



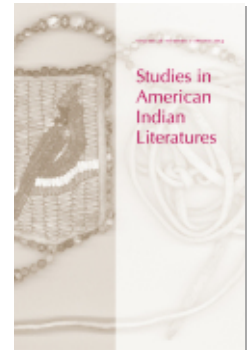
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“Maybe Einstein Was Part Yaqui”

Deposing Thought in Works by Endrezze and Silko

CATHERINE RAINWATER

For those of us who believe in physics, this separation between past, present, and future is only an illusion, however tenacious.

Albert Einstein

Anita Endrezze, the mixed-blood Yaqui author of *Throwing Fire at the Sun, Water at the Moon* (2000), joins Leslie Marmon Silko (mixed-blood Laguna Pueblo) as an Indigenous revisionist of history concerned with communities of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico.¹ Endrezze creates a “Yaqui revisionist history” that, much like Silko’s narratives, reaches far beyond mere corrective changes to the western dominant record concerning not only history, but also what counts for knowledge in general (*Throwing* 25). Historical narrative, after all, follows semiotic rules that control the definition of history within a cultural framework. In a few terse comments at the beginning of her provocative, surprisingly neglected volume, Endrezze explains the dramatic impact on the universe when “two observers occupy different cultural space, mythically, intellectually, or spiritually, but the same material or physical space” (24). Such initial meetings between Western European invaders and American Indigenous people, she contends, distorted the realities of both, but most profoundly the latter’s. The effects of this encounter on the Indigenous cosmovision are indelibly inscribed in Native stories and storytelling tactics, including Endrezze’s and Silko’s as present-day expressions of ongoing, cultural forces.²

For Native people, Endrezze explains, “Time is not absolute but depends on the direction of the relative motion between two observers making the time measurements” (*Throwing* 24). Thus, the “encounter on

the time line” between the Spanish and the Yaqui changed “the motion of Yaqui culture forever” (25). The Western culture of “exploitation and exploration,” with its notion of time as quantifiable, linear, and irreversible, moved relentlessly forward with the intent to erase Indigenous cultures (24); however, even as most were exterminated, written over, and written out of the dominant reality, survivors such as the Yaqui folded aspects of the invaders’ worldview into the torn fabric of their own reality, with its extraordinarily different understanding of time:

[Y]ou may read [in *Throwing Fire*] a story of Mary’s conception happening before the Jesuits came to the Yaquis, and you may be surprised to read that Jesus walked the paths between the Yaqui *rancherías*. In a way, this is Yaqui revisionist history. It is also a way for the Yaquis to become part of the same time continuum. Yaquis believed in the four directions: time is the fourth dimension. Maybe Einstein was part Yaqui. (25)

This practice of intermingling foundational stories of both cultures recalls Silko’s narrative strategies. In *Gardens in the Dunes* (1999), for instance, a pan-cultural Messiah appears in the Americas to make the point that “Jesus Christ doesn’t belong to any given group or religion or continent” (Perkins 120–21). Interlacing foundational stories across cultures, both Silko’s and Endrezze’s works are examples of *autoethnographic texts*, Mary Louise Pratt’s term for the writings of colonized people who incorporate the stories of the colonizers into their own in a double-vectored attempt to reclaim their powers of self-representation while addressing both audiences (445–46). For Endrezze, this revisionary practice amounts to “physics, Native American style” (25).

Although Endrezze takes imaginative liberties with the strict definition of *physics*, like Silko, she is fascinated by similarities between the Einsteinian, and post-Einsteinian, worldview and that of the “old [Indian] people” (Coltelli, *Winged* 138).³ Endrezze suggests it is possible within the fluid parameters of Indigenous time to reboot history, so to speak, to begin again with an inclusive agenda and an alternative cosmivision—in effect, to change the past and, consequently, the present and the future. Both Silko’s and Endrezze’s works deliver powerful messages about how the past can be changed, and they are not speaking merely about correcting the historical record by adding information or replacing one set of facts with another. Both writers agree that far more

is required. As critical discussions of Silko's writing have variously demonstrated, she calls for nothing less than an epistemological shift.⁴

Perhaps influenced by Silko, Endrezze pursues similar ends; indeed, both writers' deliberate efforts to privilege an Indigenous epistemological scheme often appear as metatextual conversation with the audience. At times this conversation with readers (both Native and non-Native) feels confrontational, abrasive, and even deliberately threatening, as though a rite of passage were required of us.⁵ Not only does this destructive purpose shape the role of the reader, but the authors' fulfillment of their apparent aim is prerequisite to readers' adequate reception of their overall message. Silko's and Endrezze's mutual goal seems to be the near-annihilation of the reader's constructed self that rests on unquestioned foundational assumptions concerning what is real. Like the Spanish and the Yaqui, a reader and a writer are "two observers [who] occupy different" subjective space, but "the same material or physical space." Both writers understand reading as an "encounter on the time line" that might change "the motion of . . . culture forever," or at least the trajectory of one reader at a time (Endrezze 24–25). In Endrezze's words, what she has to say "will blow your brains out" (137).

My aim in this essay, however, is not merely to note these writers' demand for an intellectual adjustment of their readers' worldview or their ideas about reading—points that critics including myself have already made—but to move beyond this dimension of their work into more complex philosophical territory, to explore some of the technicalities involved in such an adjustment resulting in permanent changes in readers' extratextual lives. After all, it is easy to say that we, as readers, ought to change and in what ways; harder to explain is how we might do so with lasting effects beyond the reading of texts that test our convictions about the extratextual realities we inhabit. Even for post-Einstein scientists, shedding the obviously inadequate, classical view of the universe has been extraordinarily difficult. With his "Yaqui" notions, Einstein transformed Western science and technology, but many physicists even today struggle to modify their epistemological spectacles to sustain a consistently post-Einsteinian view, with its ramifications for understanding daily experience.⁶ This struggle results less from intellectual limitations of scientists than from the fact that the new physics describes the world in counterintuitive ways that belie our "tenacious illusions" of objectivity; moreover, the new physics not only explodes a

worldview but also profoundly interrogates the viewer's conception of who or what is viewing the demolition.

Endrezze and Silko present us with works giving all readers, Native and non-Native, a chance to change ourselves through reflection on ways of thinking about reality that the "old people" and the new physics agree is participatory and resistant to objectification. Endrezze's *Throwing Fire* and most of Silko's narratives, including her latest, *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir* (2010), and the novella, *Ocean Story* (2011), challenge fundamental assumptions concerning the relationship between the exterior world of material space-time (that author, text, and reader inhabit) and the interior realm of subjective space-time, or thought (where the writing-reading experience unfolds). Key to the development of my argument are a few principle notions of theoretical physicist David Bohm (1917–1992), as these intersect intriguingly with some ideas of reader-response theorists David Miall and Don Kuiken.

THINKING, FEELING, READING

The type of physicist whose writings for the layman appeal to both Silko and Endrezze, Bohm in *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (1980) and in *Thought as a System* (1994) tackles thought as a human activity in need of deposing. He was convinced that we will forever be stuck in illusions about reality if we continue to privilege thought as an objective faculty for knowing the universe. Consequently Bohm's public educational efforts involved engaging audiences in a unique style of "dialogue" that cultivates "proprioception of thought," or self-consciousness about aspects of the thought process.⁷ Admitting the paradox implied in asking us to think about thought without getting caught up in the epistemological snares we are attempting to escape, Bohm encourages us to consider how an individual's thought is neither a direct perception nor an objective account of the world, but part of a shared semiotic "system" that is flawed.⁸ For Bohm, "collective thought and knowledge" are not a transparent means of understanding and controlling reality; on the contrary, they "have become so automated that we are in large part controlled by them," with a "subsequent loss of authenticity, freedom and order" (*Thought* ix, 184). Bohm sets out to restore some of this authenticity and freedom by asking us to think about thought as the source of erroneous convictions about objectivity, as the basis of a mistaken con-

ception of the hierarchical relationship of mind and matter, and as the ground of a fragmented, incoherent worldview.

Redefining thought, or at least attempting to unhinge us from our entrenched notions about what goes on in our minds in relation to the outside world, Bohm contends that most thought is "the instantaneous display of memory, a superimposition of images onto the active, living present" (*Thought* x, 75–76). Much of what we see and hear is what we expect to see and hear. The ongoing "talk" in our heads as we construe sense data is not a field report of what is happening "out there." We know the present in terms of prefabricated interpretations, "approximate representations," and other formulations bequeathed to us from the collective (xiv, 110–13). Words themselves, as we well know, generate an excess of meanings we must negotiate; they are not precisely aligned with phenomena. In short, Bohm argues, much of reality is a participatory, subjective phenomenon, and objectivity is an illusion to which we cling. Well-known, illustrative examples from quantum mechanics include the dual particle-wave behavior of photons, the observer effect, the uncertainty principle, and the thought experiment known as Schrödinger's Cat—all indicating the effect of our perceptual screens on what we "know" about an "object." However, less esoteric examples abound. E. H. Gombrich's famous *Art and Illusion* (1960), for instance, details the role of collective "schemata" or aesthetic conventions that determine how a painter perceives, then represents reality.

Another of our cognitive mistakes, according to Bohm, involves the fragmentation of thought and emotion, which he contends are not separate, as the Western tradition has so stubbornly insisted, but two aspects of a single phenomenon. Thoughts and feelings are neurophysiologically hardwired together and cannot be meaningfully distinguished. For example, a thought arises: "I think that teacher with the spikey hair is evaluating me unfairly." A bodily response accompanies the thought—a surge of adrenalin, a rise in blood pressure. Idea and anger are bound together. Next time I encounter an authority figure with spikey hair, I might irrelevantly feel anger and suspect mistreatment. Has the thought caused the feeling, or has the feeling caused the thought? There is no easy answer to this question.⁹ If the feeling caused the thought, then the thought's objectivity is compromised. If the thought caused the feeling, what must we make of the emotion's irrelevance to the present situation? Moreover, what must I make of the fact that my present reaction has

been evoked by a memory, if indeed I even realize it? Bohm concludes that our efforts to be “objective” by valuing thought and devaluing emotion are ill-conceived and misleading—one of several “flaws” in the “system” of thought. Knowledge comprises emotion.¹⁰

Interesting implications follow from Bohm’s analysis of thought for what happens when we read, an activity that arouses thoughts and feelings within a fictive world that carry over into the actual world. Independently of Bohm, but correlatively, David S. Miall and Don Kuiken have developed what they call *empirical* reader-response theory that attempts to trace the intricate complex of thoughts and feelings of readers encountering literary texts. In the wake of several decades of reader-response theories—from Roman Ingarden’s and Wolfgang Iser’s phenomenological approach, to Umberto Eco’s and Peter Rabinowitz’s semiotic orientation, to David Bleich’s and later Stanley Fish’s subjective psychological slant—Miall and Kuiken’s empirical method seeks to avoid, on the one hand, overemphasis on intellectual performances that produce cohesive readings and, on the other hand, encouragement of mere free association that amounts to misreading.¹¹ “Our research procedures capture the temporally unfolding *experience* of a text rather than its consummating *interpretation*,” they contend (239). Like David Bohm, critics Miall and Kuiken doubt the “primacy” of either feeling or thought, and they suggest instead that future research in neuroscience might discern a holistic faculty revealing the inextricable entanglement of thought and feeling.

Miall and Kuiken identify “levels of feeling” that are engendered in some readers by literary texts. Among these, “self-modifying feelings” may “create unexpected challenges to the reader’s sense of self” and may “modify self-understanding” (221, 230). Although texts evoke in readers many “remembered feelings”—for example, when we read in *The Turquoise Ledge* about Silko’s rock-hunting treks in the Tucson Mountains and recall our happiness as children, rock hunting in our own homelands—texts also evoke what Miall and Kuiken identify as “fresh feelings”; these are feelings we have never known before, and they may lead to permanent self-modification in the world of lived experience, especially for readers who become reflective about the nature of the thought processes involved in reading. Bohm, with his social reformative agenda, describes a similar transformational event when he asks us to “suppose that thought is able to be aware of its own effects.

Then when it is producing effects which make no sense" or are destructive, laced with violent or antisocial feelings, we might learn to make it "stop doing so" (*Thought* 133). Readers immersed in works by Silko and Endrezze may find themselves developing such an ability, owing to the texts' capacities for enhancing our self-awareness about thinking, feeling, and reading. Such an aim appears to be part of Silko's agenda for social change in works such as *Ceremony* (1977) and *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) and of Endrezze's in *Throwing Fire*.

Besides being inseparable from emotion, according to Bohm, thought is also one with its concrete productions. Things we make are manifestations of ideas, he reminds us. A book is a thing in the world that particularly signals its continuity with the mind that created it and the mind that encounters it. Reader-response theorist Wolfgang Iser speaks of the "virtual dimension" that comes into being during the reading of a text, and Georges Poulet in "Phenomenology of Reading" argues that the writer's mind inhabits the mind of the reader of a book. Miall and Kuiken's claim that readers may be permanently altered in their minds and selves is a kindred notion. These reader-response theories point to the existence of what Bohm calls "an unbroken field" of thought or consciousness that belies the subject-object fragmentation of the world. In truth, he argues, there is only the "flow of meaning" (*Thought* x). According to Bohm, subject-object fragmentation sustains the illusory belief in an individual "self" separate from this flow. He explains, "Our common experience is that we have personal thoughts that come from our individual 'self'; however, Bohm objects, "this is a culturally inherited sensibility that overemphasizes the role of isolated parts. . . . [T]he 'flow of meaning' between people is more fundamental than any individual's particular thoughts" (x).

Abstracted from the "one unbroken field" of thought, some ideas such as the notion of a separate self are powerfully reinforced over time to become "structures" no longer interrogated in terms of their presumed objective reality. Such structures (or schemata, or conventions) control perception and block alternative observations of the universe—observations such as those of Indigenous people whose views have been disparaged and dismissed by Western cultures. Bohm urges his readers to find a way to focus on the workings of our own minds in order to liberate ourselves from habitual thinking, to attune to aspects of the envi-

ronment to which our “nervous system could respond” and in which we are “sufficiently interested” (Bohm, *Essential* 62–63). Silko and Endrezze seem to aim for precisely this kind of attunement in their readers. An implication of Bohm’s thoughts about thought, together with Miall and Kuiken’s insights into the self-modifying effects of reading, is that at least some readers (both Native and non-Native) of Indigenous writing have a chance to become permanently other than who they were before.

When I say that readers are changed by reading texts by writers such as Silko and Endrezze, I do not mean that reading somehow confers indigeneity or grants full access to others’ perspectives. I do mean that participation as readers of Indigenous writing, whether we are Indian or not, may change us fundamentally in our minds so that our extra-textual behavior is altered. Liberation through dislocation and loss potentially characterizes the reader’s experience of texts by Endrezze, Silko, and other Native writers whose works foster both the deposition of thought from its long-held position of authority that physicist David Bohm describes and the recognition of the role of emotion that Miall and Kuiken explore.

LA LLORONA TELLS US THAT OUR TIME IS UP

Endrezze’s *Throwing Fire* is not a conventional collection of stories, poems, and paintings, though each of the pieces could stand alone meaningfully. In its design the book recalls Silko’s *Storyteller* (1981), a complex and multilayered single work composed of similarly interconnected narratives, poems, and photographs.¹² Throughout the book, sometimes in her own voice, sometimes in assumed voices, and sometimes through the published voices of Spanish clerics and journal keepers, Endrezze recounts folk tales, historical contexts, and family stories about archetypal females in ways that challenge readers’ confidence in standardized views of the past. Through Endrezze’s managed voices, readers confront La Morena (the dark-eyed woman), Tequatlasupe (appropriated by the Spanish and renamed Guadalupe), Malinche (the abused woman), and La Llorona (the mourning woman); Endrezze also narrates some of her own personal stories in which she reinvents herself and others as manifestations of these archetypes. Along with positive feelings such as sympathetic and empathetic identification with the author, the variously managed voices in the text potentially evoke an

array of uncomfortable feelings in the reader that range from anger and guilt to embarrassment, fear, and shame.

One of the poems in *Throwing Fire* that best exemplifies Endrezze's calibrated assault on her audience's mindset is "La Llorona, the Crying Woman." In a prefatory remark Endrezze explains that in this poem La Llorona inhabits a modern, urban world, and like Endrezze, she is a poet. The speaker addresses her audience, apparently during a Q&A period following a reading of her work. Audience members inquire: "How do you get your ideas? Are you rich? Famous? What is your next project?" In humorous and sinister fashion, the poet answers them.

The questioners appear to be the usual sort of people who turn up at public readings. Among them are well-intended, but ill-informed, worshipful admirers of Indigenous poets. Their clichéd, predictable questions reveal their lack of deep engagement with the works the poet has presumably read to them, along with their unconscious entertainment of prefabricated thoughts and feelings. Such individuals need their cognitive maps redrawn, their superficial, exoticizing habits of mind broken if they are to have any chance of entering the poet's world. In short, they need their brains blown out, and the poet threatens to oblige.

Her answers to their inane questions are blunt and shocking. She tells the audience she gets her ideas at night while stalking men "dumb enough / to come out in the dark" (156). She lets down her hair and wears a transparent dress to make men follow her to a reservoir or a lake, where she drowns them, reminding them that she is "real," and "this is [not] a Stephen King movie" (157). Horror movies, indeed, exemplify culturally imbricated structures of thought and feeling about female sexuality and otherness. Asked whether or not she is rich and famous, she replies that she is as rich and famous as all the Indian women and children who have died at the hands of oppressors. Her "next project?" It will satisfy their need for Indian stories; it will "hook" the audience, she says, for her "hands are full of syringes." Her readers will "suck on [her] cocaine breasts" as she offers them "blankets of paper" (158). Remarking her confidence in "the universal impact / of [her] new work," the poet concludes the evening's event, telling her audience she knows some of them "are ready for a fix," and that "now, as you know, / your time is up" (158).

Indeed, this Llorona-poet will "drown" readers who use her works like drugs to satisfy their romantic longings and to reinforce their stereotypical ideas about Indigenous women and Native writers. Although

she says she has “worked through” her “need for revenge” (158), she releases her audience into the night where, she has warned them, La Llorona hunts for those “dumb enough” to walk around in the literal and figurative dark.

In La Llorona-Endrezze’s world, the Yaqui past is not in the past but remains alive in the present where its effects are known and felt by those not blinded by Eurocentric versions of history. To be sure, Endrezze and her own family continue to live the stories of their violated ancestors. Her father, destroyed first spiritually and then physically, was honorably discharged from military service only to learn he could not buy a house: “You’re an Indian!” he was told. “You’re a woman!” her mother was told when she offered to sign the papers. They did not get the house. In another poem, “Angelina,” we learn about Endrezze’s grandmother, Carlotta,

raped by Mexican soldiers, back when Yaqui hands were
cut off and nailed
Christ-like to boards. (125)

Such dreadful stories are alive in La Llorona-Endrezze’s “darkness,” unscattered by the Eurocentric “lights” of reason and Christian dogma.

The poet’s designs on her oblivious fans involve destruction of their ways of knowing and seeing. Think about how and what you are thinking, the Llorona-poet warns, for it could save your life. An even more complex version of the same warning for some, though not all, readers comes through the voice of the implied author behind the scenes: think about how and what you are thinking, together with who you are in relation to the writer. Who were your ancestors? What part of their past is still present in you? What is the nature of our “encounter along [this narrative] time line?” Though perhaps quiescent in the reader’s mind, answers to such lingering questions must necessarily be emotionally inflected.

CALABAZAS IMPLIES WE MUST GET WIPED OUT

Silko’s works contain similarly ominous dialogues fostering conscious awareness about thoughts and feelings in her audience. By comparison to *Almanac of the Dead*, her other works carry subtler, more benignly nuanced messages, but the messages are there nonetheless in the fates of

the "destroyers" in *Ceremony* (1977) and the traits of the Gunideeyah in *Storyteller* (1981), and in references to Ghost Dance prophecies in *Gardens in the Dunes* (Moore, "Ghost" 92, 94). In *Almanac*, over 750 pages detail the violent, death-and-drug-dealing history of the "destroyers" that has unfolded for more than five hundred years in the Americas. Silko's "destroyers" in *Almanac* are primarily Eurocentric, but her politics are far from simplistic. Yoeme remarks how Cortez and the European invaders were easily matched in their bloodlust by Montezuma and the Aztecs. "Those who worshiped destruction and blood secretly knew one another," the old Yaqui woman declares (*Almanac* 570). Silko implies here and elsewhere in *Almanac* that preceding specific racial and ethnic conflict are more general ways of thinking, habits, or Bohmian unexamined "structures" of thought, that identify people as "destroyers" with violent predilections. Despite Silko's ultimately nonviolent message, she openly confronts in *Almanac* the possibility that ingrained cultural constructions sometimes require brutal shattering, comparable to the brain injury of one of her characters. Potential reader response to her message might range from hostility to fear; many popular reviews of *Almanac* when it first appeared suggest this is so.¹⁵

Critical attention has more than once focused on Root, the descendant of Mexicans who "got rich off the Indian wars" (*Almanac* 168), and on how his brain damage iconizes Silko's view of what might be required to alter a mindset. Michelle Jarman contends that Root's disability affords access to the world of the "different" Other, including but not limited to the world of those with physical impairments. Understanding how Silko sets out to "counterbalance the erasure of non-dominant narratives by reinstating lost histories" (159), Jarman argues that through Root, "Silko suggests that disability might allow one to cross into another form of consciousness, even an alternative cultural identity. A person with brain damage has suffered the ultimate depositing of thought; he is incapable of normal 'thought' as we understand it. After his accident, Root begins to reject his Caucasian identity and to question the presumptions associated with it" (161). Because his family no longer accepts him, Jarman contends, Root's "brain injury suddenly allows him to see his family from an outsider position, a location that also forces him to admit his former participation in their tacit discrimination" (161). Eva Cherniavsky agrees, arguing that Root's "unlearning

of the colonizer's historical privilege" occurs because he is maimed in a "devastating motorcycle crash" (115).

One might reasonably say that Root has, in effect, "died" and returned completely changed. Mosca sees Root's calamity as a near-death experience. He urges Root not to try to recall his historical past but to explore instead the spiritual dimensions of his misfortune: "Well, you know, old Calabazas, he said one time people who get wiped out like that—you know, *almost* killed—well, they get visions or they take a long journey. Mosca . . . wanted Root to talk about the soul journey and about visions" (200). Though Root fails to satisfy Mosca's imaginative curiosity, he does begin to share the Indigenous worldview of the old Yaqui drug smuggler, Calabazas. Root contemplates Calabazas' words: "Those who can't learn to appreciate the world's differences won't make it. They'll die" (203). Before the accident, Root entertained fixed ideas and prejudices against Indians. His mother had insisted the family was "Spanish." He had been unable to appreciate difference. After the accident, he knows "the accident . . . was a journey to the boundaries of the land of the dead" (199). Now, he not only embodies "difference" but knows it intimately from within. "Root preferred to say that all his family had died in his accident" (169), but he is the one who has been "wiped out," who has "died" to them and their illusory world.

Calabazas's warning applies to Silko's audience. Like Endrezze's *Throwing Fire*, Silko's confrontational novel suggests that in order to stop being "destroyers," closed-minded readers who remain hostile or insensitive to "difference" must in one way or another be "wiped out." Calabazas might be said to exhibit "proprioception of thought" in that he is capable of thinking about reality from multiple perspectives; his close attention to his own perceptual experience and his interpretive acts in connection with that experience result in the sort of "authenticity and freedom" that Bohm associates with self-conscious, self-critical awareness of thought and its implicit emotions.

INTO THE OCEAN OF UNCERTAINTY—
READING AS LOSS AND LIBERATION

Both Endrezze and Silko imply that the loss of comfortable illusions pays off in better alternatives. Endrezze's "La Llorona, the Crying Woman" is immediately followed by "Dream-Walkers from the Flower World," a

poem introducing readers to the Yaqui supernatural "world of spirit and beauty"; the dream-walkers bring healing messages about the constructive powers all beings potentially wield. "Dreams are the minarets / of the soul," the speaker promises (165). Even the darkest of Silko's works hold out similar promises to readers willing and able to absorb her messages.¹⁴ Tayo in *Ceremony* restores harmony and health to the world; characters in *Almanac* and *Gardens* learn to stand against the destroyers. Readers seeking entrance into Endrezze's and Silko's restored worlds beyond the borders of the written text, however, need a reconstructed mind like Calabaza's. Such is the case in Silko's latest work, *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir*, a text demanding a most unorthodox reader.

In this text Silko's relationship with readers assumes an unprecedented dimension. We are presented not with fiction, but with a memoir, a non-fiction form that conventionally cues the reader to expect "truth" and strict verisimilitude. Silko tests her audience in this genre-bending work, however, as if to see what, and whether, they have learned from reading her earlier works. Putting readers on notice in her preface that "We can't be certain of anything" (1), she proceeds to speak to an audience who can follow her into her personally inflected, Indigenous reality. Like Calabaza, who scolds Root in *Almanac* for his unnecessary "blindness" to the natural landscape (201) and then "couldn't care less if [Root] got [himself] lost . . . and . . . died" (202), Silko reminds her audience in her memoir to pay attention, and then opens a door into a world rife with sheer impossibilities for the average Eurocentric audience, which reads according to rules that have been jettisoned by the writer.¹⁵ Many Native readers might find themselves a bit sidelined, as well, for not much about *Turquoise* is strictly Indigenous, either. In *The Turquoise Ledge*, Silko speaks to an audience she has cultivated for herself from the beginning of her career. We either follow her and cope with her efforts to force us to find ourselves anew, or we get completely "lost."

Drawing on the ideas of Paul Ricoeur about time and narrative, I have argued elsewhere that some contemporary Native American writers, including Silko, expand the semiotic capacities of Western fictional forms (Rainwater, *Dreams* 104–30). I have explained how such works sustain, in Ricoeur's terms, a "temporal experience that only fiction can explore. . . . Only fiction . . . can explore and bring to language this divorce between worldviews and their irreconcilable perspectives on time, a divorce that undermines public time" (Ricoeur 101, 107).

As a work of nonfiction that attempts just such an exploration, however, Silko's memoir challenges this Ricoeurian tenet. In ways that force readers to a crisis, it "undermines" the "public" or Western mechanical time scheme inscribed in memoir. Certainly, for many readers, *The Turquoise Ledge* broadly strains credulity: the author says she allows rattlesnakes to slither free in the house with her; she routinely sees and hears ghosts; she converses with Star Beings, and the list of affronts to Western spatial-material reality goes on. Equivalently outré for many readers is the temporal scheme informing the memoir. For example, Louisa Thomas, reviewing it for the *New York Times*, seems particularly uncomfortable with the text. Aware of Silko's established reputation, she credits Silko with enjoying "a different relationship with time," but Thomas evades description of this relationship in a hesitant manner suggesting bafflement.

Silko's daily life unfolds in her own personally nuanced, Indigenous time: "I learned the world of the clock and calendar when I started school, but I've never lost my sense of being alive without reference to clocks or calendars" (47). Silko's world is, in fact, the realm of her fictional characters, but since she is not a fictional character, her claims in a memoir are not subject to interpretive practices germane to fiction. Silko inhabits the capacious "present," unbounded by Western ontological demarcations including mechanical time. This "present" is the holistic realm of the perceiving consciousness, which knows past and future in terms of Bohmian "flow," a fluid and multidirectional movement within the spacious present, rather than in Western, fragmented terms of an irrecoverable, extensive "past" and an infinite, unknown "future" that sandwich an infinitesimal present. Indeed, she casually reports on looking into the future the way a conventional Western person might comment on looking back into history, or into the neighbor's back yard (*Turquoise* 40).

In *The Turquoise Ledge*, the future unfolds from Silko's imagination and intent, and the past, from imagination and memory. Future and past are contained within a post-Einsteinian (and Indigenous) web of creative energy-in-motion that the author understands to be the universe. On her walks through the Tucson Mountains parts of the phenomenal world appear to shift in response to her intentional focus. The turquoise ledge near her house, for instance, seems to emerge in connection with her decision to look for it. We are to assume that the

ledge might or might not have preexisted her search. ("We can't be certain of anything.") Recalling Endrezze's "physics, Native American style," objects appear and disappear in complex relation to participant observers, who include not only the individual but also the vast collective of (not exclusively human) beings. For instance, Silko reports in an earlier nonfiction essay as well as in *Turquoise*, "a twenty foot long sandstone formation in the shape of a giant snake appeared" mysteriously in 1980 at the Jackpile uranium mine near Paguate. It showed up "only a few yards from the base of a tailings pile. The sandstone formation looked as if it had been there forever—but it hadn't" (*Turquoise* 73; "Fifth World").

Silko's non-ordinary memoir is rife with just such instances of the Western-impossible. Star Beings she first notices as figures in ancient petroglyphs begin to pester her at night while she brushes her teeth; they tell her how to portray them in paintings (141). Silko walks past places near her house where "gravity is distributed . . . unevenly," and where "[p]arallel planes or worlds may be visible briefly at certain points . . . from time to time. Thus the discrepancies between my recollections and notes immediately after a walk and what I actually find when I attempt to locate these places again" (7).

As Western-impossible claims within the Eurocentric genre of memoir, Silko's claims force the reader to choose: we may comfort ourselves by concluding, along with some of her reviewers past and present, that she needs "psychiatric help," or we may take Silko at her word (Nieman 107–08). In other words, we may choose to remain inside the Eurocentric "box," with its secure ontological boundaries, or step outside of it into radical uncertainty where we discover the illusion-generating and illusion-sustaining habits perpetuated by what Bohm calls the flawed "system" of thought.

Endrezze's *Throwing Fire* similarly liberates the audience through loss of blinding certainty. With such freedom inevitably come feelings of insecurity—doubts ranging from our ability to know the world to our understanding of how to read. Like Silko, who manipulates the reader's expectations through disruptions of genre, Endrezze attempts to deprive the reader of even the most ordinary assumptions about the relationship of one printed poem to another. For instance, "Coaticue: An Aztec Creation Story in Two Versions," consists of two poems placed side by side in columns. We may read the poem on the left that begins, "Hungry Woman," and then the one on the right that begins, "Lady of the

Serpent Skirt.” We may also read across the page—line one of the first poem followed by line one of the second, line two of the first and line two of the second, and so on. This unorthodox merger of the two poems also generates meaning, especially since *Hungry Woman* and *Lady of the Serpent Skirt* are two names for one figure, and the two poems tell two versions of one story.

The linear-horizontal reading option that invites the audience to stray outside conventional formal boundaries also encourages other sorts of boundary transgressions, including temporal ones. Moving unconventionally in space—across poems—and still being able to construe meaning implies that we need not observe the rules of narrative time for reading, staying in one poem until we reach its end, for instance. Endrezze’s “Coatlicue” contains an important message about nonlinear time that applies to history, understood within an Indigenous cosmovision: time past and time future exist within the spacious present that is consciousness, Bohm’s “unbroken field of thought.” Stories may bleed forward or backward into one another. Once read, stories do not reside in readers’ consciousness in a linear sequence. Readers are expected to enter Silko’s and Endrezze’s worlds without the benefit of Western semiotic guidance; in the realm of the “impossible” lies the distinct possibility of coming to know, and adopting, alternative ways of inhabiting the universe. One way Endrezze prepares her audience for liberating loss is by placing the destabilizing “Coatlicue” in the opening pages of *Throwing Fire*. Must we read this way again in this book, we wonder? How should we proceed?

Endrezze also joins Silko in cautioning readers about illusory objectivity. “Nothing happens the way we remember it,” Endrezze insists, and “truth is not often found in fact” (xv). Silko would no doubt appreciate Endrezze’s observation that the “reporting of history is always subjective, no matter who is telling it. This discovery freed me.” Writes Endrezze:

I was able to figure out how I wanted to approach my family history—as fact or fiction? Long troubled by the question, I decided to do it in both ways. This book [*Throwing Fire*], therefore, is history, myth, family anecdotes, poetry and short stories, and they are all the same thing. (xv–xvi)

As revisionist historians with designs on their readers’ relationship to space-time and reality, both Endrezze and Silko are mutually interested

in reconnecting with their Comcáac predecessors by rescuing them and their stories from Western-historical and time-bound oblivion—thus restoring them to the commodious present. Like “Coatllicue,” their works encourage a nonchronological movement of the mind. Erasing generic boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, between present and past, between Indigenous truth and Western recorded history, these writers allow the old stories of the coastal Comcaác to ebb and flow within their own narratives. This strategic erasure of boundaries not only establishes an intertextual, historical link between Endrezze’s and Silko’s works but also focuses our attention onto the ocean as a significant trope communicating their shared conception of the space-time continuum as the expansive, undifferentiated present of consciousness.

THE OCEAN METAPHOR

Along with the Yaqui and the O’odham, the Comcáac were native to Sonora, Mexico. Though only the Comcáac were “ocean people,” all three groups share profound connections to the Gulf of California region. Neighbors of the Yaqui, the Comcáac were kin to the O’odham ancestors of present-day North American Pueblo people. In *Ocean Story*, Silko’s narrator (arguably, a version of Silko herself, as we shall see) reclaims her tribal ocean memories as she informs us about the Comcáac: “I visited San Carlos Bay, Sonora years ago when I was in college, and I never forgot the ocean there. Other oceans only made me think of the Gulf of California” (Kindle locations 18–28); “the Comcaac people belonged to the entire Gulf of California; they made the beaches and fresh water estuaries of the Gulf their home for at least 10,000 years before the Europeans appeared” (Kindle locations 174–84).

Endrezze likewise reclaims the Comcáac in *Throwing Fire*:

Geologists tell us that the sea split
millions of years ago
before the Yoemem, Yoremem, Kunkaak, O-Otam
curled their tongues around the names
of themselves. (3)

The Kunkaak “caught huge fish and knew how to sing like the sea” (48). The stories of the Comcáac concerning whales, dolphins, and the ocean waters animate both landscape and inscape of Silko’s and Endrez-

ze's revisionary worlds. The combined stories also come to inhabit the reader. As Linda Krumholz contends regarding Silko's *Storyteller*, there is often a ritualistic dimension to works that entangle old stories with new ones. Such ritual may alter not only the readers' understanding of reality but the nature of their participation in the text as well. Silko and Endrezze develop the trope of the ocean to suggest that storytelling is a variety of an overarching cosmic force that writes, erases ("wipes out"), and overwrites—that forms and unforms—writers, readers, and worlds.

In her poem "The Gulf of California" Endrezze speaks of "two memories of tides" (3). The first is a memory of the earth's formation, a cosmic event, and the other is a memory of the emergence of land, when the sea "found itself / in the daybreaks of rivers," a local, planetary event (3). Ever since the European invasion, she says in "Lost River," these waterways mark the sites of Indians' disappearance. The Spanish invaders feared the ocean, "So they contained it in maps / written on dead animal skins / with ink made from dried octopus . . . blood" (4). They renamed everything in an effort to subdue it—"the *Vermilion Sea*," "the *Sea of Cortés*" (5). With each naming and renaming of the Gulf, she says, memory of "what it was" grows vaguer. Silko makes a similar point in *The Turquoise Ledge*, as well as in *Ocean Story*, by referring always to the Gulf of California, or El Golfo, instead of alluding to the Sea of Cortez, its Spanish name. For Endrezze, naming of any sort, not just Eurocentric renaming, sometimes contributes to loss of memory. Nonhuman animals, Endrezze says, know much more about "the sea that names itself / *unnameable*" than do people who have lost it beneath labels (5). Silko, with her keen interest in "what can be known without words" (*Turquoise* 45), would no doubt agree.

Interesting with regard to both writers' references to the dual, revealing-and-concealing nature of language is their mutual use of the letter X to denote significant cancellation or absence of identity. In Endrezze's "Lost River" she writes that on a Western "map: / If you are Indian, / you are not / here X" (134). Endrezze endeavors in *Throwing Fire* to replace such Xs with old names and old stories, as well as new names and new stories from the land and the people as they are now. While Endrezze employs an X to note absence, Silko's Xs constitute her own form of active erasure. A key character in Silko's *Ocean Story* is, ironically, called merely "X," and a key place in Mexico merely "Puerto Z." The character, X, is an Algerian immigrant involved in cockfighting

and shady real-estate development deals that exploit the land, animals, and people of Sonora; he might also have ties to Mohammed Atta, one of the key terrorists in the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11. In other words, he is one of the long line of colonial "destroyers" of the Americas, not much different from Hernando Cortez, Cabeza de Vaca, or other Europeans before him. Calling him "X," and calling Puerto Peñasco "Puerto Z"—in other words, X-ing out European names—is Silko's way of turning Western strategies of identity erasure back against the colonizers. It is an act of unnameing that destroys temporal and spatial boundaries and, no doubt, engenders feelings of vulnerability in readers securely anchored to conventional notions about self and world.

Renaming follows unnameing in Endrezze's *Throwing Fire*, as well as in Silko's *Turquoise Ledge* and *Ocean Story*. A significant part of both writers' purpose is to unname and rename themselves as individuals. Neither writer wishes for stasis, but instead for an identity-in-motion within a universe of creative energy-in-motion. Endrezze concludes the verbal portion of *Throwing Fire* with three pieces specifically addressing acts of self-revision. The first, "A Good Journey Home to Vicam," is a prose piece that narrates a trip to Sonora to see the homeland of her Yaqui ancestors for the first time, "to find the land in the stories my family had told" (177). The second, "No Me Recuerdo las Palabras Ahora," is a poem in which the speaker rejects both her father's Spanish and her mother's "Buttemontana" English for "silence," everyone's "first indigenous language":

It is the tongue of secrets, thick fruit, red hands,
the dolphin-eye of the human fetus
swimming in salty waters, practicing
its first sound between heartbeat and poem. (180)

The third piece is a short story, "The Humming of Stars and Bees and Waves," about an old woman growing young again, reversing time and reinventing herself anew. Overall, Endrezze's *Throwing Fire at the Sun, Water at the Moon* is a book designed as self-invention through relocation of the author-as-Yaqui within a reclaimed space-time continuum. To keep pace with the writer, readers must engage in the participatory dance of self-dislocation and relocation; such readers must dispense with fixed interpretive practices and excessive attachment to what

appears “objectively” true owing to habits of mind that fragment and separate rather than sense the unbroken field of consciousness.

Silko’s memoir and her novella share Endrezze’s self-reconstructive aim. I remarked earlier, with reference to her memoir, that Silko is not a fictional character, but both *Turquoise Ledge* and *Ocean Story* suggest that, to an extent, she sees herself as one of her own imaginative inventions. “I make myself a fictional character so I can write about myself,” she tells us in flagrant violation of generic norms in the preface to her memoir (1). Conversely, in the fictional *Ocean Story*, readers cannot help noticing how many of the narrator’s statements about herself and her life reflect known facts about Silko’s actual life. Within the fictional context, such known facts become subject to change. The message of both authors is that thought, or imagination, or consciousness—the source of phenomenal changes in the world, in the self, in the past, the present, and the future—destabilizes everything, all the time.

Silko’s conception of the universe as oceanic, creative energy-in-motion may be understood in terms of her self-proclaimed interest in contemporary physics, an interest she shares with Endrezze. Endrezze’s and Silko’s “ocean” of creative energy is like the sea of the Comcáac: treacherous and deadly, it may become the source of our destruction; sacred and sustaining, it may buoy us on the wreckage. The stories of the seagoing Comcáac tell as much. They preserve a wealth of information about how to survive in and near the ocean. They speak of the complex consciousness of sea creatures, such as whales and dolphins, who remember when they were human and who will help humans in trouble at sea. The Comcáac’s proper behavior and respect for the ocean, including its plants and its animals, saved their lives; in *Ocean Story*, through which Comcáac stories flow, a mass of seaweed saves the narrator’s life until human rescuers arrive. Comcáac stories also warn of how the ocean punishes, snatching those who neglect sacred obligations, inundating the land from time to time, and erasing all that is “written” there (Kindle locations 451–67). Connected to these ancestral stories within the oceanic energy-in-motion of the universe, the narratives of Endrezze and Silko share their creative-destructive capacities. Readers afloat in the “ocean” of uncertainty—threatened, perhaps fearful, “wiped out,” “brains blown out”—may begin with Silko and Endrezze the search for what remains.

BEYOND DECONSTRUCTION—L'AVENIR

Critics have observed the deconstructive agency of Silko's work (Krumholz; Rainwater, *Dreams*). Many of the same arguments pertain to Endrezze's writing. Despite energy expended in deconstructing Western frames of reference, however, most Native American writers, including Silko and Endrezze, are not deconstructors in the commonly understood sense of the term. Most, in fact, pursue essential truths, albeit decidedly non-Western ones. Silko's and Endrezze's works deconstruct the deconstructible, then force readers to consider aspects of the universe not susceptible to deconstructive moves—aspects of experience that Derrida himself, to the dismay of some of his devotees, termed "undeconstructible."

Derrida always denied that deconstruction is a form of nihilism. John D. Caputo's elegiac essay on Derrida soon after his death in 2004 succinctly traces his thought through his later years. Caputo explains:

the destabilizing agency in his work is not a reckless relativism or an acidic skepticism but rather an affirmation, a love of what in later years he would call the "undeconstructible." . . . Deconstruction is satisfied with nothing because it is waiting for the Messiah, which Derrida translated into the philosophical figure of the "to come" (*à venir*), the very figure of the future (*l'avenir*), of hope and expectation. . . . When asked why he does not say "I am" an atheist (*je suis, c'est moi*), he said it was because he did not know if he were, that there are many voices within him that give one another no rest, and he lacks the absolute authority of an authorial "I" to still this inner conflict. . . . Derrida visits upon all of us, Christian and Jew, religious and secular, left and right, the unsettling news of the radical instability of the categories to which we have such ready recourse and he raises the idea of a still deeper idea of ourselves which (religiously?) confesses its lack of categories. He exposes us to the "secret" that there is no "Secret," no Big Capitalized Secret to which we have been wired up—by scientific reason, by poetic or religious revelation, or by political persuasion. We make use of such materials as have been available to us, forged in the fires of time and circumstance. We do not in some deep way know who we are or what the world is. That is not nihilism but a quasi-religious confession, the beginning of wisdom. (565–67)

An Indigenous person might hear in Caputo's words an acknowledgment of the Great Mystery. In Derrida's recognition of the "radical instability" of our "categories" lies the undeconstructible, paradoxical "truth" that "We can't be certain of anything" (Silko, *Turquoise* 1). Scientists including Paul Feyerabend and David Bohm have implied as much in their own interrogation of Western objectivity. "There is no 'scientific method,'" Feyerabend writes; "even the idea of a universal and stable rationality" is "unrealistic" (10). Likewise, Bohm contends that all scientific knowledge is necessarily constructed through metaphors, including the metaphor of objectivity (72, 74). In his study of readers' feelings, Don Kuiken et al. contend that a reader's "shifting sense of self" occurs in relation to "metaphors of personal identification"—figures actually in the text that evoke personal memories from the reader's own life and map onto them new associations (269–70). Such a reading experience may be said to take place within a Bohmian "unbroken field of thought" in which the boundaries separating author, text, and reader blur.

For Silko and Endrezze, the trope of the ocean captures this undeconstructible aspect of the universe. Their "ocean" is creative energy in motion (thought, conscious intent, imagination—capacities, incidentally, that are not exclusively human). As David L. Moore observes, "myth in Silko is the organization of creative energy itself, a morphogenetic field of meaning," and she often mentions physics to "envision a sense of energy" ("Ghost" 108). I have observed throughout this essay that Endrezze shares with Silko a conception of "story" or "myth" as an organizing field of meaning. Both writers are fascinated with emergence, the point at which the known world of forms and concepts takes shape out of formless, creative energy. This is a point much like Derrida's "*l'avenir*" in its implications for "hope and expectation," a point beyond which our rational capacities do not extend, but also a point where the consciousness of the reader possibly intersects with that of the writer with affective results.

L'avenir. How do we begin to dwell within this alternative space-time into which such works by Endrezze and Silko apparently open? What might transformed readers do when they close the books and resume their daily lives? How do ways of being follow ways of knowing? According to Kuiken et al.:

At times, readers of literary texts find themselves participating in an unconventional flow of feelings through which they real-

ize something that they have not previously experienced—or at least that they have not experienced in the form provided by the text. When this occurs, the imagined world of the text can become unsettling. What is realized (recognized) also may become realized (made real) and carried forward as a changed understanding of the reader's own life-world. (268–69)

Kuiken et al. conclude that this "altered sense of self" is "not readily conveyed to others," primarily because the affective changes we undergo loop back into daily life and have little to do with an interpretation of the text (268). Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to say that Silko's and Endrezze's writings have the power to affect our sense of the presentness of the past, to foster in us the habit of catching ourselves on the verge of a prefabricated thought, or to shake us free for a moment of our illusory convictions about objectivity and the assumed "unreality" of subjective experience. If so, these writers have helped us to cultivate a worldview appropriate to post-Einsteinian physics.

NOTES

1. Discussions of Silko's revisionist historical agenda include Carsten; Cherniavsky; Moore, "Ghost"; and Porter.

2. Fitz addresses Indigenous oral and Western written expression as mutually reinforcing influences on Silko's work. His observations apply to Endrezze's work as well. See also Hirsch.

3. On Native American writers and their interest in physics, see also Rainwater, "Bohmian," and Dunston. Important to remember is that a nonscientist writer's understanding of quantum physics may not necessarily be correct or precisely accurate; however, the writer's understanding and misunderstanding together inform his or her worldview, which is the subject of literary critical analysis. Many writers around the end of the nineteenth century, for instance, were excited by the ideas of Einstein, Freud, and other intellectuals, but these same writers' slants on science and medicine might or might not be considered technically correct by a scientist. Shlain's book on art and physics is a source of thought-provoking observations about how artists anticipate, absorb, and reflect the scientific discoveries of their era. Another Native American (Choctaw) writer with a significant interest in physics that is reflected in her works is LeAnne Howe, in *Miko Kings* and *Shell Shaker*.

4. Addressing Silko's demand for an epistemological shift in her readers' notions are Bauerkemper, Huhndorf, Irr, Krumholz, Moore, Rainwater, and Reineke.

5. On Silko's sometimes rough treatment of readers, see also Moore, "Silko's" 157. Commonly acknowledged among Silko scholars is the difference between her relatively gentle dealings with readers in *Ceremony* and her aggressive ways of ad-

dressing readers in *Almanac*. Moore explores the intriguing intertextual relationship between these two novels.

6. Capra writes, “most of today’s physicists do not seem to realize the philosophical, cultural, and spiritual implications of their theories” (307). Bohm laments, “the historical development of physics” runs opposite to many of the persistent assumptions still basic to scientific inquiry (*Essential* 12); Jeffrey Kripal asks, “[W]hy are we still writing history as if we only inhabited a simple three-dimensional cosmos, lived in a neat linear time, and existed as so many disconnected billiard balls in a world of Newtonian causality, collisions, and reactions?” (21). Kitchener complains that science still sometimes operates based on classical “common sense notions,” but “such a Newtonian world view is in serious empirical and conceptual error and should be replaced by a newer world view, one based on a more adequate theory of physics, incorporating the revolutionary implications of classical field theory, relativity theory, thermodynamics, quantum theory, and so forth” (5). Mansfield also adds to this dialogue in significant ways pertinent to my discussion of Silko’s and Endrezze’s worldviews.

7. Bohmian “dialogue” of the sort he organized for his audiences is characterized by the free flow of spontaneous thought among open-minded people who are not at the time interested in supporting fixed views (Bohm calls this “discussion”), and who intend to try to escape tyrannical or prevailing paradigms, to “get outside the box,” to use a popular expression. See *Essential*, 294–95, where Bohm defines his term at length. On the “proprioception of thought,” see *Thought*, 121–40, 145–51.

8. Pickering addresses semiotic aspects of Bohm’s thought.

9. See Miall and Kuiken, 222, who “point out that psychological research on feeling and emotion has been far from decisive. Several fundamental issues . . . remain in dispute. First, the extent to which feelings are culturally determined is still debated. . . . Second, controversy about the ‘primacy’ of feeling over cognition remains unresolved. . . . It is not to be expected . . . that psychological research can offer straightforward guidance regarding the role of feeling in literary response.”

10. Here it is fascinating to note Maureen Trudelle Schwarz’s study of the Navajo understanding of the link between shared emotions and social activism. For instance, within the Navajo worldview “to shed tears in the presence of strangers [is to] participate in a conscious form of activism” (149). The “intentionality” behind sharing feelings points to the thought process that cannot be understood separately from emotion. See also Nandorfy, who addresses emotional components of Silko’s works.

11. Reader-response theory has from the beginning been characterized by a significant gap between those who argue that an empirical basis of some sort must underlie claims about a reader’s response to a text, especially claims about how a text might alter real-life thought and behavior. Phenomenologists such as Ingarden and his intellectual successors, especially Iser, endeavored to identify elements of texts that signified the intent of the writer and the consequent recognition by the reader of these cues or clues that elicited a range of predictable, because they were socially shared, responses. Eco’s semiotic approach and Rabinowitz’s Iserian structuralist approach proceed along some of these lines. Bleich and later Fish, however, argue that a literary work is far more dramatically the production of the reader’s consciousness

working in tandem with collective ideas, or "interpretive communities." Miall and Kuiken (a psychologist) explore the ways in which neuroscience, particularly studies of emotional responses in subjects, may shed light on the reading experience, though they admit the limitations of this type of inquiry. Like Iser, Miall and Kuiken believe that reading has lasting effects on the mind and behavior of some readers.

12. Critical assessments of the narrative arrangement of elements in *Storyteller* include Carsten, Hirsch, Krumholz, Krupat, McHenry, and Rainwater, *Dreams*.

13. Negative reviews of *Almanac* ranged from savage to hostile to baffled, and even now lay readers' blogs reflect some of the same sentiments. Gene Lyons describes her "angry, inflexible monotone." For the *Publisher's Weekly* reviewer, the book is "unwieldy, unconvincing and largely unappealing." Coleen Eils mentions her own "anxiety" and "unsettled" feelings as a reader, and from Dawn Pendergast, we learn, "After 300 pages, I became angry with the author—Why did Silko go this far? Why does she want to exhaust me? . . . All I know is that the book is thoroughly unsettling, a painful spasm that inflames itself constantly. But I never cried. The book didn't want me to cry. Silko emphatically smashed my face in the real pain of colonialism, but what now?"

14. Olmstead argues for Silko's "hopeful inclusiveness" (481), and Jarman contends that readers are capable of developing the insights that Silko imagines. I argue in *Dreams of Fiery Stars* that Silko's overall aim is the transformation of her readers, whether her tactic is gentle, as in *Ceremony*, or aggressive, as in *Almanac*.

15. See, for example, Iser and Rabinowitz for discussions of interpretive practices that readers typically bring to the text; see also Costa; Rainwater, *Dreams* and "Bohman," on Silko's dealings with reader expectations.

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