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*LeAnne Howe at the Intersections of Southern and Native
American Literature* by Kirstin L. Squint (review)

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the reader through his life and career. Broadening the discussion of McCarthy to include performance allows for deeper understanding of his treatments of isolation, engagement, and tragedy. *Cormac McCarthy and Performance* is suitable both for McCarthy scholars and for those new to his work.

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LeAnne Howe at the Intersections of Southern and Native American Literature, by Kirstin L. Squint. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018. 192 pp. \$40.00 cloth.

KIRSTIN SQUINT HAS WRITTEN A REMARKABLE AND MUCH NEEDED monograph on the works of Choctaw writer LeAnne Howe. This is the first full-length manuscript devoted entirely to her work, situating it specifically in relationship to southern studies. Too often southern studies has concerned itself with the binary of whiteness against blackness, but more scholars are now addressing the pivotal role of Indigenous people in the South and their literary and cultural imaginings. Squint argues that readers and scholars of Howe's work should understand her oeuvre in relationship to the South for a number of reasons, including the history of Choctaw people in the region, removal to Indian Territory in present day Southern Oklahoma, and Native mobility, a point Squint develops in her theories of the interstate South. What also makes the book so noteworthy is the scope of Squint's engagement with Howe's literary output. Squint painstakingly addresses the full range of Howe's work, including unpublished performance pieces. In examining such a wide range of work, Squint confronts issues relating to gender theory and postcolonial studies, in addition to southern studies. In less capable hands, the book could read as a loose collection of ideas centered on Howe's works. Yet Squint continually foregrounds Howe's embodied connection to Choctaw lands, history, and customs, hence unifying the chapters.

Indigenous/tribal specificity frames Squint's introduction, beginning with an explanation of Howe's neologism "Choctalking." Choctalking stems from Howe's understanding of Choctaw humor, history, and cultural legacies, which she shares and translates for her audience (12-13). It represents the relationship between Choctaw history, present,

and future in relationship to various peoples, places, and things, allowing for dynamic and relational intertribal and even trans- Indigenous analysis (5). One of the strengths of Squint's analysis rests in the negotiation not only between tribal nationalist approaches to Howe's work but also to its intersection with other bodies of critical theory. Squint's work is unique, as she establishes points of connection with emerging trends of Indigenous literary studies. Squint argues that Howe's output is "a representative of a Native, interstate, and global South," with "interstate" connoting ancestral Indigenous homelands in the South and the way Native people circulated and moved "into, within, and outward from the South" (6).

In the first chapter, Squint proposes reading Howe's writings in relationship to southern literary studies. Squint reminds readers of the Choctaw relation to the South, as Mississippi and Louisiana are Choctaw homelands. Squint notes the ways Howe's writings engage with Choctaw land, specifically "its loss, its recovery, its significance to cosmological ritual, [and] its etching within collective memory" (36). Throughout this chapter, Squint showcases examples where Howe forces her readers to acknowledge Mississippi and Louisiana as Choctaw, through history, names, cosmological ritual complexes, trade routes, and the continued presence of bands of Indigenous tribes in the area. Squint distills hundreds of years of Choctaw history into a readable overview, specifically of Choctaw early history with European settler colonists. While historians may decry that broad overview, it effectively provides a framework for understanding Howe's playing with and against that history. While it is far from exhaustive, this chapter eloquently provides readers with a historical backdrop to Howe's work, especially the novels *Shell Shaker* and *Miko Kings*.

Chapter 2 describes the relationship between gender and Choctaw cosmology in Howe's work. Colonialism and Indian removal targeted ethnic diversity of tribes and their different gender roles. Pulling from Choctaw history, Squint notes the ways Howe's writings "resist a Western patriarchal tradition" while they "recuperate significant cultural practices" of Choctaw peoples (55). Squint leads the reader through a careful analysis of gender performance and spirituality in *Shell Shaker* and *Miko Kings*, paying close attention to the roles of *alikchi* (healers) in the texts. Given the complexity of each novel—both span multiple generations, changes in location, time, and spiritual temporality—Squint masterfully weaves the intersections of spirituality and gender in

presenting these novels as examples of healing from colonialism. This chapter will be useful for those who teach Howe's writings, encouraging discussions of her texts that reframe her novels in specifically Choctaw gendered and spiritual epistemologies and cosmologies.

Howe often includes examples of Native people who adopt colonial representations of indigeneity, a point Squint develops in Chapter 3. Utilizing theories by Gerald Vizenor (28) and film critic Michelle Raheja (93-94), Squint suggests that Howe produces such characterizations as a form of humor that engenders resistance (78). This chapter discusses the racist depictions of Native people in the guise of mascots that still proliferate in the United States, while also noting the history of Native people in film and other performance areas who at times adopted comparable simulated roles. Squint reminds her readers that Howe's simulated Indians challenge false and stagnant representations of Native people to "creat[e] a body of work in which Native peoples can see themselves reflected honestly and respectfully" (98).

While Squint situates Howe's writings in relationship to Choctaw history and culture, Chapter 4 engages with globalism from a specifically Choctaw perspective. Following Chadwick Allen's call for scholars to address both the "Indigenous global" and local (99), Squint proposes that Howe's work anticipates and engages with such a position. Howe argues that Native people traveled, learned new ideas and tools, and then returned with that knowledge; they were never stagnant but "are international and intertribal, reflecting a larger worldview" (99-100). Throughout this chapter, Squint looks at examples of Howe's Choctalking and the way it has engendered dialogues with other global peoples. Squint observes that Howe's global encounters facilitate conversations about and between Indigenous peoples (105), reminding readers that global groups often share oppressive histories (108). Such writing helps to focus attention on Indigenous experiences and "the life-affirming cultural cross-currents present in the globalized era" (120).

In her conclusion, Squint discusses the direction of southern Indigenous studies. At the forefront is the relationship between identity and place for Indigenous people. Native people have always been telling their stories, as seen in the earthwork compositions throughout the South, according to Eric Gary Anderson (125-26). Howe's work likewise embodies that land and Squint argues that healing occurs in that recognition. As is fitting for a work that focuses on Howe, Squint concludes her book with an interview, one in which Howe's eloquence

and humor are on display. *LeAnne Howe at the Intersections of Southern and Native American Literature* is a welcome addition to southern and Indigenous studies, especially of interest to scholars of gender, indigeneity, and colonialism. Squint beautifully and clearly provides readers with an example of how to engage with tribal specificity and nationalism while also tackling broader scholarly engagements. She demonstrates how vital these discussions are not just in understanding Howe's work but also in tackling the legacy of genocide and violence that marks Indigenous history.

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