‘There is something in this land that will sustain us’: Osage Oil and Extraction in Indigenous Literatures

Rhy Brignell

University of East Anglia

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 31, 2022

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest thanks to my supervisors, Drs Hilary Emmett and Rebecca Tillett, without whose endless encouragement and wisdom this project would never have crossed the finish line. In many ways, this thesis is the culmination of 12 years of undergraduate and postgraduate study at the University of East Anglia, where the American Studies department offered such engaging classes that I just kept going back for more. Special thanks the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Research Studentship for funding this project.

I formally started this project in 2017, and in doing so, my life was completely transformed, and for that I will be forever grateful. I met a group of people here in Norwich that became my community and family for life; in particular, I would like to thank Cleo, Jake, and Megan for being such good companions throughout the frequent ups-and-downs of PhD life and well into the beyond.

And finally, to my life partner, Louis - thank you for always listening with actual interest as I read repeatedly sections of this project out-loud in an attempt to make sense of them. Thank you for always being there to provide encouragement and a warm hug when it was most needed.

NOTES

Terminology

I use a combination of Indian, Native American, Native, and Indigenous throughout, since the primary and secondary texts that this thesis engages with vary in their usage of terminology. I utilise tribal specificity as often as possible, with a general preference for Indigenous when writing generally (e.g., regarding Indigenous studies).

Plurals

I use Roger Hall-Lloyd's approach to plurals with regards to 'the Osage' and 'Osages': 'When I refer to the tribe as a whole, an ethnic group if you like, I follow the ethnologists (as in 'In the spring the Osage went on the plains') but when I am referring to a group of tribal members I use the English plural form (as in 'several Osages left the village').' In some contexts, 'the Osage' can also be used to refer to land – I have tried to make this distinction clear by specifying land in such circumstances.

Positionality

Throughout this thesis, I endeavour not to speak on behalf of the Osage or any other Indigenous group, since I am a white, UK-based scholar. This thesis firmly grounded in the work of Osage and other Indigenous writers and scholars, and it seeks to keep these voices and perspectives in the foreground at all times. The ideas and theoretical interventions put forward here are sustained by close readings of published texts by Indigenous authors which are generally available to a wide readership.

INTRODUCTION

Osage 𐓤𐓚𐓯𐓶𐓤𐓘 𐓲𐓘𐓺𐓶𐓤𐓘 surveyed the new land and declared, "there is something in this land that will sustain us."[1]

…

These words, spoken by Jim Gray, former Principal Chief of the Osage Nation encapsulate the complex history of the Osage and their relationship to their land. On a literal reading, the 'something' in the land that will sustain the Osage is oil. Whilst oil is more commonly understood to sustain the vast and ever-growing appetite for energy across the world's most industrialised superpowers, its potential as sustenance is less commonly associated with Indigenous communities, particularly those of the North America. This thesis focuses on the Osage Nation, whose lands are located in what is currently referred to as Oklahoma in the United States. The Osage Nation has a longstanding and multi-layered relationship with oil and extraction, having secured and retained rights in common to all subsurface minerals beneath their lands since 1906. Since no individual or group of individuals owns the Mineral Estate, the Osage Nation collectively owns what has been referred to the first 'underground reservation'[2] of oil, gas, and other subsurface minerals across the 1.47-million-acre Osage Nation Reservation.[3] Specifically, this thesis explores the deeply entangled relationship between Osages and oil extraction through the lens of three novels by Indigenous authors over the span of several decades: John Joseph Mathews' (Osage) *Sundown*

---

[1] Jim Gray, former Principal Chief of the Osage Nation, at the Osage Sovereignty Day Celebration in 2005, qtd. Jean Dennison in 'Relational accountability in Indigenous governance: Navigating the doctrine of distrust in the Osage Nation', *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies* (1st ed), Routledge, 2020, 301. *𐓤𐓚𐓯𐓶𐓤𐓘 𐓲𐓘𐓺𐓶𐓤𐓘* can be loosely conceived of as tribal elders and/or spiritual leaders, though Dennison does not offer a direct translation into English.

[2] Terry P. Wilson, *The Underground Reservation: Osage Oil*, University of Nebraska Press, 1985.

[3] 'Minerals Council', Osage Nation, no date. Accessed via [osagenation-nsn.gov].

(1934), Linda Hogan's (Chickasaw) *Mean Spirit* (1990), Charles H. Red Corn's (Osage) *A Pipe For February* (2002).

This Introduction first takes a broad brush to render the long-standing imbrication of colonialism and extraction, with a particular emphasis on the impact of the oil and other extractive industries on a range of North American Indigenous peoples, before going on to sketch out the aims of the relatively new fields of environmental and energy humanities. As extraction and colonialism are inextricably linked so, too, must Indigenous studies be considered integral to environmental and energy humanities: it is thus within this nexus that my readings of these novels are located. I argue that *Sundown, Mean Spirit,* and *A Pipe for February* provide fresh perspectives on the matter of oil extraction and its effects on land, environment, politics, and culture; effects felt by both the Osage and settlers within and beyond the scope of the novels themselves. These novels highlight the need to look beyond a narrative of Indigenous exploitation to further explore the vexed and occasionally ambivalent relationships between Indigenous peoples and oil extraction, characterised in the case of the Osage by the wealth, opportunity, dispossession, and violence that oil simultaneously brought. Read together and in conversation with critical theorists in the fields of Indigenous studies and the environmental humanities, this thesis contends that these novels also open up new avenues of inquiry between these disciplines in relation to the operations of power and time, thus providing opportunities for greater collaboration and critique across these areas of study.

The legacy of extractivism

At the end of the nineteenth century, oil was discovered on Osage lands, a discovery which would dramatically alter the course of the tribe for the foreseeable future.[4] When the Osage were pressured by the U.S. government into allotting their land under the Dawes Act, they insisted on tribal ownership of oil, gas, and other subsurface minerals. In 1896, the first ten-year lease for drilling was signed, with Osage lands opening up for general bidding after 1916.[5] The ensuing boom period of the 1920s, triggered by increased demand for oil during World War I and the growing popularity of the automobile, created a vast, almost unimaginable wealth for the Osage. At its peak in 1925, each Osage listed on the 1906 tribal roll received $13,200 per quarter, roughly equivalent to $224,000 when adjusted for inflation today. Subsequently, in what local Oklahoman newspapers coined the 'Osage Reign of Terror', the tribe suffered fraud, theft, intermarriage schemes, violence, and murder at the hands of white settlers who sought access to their land, resources, and vast oil wealth. Drawing on Hogan's depiction of this period of Osage history in *Mean Spirit,* Alix Casteel contends that the Osage were shot, blown up, and poisoned in the same manner, and for the same reasons, that the earth was drilled, dynamited, and despoiled for oil.[6] It was initially estimated that around sixty Osages were murdered during the period, but newer research by David Grann estimates the real number may

[4] There are conflicting accounts about who first discovered oil on Osage lands. Osage scholar Jean Dennison attributes the discovery to unnamed settlers in her 2020 paper on accountability in Osage governance, whilst David Grann, in his best-selling 2017 nonfiction *Killers of the Flower Moon: Oil, Money, Murder and the Birth of the FBI,* refers to an unnamed 'Osage Indian [who] had shown John Florer, the owner of the trading post in Gray Horse, a rainbow sheen floating on the surface of a creek in the eastern part of the reservation' (52). According to Grann, the unnamed Osage man 'dabbed his blanket at the spot and squeezed the liquid into a container' and took it to Florer, who recognised what it was and subsequently obtained the first drilling lease on the reservation with his wealthy banking partner friend.

[5] 'Million Dollar Elm', American Oil and Gas Historical Society, no date. Accessed via [https://aoghs.org/petroleum-pioneers/million-dollar-elm/].

[6] Alix Casteel, 'Dark Wealth in Mean Spirit', *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* Series 2, Vol. 6, No. 3, Linda Hogan: Calling Us Home, Fall 1994, 50.

in fact be in the hundreds.[7] Settlers, private industry, and government policy sought to reduce the Osage to another natural resource to be extracted, exploited, and profited from; an attempted reduction of Indigenous people that has been echoed throughout the centuries since initial European contact.[8] An emerging twentieth-century oil industry influenced, and was influenced by, prior decades of conflicting and contradictory U.S. Indian policy making. The industry created and profited from huge power imbalances and struggles between state, federal, and private interests, with the Osage too-often caught in the (literal, at times) crossfire.

There is a growing need for greater understanding of the historical and ongoing relationships between Indigenous communities and the energy industries, especially as public concerns about the climate crisis reach new heights. The Osage 'Reign of Terror'[9] was one of the first and most significant conflicts between an emerging oil industry and an Indigenous community during the early twentieth century. Many Indigenous communities globally have been fighting against the oil industry's collective extraction and pollution of Indigenous lands, water, air, and resources since the industry emerged, and many communities continue that fight across the globe in the present day. But, as this thesis will explore, the history and legacy of oil extraction on Osage lands is complex and multifaceted, resisting attempts to place it within the confines of a perhaps more familiar 'Indigenous peoples vs. extractivism' binary conflict. As Allen Stoekl writes, 'we need to understand, given the centrality of oil, its weird natural/cultural status, what oil has been in history, and what it will be:

[7] In the final chronicle of *Killers of the Flower Moon,* Grann describes how there were countless killings not included in official estimates because they were not investigated or classified as homicides, indicative of widespread murder.
[8] Walter Echo-Hawk and Jack Trope detail settler treatment of Native American remains from European contact to the creation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990. The exploitation of Native remains and non-renewable resources is explored in later chapters.
[9] This term was first coined by local Oklahoman newspapers in the 1920s.

politically, culturally, aesthetically, historically.'[10] The collection of novels that form the primary focus of this thesis can provide us with a political, cultural, historical, aesthetic, and future-facing understanding of oil, particularly in relation to the Osage, but more broadly too.

The 'Reign of Terror' can be placed within a wider historical context of colonial extraction on and of Indigenous lands since European contact. When Columbus first arrived in the Caribbean, he was met by the Arawaks of the Bahama Islands, whom he observed 'would be good servants…I could conquer the whole of them with fifty men and govern them as I pleased.'[11] Since the Arawak people wore small pieces of gold in their ears and noses, Columbus chose to take some of them as prisoners and insisted that they guide him to the source of their gold.[12] After reporting his findings to the Court in Madrid, Columbus set out on his second mission to the islands, where 'the aim was clear: slaves and gold.'[13] The relationship between Indigenous peoples and colonial settlers has been marked by extraction since first contact – evidenced here in both Columbus' desire for gold and his equation of Indigenous peoples' bodies as a resource to be extracted in the same manner.

Broadly, the colonial practice of extracting resources away from Indigenous lands can be traced across the centuries since first contact and still affects many communities in the present day. Lands belonging and proximal to North American Indigenous communities have been extensively mined for metals such as gold, silver,

[10] Allen Stoekl, 'Foreword', *Oil Culture,* ed. Ross Barnett and Daniel Worden, University of Minnesota Press, 2014, xiv.
[11] Paul Halsall Mar, 'Christopher Columbus: Extracts from Journal', *Internet Medieval Sourcebook,* 2020. Accessed via [https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/columbus1.asp].
[12] Howard Zinn, 'Columbus, The Indians, and Human Progress', *History is a Weapon: A People's History of the United States*, 1980, np. Accessed via [http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinncol1.html].
[13] Ibid., np.

lead, copper, molybdenum, and vanadium since the mid-1800s, with uranium becoming more common post-1940.[14] As Lewis *et al.* observe in their 2017 report on mining and environmental health disparities in Native American communities, 'as mineral resources were identified [on reservations], ethical and legal responsibilities set in the treaties were abrogated by the US government to provide access for mining by successively shrinking the area of lands designated to each tribe'. As a prototypical example, they refer to US legislation created in 1919 where 5% of the net value of extracted resources was to be set aside 'for the benefit of the Indians'. In reality, this fund was subject to shadow accounting by mining companies, reducing their overall net value and therefore the amount paid into those accounts set aside.[15] Lewis *et al.* continue to highlight how the legacy of economic disparity as a result of centuries of mining is still being addressed, but not rectified, in the present day:

> …between 2009 and 2016, the US Attorney General and Secretary of the Interior reached settlements with more than 100 tribes totalling $3.3 billion USD for mismanagement of monetary and natural resource assets held in trust by the USA for the benefit of the tribes. These settlements, however, do not come close to addressing the mining legacy. A recent $1 billion USD settlement from Tronox awarded to the Navajo Nation has been estimated sufficient to address remedial action of only ~10% of the 3.6 billion kg of uranium mines on Navajo Nation alone.[16]

[14] Johnnye Lewis, Joseph Hoover, and Debra MacKenzie, 'Mining and Environmental Health Disparities in Native American Communities', *Current Environmental Health Reports*, *Current Environmental Health Reports*, Vol. 4., No. 2, 2017, 131.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

Currently, tribal lands are estimated to include nearly 30 percent of US coal reserves west of the Mississippi, as much as 50 percent of potential uranium reserves, and up to 20 percent of known natural gas and oil reserves, despite tribal lands only encompassing around 5 percent of the nation's total land base.[17] There are also several substantial surface and underground copper mines, and a number of rare earth and other minerals are found and mined on Native American lands, including molybdenum (commonly used in steel alloys), yttrium (used in lasers, superconductors, and microwave filters), and ytterbium (used in infrared lasers and as a chemical reducing agent).[18]

The combination of governmental and corporate interests in controlling, producing, and distributing these resources plays a factor in the continued pattern of what some scholars have referred to as 'internal colonialism' within the United States, Canada, and Mexico.[19] Despite the wealth of land and resources retained by some Indigenous nations, 'North American Indian populations suffer virtually the full range of conditions observable in the most depressed Third World areas', and that 'it has become obvious that social and economic disruption inflicted upon many Indigenous nations results from needs particular to energy corporations.'[20]

Lewis *et al.*'s findings illustrate that alongside social and economic disruption, many Indigenous communities experience significant detriments to their physical health as a result of resource extraction. The authors examine two case studies: gold

[17] Maura Grogan, 'Native American Lands and Natural Resource Development', *Revenue Watch Institute,* 2011, 3.
[18] Ibid., 9.
[19] Ward Churchill and Winona LaDuke, 'Native America: The Political Economy of Radioactive Colonialism', *Critical Issues in Native North America -Volume II*', International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1991, 25.
[20] Ibid., 30.

mining in the Black Hills of the Sioux Nation and uranium mining around lands of the Navajo Nation. Gold mining in the Black Hills in South Dakota began during the Gold Rush of 1874, and since then over $1 billion USD worth of gold has been extracted.[21] High concentrations of arsenic remain in Sioux Nation water supplies, soil, and sediments, affecting lands used for agriculture, ranching, and ceremonial purposes. Lewis *et al.* found that the Cheyenne River Sioux have a higher ANA (antinuclear antibody) prevalence than that found in the US population, likely due to proximity to arsenic deposits as a result of mining, which is linked to a variety of autoimmune diseases. [22]

Uranium mining has had a disproportionate and significant impact on the health of many Indigenous communities. 'Although reservations encompass only 5.6% of land area in the Western USA, approximately one in five uranium mines are located within 10km of a Native American Reservation' and 'more than 75% (more than 3200 of the 4600) within 80km', with Indigenous men historically making up a substantial portion of the underground workforce.[23] For the Navajo Nation, uranium mining has effectively led to the wiping out of a generation of Navajo men, who continue to die from respiratory diseases as a result of exposure. Due to a lack of regulation, security, and proper waste management, Navajo communities continue to be chronically exposed to waste from the 520 abandoned uranium mines, 4 abandoned uranium mills, and more than 1100 waste sites located on and around their lands. The authors find a strong

[21] Lewis *et al.*, 134.
[22] Ibid., 135.
[23] Ibid., 136.

correlation between exposures to uranium waste during the active mining era and later development of kidney disease – with 'exposure more than doubling the odds ratio.'[24]

Whilst the impacts of uranium and gold mining continue to cause significant detriment to the Navajo and Sioux nations, the extractive resource with one of the largest impacts on politics, economics, environmental health around the globe is oil. Though conventional oil production has plateaued in the last decade, it has been replaced not by renewable biofuels or solar power but by 'heavier' tight oils; a market trend heavily influenced by North America as the home of the largest of these unconventional reserves.[25] As Karen Pinkus points out, where academics were previously concerned with what would happen when we reached 'peak oil', we are now facing another (perhaps worse) alternate future: one in which we never run out of oil, due the boom in unconventional oil and gas. Generally, the term 'unconventional' in this context refers to two forms of resource: natural gas, in the form of tight gas sands, coalbed methane, and shale gas, and oil, in the form of oil sands, tight oil, new heavy oils, and oil shale. Unconventional oil and gas are generally located beyond the reach of conventional drilling, requiring more technical, energy-intensive methods of retrieval. In the US, the statutes in place to protect tribal cultural resources (such as traditional ceremonial and burial grounds) against the ever-rising growth of the oil industry are inadequate and often too general. These statutes tend to provide discretion to protect but do not legally require it, creating only temporary barriers to the

[24] Ibid.
[25] Hillary M. Hoffman, 'Fracking the Sacred: Resolving the Tension Between Unconventional Oil and Gas Development and Tribal Cultural Resources', *Denver Law Review,* Vol. 94, No. 2, 2016, 326. Hoffman's article provides more detail on the nature of unconventional resources.

development of unconventional oil and gas in the vicinity of cultural resources.[26] A contemporary example of these legal shortcomings in action is the construction of the Energy Transfer Partners' Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).

In 2016, the world's media began to focus their attention on a growing grassroots resistance camp led by Standing Rock Sioux forming in South Dakota, against the construction of DAPL. The pipeline would carry unconventional oil extracted from the Bakken shale oil fields in North Dakota across four states to an oil tank farm in Illinois. DAPL was planned to run beneath Lake Oahe and the Missouri River, half a mile away from the Standing Rock Sioux Indian Reservation, who rely upon the river as their main source of water. The tribe raised concerns about the potentially devastating consequences of a pipeline leak and the desecration of several sacred sites along its planned route, supported by the fact that the proposed construction was in violation of the 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie Treaties. The tribe's concerns would prove to be legitimate, as it emerged in November 2016 that Energy Transfer Partners had failed to disclose the discovery of at least one sacred site during construction on Lakota treaty land, as per the terms of their permit.[27] In a report submitted to the U.S Army Corps of Engineers, the tribe highlighted concerns over the potential contamination of their clean water supply, as DAPL could spill up to 12,000 barrels of

[26] Ibid., 323. Hoffman levels this claim against the shortcomings of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGRPA).
[27] Chelsey Luger, 'DAPL Desecrated Sacred Sites, Took 10 Days to Tell State, as Human Rights Abuses Continue', *Indian Country Today*, 4th Nov 2016. Accessed via [https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/dapl-desecrated-sacred-sites-took-10-days-to-tell-state-as-human-rights-abuses-continue].

oil per day without triggering the leak detection system.[28] According to *The Intercept,* six months into the operation DAPL had already leaked at least five times.[29]

The tribe's resistance would initially prove successful, as in December 2017 the Obama administration refused to grant an easement for the pipeline to continue construction, citing the need for a more extensive environmental review. Though Donald Trump would sign an executive order allowing construction to proceed in January 2018, the Standing Rock tribe, along with EarthJustice[30], successfully sued the US Army Corps of Engineers over the permits they issued, citing a lack of consideration for tribal concerns and a lack of expert analysis, and a further environmental review was ordered. Although the pipeline remains operational at the time of writing, in 2022 the U.S. supreme court rejected Energy Transfer's appeal to avoid the review, which is currently still pending submission.[31]

A wide range of non-renewable natural resources are present on and around Indigenous lands. The legacy of over a century of extraction is still being felt in the present day, even in places where mining has long ceased. Resource extraction has, and continues to disproportionately affect the social, economic, health, and environmental wellbeing of Indigenous communities across the globe. Global Witness, an international NGO that aims to expose the links between conflict, corruption, and environmental abuse, reported that at least 200 land and environmental defenders

[28] Phil McKenna, 'Standing Rock: Dakota Access Pipeline Leak Technology Can't Detect All Spills', *Inside Climate News*, 9th Mar 2018. Accessed via [https://insideclimatenews.org/news/09032018/dakota-access-oil-pipeline-leak-detection-technology-standing-rock-water-safety-energy-transfer-partner].
[29] Alleen Brown, 'Five Spills, Six Months in Operation: Dakota Access Track Record Highlights Unavoidable Reality – Pipelines Leak', *The Intercept,* 9th Jan 2018. Accessed via [https://theintercept.com/2018/01/09/dakota-access-pipeline-leak-energy-transfer-partners/].
[30] EarthJustice are a non-profit public interest environmental law organisation.
[31] Nina Lakhani, 'US supreme court rejects Dakota Access pipeline appeal', *The Guardian,* Feb 22, 2022. Accessed via [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/feb/22/us-supreme-court-dakota-access-pipeline]

were murdered in 2016 alone, and almost 40% of these victims were Indigenous.[32] The report identifies mining as the most dangerous sector, with 33 defenders killed after having opposed mining and oil projects.[33] Violence enacted in the name of oil against Indigenous communities, lands and those that defend them is not new, and the violence inflicted upon the Osage during the 'Reign of Terror' demonstrates that it has been a feature from the outset.

Oil culture, petro-violence, and necropower

This thesis explores the idea that the formation of oil culture – a necro-powered 'space of death' – in the early twentieth century was and remains inseparable from the 'decrepit, venal, and corrupt' colonial conditions that have been imposed upon Indigenous tribes for centuries.[34] Whether the resource at issue is oil, natural gas, uranium or other minerals, land ownership, social control and all other aggregate components of power are fundamentally interrelated.[35] The intermarriage of land ownership and social control is of particular significance to Indigenous peoples, whose identity, beliefs, and sovereignty are all bound up in access to and the protection of land. Glen Sean Coulthard argues that these components of power 'all interact with one another to form the constellation of power relations that sustain colonial patterns

[32] Global Witness, 'Defenders of the Earth: Global killings of and environmental defenders in 2016', *Global Witness,* 6-7. The report notes that it can be difficult to always identify those responsible but have identified (in order of frequency) paramilitary, police, landowners, private security, poachers, military, settlers, loggers, hired gunmen, and business representatives as responsible in many cases.
[33] Ibid., 7.

[34] Michael Watts, 'Petro-Violence: Community, Extraction, and Political Ecology of Mythic Commodity', *Violent Environments*, Cornell University Press, 2001, 207.
[35] Churchill and LaDuke, 27.

of behaviour, structure, and relationships.'[36] It is under these colonial conditions that oil culture emerges and is sustained.

'Petro-violence' is a defining feature of oil culture for Indigenous communities generally, but specifically, and in particular ways for the Osage, and this is demonstrated in the three primary novels that this thesis explores. Michael Watts coined the term petro-violence, defining this phenomenon as a 'sort of culture of terror and a space of death'.[37] Emerging in North America from a space already formed by a history of colonial violence largely against Indigenous peoples, petro-violence refers to the social relations of petroleum beyond its narrowly-defined biological and geophysical properties.[38] Watts defines the social relations of petroleum in terms of its institutional practices, ideological associations and meanings, forms of extraction, production, and use. Petro-violence falls under the umbrella of what Achille Mbembe calls 'necropower'; a term referring to the various ways in which contemporary power is 'deployed in the interest of the maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds – new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead.'[39] Whilst Mbembe developed the term necropower to refer to the vast colonising capabilities of modern weapons, the term is applicable to my project in a similarly socio-political sense, referring to the dual-pronged attack against the Osage of destructive US government policy fuelled by the growth of the oil industry during the first few decades of the twentieth century. At the same time, I argue, the term can be productively

[36] Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition,* University of Minnesota Press, 2014, 14.
[37] Watts, 207.
[38] Ibid., 189.
[39] Achille Mbembé, 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture,* Duke University Press, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2003, 40.

expanded to refer to oil in a literal sense – oil as a product of millions of years of organic death (necro) and a form of energy (power).

Mbembe asserts that colonial occupation is a form of necropolitics, creating what Watts may call 'a culture of terror and space of death'–whereby the seizing of a physical geographical area rewrites social and spatial relations, leading to 'the production of boundaries and hierarchies, zones and enclaves; the subversion of existing property arrangements; the classification of people according to different categories; resource extraction; and, finally, the manufacturing of a large reservoir of cultural imaginaries.'[40] The Osage Reign of Terror can be read as an era under which U.S. necropolitics formed and flourished, where the forcing of the Dawes Act onto the Osage in 1909 led to 'the production of boundaries and hierarchies' that served colonial interests. The exploitation of Indigenous people under the Dawes Act simultaneously enabled the exploitation of land and resources, a practice which expanded under numerous other policy implementations–including the federal restriction of Osage monetary funds according to their 'full' or 'mixed' blood status, which in turn enabled their further exploitation by those (government, corporate, or settler parties) seeking access to Osage land and resources. This position is explored in later chapters, along with the manufacturing of that 'large reservoir of cultural imaginary' surrounding the mythos of oil as outlined by Mbembe.

Specifically addressing the socio-political qualities of oil, Watts writes that 'power, politics, ruthless exploitation, and thuggery have always been oil's defining characteristics, and imperialism is its defining moment.'[41] The extraction of oil creates

[40] Ibid., 26.
[41] Ibid., 189.

a space of further violence when it is located on lands populated by Indigenous peoples, as it leads inevitably leads to disputes about identity, rights, citizenship, and–crucially–territory.

Scholars of settler-colonialism have contended that defining land as territory is a political distinction, since it is a categorisation that places land under colonial terms of domination; territory is land under jurisdiction of a ruler or state. Patrick Wolfe writes that 'territoriality is settler-colonialism's specific, irreducible element.'[42] Building upon the understanding that settler-colonialism is a discrete form of colonialism which seeks to replace any Indigenous population with a sovereign settler society, Wolfe argues that the settler's primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, etc.) but access to territory.[43] Wolfe grounds this claim by comparing the ways in which the United States, a decidedly settler-colonial state, has historically delineated Black and Indigenous peoples. He argues that whilst Black people's enslavement meant their children were automatically racialised as slaves in order to augment their owners' wealth as per the "one-drop rule", Indigenous people obstructed settlers' access to land and so increasing their population was by contrast considered counterproductive. 'For Indians, in stark contrast, non-Indian ancestry compromised their indigeneity…In this way, the restrictive classification of Indians straightforwardly furthered the logic of elimination'[44] writes Wolfe. He continues,

> Black people were racialized as slaves; slavery constituted their blackness. Correspondingly Indigenous North Americans were not killed, driven away, romanticized, assimilated, fenced in, bred White, and otherwise eliminated as

[42] Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler-colonialism and the elimination of the native', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 2006, 388.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 387-388.

> original owners of the land but as *Indians*. Roger Smith has missed this point in seeking to distinguish between victims murdered for where they are and victims murdered for who they are. So far as Indigenous people are concerned, where they are *is* who they are, and not only by their own reckoning. [45]

The ever-growing global demand for the extraction and distribution of non-renewable natural resources has provided justification for governmental and private interests in the United States to deem it necessary to encroach upon Indigenous territory throughout the centuries. This encroachment is often in direct violation of treaties between the United States and tribes, treaties that were often forced upon tribes who were made to give up some or all of their ancestral lands in exchange for territory elsewhere.

Watts touches on tensions that arise between oil, territory, and the formation of the nation-state when he writes:

> Oil, then, simultaneously elevates and expands the centrality of the nation-state as a vehicle for modernity, progress, civilisation, and at the same time produces conditions that directly challenge and question those very same, and hallowed, tenets of nationalism and development [...] the process of accumulation engendered by oil exploitation through the slick alliances in its various iterations reveals the state and nation to be sham, decrepit, venal, and corrupt notions.[46]

The historical and ongoing struggle of the Sioux Nation to protect their land and water from resource extraction provides an illustrative example of Watts's claim. The Sioux Nation have fought for their land rights in federal court for decades. Despite the terms

[45] Ibid., 388.
[46] Watts, 208.

of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie guaranteeing the Sioux exclusive rights to their lands, 'settlers continued to encroach onto native land and the territory came under United States possession through violence and coercive threats'.[47] In 1980, the United States Supreme Court upheld the Sioux Nation's claim against the United States, rewarding them with $102 million in compensation for illegally seized lands.[48] The Sioux have refused to accept the compensation, which today still sits in a trust account accumulating interest and is now worth over $1 billion. The Sioux Nation's position is that their land was never for sale in the first place, and instead of money they want it returned.[49] Sioux lands under threat from gold mining for over a century remain under threat by the newer mercantile economy of oil, evidenced by ongoing fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Energy and environmental humanities

'Whereas we recognize geologic material practices (oil and mineral extraction) as explicitly tied up in the realm of the political,' writes Kathryn Yusoff, 'the declared innocence of acts of description and their historical inscriptions on bodies and geographies are left unexamined".[50] This is the general task of the environmental humanities. Whilst the discipline is diverse, scholars in the environmental humanities generally propose that environmental dilemmas are fundamentally problems of ethics, habits, imagination, values, institutions, belief, and power – all which are traditional areas of expertise of the humanities. The cross-disciplinary nature of the

[47] Michelle Perez, 'Whose Land is it Anyway?', Inter-American Law Review, University of Miami School of Law, 24th Oct 2016. Accessed via [https://inter-american-law-review.law.miami.edu/land-anyway-dakota-access-pipeline-protests-arent-oil/].
[48] United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians, 448 U.S. 371, 1980. Accessed via [https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/448/371/].
[49] Maria Streshinsky, 'Saying No to $1 Billion', *The Atlantic,* March 2011. Accessed via [https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/03/saying-no-to-1-billion/308380/].
[50] Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None,* University of Minnesota Press, 2018, 81.

environmental humanities is an essential component of study, as whilst it is important that environmental issues traditionally associated with the sciences and social sciences are brought into the humanities, it is equally important that scientists understand the significance of culture, society, and politics in shaping environmental impacts and concerns. The interdisciplinary nature of the environmental humanities breaks down traditional boundaries between academic disciplines, and between academic and applied research. It is therefore poised to work alongside Indigenous studies in its search for new insights into the current ecological climate.

Within the wider field of environmental humanities, there is a rapidly growing subfield known as the energy humanities. Scholars working in the energy humanities seek to respond to growing public concern about anthropogenic climate change and the unsustainability of fossil fuels, by highlighting the strengths of the humanities in an area of analysis often thought best left to the sciences.[51] In 2017, Imre Szeman and Dominic Boyer edited an anthology of the most influential work within energy humanities. As the authors put it in their introduction:

> ...the challenge of addressing global warming isn't fundamentally a scientific or technological one. Environmental scientists have played a crucial role in identifying the causes and consequences of global warming, including projections of what might occur if we fail to keep increases in global temperature to less than 2.0°C, as it appears we are poised to do. However, the next steps in addressing environmental crisis will have to come from the humanities and social sciences – from those disciplines that have long attended

[51] Imre Szeman and Dominic Boyer, *Energy Humanities: An Anthology,* John Hopkins University Press, 2017, 1.

> to the intricacies of social processes, the nature and capacity of political change, and the circulation and organization of symbolic meaning through culture. [52]

Responding to an October 2013 report by the World Energy Council (WEC) that predicts we will be using 60 percent more energy by 2050, Imre and Szeman argue that it is not an exaggeration to ask whether human civilisation has a future. 'Neither technology nor policy can offer a silver-bullet solution to the environmental effects created by an energy-hungry, rapidly modernizing and expanding global population', they write. The humanities' involvement must come 'not as an afterthought to technology and policy, but as a forerunner researching the cultural landscape around us and imagining the future relationship between energy and society that we need to drive forward.'[53]

The ever-pressing threat of climate change provides an increasing urgency for greater contextual study of oil extraction and its relations to societies around the globe. Continuing at our current rate of energy consumption will mean that extreme weather conditions will no longer be a rare unlikelihood for some but an everyday reality across the globe for most.[54] Millions of people will be forced from their homes, unable to live in conditions imposed upon them by climate change, in what will become the biggest migration crisis we have ever known. Asylum applications by the end of the century are predicted to increase, on average, by 28%–an acceleration

[52] Ibid., 3.
[53] Imre Szeman and Dominic Boyer, 'The rise of energy humanities: Breaking the impasse', University Affairs, 12th Feb 2014. Accessed via [https://www.universityaffairs.ca/opinion/in-my-opinion/the-rise-of-energy-humanities/].
[54] There is a plethora of studies to confirm this likelihood. The National Climate Assessment has provided a comprehensive overview of how climate change is affecting and will increasingly affect Americans in particular. National Climate Assessment, 'Full Report', *National Climate Assessment,* 2014. Accessed via [https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report].

attributed to unabated future warming.[55] Cities will disappear under the rising tide of the oceans, with some island nations already on track to disappear forever.[56] Since the severity of the impacts of climate change must not be underestimated, it can no longer be considered solely the concern of scientists. Gregory Cajete (Tewa) recognises the cultural bias inherent in Western science; the insistence 'that science must be objective to qualify as science, that it is culturally neutral and somehow exists outside of culture and is thus not affected by culture.' He continues, 'nothing people do is divorced from culture, including systems of knowledge, technology, and education. Everything is contexted in culture.'[57]

Geoff Colvin posits in *Humans are Underrated* (2015) that empathy is the foundation of all the other abilities that increasingly make people valuable as technology advances.[58] Though his book more generally identifies empathetic human interaction as the high-value work of future society, the point stands in relation to the value of the humanities in exploring topics like resource extraction. Elizabeth Ammons takes up a similar position to Colvin her call-to-arms *Brave New Words: How Literature Will Save the Planet* (2010). She argues that liberal activist writers have always insisted on the truth that progressive change begins in the soul, not just in the mind, and that the humanities provides us with a means to raise often profound and upsetting questions about our relationships with ourselves, each other, and the planet.[59]

---

[55] Anouch Missirian and Wolfram Schlenker, 'Asylum applications respond to temperature fluctuations', *Science.org,* Dec 2017. Accessed via [https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aao0432].
[56] This is proving to be most evident among the islands of the Pacific. Tuvalu has already lost four islands since 2000. Other low-lying areas at significant risk are Papua New Guinea, Palau, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Fiji, the Maldives, and the Seychelles.
[57] Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, Clear Light Publishers, 2000, 3.
[58] Geoff Calvin, *Humans are Underrated: What High Achievers Know That Machines Never Will*, Nicholas Brearley Publishing, 2015, 71.
[59] Elizabeth Ammons, *Brave New Words: How Literature Will Save The Planet,* University of Iowa Press, 2010, 33.

Indigenous literary studies

Often, critical material focusing on the experiences, stories, and histories of Indigenous peoples have been confined within the relatively small discipline of Indigenous studies. In many universities, Indigenous studies is placed under the umbrella of postcolonial studies, much to the chagrin of some Indigenous scholars. Chadwick Allen writes 'Indigenous minority discourses pose a problem for those postcolonial theories that designate "essentialism," "nativism," "nationalism," and so forth as anachronistic politics, because Indigenous minority discourses often emphasize land and treaty rights'.[60] Jace Weaver *et al.* contend that postcolonial preference for hybridity and fragmentation can threaten Indigenous studies, since 'For Europeans or Amer-Europeans to hybridize with Natives is to become more American, more indigenized. For Natives, it seems, it is to become less Native.'[61] Keeping Indigenous studies as a distinct and separate academic category can allow Indigenous nationalism to flourish and protect Indigenous intellectual sovereignty.

Over the past decade or so in Indigenous studies there has been a growing body of work that broadly aims to cast Indigenous perspectives into the centre in order to reposition and transform canonical 'Western' theory. In 2012, Chadwick Allen published *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies*, seeking to compare a diverse array of Indigenous texts from around the world through a global perspective of self-representation and agency. In 2015, the University of Alberta hosted a symposium titled 'Indigenous Foucault', which explored ideas surrounding Indigenous sovereignty, power, and identity alongside Foucauldian theory. One of the

[60] Chadwick Allen, *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts*, Duke University Press, 2002, 30.
[61] Jace Weaver, Craig S. Womack, Robert Warrior, 'Splitting the Earth: First Utterances and Pluralist Separatism', *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, University Of New Mexico Press, 2006, 28.

speakers, Glen Sean Coulthard, published *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* a year before the symposium, in which he draws theories from Marx, Fanon, and Foucault together with Indigenous anticolonialism, creating an intersectional refocusing of capitalism and a deconstruction of Indigenous recognition and reconciliation.

Métis scholar Chris Andersen has argued that instead of conceptualising of Indigenous studies as a discipline marked by difference, it should instead be understood as conceptually dense.[62] Andersen has responded to two articles by Duane Champagne, in which Champagne argues that 'Western' academic disciplines had failed to consider the active role that Indigenous communities occupy in colonial contexts and as such fail to effectively analyse contemporary Indigeneity.[63] Champagne contends that '[t]he heavy reliance on multidisciplinary approaches to American Indian studies…tends to inhibit development and support for an American Indian studies disciplinary approach or approaches.'[64] For Champagne, Indigenous studies should be focussed on issues of self-government, land stewardship, and cultural continuity, which is achieved by works that 'examine individual and community case studies, compare national policies, and delve into other issues of interest to indigenous communities and then nation-states with which they are engaged.'[65] In response, Andersen contends that Champagne's approach places unnecessary limits on the scope of Indigenous studies that 'capture only specific,

[62] Chris Andersen, 'Critical Indigenous Studies: From Difference to Density', *Cultural Studies Review,* Vol. 15, No. 2, 2009, 81.
[63] Duane Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method in American Indian Studies', *American Indian Quarterly,* 2017 and 'The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies in the United States', *American Indian Nations: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, ed. George Horse Capture, Duane Champagne, and Chandler Jackson, 2007.
[64] Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method in American Indian Studies', *American Indian Quarterly,* Vol. 31, No. 3, 2017, 356.
[65] Ibid., 371.

isolated elements on our complexity.'[66] For Anderson, interdisciplinarity is a vital component of Indigenous studies' density, since 'Indigenous studies' study of both Indigeneity and whiteness must use *all* available epistemologies, not just those which apparently distance Western disciplines from Indigenous studies analysis.'[67]

Indigenous literatures can provide a means to understand and dissect colonial patterns of power and control. Indigenous thinkers and writers have emphasised the power of storytelling for centuries and this significance is central to many Indigenous cultures. Daniel Heath Justice writes in *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter* (2018),

> There are many stories about Indigenous people alive in the world today. Some of these stories are our own. They give shape, substance, and purpose to our existence and help us understand how to uphold our responsibilities to one another and the rest of creation, especially in places and times so deeply affected by colonial fragmentation. Sometimes they're in our Indigenous mother tongues; sometimes they're in English, or Spanish, or French, or other colonial languages. But they're still our good stories – not always happy, not always gentle, but good ones nonetheless, because they tell the truths of our presence in the world today, in the days past, and in days to come.[68]

This thesis aligns with Justice's assertions to make the case that the three Indigenous novels at its core aid a deeper understanding of the 'truths' of oil culture for the Osage and extend the work of the environmental humanities. Justice adds that literature should be defined as 'more than singular – rightly, I should always be using the plural "literatures," as these texts and traditions are far too diverse and multifaceted to

[66] Andersen, 82.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Daniel Heath Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter,* Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018, 2.

neatly fit the presumptions behind the idea of the monolithic category of "literature"'; a thoughtful position which is reflected in the title of this thesis. [69]

For Gerald Vizenor, Indigenous literatures are a vehicle for the creation of new stories of Indigenous survivance that resist colonial dominance. Whilst survivance is 'imprecise by definition', it is nevertheless 'unmistakable in native stories...and is clearly observable in narrative resistance and personal attributes, such as the native humanistic tease, vital irony, spirit, cast of mind, and moral courage. The character of survivance creates a sense of native presence over absence, nihility and victimry.'[70] In *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (1994), Vizenor writes:

> Manifest Destiny would cause the death of millions of tribal people from massacres, diseases, and the loneliness of reservations. Entire cultures have been terminated in the course of nationalism. These histories are now the simulations of dominance, and the causes of the conditions that have become manifest manners in literature. The postindian simulations are the core of survivance, the new stories of tribal courage. The simulations of manifest manners are the continuance of the surveillance and domination of the tribes in literature. Simulations are the absence of the tribal real; the postindian conversions are in the new stories of survivance over dominance. The natural reason of the tribes anteceded by thousands of generations the invention of the Indian. The postindian ousts the inventions with humour, new stories, and the simulations of survivance.[71]

[69] Ibid., 23.
[70] Gerald Vizenor, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Prescence*, University of Nebraska Press, 2008, 1.
[71] Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*, University of Nebraska Press, 1994, 4-5.

Two questions arise: what simulations of dominance have provided the groundwork that has allowed and encouraged capitalism and colonialism to flourish, and by extension oil culture? Potawatomi Nation scientist and author Robin Wall Kimmerer explores the answers to these questions in her 2013 publication, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Kimmerer weaves together 'a braid of stories meant to heal our relationship with the world', a braid woven from 'Indigenous ways of knowing, scientific knowledge, and the story of an Anishinabekwe scientist'.[72] She opens the text with an illuminating passage comparing the creation stories of Skywoman and the biblical Eve, highlighting the contrast between Anishinaabe and Christian understandings of the world and the place of humanity within it:

> On one side of the world were people whose relationship with the living world was shaped by Skywoman, who created a garden for the well-being of all. On the other side was another woman with a garden and a tree. But for tasting its fruit, she was banished from the garden and the gates clanged shut behind her. [...] In order to eat, she was instructed to subdue the wilderness into which she was cast.'
>
> 'Same species, same earth, different stories. Like Creation stories everywhere, cosmologies are a source of identity and orientation to the world. They tell us who we are. We are inevitably shaped by them no matter how distant they may be from our consciousness. One story leads to the generous embrace of the living world, the other to banishment. One woman is our ancestral gardener, a

[72] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants,* Milkweed Editions, 2015, x.

> cocreator of the good green world that would be the home of her descendants. The other was an exile, just passing through an alien world on a rough road to her real home in heaven.[73]

Kimmerer draws attention to the morals that underpin Christian tradition through a close reading of Genesis; a story that has been passed down by hundreds of generations over thousands of years.[74] Genesis teaches that there is a natural hierarchy of beings, and humans sit at the top – 'the pinnacle of evolution, the darling of Creation'[75]–and we must make nature subservient to our will. 'Look at the legacy of poor Eve's exile from Eden: the land shows the bruises of an abusive relationship' writes Kimmerer. 'It's not just the land that is broken, but more importantly, our relationship to land.'[76] The story of Skywoman, on the other hand, demonstrates Anishinaabe ways of knowing, of belonging to, learning from and being responsible for the earth. 'Children hearing the Skywoman story from birth know in their bones the responsibility that flows between humans and the earth'… 'We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn.'[77]

Osage historian and author John Joseph Mathews, whose novel *Sundown* (1934) is the focus of Chapter 1, details the Osage creation story at the opening of his 848-page history, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters* (1961). Mathews begins by describing the Osage River and the surrounding hills, detailing how they came to be during the Ice Age and how the area transformed in the warmer centuries to follow; descriptions which are richly loaded with the various flora and fauna that inhabited the

[73] Ibid., 7.
[74] Genesis is thought to date back to 5-6th century BC, but this is contested and often considered controversial.
[75] Kimmerer, 9.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 5.

land, waters, and sky. On the arrival of the Children of the Middle Waters, ancestors of Osage, Mathews writes:

> [The Children of the Middle Waters] gave all these animals and birds and insects names because they would use them as symbols, and transmute their special powers through the agency of prayer-song, and use them vicariously, making them a part of their own bodies and spirit, even charging them with their dreams and fears and their urges, so that the symbols might give back to them that with which they had been charged.[78]
>
> [...]
>
> They were pure and clean and noble because they had just come from the stars, from among the stars, say the holy men. They were all *Tzi-Sho* then; all Sky People, but when they descended to earth, the Sacred One, they found her divided into land and water, over which the Great Mysteries chose to send the wind howling like wolves...[79]

Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete, in his 2000 publication *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* proposes that 'Native science is born of a lived and stored participation with the natural world. To gain a sense of Native science one must *participate* with the natural landscape.'[80] 'It is the depth of our ancient human participation with nature that has been lost and indeed must be regained in some substantial form in modern life and modern science.'[81] In the foreword to *Native Science*, Blackfoot scholar Leroy Little Bear asserts that 'The Native American

[78] Mathews, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters,* 7.
[79] Ibid., 8.
[80] Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence,* Clear Light Publishers, 2000, 2.
[81] Ibid., 5.

paradigm is comprised of and includes ideas of constant motion and flux, existence consisting of energy waves, interrelationships, all things being animate, space/place, renewal, and all things imbued with spirit'.[82] As we have seen with Kimmerer and Mathews, this is evident in both Anishinaabe and Osage creation stories. 'All of this happens on the Earth', writes Little Bear, 'hence, the sacredness of the Earth in the Native American mind.'[83]

The exploration of interrelationships form a methodology of entanglement in Osage scholar Jean Dennison's 2012 publication, *Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First-Century Osage Nation*, from which this thesis draws. Dennison attributes her use of entanglement to both academic (via the work of Achille Mbembe, whose work similarly features in Chapter 2 of this thesis) and Osage sources. On the connections between entanglement and the Osage specifically, Dennison writes:

> For their part the Osage and all American Indian nations have long understood the colonial process as at once devastating and full of potential. Osage ribbon work, born out of eighteenth-century trade with the French, is perhaps the ideal metaphor of colonial entanglement. Using the raw material and tools obtained from the French, Osage artists began by tearing the rayon taffeta into strips and then cutting, folding, and sewing it back together to form something both beautiful and uniquely Osage. In picking up the pieces, both those shattered by and created through the colonial process, and weaving them into their own original patterns, Osage artists formed the tangled pieces of colonialism into their own statements

[82] Leroy Little Bear, 'Foreword', *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, x.
[83] Ibid., xi.

> of Osage sovereignty. Osage ribbon work reminds us that it is possible to create new and powerful forms out of an ongoing colonial process.[84]

Osage ribbon work is a form of literature, since for Justice, Indigenous literatures 'include a wide array of other kinds of texts, such as cane baskets, wampum belts, birchbark scrolls, gourd masks, sand paintings, rock art, carved and painted cedar poles, stones and whale bones, culturally modified trees, and so on.' Acknowledging this position may be controversial to some, for Justice 'it doesn't seem like much of stretch to think of our literary traditions and being broadly inclusive of all the ways we embody our stories in the world.'[85] Using Justice's definition, the novels written by twentieth century Osage authors that form much of the focus of this thesis may be considered an extension of an Osage literary tradition that dates back centuries. Dennison's notion of entanglement in the context of oil and its extraction is explored to similar effect across subsequent chapters in order to highlight how the nature of the Osage-oil relationship is complex, embedded in a colonial context that is at once productive and destructive.

It is of no small significance that John Joseph Mathews himself participated in and later reflected on the adoption of the written word as a vehicle for new forms of storytelling for the Osage. Mathews' *Sundown* has been recognised as 'one of the first *modern* Native American novels – that is, novels meditating on specific forms of new Native American modernity, enacted by increasing Native American engagement with the new forms of liberal governmentality, wage labor, and capitalist development.'[86]

---

[84] Jean Dennison, *Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First-Century Osage Nation*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2012, 15-16.
[85] Justice, 22-23.
[86] Benjamin Balthaser, 'Native American Literature in the 1930s', *The Cambridge History of American Literature,* Cambridge University Press, 2020, 153.

Benjamin Balthasar has argued that, alongside D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded* (1936), *Sundown* was a prominent novel of the era, during a time when the broader literary field of Indigenous representation changed from settler simulations of the noble or dirty savage to 'being the first victims – and partisans against – global capitalism and fascism.'[87] Mathews' *Sundown* and McNickle's *The Surrounded* 'wrestled with the complex and often contradictory meanings of these new political and literary forms of modernity.'[88]

Almost thirty years after the publication of *Sundown,* Mathews published *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters*. In the foreword, Mathews reflects on his pivotal role in continuing and preserving tribal history:

> The idea of a book came to me when I noted that the old men talked more eagerly and with more patience to me than they ever had before. It couldn't have been deference to my age, since I was still a young man. Then I suddenly realized that they were worried; they were worried about the disruption of their father-to-son history. They were worried about the end of their own gentile and tribal importance, and that the sheet water of oblivion might wash their moccasin prints from the earth. Their only chance now of immortality was to live in the word symbols of the Heavy Eyebrows, the white man. So they talked eagerly, with precision and with meticulous care, preserving the sanctity of every word that had been handed down to them from their fathers.[89]

As a result of this experience, Mathews describes how he 'almost at once' became aware of the importance of oral history, since this 'history was a part of them, of the

[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Mathews, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters,* x.

informants and the tribe, and they could not be detached from their narrative as were literate Europeans detached from their written narratives.'[90] Mathews' position that the Osage cannot be detached from their written narratives is an evocative one that is explored multiple times across this thesis in the context of the three novels at its core.

Since the three novels placed at the centre of this thesis are all written by Indigenous authors, a methodology that adheres to Indigenous wisdom and (re)places land at the centre must also be pursued in order to proceed meaningfully. Glen Sean Coulthard's 'grounded normativity' from his 2014 publication *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition,* provides the broad conceptual Indigenous methodological framework that provides the backbone to the various avenues of inquiry across the subsequent chapters of this thesis. In defining grounded normativity, Coulthard writes:

> Stated bluntly, the theory and practice of Indigenous anticolonialism, including Indigenous anticapitalism, is best understood as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around *the question of land*– a struggle not only *for* land in the material sense, but also deeply *informed* by what the land *as system of reciprocal relations and obligations* can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms–and less around our emergent status as "rightless proletarians." I call this place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice *grounded normativity*, by which I mean the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge

[90] Ibid.

> that inform and structure our ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time.[91]

The nondominating and nonexploitative framework of grounded normativity is markedly and diametrically in opposition to colonial notions of domination and hierarchy. This ethos is fundamentally required both within and beyond this thesis, in order to provide an all-encompassing radical shift which will enable conceptual alternatives outside of colonial modes of thought.

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson expands upon grounded normativity as a methodology in her 2017 text, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. Simpsons combines grounded normativity with Nishaabeg principles to create distinctions between extraction and abstraction in an Indigenous context:

> *Abstraction* is also a grounding principle in Nishnaabeg aesthetics. Again, I think Western thinkers get this confused with extraction. Indigenous abstraction is different because it comes from our grounded normativity. Extraction is a cornerstone of capitalism, colonialism, and settler colonialism. It's stealing. It's taking something, whether it's a process, an object, a gift, or a person, out of the relationships that give it meaning, and placing it in a nonrelational context for the purposes of accumulation. Abstraction within the context of grounded normativity is shifting the relationality to change meaning or to illuminate a different meaning.[92]

[91] Coulthard, 13.
[92] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance,* University of Minnesota Press, 2017

Simpson's notion of extraction versus abstraction is a pertinent one to consider in the context of the Osage. As the following chapters will demonstrate, the history and legacy of extraction and varying ways this is depicted across *Sundown, Mean Spirit,* and *A Pipe For February* demonstrates a shifting relationality to extraction itself, illuminating the vexed, ambivalent, and at times contradictory relationship between Osages and oil.

Lisa Udel argues that the writing of some Indigenous women, such as Winona LaDuke and Linda Hogan (whose 1990 novel *Mean Spirit* is the primary focus of Chapter 2) is explicitly reformative, hoping to produce an educated reader and activist.[93] Udel's choice of the term 'reform' is particularly instructive here, since its definition is dual-pronged. 'Reform' means to make changes (in something, especially an institution or practice) in order to *improve* it, whilst simultaneously causing that thing, or person(s), 'to relinquish an immoral, criminal, or self-destructive lifestyle.'[94] Such a position is complicated in the context of the Osage and oil extraction; complications which are explored as entanglements across the following chapters of this thesis.

Udel suggests that literature performs the vital communicative function of telling a story that must be told, which is essential in a Native context:

> ...the story must be told in order to retrieve lost histories and maintain Native identity. The failure to know or learn such stories has allowed non-Native

[93] Lisa J. Udel, 'Revising Strategies: The Intersection of Literature and Activism in Contemporary Native Women's Writing', University of Nebraska Press: *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* Series 2, Vol. 19, No. 2, Summer 2007, 63.
[94] 'Reform', Oxford Dictionaries, nd. Accessed via [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/reform].

> intellectuals to ignore how history continues to inform the present story for Native writers and thinkers.[95]

Mathews' *Sundown*, Hogan's *Mean Spirit*, and Red Corn's *A Pipe for February* are three pieces of Indigenous fiction that together communicate different versions of the same story – the Osage Reign of Terror – in order to retrieve lost histories, maintain and explore identity, and reform readers by demonstrating the significance of this story in the present day. These three novels represent both the historical and ongoing relationship between the Osage, the oil industry, oil culture on the reservation, and the impacts of oil extraction on and around Osage land. Crucially, and despite the varying degrees of violence represented in each version of the history, these three novels move away from depicting the Osage as exploited victims, instead illustrating the strength of familial tribal bonds and resistance to colonial dominance. The three novels demonstrate the importance of Indigenous voices in storytelling by and about Indigenous peoples and their history, an aspect which has only become more pertinent as the story of the Osage Reign of Terror will soon be brought to the forefront of mainstream cinema with the pending release of Martin Scorsese's multimillion-dollar film, *Killers of the Flower Moon* (due 2023).

For Mathews, who published *Sundown* less than a decade after the Osage Reign of Terror ended, the emerging entanglements that come to characterise the relationship between the Osage and their oil over the next century lend themselves to a crisis in telling, personified through Mathews' protagonist, Chal. Though there exists a crisis in telling within Chal's narrative, Mathews is nonetheless explicit in his presentation of the environmental destruction and settler exploitation enabled by oil

[95] Udel, 73.

extraction toward Osage life and land. The experiences of destruction, exploitation and violence that comprise threads in the weave of Osage history during this period are later magnified by Hogan in *Mean Spirit*, who presents a version of events that is distinctly more 'anti-oil' than Mathews or Red Corn, perhaps due to her relative distance from the benefits that oil has brought the Osage as a non-Osage writer. Yet, there simultaneously exists a deep ambivalence in *Sundown* toward oil extraction, complicated by the many benefits that oil wealth brings to the Osage community. Such entanglements inherent in the Osage-oil relationship are furthered by Red Corn in *A Pipe for February*, a novel which is deserving of and sorely lacking in secondary academic engagement, and thus receives a diptych of two dedicated chapters of analysis in this thesis. In *A Pipe for February,* Red Corn demonstrates the vexed status of oil in Osage history and how that vexation continues to occupy Osage writers in the twenty-first century.

Across the following chapters, Mathews, Hogan, and Red Corn are brought into conversation with the work of other scholars across the fields of Indigenous studies and the environmental humanities to produce a series of interventions on the nature of oil itself, as well as the need to explore the amalgam and occasionally ambivalent relations oil and its extraction invokes. The narration in Mathews' *Sundown* is rich with the real-life history of the Osage, which is explored in Chapter 1 alongside texts by other Osage, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous historians such as Robert Warrior (Osage), Carter Revard (Osage), Roger Hall Lloyd, and Mathews' other publications, in order to provide crucial context for understanding the sociopolitical position of the Osage leading up to the events of the Reign of Terror. Subsequently drawing upon the work of two scholars across the disciplines of Indigenous studies and the energy

humanities, Mark Rifkin and Ross Barrett, I produce a new way of reading *Sundown* in relation to oil and time. Mark Rifkin's notion that *Sundown* juxtaposes three modes of time is built upon to propose that a fourth mode of time exists in the novel; oleaginous time, a purposefully slippery and constructed mode of settler-time affected onto Osage lands. Chal's experiences living simultaneously within or, at points, between these modes of time demonstrate the complex relationship between oleaginous time and the Osage when existing contemporaneously.

Drawing inspiration from the structure of a recent co-publication in the environmental humanities, *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (2017), Chapter 2 explores the presence of ghosts and monsters in Hogan's *Mean Spirit,* a novel situated in a time and place on the Osage reservation where oil-induced environmental destruction was finding its first foothold across the globe. The ghostly figure that occupies *Mean Spirit* is John Stink, based on real-life Osage man Ho-tah-moie, whilst the monstrous presence in the novel is the vampiric nature of oil culture and extraction itself. Mbembe's work on necropolitics and necropower is brought to the forefront in this chapter, as it has particular resonance for Hogan's literary representation of 1920s Osage County. The colonial imposition of Mbembe's 'death-worlds' are created by oil as a form of necropower; a death-world inhabited by those confined within the status of the *living-dead* such as John Stink.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on *A Pipe for February*, forming a literary-critical diptych; though each chapter stands independently, they are intended to be read as a pair, in conversation with one another. A diptych is typically understood as a painting or carving presented across two panels, traditionally connected by a hinge whereby the

two panels can be folded.[96] The panels of a diptych are usually different but related, forming a complementary pair often intended to articulate a meaning or message when viewed together. A famous example from classical art is Jean Gossaert's *Diptych of Jean Carondelet* (1517), which features Dutch cleric Jean Carondelet on the left panel and the Virgin and Child on the right. On the diptych's reverse is Cardonelet's coat of arms on the left panel and a skull with a dislocated jaw on the right. The diptych is interpreted to be Gossaert's 'mediation on the human condition and the inevitability of death, however rich and powerful the individual may be.'[97] In modern art, Andy Warhol's *Marilyn Diptych* (1962) is composed of two contrasting panels displayed side-by-side, one in full colour and the other in increasingly fading monotone, suggesting discrepancy between Marilyn Monroe's public and private lives.[98] The form has been used in academic criticism by Serenella Iovino and Serpil Opperman in their 2012 theorisation of material ecocriticism in order to interrogate two converging modes of inquiry (that of new materialist theories and of ecological postmodernism) within the discipline. 'Moving from different standpoints and experiences,' write Iovino and Opperman, the diptych form is used to 'tell a conceptual story about a newly explored territory: one where material realities merge into discursive dynamics tracing the signs of new configurations much like two hinged panels or an opening book'.[99]

The diptych form of Chapters 3 and 4 reflect the artistic preoccupations of both the author and protagonist of *A Pipe for February*. Questions surrounding artistic endeavour, of content and form–who gets to tell a story and how–preoccupy both Red

[96] 'Diptych' comes from the Greek root *'dis'* (two) and *'ptykhe'* (fold).
[97] Kazerouni Guillaume, 'Diptych of Jean Carondelet', *Louvre.fr,* nd. Accessed via [https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/diptych-jean-carondelet].
[98] 'Andy Warhol Marilyn Diptych 1962', *Tate.org.uk,* nd. Accessed via [https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/warhol-marilyn-diptych-t03093].
[99] Serenella Iovino and Serpil Opperman, 'Theorizing Material Ecocriticism: A Diptych', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, Vol. 19, No.3, 2012, 448.

Corn's protagonist, a frustrated painter continually musing on his next subject matter, and Red Corn himself as an author writing about the Reign of Terror, since the precise nature of the legacy of this era remains elusive. As Jim Gray notes, 'the story we often hear is one other people have told about us, but rarely is it one we tell ourselves.'[100]

Moreover, dedicating two chapters to *A Pipe For February*, as opposed to the one each allocated for *Sundown* and *Mean Spirit*, also allows for greater room to fully explore an underappreciated novel that sorely lacks secondary academic critique. At the time of writing, *A Pipe for February* has only been engaged briefly or in passing in published academic critique in the two decades since its release, despite Jace Weaver (Cherokee) commenting in 2007 that the novel stands out as a 'wellspring' of creative output for Native American Studies. [101] By contrast to *Mean Spirit,* Red Corn's *A Pipe for February* is primarily concerned with domestic and communal spaces, detailing the daily comings and goings for its central characters whilst the Reign of Terror is situated in the background. In doing so, Red Corn creates multiple conceptual spaces in the novel for the reader to learn about and/or revise Osage ways of being and knowing in the world. Chapter 3 argues that *A Pipe for February* equally allows the reader to better understand oil as a social relation by focusing on how larger machinations of an emerging petrocapitalist settler state play out in the domestic 'everyday'. Alexandra

[100] Jim Gray, 'Reclaiming the legacy of the Osage murders is still elusive to this Osage', *Indian Country Today,* September 13, 2019. Accessed via [https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/opinion/reclaiming-the-legacy-of-the-osage-murders-story-is-still-elusive-to-this-osage-NoS2cihSfki3sL4Wjb3M6A/].

[101] Jace Weaver, 'More Light Than Heat: The Current State of Native American Studies', *American Indian Quarterly,* Vol. 31, No. 2, 2007, 247. At the time of writing, the novel has been addressed briefly by George 'Tink' Tinker in a 2004 paper on Indians, rocks, and consciousness, and later more substantially by Dean Rader in *Engaged Resistance* (2011). It is mentioned in passing in 2017 and 2018 papers by energy humanists Graeme MacDonald and Maximilian Feldner respectively as a petrocritical novel of dispossession. The novel had limited reviews, namely by Robert L. Berner in 2003 for *World Literature Today,* and more substantially by Barbara K. Robins in 2004 for *Studies in American Indian Literatures*. There may be other instances where the novel has been addressed in an academic context but if so, they were elusive.

Harmon has noted that studies of the 'Roaring Twenties' featuring Osage experiences are 'virtually nonexistent'[102], despite the highly public visibility of their wealth. Using *A Pipe for February* as a framework, Red Corn is positioned in Chapter 4 as Harmon's missing link; an economic theorist who provides an Osage perspective on twentieth century white economics *and* an Osage perspective on Osage economics during the same period, both perspectives crucial in aiding greater understanding of the formation and enduring nature of the Osages' relationship with oil in the present day. Taken together, these chapters demonstrate the vexed status of oil in Osage history, a vexation that continues to occupy Osage writers such as Red Corn a century later.

Within this thesis, I analyse the varying depictions of extraction in *Sundown, Mean Spirit,* and *A Pipe for February* and draw together my explorations of oil culture and its effects on land, politics, and culture in order to investigate and demonstrate the entangled nature of the Osage relationship to oil.

[102] Alexandra Harmon, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in America*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2010, 182.

CHAPTER 1

JOHN JOSEPH MATHEWS' *SUNDOWN* (1934)

'Land and communal wealth did not compensate for the disruption of the tribal organisation and the god-concept that was part of every man, woman and child.'[103]

...

John Joseph Mathews' *Sundown* (1934) is a semi-autobiographical novel tied to Mathews' own experiences on the Osage reservation and beyond as a young man in the early twentieth century.[104] His first and only work of fiction, *Sundown* was Mathews' second publication after his history, *Wah'Kon-Tah: The Osage and the White Man's Road* (1929) cementing a then-nascent trend whereby the majority of Mathews' published works were connected to Osage histories and stories. *Sundown* is structured around three key acts which can be characterised as 'life in the nation' (chapters I-VI); 'searching for purpose' (chapters VII-XII); and 'returning to Kihekah' (chapters – XIII-XVI). Since the novel is rich in historical context, I mobilise Mathews' historical and fictional works in this chapter, alongside secondary historical accounts, to provide an overview of key aspects of U.S. policy regarding Indigenous peoples, including the establishment of residential schools and the effects of the Dawes Act, as well as an in-depth outline of Osage socio-political history in the years leading up to and during the Reign of Terror. I then build on this history to offer my reading of the novel. Via a sustained intertextual reading of *Sundown* and Niehaus's *The Driller*, I examine the operations of what I call 'oleaginous time' in Mathews' novel.

---

[103] John Joseph Mathews, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters*, 740.
[104] John Joseph Mathews, *Sundown*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1988 (first published 1934). All references to *Sundown* in this chapter are from this edition and featured parenthetically within the text.

I propose that Mathews' complex interweaving of historical context and trauma within the text demonstrates that *Sundown* is simultaneously a novel about a historical crisis and a crisis in telling history. The history that the novel engages is the story of the discovery of oil and its consequences for the Osage nation. And yet, this history is not told in a straightforward, recuperative manner. The tumultuous and violent changes wrought by the settler colonialism of the early twentieth century leads to a personal crisis in belief and faith within Mathews' protagonist, Challenge (Chal). As a result, Chal distances himself from his community and thus cannot recognise their history and stories, which in turn creates a rupture in his narrative and a crisis of expression.

Sundown is a novel anchored around the Reign of Terror, but in a way that is different to Hogan's *Mean Spirit* (1990) and Red Corn's *A Pipe for February* (2002). Whereas the violence of the Reign of Terror is foregrounded in Hogan and backgrounded in Red Corn, in *Sundown* it is largely absented. Mathews' protagonist Challenge (Chal) leaves the Osage reservation for some years as a young adult, attending university before enlisting in the United States air force during WWI. His absence means that he is not present when the violent events that come to characterise the Reign of Terror occur. When he returns to his birthplace after the death of his father, Chal notices the tumultuous changes that the town has undergone as a result of the oil boom, but he is largely a distant, disconnected, and discontent observer.

Chal remains at the periphery of the telling of this history, privy to threads and rumours regarding the violent deaths suffered by members of his tribe, and at times even dismissive of their veracity. Though this means Chal's status as a victim of the Reign of Terror may be debatable, Chal's narrative nonetheless is written through, and

as a result of, trauma, his ruptured sense of identity and continual crisis of belief, both internal and external, contribute to his telling of a traumatic history that is at once intensely personal for and communally shared by the Osage characters in the novel. Chal's traumatic repression becomes a filter through which he, and we as the reader, indirectly experience the events of the Reign of Terror. I argue that Chal's fundamental inability to adequately express himself, to which Mathews returns to throughout the novel, is an iteration of what Cathy Caruth terms as trauma's 'complex relation between knowing and not knowing'.[105] This knowing/not-knowing is a narratological performance of the ambivalent relation to oil wealth as a source of prosperity and violence as depicted in the novel.

Ancestral lands

According to Osage scholar Robert Warrior, up until the end of the nineteenth century and for the most part of each year, the Osage lived prosperously in the fertile mountain regions south of the Missouri River, in an area of land referred to today as the Ozarks, where they tended to abundant gardens and hunted small game.[106] In the summer and autumn, the Osage would leave the mountain region for their biannual buffalo hunts on the prairies of what is now Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado.[107] Warrior indicates that the history of Osage linguistic relations with other neighbouring tribes suggests that the people may have once come from somewhere further to the east. As Mathews details in his expansive history, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters* (1981), the Osage are children of the sky, 'from among and of the stars,' who

[105] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, John Hopkins University Press, 2007, 3.
[106] Robert Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction*, University of Minnesota Press, 2005, 59.
[107] Ibid.

divided into three groups: the People of the Water, the People of the Land, and the people of the Sky.[108] The three Peoples encountered the Isolated Earth People, a fourth group living in disarray in an earthly village.

> The three groups from the stars invited the fourth group to join them in finding a new way to live together and organize themselves. This invitation to "move to a new country," as it is figured in the story, was geographical, philosophical, and spiritual. And each time the Osages made a major change in their social structure, this was the phrase that marked the occasion.[109]

Historian Garrick Bailey writes that '[t]he basic religious practices, ideas, and concepts of the traditional Osages were derived from those of earlier "Mississippian peoples"; the horticultural peoples of the Mississippi Valley and adjacent regions who, in the centuries prior to European contact, had constructed the great mound complexes at Cahokia, Aztalan, and elsewhere.'[110]

The Osage first encountered Europeans in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Mathews provides an account of this encounter in *The Osages:*

> On this certain day, the history thereof garbled in tribal memory, two pale men came up the river with two of the *Ni-Sho-Dse* warriors. They had hair on the backs of their hands and on their faces, and hair glistened in the sun as it showed itself from the V of their Algonkian buckskin shirts. Their eyes and their

[108] Mathews, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters*, 9-10.
[109] Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction*, 60.
[110] Garrick Alan Bailey, *The Osage and the Invisible World: From the Works of Francis La Flesche*, University of Oklahoma Press, revised ed., 1999, 3.

> mouths were almost hidden by hair. Their mouths were like the den of an old, bank beaver overhung by rootlets.[111]

The Osage named the Europeans *I'n-Shta-Heh,* or Heavy Eyebrows, in reference to the strangeness of their heavy hair. Mathews notes that the name 'had no dignity and was a name both personal and quite informal. One could not possibly attach dignity to it.'[112] Mathews further notes that the Heavy Eyebrows' odour, 'of dried sweat and armpit,' became a 'tribal memory', and that the People noticed the distasteful manner in which they 'flashed their eyes everywhere and let them rest for long moments on the women and girls.'[113]

As Warrior writes, from that first encounter in the seventeenth century, 'the Osages would experience successive waves of pressure on their domain' from French and Spanish settlers, but 'the lifestyle of the tribe changed little.'[114] The Osage would initially prosper from the increased colonial presence due to their geographic advantage in bordering three major rivers that accessed Spanish, French, and English territories. The eighteenth century would bring the arrival of Americans, 'people who looked at the land of the Osages as ripe for settlement.'[115] The Osage entered into a quarter century of treaty-making with the Americans, made in good faith by Osages wanting to control their borders against the influx of American settlers and other Indigenous groups who had been forced out of their homelands by these settlers and subsequently pushed west. By 1825, the Osage had been driven from the Ozarks and onto the plains and had ceded over forty-five million acres of land to the United States.

---

[111] Mathews, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters*, 98.
[112] Ibid., 100.
[113] Ibid., 100-101.
[114] Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction,* 60-61.
[115] Ibid., 62.

As a result of these treaties, the first Osage reservation was created out of a small 50-by-150 mile strip of their lands, in what is now Kansas.[116] By the mid-century, the Osage faced 'increasing demands for white settlement in the Kansas Territory…[and] the prospect of losing even the small area they had managed to hold on to.'[117] The Kansas era of the nineteenth century would be marked by multiple threats that American settlers brought to Osage lives and livelihoods; the relentless violation of Osage borders by squatters and land spectators, the theft of Osage lumber and horses, constant hunger, and the increased prevalence of settler diseases such as smallpox, measles, whopping cough, and typhoid fever.

Removal from Kansas

Sundown opens by claiming '[t]he god of the great Osages was still dominant over the wild prairie and the blackjack hills when Challenge was born' (1). Without mentioning a fixed date, Mathews implies *Sundown* commences in the pre-allotment era for the Osage, likely around the end of the nineteenth century. The wild prairie and blackjack hills that typify Mathews' landscapes across his work indicate that *Sundown* is set on the Osage reservation in what is now Oklahoma, sometime after the Osage removal from Kansas in 1871. After the American Civil War (1861-1865), capitulating to the growing number of settlers demanding ownership of Indigenous lands, the Southern Treaty Commission required Indian nations who had sided with the Confederates to sell portions of their lands in Indian Territory. The sale would create space for other nations currently living in the Kansas reserves (including the Osage) to be forcibly relocated to Indian Territory. From 1864 to 1871, all but a few nations were

[116] Ibid., 63.
[117] Ibid., 64.

forcibly removed from Kansas to Oklahoma, in what Burns regards as 'great injustice that caused suffering and loss of life…[as] equally unjust, equally full of suffering' as the Cherokee removal (otherwise known as the Trial of Tears) in 1839.[118]

Burns provides an account of the written petition submitted by the Osage requesting changes to the Removal Act of 1870. Of the five requests, three changes were made: a larger reservation than the standard 160 acres per person being allocated to other tribes; allotment would not be forced upon them without their consent; and permission to hunt buffalo. As Burns points out, the second provision on allotment 'enabled the Osage to become the last Indian nation in either Indian Territory or Oklahoma Territory to allot'.[119] This important right meant that neither the Dawes Act (1887) nor the later Curtis Act (1898) could be applied to them, leaving the Osage in 'a strong bargaining position' to retain mineral rights in common some years later.[120] The Dawes Act and Osage common mineral rights will be discussed in further depth later in this chapter and many times over the course of this thesis.

It is of no small significance that the Osage bought their lands. The purchase and subsequent legal ownership of land placed the Osage in a very different position to the vast majority of other Indigenous nations, who were similarly forcibly settled on their lands but instead granted right of occupancy instead of ownership. [121] The Osage sold their lands in Kansas to the United States for the agreed price of $1.25 an acre, along with a payment of $30,000 due to unfulfilled provisions of a previous treaty in 1839. They bought 1,500,000 acres of land in Indian Territory from the Cherokee at

[118] Louis F. Burns, *A History of the Osage People*, The University of Alabama Press, 2004, 314.
[119] Ibid., 320.
[120] Ibid., 341.
[121] Burns states that as far as we know, the Osage and the Kaw were the only Indigenous nations to purchase their lands.

seventy cents an acre. The federal government set up a Removal Fund intending to make the move easier for the Osage, but according to Burns, the fund was misused to pay for gifts, the expenses of the Removal council, and the cost of surveying the land.[122] Unfulfillment of a treaty and misuse of funds designated for Indian use and was not the first and would certainly not be the last instance of federal mismanagement in Indian affairs in the coming decades.

The Osage were among the last nations to be removed following the Removal Act of 1870, settling on Kansas lands in March 1871. After some negotiations over precise boundaries due to an incorrect survey of the land, the Osage reservation was outlined from the 96th meridian to the Arkansas river, 'the boundaries, more or less, of Osage County today'.[123] And yet, despite the upheaval and trauma of forced removal, Mathews emphasises Osage survival and resilience from the very beginning of *Sundown*. As the opening lines of the novel tell us, thirty years later 'the god of the great Osages was still dominant' (1), and the Osage maintain connections to their lands in Kansas through regular return trips to find and employ settlers as servants (13). Mathews use of the progressive tense ('was still') indicates that change is coming for the Osage, and the impending and imprecise nature of that change characterises the first third of the novel.

Generally, Mathews presents everyday life for Chal during his childhood as calm, slow-paced; a place of 'few white people' (15) where the 'air was so still' (6). Chal's childhood experiences are often deeply reflective as he spends the majority of

[122] Ibid., 322.
[123] Roger Hall Lloyd, *Osage County: A Tribe and American Culture 1600-1934*, iUniverse Inc., 2006, 293.

his time immersed in the natural landscape, surrounded by the prairie's wild flora and fauna:

> Whether he was alone on the prairie or swimming with little Running Elk, Little Wild Cat, Sun-On-His-Wings, and other boys of the camp, these days seemed always to be a part of the life he was destined to live; the quieter part of a stream near its source, lazy, murmuring and dappled. (12)

Mathews' idyllic depiction of life in the nation is reminiscent of popular depictions of Indigenous life around the turn of the century. Such depictions were often overly romanticised and nostalgic, playing into notions of the 'vanishing Indian' popularised by Edward Curtis' photographs. The writings of Charles Eastman around this period similarly contributed to the notion that the traditional Indian way of life was either disappearing or had disappeared already–the foreword to his autobiography *From the Deep Woods to Civilisation* (1916) decries that Eastman's 'childhood and youth were a part of the free wilderness of the first American, a life that is gone forever!'.[124] Roger Hall Lloyd describes how Mathews alludes to this period of time for the Osage with 'an elegiac tone, an autumnal mellowness'.[125] For Lloyd, in this moment 'the Osage were allowed to be, as it were, themselves, neither alien savages not yet red skinned Americans. The hand of the federal government lay lightly upon them.'[126] Mathews complicates notions that the 'traditional' Indian lifestyle, one that is inseparable from the natural landscape, or 'the quieter part of the stream,' is dying and disappearing by

[124] Elaine Goodale Eastman, 'Foreword,' *From the Deep Woods to Civilisation* by Charles Eastman, Little Brown and Company, 1916, np. Accessed via [https://archive.org/stream/deepwoodsto00eastrich/deepwoodsto00eastrich_djvu.txt].
[125] Hall-Lloyd., 329.
[126]Ibid.

instead exploring the ways in which it forms an integral part of Chal's continually self-contested identity as he matures.

Whilst Mathews indeed implies a relative era of safety for the Osage, a time when the town 'slept peacefully in the winter sun' (42), he nevertheless points to Chal's growing uncertainty in the face of increased settler encroachment on Osage lifeways. There are formative experiences with settler colonialism in *Sundown* which have a significant impact on Chal's childhood: the education he receives at day school and the process of allotment forced upon the Osage by the United States' government. Mathews uses Chal's experiences to convey personal and collective histories for the Osage, gesturing toward the ways in which these experiences feed into Chal's crisis of identity and belief as an adult. Chal's crises affect the way he processes Reign of Terror and by extension, the way he relates the Reign of Terror to the reader as a narrator.

Indian education

During the late nineteenth and mid twentieth century, Indian boarding schools were established across the United States, 'largely financed by Congress and increasingly controlled from Washington.'[127] Their primary goals were to assimilate Indigenous children into white settler society and thereby eliminate Indigenous culture entirely. Children were often forcibly removed from their parents, forbidden to speak their tribal languages and made to abandon their tribal names, forced to cut their hair and wear Euro-American clothing, and widely taught that their tribal cultures were inferior. One such boarding school, the Osage Indian Government School, was established in Pawhuska, Oklahoma Territory. Towards the beginning of *Sundown*, Chal observes the

[127] Jacqueline Fear-Segal, 'Nineteenth-Century Indian Education: Universalism Versus Evolution,' *Journal of American Studies*, *Journal of American Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 33 No. 2, 1999, 323.

boarding students as being ‘like animals in a cage, and there seemed to be much sadness in their faces.’ (22) Despite his mother disliking the way ‘the men in Washin’ton ran that school’ (23), Chal reluctantly attends as a day student at the wishes of his father, who believes in the importance of ‘education and the Indian citizen.’ (23) Chal dreads school, haunted by the mental image ‘of the door as a mouth into which they were going; a big, black mouth, bigger and darker than a wildcat’s.’ (23)

Chal is tutored by a Quaker missionary called Miss Hoover. Miss Hoover’s attitudes towards her Indian students embody the white romanticism of the era regarding the ‘civilisation’ of the Indian. She dreams of assimilating ‘little Indian minds,’ ‘bringing to them the gifts of science, like gifts from heaven’ (26). She cites Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s epic poem, *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855) and ‘the romantic spell’ (26) of the sentimentalism of Fenimore Cooper as personal influences. At first, Miss Hoover is completely invested in the ‘noble savage’ stereotyping that characterised American Romantic depictions of Indians in the nineteenth century. She slips easily into fetishization, relaying stories to her family in which ‘she made the reservation a little wilder than it actually was…Several times she blushingly hinted at romance – the imaginary attachment of a handsome warrior for herself’ (27). After she actually spends some time on the reservation, however, Miss Hoover becomes pessimistic and disillusioned when her expectations are not met, unhappily realising ‘that Indians were Indians’ (27). For Mathews, Chal’s teacher is not an exception to the rule and is in fact the standard, evidenced when Miss Hoover sits at dinner with other matrons and teacher and they all tell her ‘about the stupidity of Indians.’ (27)

Miss Hoover’s conclusion that ‘Indians were Indians’ and the attitudes of her colleagues ascribe to the evolutionist approach favoured by one of the founders of the

Indian boarding school system, Samuel Chapman Armstrong. Jacqueline Fear-Segal writes that for Armstrong, the Indians' 'backward state' amounted to 'a lack of character and a surfeit of freedom,' and he 'cast doubt on Indian potential for equal citizenship, and communicated a deep and long-standing conviction in the race's inborn inferiority,' believing it would take several generations of education to properly assimilate the Indian into white society.[128] Whilst Miss Hoover initially subscribes to an optimistic assimilationism more in-line with a nineteenth century educational approach, she changes her mind when confronted with 'the stupidity of Indians' (27). Mathews' characterisation of Miss Hoover supports Fear-Segal's assertion that '[a]ssimilationists did not all hold the same assumptions about Indian capacity and the place the educated Indian would find in American society.'[129]

It is significant that Mathews offers a critique of the boarding school system and its legacy in a publication of the 1930s. As Carol Hunter points out, '[g]enerally, Southwest regional and social novels of the 1930s focus[ed] on the unfortunate trials of white or immigrant Americans confronting a harsh environment'.[130] Though Loretta Fowler argues that Osage oil wealth meant that they were 'cushioned' against some of the worst practices implemented at boarding schools, Mathews' nonetheless incorporates the Indian school experience as a part of Chal's formative years.[131] Chal's early exposure to settler-colonial racial inferiority narratives disseminated within the

[128] Ibid., 330, 339.
[129] Ibid., 325.
[130] Carol Hunter, 'The Protagonist as a Mixed-Blood in John Joseph Mathews' Novel: "Sundown",' *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 3/4, 1982, 319.
[131] Fowler explains how '[p]arents concerned about their children in the agency boarding school insisted that tribal funds be used to hire enough workers so that their children would not have to do the heavy labour and menial tasks at the school.' *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Great Plains*, Columbia University Press, 2003, 106.

Indian school system is a significant factor in his later crises in belief, both in himself and in the Osages around him as the Reign of Terror takes shape.

Oil, allotment, and democracy

In the opening paragraphs of *Sundown*, Mathews anticipates a great change coming for the Osage at the turn of the century. His protagonist is born in a 'red dim light…faint and half-hearted in the brilliant moonlight; faint as though it were a symbol of the new order' (1). In resistance to this new order, Mathews' protagonist is named Challenge by his father, John Windzer; as 'a challenge to the disinheritors of his people' (2). To disinherit is to deliberately prevent someone from inheriting something, depriving them of 'natural or human rights or of previously held special privileges'.[132] For the Osage and Indigenous people more generally, Mathews' use of the term 'disinheritors' incorporates all three threads of that definition into one, effectively replacing those definitional 'or's with 'and's. For John, the disinheritors of the Osage are presumably Euro-Americans settling on the reservation in increasing numbers. However, as Chal progresses through boyhood, John comes to align himself with those disinheritors through his position as a 'Progressive' mixed-blood, greatly affecting Chal's sense of identity and self-belief. [133]

The day after Chal's birth, John ventures out on a small pony to the centre of the Agency[134] and converses with a group of his Osage friends sitting in front of the trader's

[132] 'Disinherit,' Merriam-Webster, 2018. Accessed via [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disinherit].
[133] The term mixed-blood is used during this period to refer to Osage of mixed heritage.
[134] The Osage Agency, established in 1872, oversees the relationship between the federal government and the Osage Nation. Mathews' use of the term here refers more generally to reservation lands covered

store about the birth of his son. The conversation ends with a worried discussion of the Frazer lease. As Hanna Musiol observes, oil becomes a character in the novel at the same time Chal does, intimately linking Chal's birth with the discovery of oil on the reservation, and, effectively, the birth of the Reign of Terror.[135] The Frazer lease is Mathews' fictional renaming of the Foster lease of 1896; the very first oil lease on the reservation, a ten-year blanket lease which covered the reservation in its entirety. John's friends voice their concerns that 'the guv'mint's gonna play hell' (8) when the lease ends to reap their own benefits, but John remains sure that the government will only do what's fair. Mathews ends the chapter ominously resting on John's faith in the democratic, reasonable nature of settler-colonial governance. Mathews establishes the vulnerability of John's position, ripe to be taken advantage of when the Dawes Act is extended to include the Osage.

On February 26, 1886, the Senate passed a bill introduced by the chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, Henry L. Dawes, that was designed to revolutionise Indian lands, opening them up to white settlement.[136] The General Allotment Act, or the Dawes Act as it became known, embodied nineteenth century assimilationist and individualist doctrines regarding the 'Indian problem'. As Francis Paul Prucha writes,

> Nineteenth-century reformers had a simple formula for Indian economic life – transformation of hunters and gatherers into hard-working yeoman farmers. The

---

by the Agency, and John is travelling to the centre of it, where 'the Council House and traders' store were' (5).

[135] Hanna Musiol, '"Sundown" and "Liquid Modernity" in Pawhuska, Oklahoma', *Journal of American Studies,* Vol. 46, No. 2, 2012, 360.

[136] Loren N. Brown, 'The Dawes Commission,' *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 9, 1931, 72.

> Dawes Act, with its 160-acre allotments to individual Indian families, was the crowning symbol of this almost universal approach.[137]

Any land beyond the 160-acre allotments would be deemed 'surplus' and therefore available for purchase by settlers. The federal government would hold the titles to the individual allotments of land in trust for twenty-five years, and in 1891, provided for the leasing of 'trust' lands not allotted and not yet settled. With this, the Allotment Act thereby dismantled reservations, but still allowed for federal management of individual allotments of land and trust land in general.[138] The Dawes Act would be a disaster for Indian nations, since it occasioned the massive loss of their lands, both through the sale of 'surplus' lands and by the loss of the individual allotments themselves. Between 1887 and 1900, around 32,800 allotments of land were made to individual Indians, covering 3,258,000 acres. During the same period, the United States government forced the cessation or sale of about 28,500,000 acres of land from Indian nations. By 1921, the vast majority of land that had previously been a part of a reservation in 1887 was in the hands of white settlers.[139]

Whilst the Osage were initially exempt from the Dawes Act due to their requested changes to the Removal Act of 1870, United States Congress soon returned their attention to the tribe, sending a Commission to Pawhuska in 1893, 'in an effort to persuade them to take allotments and sell their surplus lands'.[140] The commissioners' report noted that,

---

[137] Francis Paul Prucha, 'American Indian Policy in the Twentieth Century, *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Jan 1984, 15.
[138] Fowler, 'Reservation Life: 1880s-1993', *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Great Plains*, 89.
[139] Hall-Lloyd, 307-308.
[140] B. B. Chapman, 'Dissolution of the Osage Reservation,' *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 20, 1942, 244.

> ...the desires of the Government were developed by discussion a considerable number, including quite all of the half or mixed bloods, expressed themselves as willing to adopt the new relation sought by the Government [...] but the majority of the tribe, composed almost entirely of the full blood element, refused to even discuss the propositions submitted to them. An ill feeling had developed between the contending factions, and there was not even a hope of reaching an agreement at this time.[141]

The general position of the mixed-blood faction leading up to allotment was one of support, and Mathews characterises their position through Chal's father, John, in *Sundown*. To John, allotment 'seemed to be the very best of things' (46), and he would 'walk up and down the room in his excitement and talk' (44). Allotment is the embodiment of civilisation, and John 'was almost continually thrilled' with 'the atmosphere of growth and progress' (49). In contrast, the full-blood Osages were not supportive of allotment, which leads to great resentment from John. He cannot understand why the 'weak-spined and easily led' (49) full-bloods are so against that which will bring growth and progress to the town, making Kihekah a place that 'people would come from all over to live' (44). John smugly declares to his family that "If it hadn't been for the progressives on the council, they [sic] never would have been any allotment, if it was left up to the full-blood party." (45)

Mathews elucidates the conflicting opinions regarding the motives and ultimate responsibility that can be placed upon the Progressives in bringing about allotment. On the one hand, he writes how '[i]n the breasts of the Progressives was the desire for riches and prosperity,' and so they 'employed all the tricks of their white brothers to get

[141] 'Commissioners to the President', 7801 Ind. Div. 1893, Office of Indian Affairs, Aug. 21st 1893.

what they wanted' (49). However, Mathews extends an amount of forgiveness to them, 'because their ideals were more sincere [than the whites'] because their source was the pride of seeing their native country developed.' (50) 'In reality,' he writes, 'allotment was forced upon the tribe by people outside the reservation who had no particular interest in the welfare of the tribe.' (49)

Osage scholar Robert Warrior adds further context to the division between mixed-bloods and fullbloods in the pursuit or resistance to allotment. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the faction of pro-allotment mixed-bloods was growing, a faction that included perhaps hundreds of white men who had been placed on tribal rolls, though the majority of the faction was made up of mixed-heritage Osages largely descended from Osage women and white traders. Over the last decades of the nineteenth century, mixed-blood population grew steadily, whilst fullblood population severely declined. This growing mixed-blood population had 'many of the best lands on the reservation' when the fullbloods remained committed to buffalo hunting, were courted by the pro-allotment forces of the U.S. government, and owned a pro-allotment newspaper that 'could trumpet the benefits of giving in to federal demands to parcel out the reservation.'[142] 'By the turn of the twentieth century,' writes Warrior, 'the anti-allotment full-bloods were a clear minority, and even the staunchest supporters of Osage nationhood knew that allotment and statehood for Oklahoma and Indian territories were coming.'[143]

[142] Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction*, 78-79.
[143] Ibid., 81.

In 1906, Congress passed the Osage Allotment Act, a hugely significant and unique piece of federal-Indian policy where oil and legislation mixed intimately.[144] Mathews notes that despite the majority support for allotment, the minority anti-allotment full-blood party managed to achieve something that would have enormous significance for the tribe, with lasting effects to the present day. 'After the act of Congress allotting the Osages and the expiration of the Frazer [Foster] oil lease,' states the narrator, 'the tribe received one-eighth royalty on each forty-two-gallon barrel of oil rather than the one-twentieth under the old lease.' He continues, '[t]his provision was inserted into the allotment bill by a brilliant young Sioux who had married into the tribe; also the provision that all minerals should be held as community property.' (50)

Mathews is alluding here to the achievements of James Bigheart (Pun-Kah-Wi-Tah-An-Ka), half-Osage Chief of the Osage Nation who led the traditionalist minority. He spent more than two decades fighting for the rights of the Osage, instigating the first Osage Nation constitution in 1881 seeking to preserve Osage culture, independence, and rights to their land. Bigheart successfully delayed allotment for ten years, ensuring that when it did happen, it would be under the best possible terms for the Osage. Bigheart secured two uniquely favourable terms – that there would be no 'surplus' lands made available to white settlers, and all mineral rights would be retained as the common property of the tribe. As a result of his and the full-blood faction's efforts, each enrolled member of the tribe received 657 acres of land, and each member received 'headrights' from the oil leases. In the four decades following Bigheart's death

[144] Ibid.

in 1908, the Osages and their descendants shared more than $300,000,000 from headrights, bonuses, leases, and rentals.[145]

For the Osage Nation, oil and democracy have been inextricably bound together since oil was first discovered on the reservation. In addition to parcelling up individual portions of land and creating the Mineral Estate, the Osage Allotment Act of 1906 legislated for a Tribal Council to be elected by headright owners to manage the affairs of the Osage people. Political power was concentrated in the hands of those original 2,229 allotees listed on the tribal roll with shares in the Mineral Estate. Warrior points out that in this way, 'the United States failed to erect even the façade of an independent Osage polity,' since under the Allotment Act, Osages vote 'according to a corporate model based on shares held.'[146] As the twentieth century progressed, the unevenness inherent in a corporate mode of political representation became increasingly apparent, as some Osage descendants of the original allotees ended up with multiple shares, some with fractions of shares, and those without shares were left with no political representation at all. [147] 'In the last hundred years,' writes Osage scholar Jean Dennison, 'the Mineral Estate has created a deep divide between Osage "haves" and "have-nots."'[148]

The Osage Allotment Act's reorganisation of Osage political representation under an oil-based corporate model was a marked diversion from the people's adoption of the democratic Osage Constitution of 1881. According to Warrior, the

[145] Orpha B. Russell, 'Chief James Bigheart of the Osages,' nd. Accessed via [https://www.geni.com/people/Chief-James-Bigheart/6000000040005279728].
[146] Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction,* 81.
[147] This remained the case until 2006, when, after decades of legal back-and-forth and unsuccessful attempts, the Osage Nation formally adopted a reformed constitution that allowed 'every citizen a vote that is equal to all others and form[ed] a government that is accountable to the citizens of the Osage Nation,' regardless of an individual citizen's share in the Mineral Estate.
[148] Jean Dennison, *Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First Century Osage Nation*, 104.

Osage Constitution of 1881 'served as the basis for a working democracy in the last two decades of the nineteenth century,' whereby Osage people 'became accustomed to casting votes for an elected National Council, which replaced the previous influence of the *Non-hon'-zhin-ga*, or Little Old Men, the village and tribal elders who had been invested with decision-making power in earlier generations.' For Warrior,

> ...the principles articulated in that document, imperfect though they may be, provided the basis for Osage civil society in the transition from traditional to modern society. Albeit often rudimentary in form and sometimes only partially successful, the Osages made a remarkable transition to a constitutional democracy.[149]

Yet, in 1898, the United States decided that it would no longer recognise the legitimacy of the 1881 Constitution and dissolved the Osage National Council, before legislating for the Osage Tribal Council in 1906. Warrior attributes the dissolution of the Osage National Council to a federal government uncomfortable with Osage and Indigenous intellectual and organizational success.[150] In *Sundown,* Mathews' depiction of the newly created Osage Tribal Council– forced onto the Osage by federal legislature and elected through inherited shares in the mineral state (as opposed to an expression of democratic sovereignty as with the 1881 Osage Constitution)–is less than complimentary. Through John's experiences serving on the Tribal Council during Chal's childhood, Mathews draws attention to corporate oil's interference with Osage political autonomy.

[149] Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction*, 53.
[150] Ibid., 54.

After the Osage Council heads to Washington to discuss oil leases, John writes home dejectedly that that the 'Reservation Oil & Gas people…is makin the Govt' cancel leases made by the Council with another competing oil company. A few days later when the Council return to the reservation, the Agent receives a letter from the Secretary of the Interior 'kickin' us all off the Council – 'cause we let leases to the People's Oil Company, so they kicked us all off the Council – they wanted the Reservation Oil Company to have the leases' (59). Chal notices that John's 'black eyes showed disillusionment, and the dismissal from an unimportant, practically powerless Indian council, seemed tragic' (59). Warrior's suggestion that the 1906 Act meant '[c]orporate interests seemingly got exactly what they wanted' is on clear display here in *Sundown*.[151] Mathews intimately ties the influence of corporate oil to the suppression of an already limited form of Osage political representation, which crushes the spirit of an Osage man who has, up until this point, been utterly invested in the federal 'guv'mint' as a harbinger of civilization and progress that will only bring good things to the little town on the prairie.

The long view

In addition to the overtly political manoeuvrings of the Dawes Act and its aftermath, there was an implicit politics to the intimate and reciprocal relationship forged between nineteenth and twentieth century American conceptions of human 'civilization' through time and corporate oil promotion throughout the same era. As Ross Barrett argues, corporate oil consciously invoked a series of images and ideas in

[151] Ibid., 81.

order to convey a sense of oil's 'deep history.' These corporate interests generated a cultural discourse which imagined oil extraction and consumption as 'a timeless practice transcending the vicissitudes of sociopolitical history' in order to assess and recode the crises and growing public concern with the modern petroleum industry; a cultural discourse which Barrett terms 'petro-primitivism'.[152]

Through a series of promotional public displays across the early decades of the twentieth century, oil corporatists levered petro-primitivism to encourage audiences to 'take the long view on oil: to adopt a sweeping historical perspective that reconceived the fugitive resource as a timelessly abundant element and the boom-and-bust oil industry as one phase in an age-old and steadfast venture.'[153] Barrett reconstructs an early nineteenth-century example of such a display; *The Driller,* a bronze statue erected as part of a larger memorial project in Titusville, Pennsylvania, funded with a $100,000 (or $2.2 million in current currency) donation by Henry H. Rogers of the Standard Oil Company. Barrett identifies several auto-mythological impulses enshrined within *The Driller* that frame the history of oil extraction as a narrative of control, stability, and timelessness. Sculpted in bronze by Charles Henry Neihaus, *The Driller* depicts a nude, heavily muscled male figure crouching over a barren rock shelf with his arm and hammer raised in the air. The memorial site commemorates Edwin Drake for drilling the nation's very first oil well on the nearby banks of Oil Creek, Pennsylvania, on 27th August 1859. Though 'keyed to the specific concerns facing the turn-of-the-century oil industry,' writes Barrett, 'the Drake memorial established the

[152] Ross Barrett, 'Picturing a Crude Past: Primitivism, Public Art, and Corporate Oil Promotion in the United States', *Journal of American Studies,* Vol. 46, No. 2, Oil Cultures, 2012, 397.
[153] Ibid. 397.

foundations for a cultural discourse…that would reappear in later promotional displays and gradually filter into the rhetoric of advertising and publicity.'[154]

Corporate promotion of 'the long view' on oil utilised a sweeping historical perspective in order to realign oil extraction with a deep historicity and thereby reframe the material conditions of contemporary oil capitalism.[155] The conjuring of oil's apparent deep historicity served to locate the volatile practices of twentieth century oil extraction as merely part of an ongoing 'transhistorical practice [of extraction] rooted in the distant past.'[156] Such promotional messaging did not go unremarked upon: according to A *New York Times* review of *The Driller*,

> The monument will… recall first of all the various laborers in these oily fields – the Indians who collected oil to mix with their paints and used to set fire to the scum of petroleum on lakes and rivers on days of high festival - the settlers who used the oil as liniment and for lighting purposes, and the great army of workmen who have been laboring in the oil fields since 1859.[157]

The 'Indians who collected oil' in this review are firmly located in the past; they are invoked to convey humanity's apparent technological, logical, and moral linear progression through successive phases of civilisation. From the primordial practice of paint mixing to 'settler' use of oil for medicinal purposes (a misattribution that dates back millennia to various cultural and ethnic groups), before finally evolving into the heroic practice of turn-of-the-century mass extraction via 'the great army of workmen'. This version of pre-modern Indigeneity that sought to realign mass extraction with a

[154] Ibid., 398.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid., 413.
[157] 'Monument for Titusville', *New York Times,* 2nd March 1901, 8.

linear deep historicity was invoked by corporate oil at multiple points throughout the twentieth century. During the mid-century, the Sun Oil Company had a promotional exhibit at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, which prominently featured a panoramic mural titled *The History of Oil and Natural Gas*¸ as discussed by Barrett:

> Set at the centre of the mural, Drake's inaugural derrick functions as the organizing hub of the composition. The "modern" vignette at left pictures bits of cutting-edge infrastructure developed by US companies, including a steel derrick, a fractionating water tower…and a Hortonsphere tank. Given emphasis by its large size and visual proximity to the visitor, the "primitive" grouping at right further affirmed the "American" character of the pictured history. Picturing a group of Native Americans engaged in archaic practices of oil extraction and consumption, the vignette firmly situated oil's past within the confines of the continent.[158]

Corporate oil's version of the continent's apparently long and linear history with oil extraction is simultaneously an appropriation and an erasure of Indigenous histories and temporalities. Whilst corporate oil insisted on the deep historicity of their industry, mass extraction was (and largely remains) at least partially responsible for the destruction of Indigenous lands, lives, and livelihoods across the globe; each with tangible deep historicities of their own. By co-opting the Indigenous figure into ideological accounts of its own history, corporate oil effected a remapping of Indigenous history and presence, into one linear, 'American' timeline.

[158] Barrett, 'Picturing a Crude Past', 419-420.

Mathews' *Sundown* illustrates the manner in which what I call 'oleaginous time' is constructed and effected on Osage lands. Mark Rifkin has convincingly argued that *Sundown* juxtaposes three modes of time:

> '...the implementation of allotment-era Indian law and policy, the felt sensations of an Osage man (Chal Windzer) coming of age during this period, and the duration of Osage occupancy in their homeland, attending to the emergence and persistence of modes of perception, experience, and memory that link Osage people to that place.'[159]

I contend that oleaginous time exists as a fourth mode in the novel and the experience of living simultaneously within or, at points, between these modes effects a remapping and disjunction of time for the town's residents, who are continually caught up in a slippery, oleaginous present-future.

Returning to Neihaus's *The Driller,* Barrett writes,

> Poised on the verge of an explosive "strike," *The Driller* remains locked enduringly in **a fruitful moment of productive potential**, a moment in which an extractive conclusion is both **immediately foreseeable and infinitely deferred**. The sculpture, that is, visualizes **a permanent transitional state of productive capability** that both invokes the inexorable completion of industrialized oil extraction and endlessly delays that final moment.[160]

In *Sundown,* Mathews depicts the experience of living in an oil-induced temporal space that is at once 'immediately foreseeable and infinitely deferred' for Chal and the wider

[159] Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination,* Duke University Press, 2017, 98.
[160] Barrett., 410. Emphasis added.

residents of the town. As oil derricks begin to appear on and around the reservation, Mathews describes how:

> Nothing was certain and calm any more, but the atmosphere was a-tingle with uncertainly; a thrilling uncertainty which would evolve some day into a glorious certainty. (61)

Mathews describes this collective emotional state as a 'fevered expectancy' (61) – suggestive of something overwrought, excessive; a warning sign before the sickness sets in, the arm held aloft before the strike. The uncertain nature of living under an extractive mode of time that is 'both immediately foreseeable and infinitely deferred' manifests in a large part of the novel as an elusive indescribable glory that Mathews repeatedly returns to in his depictions of an emerging oil culture. Mixed-blood Osages in the novel, broadly in favour of oil extraction and the 'Progress' and civilization it brings, are attuned to 'the spirit of the times (68)'; 'that thrill of the indefinite something that was glorious (67),' 'feeling in their hearts that the indefinite glory was not far off now (74),' believing in a 'future which was sure to be glorious, though its particular glory was vague (74).' Mathews emphasises the all-consuming nature of such fevered expectancy, at one point raising the question '[b]ut how could anyone keep his mind on anything except oil, when that tingling thrill was constantly with one; that thrill that expressed itself in expansive camaraderie and boisterousness? (75)' Mathews describes mixed-blood inclination toward oil-thrill as an attribution of the 'blood in their veins' as descendants of European adventurers who were 'handsome, careless, and promiscuous,' who 'had no tendency to acquisitiveness, and their lives were made sparkling by a series of enthusiasms (75)'. Later in the third act of the novel when Chal returns to Kihekah and the oil frenzy is in full swing, the glory of it remains locked in

that fruitful moment of productive potential, still at once immediately foreseeable and infinitely deferred. Mathews describes how, after the lease sales beneath the 'million dollar oak', where oil magnates simply raised a finger to the auctioneer and in so doing spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, the 'atmosphere was one of optimism, and they felt glory had come.' (246) But even in this moment, when it seems the fevered anticipation of glory has *finally* arrived, 'everyone knew there was no end to it. There would be a greater glory' (246).

And yet, that seemingly infinite deferral is made finite by the end of Mathews' novel. In its final chapters, the people of Kihekah are forced to confront the harsh realities of what happens when the boom inevitably goes bust. Mathews describes how '[t]he all-powerful life that had come with the creeping black derricks began to recede to the east (303).' Those derricks, so frequently and prominently featured in Mathews' composition of the landscape, 'stood black against the prairie horizon in rows, and become the husks of a life force that had retreated back along its own trail (304).' All most overnight, Kihekah descends into one those 'sad little towns' that Chal had noted some chapters ago on his journey to university, 'disillusioned after a short dream of glory (90).' As a consequence, '[t]he representatives of civilization changed from jovial backslapping, efficient people, around whom [Chal] had placed an aura of glory, to dour, reticent people who seemed afraid (307).' Jep Newburg, 'the richest businessman in town (91)' and Doc Lawes, an oilman who 'knew both senators from the state by their first name' (280-1) – the type of men 'that everybody was beginning to say ought to be president of the United States (280)' – choose not to stick around for the encore. Mathews wryly describes how,

> One morning Jep Newberg was found with a bullet hole in his temple. Those who knew said that he sure was powder burned. He, with the sardonic humor of the hard-headed business man, had elected to float out sentimentally on the receding tide.
>
> Doc Lawes, however, used a shotgun, and they said that he did a good job, all right. (304-5)

Mathews depicts the human costs of the post-boom bust, costs that extend to the Osage. In the weeks following the town's sudden decline, where 'the roar of activity faded into the lazy coughing of pumps' (304), federal investigators discover that a group of citizens have been killing Big Hill Indians for several years in order to gain control of their oil wealth. Mathews is referring to the real-life Reign of Terror murders of Mollie Burkhart and her extended family members. For Mathews, these events 'had aroused little interest…and naturally little attention had been paid to the murders,' in part due to the deafening 'roar of the Great Frenzy (305).' Mathews refuses to flatten the emotional and physical human costs of oil capitalism as merely 'one phase in an age-old and steadfast venture'[161], as later encouraged to do by the kinds of corporate oil promotion outlined by Barrett. Whilst such promotion may later seek to persuade audiences to 'take the long view' on oil, Mathews drills down (as it were) to deliver the realities of living within a microcosm of the destructive boom-and-bust cycles of oil extraction.

Returning again to *The Driller,* Barrett contends,

[161] Barrett, 'Picturing a Crude Past', 397.

> The productive performance of the gleaming sculpture seems to realign oil extraction with these themes, framing oil production as a **carefully controlled application of technological power to dynamic natural matter.** Squatting over his drill, *The Driller* **models a wilful command over the natural landscape** that visualizes the **complete harnessing** of the dynamic material of oil through extractive labor.[162]

Whilst *The Driller* may seek to frame oil extraction as emblematic of man's wilful control over and harnessing of nature, Mathews depicts the gritty processes of extraction as the inverse in *Sundown*. As black derricks creep farther west during the first act of the novel, Mathews describes how oil wells near the town would occasionally be 'shot' with nitroglycerine, 'so that the strata might be loosened and allow a freer flow of oil.' (73) This outcome of this process excites both the Osage and settler citizens of the nearby town, who would 'drive out and watch the spray of oil as it shot high into the air' (73). There is a playful and jovial atmosphere to these scenes, and at one point, a mixed-blood Osage excitedly rushes into the splaying oil, ruining his new suit and expensive hat (74). The process of using nitroglycerine to 'shoot' a well was hardly a carefully controlled application of technological power – by the time it was being used for blasting and drilling in the United States, nitroglycerine already had a history of causing catastrophes at factories and construction sites.[163] The shooting of

[162] Ibid., 409. Emphasis added.

[163] In 1864, Alfred Nobel (of the Nobel Prize)'s younger brother Emil Oskar was killed in a factory explosion in Sweden handling nitroglycerine. When Nobel subsequently experimented with ways to safely handle nitroglycerine, his factory in Germany was destroyed twice. In 1866, a crate containing nitroglycerine intended to be used in railway construction exploded, killing fifteen people at a Wells Fargo office in San Francisco. In 1869, two wagons containing nitroglycerine exploded in Wales, UK, killing six and injuring many more.
Lemmel, Birgitta, 'Alfred Nobel in Krümmel', *The Nobel Prize,* nd. Accessed via [https://www.nobelprize.org/alfred-nobel/alfred-nobel-in-krummel/].
'Transcontinental Railroad: Nitroglycerin', *American Experience,* PBS, nd. Accessed via

oil wells was already considered dangerous work, and the use of nitroglycerine in place of gunpowder increased that danger tenfold. But for Mathews' residents of Kihekah, these advancements in technology lend themselves to the sweeping enthusiasm for extraction, since as 'more oil came out of the ground the quarterly payments became larger and larger', and 'men's heads became filled with dreams and their lives became frenzied activity.' (78)

But such 'harnessing' of the earth's dynamic materials does not go unnoticed or unremarked upon by nature – or perhaps Wah'Kon-Tah, the Great Mysteries – itself. A few short pages after the oil well is shot with nitroglycerine and as lives become consumed with the frenzied activity and fruits of oil wealth, a cyclone descends upon Kihekah, as though not to be outdone by the exuberant explosiveness of extraction:

> One afternoon black clouds came up in the northwest and tumbled over each other in their attempts to be in the van; tumbling as though with deliberate design, as though directed by angry gods to destroy the town in the valley among the blackjacks. Lightning played against the black mass and there was distant thunder. The outer edges of the clouds were whipped by crazy little winds, and a deep silence settled over the valley. The rest of the sky was pale green. (78)

When the storm passes, Chal discovers that lightning has hit a well near the town. He first hears wind 'like a protest' (80) and the roar of the creek, before hearing a 'roar that shook the earth under their feet.' (81) Chal approaches the site with the deafening roar of fire in his ears and sees a burnt-out derrick, a great flame jetting up several feet

---

[https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/tcrr-nitroglycerin/].

above the pipe. Several men stand around the site, shooting rifles at the flame in a vain attempt to separate the column of roaring gas from the flame. The flames are so large and intense that they light up the countryside for miles around in a 'terrific ground-shivering roar' that 'drowned out all other sounds' with 'light that spread over the whole valley' (83-4). Chal wryly observes that, after all, '[l]ightning was fickle, or rather, it was directed by the Great Mysteries to a certain spot.' (81)

This scene deftly illustrates the consequences that may be wrought by nature, and/or by angry gods, when the relationship with the land is informed by a wilful command over the natural landscape, as opposed to viewing the land as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations in nondominating and nonexploitative terms.[164] The town's inability to quell the fire at the derrick, instead forced to leave it to burning throughout the night, can be read as a counternarrative to *The Driller;* it symbolises a complete unharnessing and lack of control over the dynamic matter that the methods of oil extraction are meant to contain. For Chal, this demonstration is at once amusing and confusing:

> He stood there for some time and watched; the crowd amused him. White people seemed so helpless when they couldn't talk, and it was funny to see them so inefficient, standing there. He could see some of them move toward each other, not able to restrain themselves any longer, and attempt to talk above the terrific roar. For a moment as he sat there on his pony, he wondered if they were as great as he always thought them to be. These doubts gave rise to confusion and he dismissed them after a moment. (83)

[164] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition,* 13. Coulthard terms this place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought and practice 'grounded normativity'.

As Métis scholar Chris Andersen argues, Indigenous communities are not only producers of complex knowledge about indigeneity, but also about whiteness.[165] *Sundown* features many such observations and critiques of whiteness, which are typically presented as flickering points of confusion for Chal as he attempts to find a sense of selfhood among Osages and white settlers as he matures.[166] In the particular context of this scene, Chal has thus far spent his childhood and adolescence surrounded by both a pedestalling of whiteness as well as the oft repeated boundless glory that oil extraction will supposedly bring. The lightning strike at the well becomes an emotional precipice for Chal, threatening to undo years of conditioning regarding the power of whiteness and its ability to exert total control over Osage lands and resources. Chal's dismissal of these unsettling realisations signals a wider trend across the novel in terms of Chal's difficulty with emotional processing and knowing/not-knowing, whereby he experiences tumultuous or confusing emotions and responds by attempting to repress them or dismiss them outright from his mind.

There are moments in the novel where Chal experiences some peace and happiness, but these moments are still entangled within the complexities and contradictions of oil. One scene in particular occurs after Chal leaves the reservation

[165] Chris Andersen, 'Critical Indigenous Studies: From Difference to Density', *Critical Indigenous Theory* Vol. 15, No.2. 2009, 81.

[166] Chal makes frequent generalised observations about whiteness, white people, and their behaviour as the novel progresses. As a young boy, he meets white people for the first time at boarding school, where they are figures of authority, 'talking much and rushing into and out of the room, like white people always did.' (24) He is first exposed to naked white bodies at the swimming hole with his friends, where he fixates on them with a mixture of fascination and shame, feeling that 'their white bodies were indecent in some inscrutable way.' (36) Michael Snyder has offered an insightful analysis of this scene as a demonstration of Chal's queerness in his 2008 essay on Chal's sexuality in *Sundown*. When first hearing that 'civilisation' is coming to the Agency, Chal visualises an ultra-feminine 'pale and beautiful' white woman, 'with her laces, fluttering handkerchiefs, and sickening perfumery' (66). By contrast, white masculinity is more often presented as boisterous and undignified, particularly across the second act of the novel where Chal is away at university.

and becomes a pilot for the United States Army. When Chal receives orders to fly to an airfield on the Atlantic seaboard, Mathews offers the following rich description:

> Thus, as he roared through the night, he was happy. Clusters of lights sparkled far below in the darkness as they passed over towns. During the long hours he watched Captain Anderson's lights rise and fall in front of him like the lights of a ship at sea. Growing tired of watching the ship ahead of him, he amused himself by watching for the clusters of lights far below him like a galaxy, which indicated cities and towns. Flying over cities there would be lights running out from the central cluster, like radii, losing themselves in the darkness. The hum of the motors was soporific, and he became too lethargic to dream. (231)

In a somewhat ouroboric fashion, the increased demand for electricity as cities grew and increased demand for petroleum-based transportation during the First World War has had a direct impact on Chal's personal wealth, and thus his ability to leave the reservation, fund his own education and become a pilot. The increased demand for oil has enabled a fossil-fuelled automobility for Chal, allowing him to find a brief moment of happiness and serenity, but it is a happiness and serenity that is borne out of being as physically far removed from the actual physicalities of oil extraction as possible, away from the impact zone of the Osage reservation.

Chal's difficulty with processing his emotions and his ability to subsequently express himself has been touched upon by scholars who have written about *Sundown* in varying contexts.[167] It becomes more pronounced when he leaves the Army and returns to Kihekah in the third and final act of the novel. This act is speckled with

[167] See Hunter (1982), Musiol (2012) , Synder (2008).

moments where raw emotion break through, but in response Chal sinks further into his tumultuous relationship with alcohol, often abusing it as an emotional crutch. In one such scene, he takes a drive with a friend, seeking a 'beautiful spot' where he 'used to ride to a round hole of water with elms arching above it; elms in which the prairie breezes talked eternally' (250). Upon reaching the creek, Chal makes an unpleasant discovery:

> Several black wells stood about on the prairie above the trees and from each a path of sterile brown earth led down to the creek, where oil and salt water had killed every blade of grass and exposed the glaring limestone. Some of the elms had been cut down, and the surface of the water had an iridescent scum on it.
>
> Chal stopped the car and with his hands on the wheel looked. A feeling of unhappiness came over him and the alcohol that warmed to inspiration, to obstinacy, to remembered beauty, now caused him to feel a deep anger; a helpless anger which became bitter, injured innocence as he looked.
>
> ...
>
> The next morning, for the first time in the experience of his hip-pocket flask, dances, and drinking parties, he wanted more whisky. He felt that he must have a drink. (250-1)

Just as the explosion at the gas well illustrated the lack of control over the natural landscape that extractive promotions such as *The Driller* tried to belie, the real cost of oil extraction is brought to bear for Chal in the severe degradation of the landscape that once brought him such joy in childhood. The sterility of the scene connects with what Stephanie LeMenager has termed 'the spectre of the irreversible', here evident in

the permanent loss of the elms and grass and the oil-slicked scum coating the surface of the creek. The spectre of the irreversible interrupts the promise of petromodern ebullience, undoing its fantasy of temporal reversibility whereby 'the damage wrought by technoscience can be undone'.[168]

In *Sundown*, Chal remains largely at the periphery of the events of the Reign of Terror. He leaves the reservation as a young man and returns when the events that come to characterise the Reign of Terror are drawing to a close, but he is largely not exposed to them, instead occasionally hearing rumours and stories. Towards the final chapters of the novel, when he learns from White Deer that the death of his childhood friend Running Elk was actually homicide at the hands of white men, Chal is 'impressed by White Deer's story', and wonders whether 'White Deer imagined this or if white men were really killing the Big Hills for some purpose' (272), as if he is unable to process the immensity of the knowledge being offered to him. This kind of traumatic knowing/not-knowing is an extension of the narratological performance conducted across the majority of the novel toward oil extraction and its effects. For Chal, the experience of being caught up in the Great Frenzy creates ruptures in his sense of identity and knowledge of the world, which in turn connects to his inability to adequately express himself. The novel is rich with historical context regarding the discovery of oil and its wider implications for the Osage, but due to Chal's personal experiences living through these changes, the story cannot be told in a recuperative manner. Though the novel has its moments where the environmental degradation of oil extraction is made explicit, *Sundown* reflects the ambivalent entanglements which characterise the Osage-oil relationship.

[168] Stephanie LeMenager, 'The Aesthetics of Petroleum after Oil!', *American Literary History,* Vol. 24, No. 1, 2012, 65.

CHAPTER 2

LINDA HOGAN'S *MEAN SPIRIT* (1990)

'Gas rumbled under the ground like earth complaining through an open mouth, moaning and sometimes roaring with rage.'[169]

...

A note on naming:

I use a combination of Ho-tah-moie and John Stink throughout this chapter to refer to the same person. As a general rule, I use John Stink to refer to Hogan's fictional character in Mean Spirit, and Ho-tah-moie to refer to the 'real life' person Ho-tah-moie. Ho-tah-moie (or Rolling Thunder) was his Osage name, whilst John Stink was the name more often used by white people to refer to him.

In contrast to Mathews' ambivalence about the advent of oil for the Osage, Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan sees oil as uncompromisingly devastating for the Osage and their lands. This chapter focuses on Hogan's 1990 novel, *Mean Spirit,* by exploring it in two parts: the first is concerned with monsters, and the second, longer section, with ghosts. These sections are loosely inspired by the structure of *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (2017), a two-sided trans-disciplinary anthology about living on an earth under threat of environmental catastrophe. The anthology centres on two key figures in the 'more-than-human' anthropocene–monsters and ghosts, or, as the *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*

[169] Linda Hogan, *Mean Spirit,* Ivy Books, 1990. All references to *Mean Spirit* in this chapter are from this edition and featured parenthetically within the text.

contributors term it, 'the wonders and terrors of an unintended epoch.'[170] I argue here that monsters and ghosts of this kind similarly reside in Hogan's *Mean Spirit* (1990), a novel situated on Osage lands in a time and place when oil-induced environmental destruction was finding its first foothold in the early twentieth century.

The first section of this chapter focuses on Hogan's frequent depictions in *Mean Spirit* of the destructive impact oil extraction wrought on Osage lands and people during this period. In reading of Hogan's novel, I draw on Achille Mbembe's notion of necropolitics to explore the ways in which, for Hogan, oil extraction is a form of necropower, marked by the monstrous and vampiric processes of oil culture. Mbembe offers the term necropower to describe 'contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death', referring to the various ways in which modern weapons of war are deployed 'in the interest of the maximum destruction of persons'.[171] Moreover, Mbembe argues that these weapons create '*death-worlds,* new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living-dead*.'[172] Drawing Mbembe into conversation with Indigenous theorists of land and sovereignty, Glen Sean Coulthard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, I argue that the concept of necropower, or, more literally, death-energy, can be expanded to include oil itself. The colonial imposition of a necropowered death-world created by oil extraction, advanced by monstrous agents such as John Hale, and inhabited by those confined within the status of the living-dead

[170] Taken from the publisher's webpage for the collection. 'Arts of Living on Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene', University of Minnesota Press, 2017. Accessed via [https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/arts-of-living-on-a-damaged-planet].
[171] Achille Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture,* Duke University Press, Vol. 15, No. 1, Winter 2003, 40. Emphasis copied from original text.
[172] Ibid., 40.

such as John Stink, thus has a particular resonance for Hogan's literary representation of oil in *Mean Spirit*.

But beyond the symbolic logics of the monstrous and the vampiric in Hogan's work, the ghost that takes up residence in the second section of this chapter has had an uncanny and persistent literary afterlife beyond his historical existence and outside of Hogan's text. This ironically rather more corporeal figure, is that of John Stink, based on a real-life Osage man named Ho-tah-moie. I note that the history of the Osage and their relationship to oil has been explored more recently through invocations of Ho-tah-moie by two white writers with markedly different approaches that still result in similar conclusions. Alongside Hogan's representation of Ho-tah-moie, therefore, I read Robert F. Turpin's collection of short fiction, *Forgotten Ghost Tales and Legends of the Old West*, and Michael Wallis's 2014 non-fiction *Oil Man: The Story of Frank Phillips and the Birth of Phillips Petroleum* as evidence of the discursive afterlife of colonialism. I demonstrate that while colonising discourses are alive and well in the representation of Osage histories, Hogan's character can be read as a counternarrative to such accounts. Where Turpin reinscribes a white supremacist version of the 'Wild West' across the majority of his works, Wallis chooses to put oilman Frank Phillips of Phillip's Petroleum front and centre in the story of the Reign of Terror. Both Turpin and Wallis erase the destruction that oil extraction effected on Ho-tah-moie and by extension the lives of those around him. By contrast, Hogan's depiction of John Stink illustrates the strength of familial Osage bonds and demonstrates the importance of Indigenous voices in storytelling by and about Indigenous peoples and their histories. The specifics of historical and chronological accuracy of Ho-tah-moie's 'real life' are not my primary concern here with any of the accounts, but rather I seek to trace his afterlife in the

variations in framing and rhetoric employed across these accounts in order to manifest the kinds of agency or erasure that these frames enable. In the concluding section of the chapter, I examine the unquiet deaths, the reburials and resurrections of Hogan's characters as different modalities of haunting in the text in order to tease out the manner in which oil culture has effected slippages between life and death.

Monsters: John Hale and the symbolic logic of vampire capitalism

Oil is death made manifest: the product of millions of years of organic decomposition, composed of thousands of bodies, both human and non-human. That is not to say that oil is therefore inherently bad or evil; rather, when oil is extracted from the earth, death is made into fuel, and then into energy, into power. Hence, my application of Mbembe's term *necropower*. In this context, I refer to *power* in a dualistic sense, both literally and conceptually; it refers to both the extraction and usage of oil as a fuel which literally powers society *and* the more abstract social, economic, and environmental political power gained via multiple forms of extractivism. I conceptualise a death-world as another instantiation of what is sometimes referred to as an extraction or impact zone; land that is located immediately around material sites of resource extraction and thus directly affected by it. Here, specifically, the land that has become a death-world, marked by extraction in its various forms, is Osage land, as conceptualised by Hogan in *Mean Spirit*.

Hogan's position on the extraction of oil from Osage lands is repeatedly made clear over the course of the text. Oil is depicted as the earth's blood, and to extract it is to invite a curse. Towards the end of the novel, Belle Graycloud visits Tar Town, looking for her missing grandson, Ben. '[A] settlement of the dispossessed', Tar Town is a

fringe shantytown, 'an extension of the black and destroyed land', where 'the banks were black from oil seepages' and the air is full of sickness and despair (274). There, Belle observes that '[p]ain has a way of changing the body. Human skin became something else, a wall, a membrane between the worlds of creation and destruction' (274). For Hogan, when oil is taken from the earth, when blood is removed from the body, when skin is torn and broken by drills and pipes and gas explosions, that membrane between creation and destruction breaks. It is here, in this 'miserable underworld' (275), where destruction is writ large across the land, in that *death-world* inhabited by those confined within the status the *living-dead*, settler-colonialism and its agents are monstrous. In this chapter, I consider the machinations of those settler-colonial agents who extract and profit from that imposed death-world, and explore the experiences and consequences of inhabiting in a death-world, for both human and non-human inhabitants.

Glen Sean Coulthard writes that the relationship between Indigenous peoples and land is defined not only as a struggle *for* land but also 'deeply informed *by* land' as a 'system of reciprocal relations and obligations'. He terms this relationship 'grounded normativity'; 'a place-based foundation of Indigenous decolonial thought' which teaches that our relationships to one another and to the natural world should be defined by non-exploitative and non-dominating terms.[173] Leanne Simpson, writing about Nishnaabeg epistemologies, advocates for 'a reclamation of land as pedagogy', arguing that 'Indigenous education is not Indigenous or education…unless it comes

[173] Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition,* University of Minnesota Press, 2014, 13.

through the land.'[174] Hogan establishes broadly Indigenous cosmological understandings of land from the outset of *Mean Spirit*. Within the first five pages, we are introduced to Lila Blanket, described as a river prophet, 'a listener to the voice of water, a woman who interpreted the river's story for her people' (5). Lila listens to the Blue River, which tells her that 'the white world was going to infringe on the peaceful Hill People' (5) and she passes the river's information to her tribe.

In the novel, the Hill People are practitioners of an Indigenous cosmology that is both informed *by* and *with* the land, and the extraction of oil is directly destructive to their way of life. The Hill People are a small group of Osages whose settlement is located away from the urban centre, and who, as Kathryn Erickson has contended, serve as catalysts for the central characters' later reconnection with ancient traditions and the environment.[175] Hogan's frequent allusions to oil extraction being akin to feeding on the lifeblood of the earth are unwavering throughout *Mean Spirit*. At the extraction sites, the vivid descriptions of the earth's suffering make for uncomfortable reading:

> Even from there, they could see the derricks out at the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company. Landless men labored out there. They worked for John Hale, the oilman, who kept watch over them in their steel-toe boots as they pulled the great chains back and forth and, inch by inch, drove the pipes down and into the earth. The sound of metal grated against metal out there. Gas rumbled under the ground like earth complaining through an open mouth, moaning and sometimes roaring with rage. (148)

[174] Leanne Simpson, 'Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2014, 9.
[175] Kathryn Erikson, 'Silence, Absence, and Mystery in Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit*, *Solar Storms,* and *Power*', unpublished Master's thesis, University of Central Florida, 2006, 5.

The earth is in chains, its torture deafening, its suffering palpable and anthropomorphised. The extraction of oil is directly comparable to the extraction and draining of blood from a body, a vampiric notion in which capitalism is implicated. Those labouring for such suffering are described as 'landless men'; synonymous with being faceless or soulless. In contrast to the Indigenous epistemology outlined by Simpson and Coulthard, where the land itself is education and knowledge, the labourers' absent connection to the land is what enables them to destroy it more easily. By contrast the Hill People, characterised by their unbroken connection to their ancestral lands and their dedication to preserving that connection, are repulsed by the sight of oil. From the Hill people's perspective, the 'discovery' of oil represents the future destruction of the earth. They do not want to be around 'the broken earth's black blood and its pain' (229), evidenced by their desperate attempt to block the seepage when oil bubbles up into the stream on Graycloud land.

Hogan emphasises Indigenous proximity to the physical wellbeing of the earth, caretakers of its bones and blood. Peace at the Hill People's settlement is described as a 'silence' that 'went deep down into the fiery bones of the earth' (253) whilst Moses Graycloud hears the drum from the peyote tepee as akin to 'the beating of the earth's pulse' (72). The extraction of the earth's blood, that sound of metal grating against metal, is thereby a form of double-violence, whereby the earth's suffering is shared by the Indigenous people bound to it, who are also experiencing other compounded kinds of violence as a result of settler-colonialism driven by the same desires for profit. At the end of the novel, Michael Horse writes '[t]he land is ravaged and covered with scars, and so are the broken people.' (341)

The connection that the Osage characters in the novel have with the land – an understanding of themselves as part of an ecosystem that unites all living beings – is unlike the logic that drives the settler conflation between Osage oil and Osage people.[176] Settlers treat land and people as things to be exploited, whilst Hogan's representation of the relationship between Indigenous people and land is reciprocal; one of obligations and responsibilities. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, settler thinking about the connection between Indigenous peoples and their lands had generally evolved from earlier paradigms which functioned to sever that vitalising connection for the purpose of settler land acquisition.[177] The twentieth century settler-colonial approach continued to deny Indigenous rights to the land by making them 'ideologically vanish as human beings', in order to instead construct Indigenous people as a natural resource that could be 'developed' and reduced to a commodity to be exploited. This move from a logic of elimination to a logic of exploitation (to borrow Patrick Wolfe's not uncontested terms[178]) is an aspect of oil culture that carries through into the present – it is a resource-driven culture motivated by profiteering and engaged in environmental destruction - and the violation of Indigenous rights to personhood, land, and sovereignty. And within *Mean Spirit*, the harbinger of oil culture is John Hale.

John Hale, inspired by real-life convicted murderer and self-professed 'King of the Osages' William Hale, is described by Hogan as 'a lanky white man who wore a

[176] Alix Casteel, 'Dark Wealth in Mean Spirit', *Studies in American Indian Literature*, Series 2, Vol. 5, No. 3, Fall 1994, 50.
[177] Ibid.
[178] See Francesca Merlan – 'Reply to Patrick Wolfe', *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 1997, pp-10-19. Merlan critiques Wolfe's position for being too binary, contesting that Wolfe's ontology of continuous logic means that settler colonialism is therefore 'impervious to agency and event', making it difficult to find entry points for Indigenous agency and difference.

grey Stetson hat', who had been a rancher in Indian territory before investing in the oil business (22). Hale keeps a steady watch over his oil fields, over that 'great pulling of chains and driving of pipes' (148). Early in the novel Hale is described as having 'lived among Indians since he was a boy, and they knew and trusted him' (54). During Hale's days as a cattle rancher, he 'had hired Indian men to help him cut, burn, and clear their own land' (54). Hogan elaborates,

> He introduced new grasses, and they swept over the earth, the bluegrass, which fattened cattle quickly, and the Johnson grass, that had roots so strong they spirited away the minerals and water from the other trees and plants, leaving tracts of land barren-looking. Moses Graycloud called it "Hale Grass". (54)

Oil is not the only substance that Hale has extracted from the land. Minerals and water have also been 'spirited' away–the land is quite literally being sucked dry of life by 'Hale Grass', an alien vegetation species introduced into the ecosphere–and as a result the land has become barren. Hale's introduction of the foreign grasses which 'swept over the earth' becomes a direct metaphor for colonial settlement. Moses's identification of the grass as Hale Grass, which is later amended to Hell Grass, both exposes and ironises the imperial inscription of European names onto Indigenous lands as part of the acquisition process.

Hale feeds on the oil-blood of the land and also on the water and minerals. His endeavours as a capitalist entrepreneur–via oil extraction or cattle ranching–both rely on some form of 'sucking dry'. As opposed to the literal vampires of Stoker's *Dracula* or Meyer's *Twilight,* Hale can be configured as an agent of economic and environmental vampirism. Reading Hale as a vampiric figure that draws from the life and blood of the

land enables Hogan's readers to better understand the operations and processes of settler colonialism and the actions of its local agents to desiccate Indigenous peoples and places. Hale is a figure of corruption and pollution, and his role as harbinger of a budding twentieth-century oil culture challenges and threatens Indigenous ways of life. As Rebecca Tillett points out in her essay on Navajo-Laguna novelist Aaron Carr's vampire novel *Eye Killers* (1995), contagion, corruption, and pollution are all traits typically associated with the undead. Tillett contends that these are all 'traits comparable to the excesses, lack of conscience, and lack of humanity exhibited by corporate resource exploitation'.[179] Hale's metaphoric monstrosity is made literal by his connection to the extractive processes of oil culture.

Configuring Hale as an agent of oil culture by extension makes him an agent of necropower. Not only does he have a direct hand in the creation of the death-world that grips Osage lands, he also consciously takes advantage of its wider machinations. At multiple points throughout the story, Hale reduces the lives of Osage people to bargaining chips, trading in life and death in order to further his own goal to amass an oil wealth that does not belong to him. There is one scene in particular which demonstrates the ways in which Hale takes advantage of the necropolitical environment that the Osage characters are bound up in – historically accurate circumstances which affected real Osage (and other Indigenous) people in the 1920s.

In a short scene, Hale makes a deal with an older Osage man named Walker. Walker owes Hale a debt which he cannot pay, so Hale persuades Walker to let Hale take life insurance out on him. 'That way, he told the older man, he could collect [the

[179] Rebecca Tillett, '"Your Story Reminds Me of Something": Spectacle and Speculation in Aaron Carr's *Eye Killers*', *ARIEL – A Review of International English Lit,* Vol. 33, No. 1, 2002, 162.

debt] later when Walker died, and he'd call it even for now.' (65) Hale gets the local doctor, Benjamin Black, to sign off on the paperwork declaring Walker to be 'healthy as a horse' (65). Inevitably, Hale arranges Walker's death a short while later, paying Mardy, 'a rough-looking young man whose pink scalp was visible beneath his thin, wheat-colored hair' (96) to murder Walker in exchange for a luxury black Buick. Hale lies to Mardy about Walker being suicidal and convinces Mardy that killing Walker would be 'a kindness to the poor unhappy Indian who wanted so much to die and be put out of his lonely, unhappy life.' (96) Mardy does not require much convincing, quickly casting brief thoughts of Walker aside in favour of imagining himself driving the Buick, which 'rides like a dream.' (96) Mardy's ease in accepting what is essentially a contract killing in exchange for a luxury automobile simultaneously speaks to the wider systemic and socially acceptable dismissal of Indigenous people's right to life and serves as a metaphor for the real cost of Indigenous lives in exchange for gas-guzzling cars.

Hogan points to two oppressive and interconnected necropolitical systems that Hale takes knowingly takes advantage of in order to profit from killing Walker–the federal guardianship policy and jurisdictional constraints. Two realities frame the insurance scene in Dr. Black's office, one at the beginning and one at the end. At the beginning, we learn that 'Walker owed Hale for three breeding horses and some cattle, but because Walker was a full-blood Indian and did not receive the full amount of his annuity, he couldn't pay off the debt' (65). The novel is referring here to the 'real world' guardianship program that was put in place in 1921 by the federal government to stop Osage people lavishly spending their annuities, whereby Osage with half or more Indigenous ancestry were declared legally incompetent and assigned a local white

businessman or lawyer as a guardian to manage their affairs. At the end of the scene in Dr. Black's office, we learn that Dr. Black is already suspicious of Hale. Prior to this meeting with Walker, Dr. Black has written a concerned letter to Washington, but 'D.C. had told him there wasn't enough evidence. And it was outside their jurisdiction' (66). The federal government thus enacts necropower as 'more than the Foucauldian idea of the right to kill but rather the right to *expose* people to the possibility of death; in other words, not to *make* someone die but to *let* them'.[180] Understanding the operations of necropower in this scene illuminates the compounded ways in which Walker is being *allowed* to die–he cannot pay his debts, making him vulnerable; those that already suspect he is in danger cannot act upon it; those that should be primarily concerned with his welfare are knowingly signing legal documents which are all but condemning him to death. Hale is acutely aware of the ways in which Walker has been confined within the status of *living dead,* since he has done this before to other Osages–Dr. Black observes that '[t]he last two Indians who had died had insurance policies. One of them named Hale as a beneficiary. And Hale had a lien on the property of the other one.' (66)

In his 2011 publication *Monsters of the Market*, David McNally claims that we live in an age of monsters.[181] *Monsters of the Market* analyses the rise of global capitalism and mass consumption through the lens of the grotesque, drawing on Marx's consistent use of monster metaphors to investigate narratives such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and the rise of popular vampire tropes. 'The very

[180] Thom Davies, 'Toxic Space and Time: Slow Violence, Necropolitics, and Petrochemical Pollution', *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, Vol. 108, No. 6, 2018, 1540.
[181] David McNally, *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires, and Global Capitalism,* Haymarket Books, 2012, 1.

insidiousness of the capitalist grotesque has to be with its invisibility',[182] argues McNally. The essential monstrosity of capitalism has become naturalised and normalised 'via its colonization of the fabric of every-day life'. McNally goes on to argue for the need of 'disruptive fables of modernity' that will 'disturb the naturalization of capitalism…by insisting that something strange, indeed life-threatening, is at work in our world'.[183] Hogan's *Mean Spirit* is a primary example of McNally's 'disruptive fables' – it utilises the symbolic logics of vampire capitalism to force its readers to question and identify that which is monstrous, challenging readers to view oil culture itself as essentially and inescapably monstrous; indeed something 'strange' and 'life-threatening'. Characters in the text inhabit a necropowered death-world created by settler colonialism and advanced by oil extraction, acting either as monstrous agents who leech from the land and people, or as those confined within the status of living-dead. *Mean Spirit* reminds us that the histories of modern oil culture are fundamentally inextricable from the necropolitical histories of capitalism and settler colonialism.

Ghosts: Ho-tah-moie and the discursive afterlife of colonialism

On April 18th, 1937, journalist Marshall L. Smith published an article for local Oklahoman newspaper *Tulsa World*. In the article, Smith discussed the life of 'Osage Indian recluse', Ho-tah-moie (Rolling Thunder), otherwise known as John Stink. Smith reported that a woman named Eunice W. Stabler and her children had come to know Ho-tah-moie well after Stabler was assigned to care for him in his old age. 'They found that the recluse who had been reported as hopelessly morose, suspicious, vengeful

[182] McNally, 2.
[183] McNally, 5

and slight of understanding', wrote Smith, 'was really likeable, appreciative and friendly. The myth of John Stink's death had been made up by Indians; the myth of his inveterate savagery was made up by white people.'[184] The 'distorted yarn' reportedly spread by white people 'told that he carried knives and was regarded as murderous; that he had sworn vengeance on all whites', and 'lived in the rocks and had no human contacts.'[185] In his article, Smith laments the persistence of the 'white people's myth', comparing it to 'moonshine [that] so many amateurs have dished up.'[186]

Smith's concerns about the persistence of the white folks' 'distorted yarn' remain pertinent in the twenty-first century. There are two versions of Ho-tah-moie's story published in the last decade that reproduce the white racialised myth more than eighty years after Smith's article in *Tulsa World*. The first is semi-fictional short story 'The Walking Dead Man' (2013) by Robert F. Turpin, and the second is an account featured in the biography *Oil Man: The Story of Frank Phillips and the Birth of Phillips Petroleum* (2014) by popular historian Michael Wallis. I argue here that both Turpin and Wallis draw on a dehistoricised caricature, a static stereotype of a Wild West Indian, reproducing what was already recognised as racialised language in the period that Ho-tah-moie was alive. The continued haunting of literary discourse by the white mythological version of Ho-tah-moie in the present day demonstrates the discursive afterlife of colonialism that belies any designation of the prefix 'post.' This literary afterlife both constitutes an ongoing colonisation of Osage peoples and their stories

[184] Marshall L. Smith, 'John Stink Fiction on Upgrade', *Tulsa World,* April 18, 1937. Accessed via a digital scan from the Osage Agency correspondence in the National Archives at Fort Worth [https://m.facebook.com/nationalarchivesfortworth/photos/archives-and-john-stink-does-the-name-ho-tah-moie-sound-familiar-probably-not-bu/1269686366385842/]
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.

and evidences a market interested in the reaffirmation of white readers' ideas of Indigenous peoples and their stories.

In his collection of short stories *Forgotten Ghost Tales and Legends of the Old West,* Turpin provides the most egregious colonising account of Ho-tah-moie's story. *Forgotten Ghost Tales* is one of over twenty books in Turpin's oeuvre, which also features titles such as *Stormwalker: Cherokee Avenger* (2012), *Blood for Blood: Wild West Legends of Revenge* (2013), and *The Tragic Life of Olive Oatman: Apache Captive* (2015). Turpin's texts take up an imperialist tradition within US literary culture that has justified colonial ambition both inside and beyond its borders since the Revolution; a literary tradition that John Carlos Rowe has argued is contingent on the 'savagery' of Native and African Americans in restricting the definition and meaning of American national identity whilst maintaining certain hierarchies of race, class, and gender.[187]

'Ghosts – and in particular, the ghosts of Indians' writes Colleen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush, 'have been an important element in colonial fantasy ever since Europeans [...] first arrived in North America'.[188] Boyd and Thrush argue that some Euro-American ghost stories feature Native ghosts as a means of harnessing real Indigenous beliefs about the dead and subsequently recasting those beliefs as irrational superstition that 'must give way, like the believers themselves, to rational "progress"'.[189] Turpin's 'The Walking Dead Man' is a prime example of this kind of colonial ghost story. Turpin prefaces *Forgotten Ghost Tales* with the sweeping claim that 'Native American Indians'

[187] John Carlos Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: From the Revolution to World War II,* Oxford University Press, 2000, 9-14.
[188] Colleen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush, 'Introduction: Bringing Ghosts to Ground', *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History,* University of Nebraska Press, 2011, viii.
[189] Ibid., ix.

have ‘suspicious minds’ and ‘lively imaginations’, and that their ‘fear of the paranormal was a natural born curse’.[190] This ‘curse’ was ‘the main reason why most of them would not, or did not, search for wealth buried long ago by their ancestors’ and meant that they ‘were also afraid to tell anyone else for fear these folks would be harmed or killed by some terrible beast or monster from the dark side, or an angry ghost guarding the treasure’. At the very least, Turpin’s preface provides us with a clear understanding of his colonising position on Indigenous people and their agency (the title alone claims these stories are ‘forgotten’–presumably by the coloniser and not the colonised) which frames his version of Ho-tah-moie’s story.

‘The Walking Dead Man’ opens with an unproblematised racial and gendered slur. ‘The entire Indian camp was suddenly plunged into a state of turmoil and panic’, he writes, ‘squaws grabbed their children and hid in their tepees in fear. The old men and young braves paled in astonishment.’[191] Here Turpin employs the tired gendered and racialised dichotomy of meek and superstitious Indian women and Indian male ‘braves’. In Turpin’s subsequent relaying of the story of Ho-tah-moie, familiar aspects are present: Ho-tah-moie ‘dies’ and is resurrected but contracts tuberculosis and lives at the fringes of society. However, as is common in all retellings of Ho-tah-moie’s life, events are told in a different order with some creative flourishes added in. Turpin disdainfully relays how Ho-tah-moie’s government overseer had ‘built the Indian a nice log house’ with his newly acquired oil money, but Ho-tah-moie refused to sleep in it. [192]

[190] Robert F. Turpin, ‘The Walking Dead Man’, *Forgotten Ghost Tales and Legends of the Old West’*, 2013, np.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Hollis Stabler’s brief account of Ho-tah-moie’s life claims that Ho-tah-moie’s head-right executor was eventually dismissed after a visiting Sioux reported Ho-tah-moie’s condition to the Indian agent on the reservation. *No One Ever Asked Me: The World War II Memoirs of an Omaha Indian Soldier,* University Of Nebraska Press, 2005.

Ho-tah-moie admired 'new-fangled automobiles' as 'gadgets' but fearfully ran from them when the engine started. He 'hated all white people'. Finally, Turpin assures his readers that Ho-tah-moie at least 'remembered the teachings of the priests that came to the Osage village, and always carried a rosary given to him by one of them' and that he 'was not the monster Osage squaws scared their children with.'[193]

Interestingly, Turpin refers to Ho-tah-moie being camera shy, as there were only three photographs ever taken of him. The only surviving photograph, according to Turpin, was 'taken by a newspaper and used with an article on Stink many years ago'. It is entirely likely that Turpin is referring to the same *Tulsa World* article discussed at the beginning of this chapter, which features a black-and-white photograph of Ho-tah-moie sitting on a bench and facing the camera. If he is indeed referring to the *Tulsa World* article, Turpin's account of Ho-tah-moie is made all-the-more flagrant, since it implies that he is well-aware of Smith's protestations as far back as 1934 towards the persistence of white folks' false mythologising. By referring to the real photograph in Smith's article, Turpin claims a kind of historical legitimacy in his retelling of Ho-tah-moie's story.

Comparable colonising rhetoric and language is similarly employed in popular historian Michael Wallis' 2014 biography of oil industrialist Frank Phillips. In 1917, Frank Phillips and his brother Lee Eldas (L.E.) Phillips incorporated Phillips Petroleum in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Wallis' tagline for his 'rich, rousing' biography of Phillips states that it 'captures the life and times of an American hero and the birth of the modern oil empire he created'. With this explicit framing in mind, Wallis' version of Ho-tah-moie's life in the subsequent text functions as a means to erase Osage agency and

[193] Turpin, np.

dignity, serving to re-present the legacy of exploitation in Osage County as a success for Frank Phillips.

Wallis introduces his version of Ho-tah-moie by first criticising the ways in which the Osage spent the oil wealth accrued from their headrights. '[The Osage] squandered their newfound wealth as if there was no tomorrow'[194], writes Wallis, before offering a list of big-ticket items bought by some Osages to illustrate the point. Tellingly, Wallis does not afford the same critical stance to Phillips' own ostentatious displays of wealth. By Osage historian Carter Revard's account in *Family Matters, Tribal Affairs* (1998), Phillips was known for owning 'live water buffaloes and American bison and wapiti and peacocks and swans and parrots and macaws and such'[195] at his lodge. Another famous oil baron, E. W. Marland, built a twenty-two-room mansion in Ponca City, before promptly abandoning it for a fifty-five-room mansion with a golf course, a ballroom with a gold-leaf ceiling, and an elevator lined with buffalo skin.[196] The 'Roaring Twenties' is a well-known period in US history marked by extravagance and lavish spending. During this decade, 'Americans were less and less inclined to live by the ethnic and thrift of their forebears had preached' writes Alexandra Harmon in *Rich Indians* (2010); '[m]illions bought such erstwhile luxuries as pianos, household appliances, silk stockings, rayon shirts and dresses, cosmetics, and automobiles.'[197] Despite this, '[c]ommentators had various ways of insinuating that rich Osages did not belong in the same category with other wealthy people [...] Critics reflexively construed Osage consumption as improvidence because improvidence was a deficiency

[194] Michael Wallis, *Oil Man: The Story of Frank Phillips and the Birth of Phillips Petroleum*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2014, 150.
[195] Carter Revard, *Family Matters, Tribal Affairs*, The University of Arizona Press, 1998, 7.
[196] David Grann, *Killers of the Flower Moon: Oil, Money, Murder and the Birth of the FBI,* Simon & Schuster, 2017, 77.
[197] Alexandra Harmon, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in America,* The University of North Carolina Press, 2010, 174.

expected of Indians.'[198] Wallis' uncritical reiteration of the profligate Osage provides a counterpoint for his subsequent account of Ho-tah-moie, since by Wallis' estimations, 'he was one of those least affected by the curse of oil'.[199]

As is common across the various accounts, Wallis' version features the usual significant events in Ho-tah-moie's life, again in a comparatively different order. There are two variations in Wallis' retelling that are of particular significance; Frank Phillips' influence over Ho-tah-moie's life, and the moral that Wallis brings to bear on the Osages as whole from Ho-tah-moie's story. In Wallis' account, after rising from the dead, contracting scrofula, and being shunned by his tribe, Ho-tah-moie's luck changes with specific thanks to Frank Phillips;

> [t]he reclusive Indian became very wealthy when oil was found in the Osage and he was awarded his share of the royalties. Frank Phillips drilled producing oil wells on the Indian's land and bags of letters poured in, many containing money and attention. But Stink ignored the money and attention…he continued to sleep in his crude log cabin.[200]

The kind of letters Ho-tah-moie would have received from white settlers often had an underlying motive to them beyond just seeking to lavish money and attention on wealthy Osages. In *Mean Spirit,* Hogan gestures to the real motivation behind the letters many Osages received from settlers during this period. Osage water-diviner and watcher of the tribe's sacred flame, Michael Horse receives a letter in kind from a white man. The letter openly regards wealthy Osages as business investments and offers Horse financial compensation for finding him a 'good Indian girl' to marry for her

[198] Ibid., 182-184.
[199] Wallis, 150.
[200] Ibid., 151.

wealth, preferably 'between 18-35 years of age, not a full blood…as near as white as possible' (34). The marrying of Osages by white settlers in order to acquire headrights to their land and vast oil fortunes was a major component in the exploitation of the tribe. An infamous murderous intermarriage plot was a fundamental component in Williams Hale's plan to acquire a number of headrights. In rejecting such letters, Wallis' version of Ho-tah-moie becomes virtuous figure, a moralising tale for the rest of the 'unsophisticated' Osage, who 'fell easy prey to the unscrupulous'. Wallis closes his account of Ho-tah-moie by claiming that '[m]ost of the Osage would have been better off if they had become hermits like John Stink.'[201]

While Wallis credits Frank Phillips for drilling producing oil wells and enriching the Osage in the process, Osage poet and author Carter Revard provides an interesting contrast to Wallis' depiction of the change that Phillips effected on people and land around him:

> [Frank Phillips] owned Woolaroc, down in the heart of the Osage Hills where there had always been a spring welling up, and he had brought several square miles of rolling blackjack-covered hills around that spring, dammed its hollow for a lake, built him a lodge, and brought back trophies from Africa […] and a skeleton of "an Indian who had died on the Trial of Tears" and lots of wonderful things from the Spiro Indian Mound here he had bought digging rights.[202]

It is easy to see how the transformations that Phillips enacted on the environment around him may not be viewed in a positive light from an Indigenous perspective. Revard's description invokes a monstrous, almost ogre-like image of Phillips–selfishly

[201] Ibid.
[202] Revard, 7.

damming a natural spring that 'had always been' to create a lake for his private lodge; a lodge grotesquely decorated with stolen funerary items and human bones. Whilst Wallis' centering of Frank Phillips fits within an autobiography of the man, the story of Ho-tah-moie and Osage oil–a story which Wallis ultimately offers as a moralising tale for 'unsophisticated' Osage–should not be written as a hagiography of a white man who exploited them for obscene profit. It illustrates that warped legacy of settler-colonialism attached to Ho-tah-moie's story remains alive and present a century later.

Hogan offers a counternarrative to the accounts of Ho-tah-moie provided by non-Indigenous writers like Turpin and Wallis. *Mean Spirit* is set in 1920s Oklahoma and is located in and around the Hill Indian's settlement and the nearby town of Watona. The story is primarily told through multiple perspectives which weave together fluidly between individual scenes. *Mean Spirit* does not have chapters; it is instead divided instead into two parts of roughly equal length and covers a timespan of roughly a year between 1922 and 1923. It is identifiably written in Hogan's style of 'spiritual realism', and is part-historical fiction, part-supernatural mystery.[203]

The novel begins with Lila Blanket, a river prophet of the Hill Indians, sending her daughter Grace to live with her cousin Moses Graycloud and his wife Belle. Lila receives a vision that the future of the tribe is in danger if they do not come to know the ways in which settler law and society is constructing and destructing Indigeneity. Grace, now an adult, has acclimatised to settler ways of living and become the richest

[203] François Gavillon uses the term 'spiritual realism' to contend that Hogan's noticeable blend of historical material and supernatural elements – evidenced in *Mean Spirit* through 'physiological alterations, natural and meteorological aberrations, two dead bodies rising from their graves' – is characteristic of her fiction. Hogan's spiritual realism is a 'special brand' of realism which 'effectively promotes the agency and loquacity of nature, and fosters a more empathetic form of reader's response, ultimately conducive to ecological awareness and care'. François Gavillon, 'Magical Realism, Spiritual Realism, and Ecological Awareness in Linda Hogan's *People of the Whale*', *ELOHI,* 3, 2013, pp. 41-56.

Osage in the area through her oil headrights. When out one day with Belle and Moses's young granddaughters, Nola and Rena, Grace is murdered by mysterious assailants driving a black Buick. Hiding nearby, Nola and Rena witness the murders douse Grace's body with whiskey and place a pistol in her hand, apparently emulating a suicide.

Grace's murder marks the beginning of a long string of unsolved murders that close in around the Graycloud family as the novel progresses. Since local authorities repeatedly dismiss the murders, Moses and his friend Michael Horse, writer and watcher of the tribe's sacred fire, pen a letter to the federal government requesting their assistance. A Sioux federal agent named Stace Red Hawk arrives to investigate and uncovers a tangled web of corruption, greed, and violence on an individual and state level, all of which leads back to one man: John Hale, local cattle rancher turned oil magnate, who has been systematically targeting Osages in order to obtain ownership over their headrights. Along the way, Red Hawk reconnects with his Sioux identity and the Grayclouds develop a closer bond with the Hill Indians. The novel ends with the Graycloud house exploding in a targeted attack, and the family deciding to leave town.

Alix Casteel has offered an analysis of the 'dark wealth' in *Mean Spirit*. Casteel provides comparative readings of John Stink alongside Nola Blanket, drawing attention to the gendered notions of fire and water in each character's representations. Casteel writes,

> Where the Blankets represent the culture of women, John Stink incarnates the ultimate in marooned alienation. Stink is a mute hermit who becomes a deaf

and mute ghost. This good-natured hermit is the silenced, walking dead of Indian nations.[204]

Whilst Stink's status as the 'walking dead', or living-dead, holds true for a large portion of the novel – he is persistently alienated by the majority of the characters, including Belle and her daughters – Hogan offers us ways to read Stink's story as one of active persistence and survivance.[205] 'Indigenous people are more than metaphors in the settler imagination, or silenced victims of removal', writes Boyd and Thrush, 'they are active participants in the shaping of uncanny narratives as a form of both resistance and persistence.'[206] Hogan's depiction of Stink and his journey throughout the novel illustrates Boyd and Thrush's assertions, providing the reader with a much-needed counternarrative of Ho-tah-moie's life in contrast to those that will be offered later by Wallis and Turpin.

Hogan's version is comparably similar to the other accounts of his life; Stink is a tall man that had grown mute from a childhood disease, shunned money, and lives above a golf course, away from other Osages. However, small details in *Mean Spirit* carry great significance, details which contribute to being able to read Stink as an active participant and contributor to the novel's overarching themes of Indigenous resistance and persistence. For Hogan, Stink's muteness is bound up in his agency since Stink 'no longer tried to communicate with anyone he didn't already know' (56). At one point, Stink decides that he is happier staying as mute after Moses and Horse attempt to teach him to write (56). Whilst non-Indigenous retellings can be eager to

[204] Casteel, 62.
[205] A term borrowed from Gerald Vizenor. Vizenor defines survivance as 'unmistakable in native stories', 'an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent…Survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry.' *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence,* University of Nebraska, 2008, 1.
[206] Boyd and Thrush, xi.

portray Ho-tah-moie as unwillingly isolated, socially and verbally, Hogan's version of Stink is content with and actively chooses to be non-verbal with his communication.

In *Mean Spirit,* Stink maintains familial connections with older members of the tribe, more often via one-on-one scenes or by accompanying other characters as they walk from place to place. These kinds of small but meaningful social interactions, located away from the bustling town, are the kinds of interactions that would go unnoticed to anyone outside his close-knit circle of friends, and indeed, outside of the tribe. In his 2005 memoir Hollis Stabler, an Omaha WWII veteran, recalls a personal childhood memory of Ho-tah-moie from 1932. Stabler's mother, Eunice – the same woman mentioned in the *Tulsa World* article from 1937 – had gotten a job caring for the elderly Ho-tah-moie, and the Stabler family lived with him in his 'wooden cabin on top of a big hill right across from a golf course.'[207] Hollis recalls, 'We kids called him uncle. […] He had ten or twelve dogs. Bob and I and my sister had names for them all.'[208] Though Stabler's single recollection here is brief, it nevertheless constitutes a humanising and familial claiming of Ho-tah-moie, akin to Hogan's depiction of him in *Mean Spirit*. Within the novel itself, there are two interactions in particular – between Stink and Lila Blanket, and Stink and Moses Graycloud – that merit a closer reading to unpack the subtle yet purposeful ways in which Hogan's version of Ho-tah-moie's can be read as a counternarrative to the settler narratives which still pervade the present day.

Through multiple narrative viewpoints, Hogan demonstrates that John Stink is well-liked, kind, and humorous. He is among the first handful of characters introduced in *Mean Spirit* and in his debut appearance he provides comfort and support to Lila

[207] Stabler, 14.
[208] Ibid., 15.

Blanket. After interpreting the wisdom offered to her by the Blue River as a river prophet and consulting with her tribe, Lila decides that the Hill Indians must send one of their children to live near the town of Watona, as the tribe's insularity has led to them being 'too far away from the Americans to know how their laws are cutting into our life' (6). Lila selects her own daughter Grace to move closer to the town and live with the Grayclouds, 'to learn about the white world', thereby giving the Hill Indians a chance to 'ward off [their] downfall'. (6) After embracing her daughter in farewell, Lila walks back to the Hill settlement, crying loudly 'all the way home, no matter who passed by or heard her.' (7) She is overheard by John Stink, who is introduced as 'an old Osage hermit', and upon hearing Lila's grief, 'took Lila's hand, and walked much of the way home with her.' (7) From the outset of the novel, Stink is a supportive, emotionally intelligent, and empathetic friend – markedly different to the less-than-favourable portrayals of Ho-tah-moie in non-Indigenous texts.

Stink's second appearance in *Mean Spirit* is on the first annuity payment day in the town. Well-dressed Osages come from all across the territory to the Indian Agency building in Watona to collect the royalties and interests accrued from oil and cattle leases. Moses Graycloud attends to collect royalties from the grazing leases issued on Graycloud lands; a payment of two thousand dollars that was 'minimal compared to the other Indians with oil,' but which 'kept his family in food and supplies.' (59) Moses presents his certificate of competency to the white Washington clerk along with his thumbprint and signature, and the clerk issues him two hundred dollars – only ten percent of what Moses is owed. Unbeknownst to Moses, the Indian Commission have changed the rules regarding payments to full-blood Indians. Moses calmly but firmly informs the clerk that the payment is incorrect, and almost in an instant the

atmosphere in the busy room changes. The other Osages in the room 'turned their eyes downward, feeling ashamed of something they couldn't even name' (62), knowing from 'history itself that it was a smart thing to keep silent on the affairs and regulations of Washington, to be as still and as invisible as possible' (63). 'Not an ounce of the anger he felt filtered into his voice' as Moses contests the changes, asking for further policy clarification. The clerk retaliates by threatening to declare Moses incompetent for daring to speak up. Benoit, another Osage standing in line for his payment and now close to tears, passionately voices his support for Moses in the deathly silent waiting room. Moses and Benoit decide to leave the Agency building, but not before a guard raises his rifle at the two men on their way out, believing Indians to be 'unschooled, ignorant people who knew nothing about life or money' (60).

Moses and Benoit are deeply affected by their encounter with the Washington clerk and guard. They are made to feel ashamed, belittled, and fearful for their lives, for daring to question a system that treats them 'like they were children and without a nickel's worth of intelligence' (61). Benoit turns to anger outside the Agency building and he stalks away, leaving Moses alone, his shoulders high and tight with anxiety. Moses's grief is at odds with the bustling streets around him, streets enlivened by 'cash and liquor [that] flowed like happiness' (63). Just as he fortuitously appeared in one of Lila's most difficult moments, Stink walks up behind Moses and 'placed one of his huge, warm hands on Moses's shoulder' (64). Moses smiles, knowing that it's Stink before even turning around. The pair converse whilst Stink feeds his dogs cookies, with Stink making signs with his hands that Moses understands. Moses cracks a joke about the dogs and Stink 'threw back his head and laughed, as he often did' (64) and together they set off for the encampment at the top of the hill.

In conjunction with his earlier appearance in Lila's scene, Stink appears in the novel just when two older members of the tribe need him most, as if he is spiritually attuned to the emotional needs of the Osages around him. Stink is portrayed as something of a benign spirit, miraculously turning up when he is most needed. This directly undermines familiar racialised and gendered tropes of those stoic Indian 'braves' that Turpin appeals to in his account of Ho-tah-moie, contrasting the 'myth of his inveterate savagery…made up by white people.'[209] Hogan's presentation of Stink is instead closer to the man the sparse historical record suggests he was; likeable, appreciative, and friendly. In this way, Hogan enacts a reclamation of Ho-tah-moie's personhood and humanity from the harmful racialised tropes employed by non-Indigenous writers, thereby creating a micro-story of resistance and persistence within the wider frame of the novel.

Unquiet deaths: burial and resurrection

In *Mean Spirit,* Lila Blanket is the only Osage character to pass away from natural causes; she is implied to have died from old age, before the Great Frenzy grips the tribe. As is true to history, the novel features a number of tragic moments where Osage people are murdered by settlers seeking access to their wealth and lands – Grace, Sara, Benoit, Walker, John Thomas, Ruth – all denied the right to die peacefully or naturally on their own terms. And even in death, these Osages are not permitted to rest, as their gravesites are persistently under threat of being robbed and desecrated by looters. Several days after Grace's funeral, Ona Neck, elderly Osage woman and

[209] Marshall L. Smith, 'John Stink Fiction on Upgrade', *Tulsa World,* April 18, 1937.

keeper (along with Michael Horse) of the tribe's sacred fire, notices a loud cawing of crows circling above the graveyard near her house. Upon investigating, she discovers that Grace's grave has already been desecrated and looted; a 'hideous sight' (42) that makes Ona feel faint. Grace's casket has been upended and opened, and the angel that marked Grace's resting place has been overturned, its 'west-pointing arm pointing straight up to the sky' (42). Ona notices that '[n]othing remained, not the body of Grace, not the beads, gold, not even the medicines that had been buried inside the coffin for the woman's journey to the other world.' (42) Days later, when Moses and Benoit are queued in the Agency building to receive their annuity payments, Grace's name is mistakenly read out by one of the clerks. Hogan describes how,

> For a silent moment, everyone half expected to see the beautiful, black-haired Grace walk out of the throng of people [...] They missed her. Just hearing her name reminded them. Also, word had gotten out among the younger Indian people that her grave had been vandalized and that frightened the people into a deeper silence, as they thought how the naholies[210] wouldn't leave them alone even in death and that their afterlives were bound to be haunted by money-hungry people who weren't above turning over the red clay earth and tombstones that marked the final homes of Indians. (59)

This description ironises those white narratives of Indian superstition mentioned towards the beginning of this chapter–the Osages in *Mean Spirit* are well-justified in their anxiety that evil-intentioned spirits will come for them after death. Hogan's pointed inclusion of the particular way that even in death, Osages are not treated with respect by settlers echoes the historical and ongoing settler treatment of Indigenous

[210] A colloquial Osage term for white settlers.

remains and funerary objects since the European invasion of the continent. 'Pilgrims looted Indian graves after arriving in Cape Cod in 1620', writes Devon Mihesuah (Chocktaw), 'as did subsequent colonists; Thomas Jefferson investigated the contents of several Indian burials and documented his findings.'[211] Mihesuah further details how Spanish invaders in the Southwest were compelled to destroy all traces of Indigenous spirituality in the name of Christianity. Settler disregard for Indigenous symbols of non-Christian faith persists today, 'but today those symbols are collected, not destroyed'.[212] Hogan acknowledges the global institutions responsible for incentivising the looting of Indigenous gravesites in *Mean Spirit,* since the 'bodies of Indians were at a premium for displays across the country and in Europe' (120). When Moses Graycloud discovers Grace's grave empty at her exhumation, he worries over the possibility that 'Grace's body had been taken to that museum in Connecticut that had bought up bodies and moccasins and baskets only a few years earlier from local graverobbers.' (58)

The inclusion of Osage grave desecration in *Mean Spirit* not only acknowledges these struggles during the era in which the novel is set, but it also points to contemporary events that were current at the time that the novel was published. *Mean Spirit* was published in 1990, the same year that the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was signed into law by then-US president, George Bush. NAGPRA was a landmark piece of legislation for Indigenous nations across the country who had been fighting to protect and repatriate the bodies of their dead ancestors and their funerary belongings for centuries. NAGRPA provided

[211] Devon Mihesuah, 'Introduction', *Repatriation Reader: Who Owns American Indian Remains?,* ed. Devon Mihesuah, University of Nebraska Press, 2000*,* 2.
[212] Ibid.

'nationwide repatriation standards and procedures for the return of Native remains and certain protected materials from federal agencies and federally funded institutions' and has been praised for representing 'fundamental changes in basic social attitudes towards Native peoples by the museum and scientific communities the public at large.'[213] It is estimated that between 'one hundred thousand and two million deceased Native people have been dug up from their graves, for storage or display by government agencies, museums, universities, and tourist attractions.'[214] Common legal protections–protections that most non-Indigenous people may take for granted–have historically failed Indigenous peoples. The vast disparity between these two figures indicates that the vast majority of Indigenous bodies have been unearthed without any form of proper record or documentation. The existence of NAGPRA legislation is an acknowledgement the fact that Indigenous human remains and funerary items have not been afforded the same basic respect and fundamental legal protection that has largely protected the sanctity of the dead for white settlers.

The desecration of Grace's grave in *Mean Spirit* is a subversion of the familiar trope of Indigenous ghosts haunting settlers in popular US cultural media. Boyd and Thrush have commented on the contemporary saturation of 'countless stories of actual Indian apparitions', where '[a]boriginal ghosts shimmer and shock on urban golf courses in the United States…wreak havoc on campus in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and impart wisdom to vision-questing, galaxy-hopping descendants on *Star Trek: Voyager*'.[215] Rather than wronged spirits returning to the cursed 'Indian burial ground' to haunt settlers, Hogan's characters are instead chased beyond the mortal world into

[213] Jack F. Trope and Walter Echo Hawk, 'The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Background and Legislative History', *Repatriation Reader: Who Owns American Indian Remains?*, 123.
[214] Ibid., 125.
[215] Boyd and Thrush, viii.

their afterlives by malevolent money-hungry settlers who have desecrated their sacred final resting places.

The violence of extraction enacted by settlers on Osage lands is played out in many forms beyond the extraction of oil. The bodies of Osages, physically extracted from their lands by settlers after their burial, are a commodity to be bought and sold at the behest of museums, private collectors, and the U.S. military, and Hogan addresses this through the burial and subsequent looting and desecration of Grace Blanket's grave. However, Hogan is careful to avoid presenting the Osages as merely victims of an extractive settler-colonialism. John Stink's funeral, burial, resurrection, and associated ceremony provide opportunities for Hogan to highlight ways in which many Osages continued to cultivate community and spiritual practice through a blending of traditional ceremony and newer Christian customs.

John Stink's funeral begins in the Baptist Church, late afternoon, 'when the sun shone through the stained-glass window of Jesus and his lamb and cast light across the wooden pews' (99). It is led by young Creek Reverend Joe Billy of the Oklahoman Indian Baptist Church, son of Sam Billy, 'who'd been a medicine man for twenty-three years before he'd converted to the Christian faith' (14). The ceremony is modestly attended by Stink's closest friends, mostly older Osages like Moses and Belle, and his dogs, who sit 'like sentinels in the rays of gold light that fell over them inside the church' (99). Reverend Billy offers a few lines of condolence, ending his speech by calling Stink a kind man, which was 'the highest compliment one Indian could pay to another' (100). The funeral party then head out with the coffin to the burial grounds, accompanying Stink's final journey by singing a traditional mourning song as Moses drums a slow rhythm.

The procession passes a Christian cemetery 'with its angels and lambs' before moving on to the Osage burial grounds, where mounds 'marked the place where the ancestors turned to dust' (101). Moses spreads tobacco on the ground, and the men begin to dig a deep, narrow hole for Stink's casket. Hogan continues,

> In the old days, people were buried seated, facing east, with stones piled over them. An opening was left, like a window, in front of the dead person's face. It allowed the travellers in death's world to see the dark road they had to follow. By 1922 that tradition was forbidden by American law; the Americans were afraid of the invisible lives of germs and bacteria that claimed human flesh as their territory. But the Indians found ways to put the old customs together with the new, and that evening the men dug a deep, narrow hole that would allow the casket to stand on end. Then, they removed the coffin lid, tied Stink in with a rope, and slid the casket in so that John Stink was standing and facing east. (102)

Osages had found ways to put old customs together with the new long before 1922, especially in the context of religion and spirituality. As Roger Hall-Lloyd writes, the Osages 'had long been schooled in the religion of Christ (Wah-Kon-Tah-E-Shinkah) from the Catholic priests who had been among them as missionaries for over two hundred years'.[216] By the 1920s, peyotism had had an established following on Osage lands for over three decades. There were a number of influential people associated with the earlier history of peyotism. For the Osage, Ni-Shu-Kun-Tu, or John Wilson, a Caddo Ghost Dancer who went into retreat after Wounded Knee, was a significant figure. The Osages named Ni-Shu-Kun-Tu 'Moonhead', or Mi-Ompah-We-Li. Moonhead

[216] Roger Hall Lloyd, *Osage County: A Tribe and American Culture 1600-1934*, 338

took some buttons from the Peyote cactus to aid him on a two-week-long mystic quest, where he worked out the basis for a new religion during his visions. Moonhead showed his followers how to construct churches devoted to the new religion, and Mathews comments on how the Osages 'went into peyotism with eagerness. They built sweat lodges due east of their churches. The churches were permanent…octagonal, with a diameter of about thirty feet, and were surmounted by the white cross, but the buildings were red.'[217] As Hall-Lloyd writes, '[t]he new religion gave the Osage the chance to blend this Christian symbolism with some Osage traditions too. For example, they insisted, contrary to Moonhead's revelation, that the altar face not east but West to the setting sun.'[218]

Peyotism plays a significant role in Chal's spiritual journey in Mathews' novel *Sundown* (1934), and Mathews provides context for the new religion in his epic 800-page history, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters* (1961). For Mathews, peyotism offered the chance for Osages to make a politically powerful, foreign religion such as Christianity become Osage, rather than the other way around:

> 'But the acceptance of the compromise between the old religion of the Little Old Men and Christianity which is Peyotism was not only a recognition of the power of the enemy God and the necessity to make some compromise with this powerful God of the Heavy Eyebrows for tribal comfort and spiritual safety, but Peyotism is also vindictiveness in identifying themselves with the Great Man, Christ, whom the Heavy Eyebrows also mistreated.'[219]

[217] John Joseph Mathews, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters,* 749.
[218] Roger Hall Lloyd, *Osage County,* 338.
[219] Ibid., 758.

Christian symbolism is heavily apparent in John Stink's resurrection scene in *Mean Spirit*. Hogan describes how one of Stink's dogs 'pushed a stone away from the mound' (106) to create an opening, reminiscent of the stone rolled away from Jesus' tomb. After climbing free of his grave, '[r]esurrected, he examined himself' and observes that he is dressed 'like a ghost, all right, in a winding sheet' (107), akin to the figure in white robes that attends Jesus' tomb after resurrection.[220] Stink observes how the opening he has climbed through is 'too small for the emergence of a mortal man' (107). The blending of Osage and Christian customs during Stink's funeral, burial, and resurrection scenes points to a fluidity between faiths, and towards the long-established history of Osage resilience and adaptation in the face of colonialism. Though the use of Osage-specific customs is fairly light across the novel (something for which *Mean Spirit* was criticised at the time of publication) it is nonetheless significant that in Hogan's version, Stink is able to pull himself from his grave and walk the earth again because he was buried according to Osage customs.[221] Concerning Indigenous funerary customs, Boyd and Thrush write that 'such beliefs and practices, far from being superstitious or antiquated, are in fact means by which Indigenous people maintain social order through practices of reverence and care, and by which they commemorate their own survival in the face of seemingly endless physical and cultural onslaughts.'[222]

Non-Indigenous accounts of Ho-tah-moie such as those by Turpin and Wallis are keen to emphasise the apparent shunning and ostracising of him by his own

[220] Gospel accounts differ over the exact nature of this messenger.
[221] In a 1994 review essay of Dennis McAuliffe Jr.'s *The Deaths of Sybil Bolton*, Osage scholar Robert Warrior called Hogan's account 'dubious', arguing that she had 'de-Osaged the story', likening the 'picking and choosing' of Osage historical and cultural specificities as akin to 'finding the Holocaust a rich source, but not finding Jewish people interesting enough to be subjects of their own history.'
[222] Boyd and Thrush, xix.

community after he returns from the grave. Turpin's account is rife with descriptions of these dramatic and severe reactions his reappearance, and Wallis goes as far as to refer to Ho-tah-moie as 'the Indian without a tribe'.[223] The following passage in *Mean Spirit* provides a clear rebuttal of these accounts:

> The traditional people held ceremonies for John Stink and the Indian Baptist Church held prayer meetings for the soul of the old man, but they did not succeed in putting his spirit at rest. Finally, it was decided that the only way to make peace with the ghost was to find his body and return it to the grave. But until someone could figure out how to do that, they kept the man's hungry soul supplied with coconut cookies. And Floyd Graycloud kept his promise to feed the dogs. Each day he stopped at the butcher shop and took a bag of bones and fat to the mongrels on Mare Hill. Most days, the ghost of John Stink nodded at the long-haired white man. From time to time, Floyd left a cigar and a bottle of whiskey for the ghost. Once he saw it cleaning its fingernails with a jackknife.
>
> And Stink himself, with all the food, cigars, and dogs, thought perhaps he'd gone to heaven. (121)

In Hogan's version, cross-faith groups within the tribe continue to interact with Stink's ghost post-resurrection through different forms of ceremony and prayer. When these traditional ceremonial methods are unsuccessful in putting his spirit to rest, the community adapt their ways and collectively decide on an alternative approach, and Hogan imparts Stink's feelings towards his friends' empathetic acts of soul nourishment with humour. Just as Stink's interactions with his friends pre-resurrection

[223] Wallis, 151.

were often one-on-one and familiar, his post-resurrection interactions with the tribe remain personal and intimate, and a far cry from the 'man without a tribe' construction that non-Indigenous accounts emphasise to construct narratives of abandonment and mistreatment. Non-Indigenous framings of the treatment of Ho-tah-moie are an extension of the racialised settler construct of Indigenous peoples and customs as backward and superstitious, obfuscating vital context for *why* Ho-tah-moie may have been treated as a ghost by some members of his community.

Whilst some members of the community ostracise Stink – particularly the Greycloud women – there is a deeper reason in the novel beyond just a fear of ghosts. Hogan emphasises this her retelling of Stink's story in her novel: there is fear, certainly, not necessarily of ghosts, but of the many forms of interconnected violence being enacted upon the tribe by the white settlers. Stink's treatment at the hands of some of the Osage characters in *Mean Spirit* and the increasing distance he feels from his tribe as the novel progresses is a manifestation of the trauma of living in a necropolitical environment, enforced by a settler society driven by the pursuit of oil resources.

Around two-thirds of the way through the novel, Hogan offers the reader an astute and harrowing description, just over a page long, of the myriad and constant forms of oppression and danger the Osages faced on a daily basis. She begins the passage with a dry observation of the contradictory and nonsensical racialised financial restrictions placed on the Osages' annuity payments:

> That spring, nearly all of the full-blood Indians were deemed incompetent by the court's competency commission. Mixed-bloods, who were considered to be competent, were already disqualified from receiving full payments because of their white blood. (241)

For the Grayclouds, this imposed financial stress is exacerbated by the mandatory assignment of two legal guardians for Moses, since, '[b]y the time they had deducted their legal fees, for services rendered to him, he owed them large sums of money.' (241) To pay off this debt, attorneys impound Michael Horse's' car, take his cattle (his bull bought by Hale, no less), and sell Moses' grandson's telescope. By this time, the Grayclouds have discovered oil on their lands, but are desperate to keep it hidden, in fear of what might happen to them if it was made public knowledge. They are 'helpless and depressed' (241), but they cannot leave, since, as Moses points out to Belle, so many Osages have been followed and killed on the roads on their way out. 'Three Osages had been found dead in England. One Osage woman had been murdered by her husband in Colorado Springs. No place was safe and they had to bide their time however they could, making themselves silent and invisible' (242). Being forced into living this way takes a tremendous toll on Belle's mental and physical health:

> Each time Belle rounded a corner, she stopped first and listened. She walked past every window with hesitation and felt fear rise in her chest each time she passed a stand of trees. She hated the money-hungry world and how her land had involved her in it, and she hated without limit the man named Hale. By then he'd fenced in yet another part of the Graycloud land holdings. They were almost surrounded by leased-out land. And already the land around them was shorn and bare from the grazing of cattle and buffalo. (242)

The intense feelings of suffocation and fear that constantly grip Belle, and by extension her family, manifest themselves in the ostracising of John Stink. Whilst Wallis and Turpin are quick to assign Ho-tah-moie's supposed ostracism from his tribe as evidence of the Osages' backwards superstition or unmodern culture, the particular

way that Stink is treated by some of the Osages in Hogan's novel is a combination of two things that are overlooked in Turpin and Wallis' accounts: the trauma that ensues from living in constant fear for one's life, and the belief that his presence as an unhappy spirit is a manifestation of the real and constant extractive violence being enacted against the Osage people and lands at large during this time.

The externalisation of living in fear culminates in a climactic scene towards the end of *Mean Spirit,* where Belle is shot by Sheriff Gold, who is hiding in the trees watching her whilst she tends to the beehives at the creek on Graycloud land. Moments before she is shot, Belle notices Stink's ghost, sat by the creek, trying to listen to the water with an ear trumpet. As she is struck over the heart by Gold's bullet, she passes out, and regains consciousness to find Stink's ghost holding her. Belle is terrified of him, thinking that the ghost 'had come to welcome her into the society of the dead' (313). Confused, Stink considers Belle to have 'entered his world of death's limbo' and is ashamed of his delight to 'no longer be living alone on the middle ground between worlds.' (314) This middle ground between worlds is a place where Indigenous peoples are often said to be walking - between the worlds of settler society on the one side, and indigeneity on the other. Osages in particular were said to be living between worlds during this period, an experience that occupies Mathews' protagonist in *Sundown* (explored in more depth in Chapter 1). Whilst it may be tempting to read Stink as a stand-in for Indigenous peoples more generally as living 'in the middle ground', especially during the early twentieth century, instead Hogan problematises the 'between two worlds' binary in two ways: first, through the ambiguity of Stink's ghostliness throughout the novel, and second, by having Moses reclaim Stink back into Osage life in his final scene.

The parameters of Stink's ghostliness require some teasing out. Stink's story in *Mean Spirit* can certainly be read as a ghost story, one worthy of consideration alongside Boyd and Thrush's analysis of Native North American ghosts and ghost stories in their co-edited volume, *Phantom Pasts, Indigenous Presence* (2011). In *Mean Spirit*, post-resurrection, Stink is convinced that he resides in 'the world of the dead' as a ghost, wrapped in a white sheet and 'destined to wander a soundless limbo' (107). He looks back at the hole in his grave from which he has crawled, convinced that it is 'too small for the emergence of a mortal man' (107). Whether he is truly a ghost is not made apparent at this point in the novel, nor does it become clear during the vast majority of the remainder of the story, until Stink's final scene when Belle is shot and Moses communicates directly with him, to persuade him that he is in fact alive. However, the 'truth' of Stink's status as living or dead at various points in the novel is uninteresting in this context - what is more interesting is that through Stink, Hogan continually disrupts the binary between living and dead.

Sharon Holland theorised on the living/dead binary in her 2000 publication, *Raising the Dead*. In this work, Holland 'perceives the difference between the living and the dead as the beginning binary, as the model for creating other dichotomous systems such as black and white or straight and queer.'[224] Allowing the dead – 'those already denied a sustainable subjectivity' – to speak from the place reserved for them disturbs such static categories, and embracing the subjectivity of death allows 'marginalized peoples to speak about the unspoken -- to name places *within* and *without* their cultural milieu where [...] they have slipped between the cracks of language.'[225] In turn,

[224] Sharon Patricia Holland, *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity,* Duke University Press, 2000, 4.
[225] Ibid., 4-5.

Stink's disruption of living/dead binaries also disrupts the perceived 'two worlds' of Osage society and settler society - a binary that more often serves to uphold narratives of Indigenous adaptation into settler-colonial frameworks, rather than the other way around. In the end, Stink isn't forced to adapt into the settler world or left to walk in the 'middle ground' between them – instead Stink is reclaimed back into his community by Moses.

After Belle is shot, Stink accompanies her to the Graycloud house, where she attended to by her family and Stace Red Hawk. Belle remains terrified of Stink, refusing to make eye contact with the 'angel of death waiting to take her away at her first sign of weakness.' (315) Moses reassures Belle and lays a hand on Stink and smiles at him. Moses takes a pen and paper to Stink, who writes, "I am dead." Moses writes a reply - "No. You are not dead." Stink replies, "I am a ghost", and Moses shakes his head. Stink writes - "Is that why my body is missing? I am wearing it?" After this brief and humorous exchange, Hogan describes how '[a] grin began to break through the shadows of his face.' (316) The reclamation of Stink back into his community by Moses is heavy with emotional weight beyond the act in itself. Since the story of Ho-tah-moie continues to be decontextualised and co-opted by non-Indigenous writers well-into the twenty-first century, it is vital that Indigenous writers such as Hogan retell his story on their own terms. In *Mean Spirit,* just as she allows the ghost of John Stink to return to his community, Hogan creates a much-needed conceptual resting place for Ho-tah-moie, reclaiming him back from non-Indigenous writers who seek to continue an eighty-year tradition of colonising his story.

For Hogan, the violence of extraction is all encompassing, claiming the life of the land and the people who reside within it. The depiction of oil extraction in particular

underscores Achille Mbembe's notions of necropower and necropolitics, creating a death-world inhabited by those confined within the status of living dead. The unquiet deaths, reburials, and resurrections of the novel contribute to that slippage between life and death that oil culture, and the vampiric symbolic logics of those that advance it, has made familiar.

CHAPTER 3/DIPTYCH 1

CHARLES H. RED CORN'S *A PIPE FOR FEBRUARY* (2002)

Every generation loses something as it moves towards a new era, and we as Osages have taken on a lot that is new during recent times. It may be that we must be prepared to give up something. I supposed choosing what we give up and what we keep will determine our future, as individuals and as a tribe. [226]

Is this story in your history book? Probably not. This story is in my history book, it is in my family's history book, and in the history book of thousands of Osage families. As we approach the century mark of the so called "Osage Reign of Terror", just remember the Osage people have yet to write the final chapter on this story and make peace with their past.[227]

...

Whereas Mathews cannot reconcile the ambiguity of Osage relations to oil and so *Sundown* is caught in a traumatic melancholia, and Hogan cannot countenance the vexed question of whether there were or are benefits to Osage headrights, Charles H. Red Corn's *A Pipe for February* (2002) forges a path towards working through this traumatic history. Whilst Mathews' protagonist is largely absent for the events that characterised the Reign of Terror, and Hogan's depictions are typified by high-impact,

[226] Charles H. Red Corn, *A Pipe For February,* University of Oklahoma Press, 2002. All references to *A Pipe for February* in Chapters 3 and 4 are from this edition and featured parenthetically within the text.
[227] Jim Gray, 'Reclaiming the legacy of the Osage Murders story is still elusive to this Osage', *Indian Country Today,* September 13, 2019. Accessed via [https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/opinion/reclaiming-the-legacy-of-the-osage-murders-story-is-still-elusive-to-this-osage-NoS2cihSfki3sL4Wjb3M6A/].

dramatic and violent scenes, Red Corn depicts the Reign of Terror as a backdrop for the daily comings-and-goings of his Osage characters.

Published in 2002, *A Pipe for February* is set in 1924 in Osage territory. It follows 25-year-old protagonist and artist John (Wah-ni-un-tah) Grayeagle of the Tzi-zhu-wah-shta-gi (Osage Peace Clan). Described by one reviewer as 'a gentle story about violent times', *A Pipe for February* primarily focuses on the social lives of John and his cousins Ted, Molly, and Evelyn as newly wealthy Osages dividing their time between the bustle of Pawhuska's popular cafes, restaurants and speakeasies, and regular visits with their elder relations outside of town.[228] The novel opens with the passing of John's grandfather, Xui-tha-ho-tse, who had cared for John since his parents died in a car crash some years before the novel's action takes place. John, Molly, and Ted take a four-day trip to Colorado Springs in an attempt to ease John's grief, but John is continually anxious to return home to 'get started' on some painting, or perhaps sculpture, or 'a business of some sort' (23). John's anxieties over being a productive artist punctuate the novel's reasonably leisurely progression amongst his observations on sports and music of the era as he enjoys spending time with his cousins and wider circle of friends and family. *A Pipe for February* is thus primarily concerned with domestic and communal spaces, detailing the daily patterns of life for its central characters against the backdrop of the Reign of Terror as it unfolds. Red Corn creates multiple conceptual spaces in the novel for the reader to learn about and/or revise Osage customs, values, and ceremonies. These spaces are created via John's personal monologues, extended conversations in Osage (presented as italicised English in the

[228] Barbara K. Robins, 'A Pipe for February (review)', *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* University of Nebraska Press, Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring 2004, 75.

text) between the cousins and their elders, or in the slowly blossoming romance between John and a white Kentuckian settler named Barbara Williams. These spaces for learning and revision played out in the domestic every-day remain at the forefront of the novel as it progresses, whilst the Reign of Terror generally remains in the background.

Though the Reign of Terror eventually closes in around the characters when John's cousins Martha and Evelyn are murdered and further attempts are made on John and Molly, instances of explicit settler violence are not a driving force of the narrative. There are no cutaways in the narrative that switch to the perspectives of scheming oilmen, agency employees, or local business owners, as there are in both Mathews' *Sundown* and Hogan's *Mean Spirit*. In this way, *A Pipe for February's* evocative blurb openly sets the novel apart from '[r]ecent books…[that] focus on the greed of government officials and businessmen'.[229] As if to reiterate this point in its final chapter, John muses on how best to paint 'a series of pictures that will explain Osage experience' (266). Red Corn acknowledges the prominence of settlers in the story of the Great Frenzy but reminds readers of the importance of Osage perspectives in the telling of it. John knows that settlers who have committed murder and fraud against the Osages–settlers who 'will do anything to get an illegal deed to land that belongs to Osages'–and indeed settlers who 'many have once been good people, but their greed made them do evil things', are all a part of the Osages' story. Ultimately, he firmly states 'I have no interest in painting them, or in painting experiences like theirs. I doubt that I will ever have that interest.' (266)

[229] Taken from the blurb of the 2002 print edition of the book.

The violent physicalities of oil extraction do not constitute a driving force of the narrative either. Unlike Mathews' *Sundown* or Hogan's *Mean Spirit,* none of the cousins visit grimy explosive extraction sites, or bear witness to Earth's open suffering and the subsequent poisoning of land and waterways. In *A Pipe for February,* John occasionally observes oil derricks in passing, on one occasion distractedly counting forty-seven 'chugging oil wells' (51) looming on distant hills during a funeral ceremony for Molly's cousin, Martha, killed in a suspicious car 'accident'. For John and his cousins, the physical realities of oil extraction with regards to its effects on the land are held at a distance, both geographically and narratively. With this in mind, *A Pipe for February* may seem like an odd choice for a chapter focused on tracing the origins and effects of oil culture. It offers no scope for Timothy Mitchell's method of 'following the carbon' in order to highlight the often obfuscated material processes by which oil is extracted, transported, and distributed, and yet I will demonstrate the ways in which Red Corn's text allows us to better understand oil *as a social relation* on both macro and micro scales by focusing on how larger machinations of an emerging petrocapitalist settler state play out in the domestic 'everyday'.[230] I unfurl these social relations via considerations of the role played by the work of art, the pursuit of private property, and the quintessentially American ideal of the automobile in Red Corn's novel.

The aforementioned distance at which oil is kept by the protagonist is a point of inquiry in itself since the novel is set during a time when, as Mathew T. Huber argues, oil consumption was becoming synonymous with normalised petrocapitalist notions of

[230] Timothy Mitchell explores this concept in detail in his 2011 publication, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*, Verso Books, 2013.

'life itself', or 'the good life'.[231] On my reading, *A Pipe for February* explores Osage entanglement with emerging twentieth century petrocapitalist consumptive practices: namely, individual ownership of private property and automobiles. Further, the lived experience of that entanglement is a subject of artistic exploration and creative expression, both within and beyond the text, symbolised via the protagonist's relationship with art and oil painting on one level and the author's relationship with the text on another. For Red Corn, literary fiction is a vehicle by which the vexed question of Osage oil can be thought through. This is especially important in the context of the Reign of Terror since, for the Osage, ownership of the story – who gets to tell it and how–remains a contentious issue almost a century later.

Telling 'the real story'

A Pipe for February is not the only publication revisiting the Reign of Terror since the turn of the twenty-first century.[232] Since its publication in 2002, another version of the story has gained widespread popularity, becoming an international bestseller to much critical acclaim: David Grann's investigative nonfiction, *Killers of the Flower Moon: Oil, Money, Murder and the Birth of the FBI* (2017). [233] In contrast to *A Pipe for February,* Grann's version of this part of Osage history is primarily concerned with, as the title suggests, the federal government's investigation of the Reign of Terror and the parallel formation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), named the Bureau of

[231] Matthew T. Huber, *Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital,* University of Minnesota Press, 2013, xx-xii.
[232] This list is by no means exhaustive: for fiction, see Tom Holm's *The Osage Rose* (2008). For non-fiction, see Lonnie E. Underhill's *The Osage Indian Reign of Terror: The Violence of Bill Hale, 1921-1923* (2010). Since Grann's publication, the topic has also piqued the interest of true-crime podcasts; see Strange Country's 'The Osage Murders', episode 59 (2018); It's About Damn Crime's 'The Osage Murders', episode 40 (2017); Coldest Cases' three-part series 'The Osage Reign of Terror' (2019).
[233] *Killers of the Flower Moon* received positive reviews in *Rolling Stone, NY Times,* and *The Guardian*. *Time* listed it third on their top 10 non-fiction books of 2017.

Investigation (BOI) at the time, concluding with detailed depictions of the various trials and subsequent conviction of oilman and principle instigator of the Reign of Terror, William Hale. Matthew Fletcher, writing for the *Michigan Law Review* in 2019, critiqued Grann's handling of the story:

> *Killers of the Flower Moon* grippingly details the story of the methodical killing of Mollie Burkhart's entire family by her husband, his relatives, and his business partners. The FBI and the federal government, in Grann's telling, swoop in with law enforcement and prosecutorial power. They effectively stop the killing of Mollie and her remaining child. But the real story is not how Mollie is saved but how the federal government failed the Osage murder victims before her. The federal government's betrayal of the Osage Nation and its citizens was deep, varied, and systematic.[234]

Whilst this critique is apt, Fletcher's position on what should be prioritised as 'the real story' is nonetheless still troubling, since it remains centred on federal government as protagonist, even if it is in opposition to Grann's theses. Fletcher's explicit claim that Mollie Burkhart surviving the Reign of Terror is not 'the real story' further highlights the oft repeated manner in which settlers–even if seeking to undermine settler systems and hierarchies, as Fletcher intends–centre settler narratives in the telling of Indigenous stories and histories. In the case of the Osage murders, the minimisation of Osage experiences within their own histories remains an ongoing issue, which is a matter of concern to the ex-Chief of the Osage Nation (2002-2010), Jim Gray. For Gray, Osage reclamation of story of the murders remains elusive, despite 'Osage people

[234] Matthew Fletcher, 'Failed Protectors: The Indian Trust and *Killers of the Flower Moon'*, *Michigan Law Review,* Vol. 117, No. 6, 2019, 1258.

from across the spectrum [having] their version of events not told in the archives of the BIA or the FBI'.[235] Writing for *Indian Country Today,* Gray emphasised the importance of both of the story itself and who gets to tell it, since these components combined are vital in ensuring the Osage Nation never endures such abuses again. Responding in part to increased interest in the Osage murders after the commercial success of *Killers of the Flower Moon*, Gray asked:

> Is this story in your history book? Probably not. This story is in my history book, it is in my family's history book, and in the history book of thousands of Osage families. As we approach the century mark of the so called "Osage Reign of Terror", just remember the Osage people have yet to write the final chapter on this story and make peace with their past.[236]

Gray's assertion that the Osages are 'yet to write the final chapter on this story' came at a time when *Killers of the Flower Moon* had been picked up by Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio to be developed into a major motion picture. At the time of writing, the film adaptation is projected to cost $200 million.[237] Interestingly, *Killers of the Flower Moon* is not the only story about the Osage murders that is being picked up for a film adaptation; Red Corn's *A Pipe for February* is also in production, though on a much smaller scale compared with Scorsese's venture. Osage director and screenwriter Scott Javine, Jim Gray and Yancey Red Corn (Charles Red Corn's son) are all working on the adaption, and it is being managed by a film company based in the Osage Nation. In a release about the film, Gray commented on how '[t]he white man does not swoop

[235] Gray, 'Reclaiming the legacy of the Osage Murders story is still elusive to this Osage', *Indian Country Today,* September 13, 2019.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Tyler Hersko, 'Martin Scorsese Talking With Apple, Netflix to Distribute Next Film – Report', *IndieWire.com*, Apr 10, 2020. Accessed via [https://www.indiewire.com/2020/04/martin-scorsese-talks-apple-netflix-distribute-killers-of-the-flower-moon-1202224149/].

in to save the day in A Pipe for February…The film is the all too rare story where Indians are not Hollywood stereotypes.'[238] Lisa Ellwood, writing for *Indian Country Today,* commented on how *A Pipe for February* 'provides a chance to explain the turbulence of the Osage oil boom and its subsequent 'Reign of Terror' through the eyes of an Osage protagonist unlike other tales about the notorious crimes committed then, that were focused on the greed of government officials and local businessmen'.[239] Soon after the novel's release, Osage poet and author Carter Revard commented that *A Pipe for February* was 'one of the first novels to use for any class where readers want books presenting Indian people as they lived, and as they found ways to survive.'[240]

Petro-criticism and the aesthetics of oil

Representing the Osage experience is similarly a preoccupation of the protagonist within Red Corn's novel. John's decision to embark on a series of paintings that will represent the Osage experience in the novel's final pages reflects his new-found assurance in his own Osage identity by the novel's close. At regular points throughout the story, John is concerned with form and expression via the medium of painting. Painting–and thinking about painting–is a means through which John is able to reflect on and process his experiences and the environment around him. He has a studio in his house where the air smells like oil paints, a space filled with natural light and stacks of books and sketch pads. Red Corn's imagined world in the novel is constructed through John's painterly perspective as he regularly takes the time to take

[238] Lisa J. Ellwood, 'Charles Red Corn's 'A Pipe for February' to be a Film', *IndianCountryToday.com,* January 21, 2016. Accessed via [https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/charles-red-corn-s-a-pipe-for-february-to-be-a-film-O5fRChl0y0qYM0_7E47I1A].
[239] Ibid.
[240] This quotation is from an email sent by Revard on July 3rd 2002 to the NativeLit mailing list. The email was included in a collection of Revard's emails published posthumously, which were collated by Margaret Dwyer in 'Carter Revard in Cyberspace: An Email Sampler', *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* Series 2, Vol. 15, No. 1, In Honor of Carter Revard, 2003, pp. 109-138.

in his surroundings by imagining them as potential works of art, from the Santa Fe railyard to the rolling blackjack hills of the Osage. John's journey to finding assurance in his Osage identity as his story progresses is reflected in the changing subjects he desires to paint, which gradually move from the material to the abstract.

Towards the beginning of the novel, John informs the reader that he is well-educated in European art forms and styles, professing a love for Van Gogh, Renoir, and impressionism. He details his travels to Europe in his college days, where he spent four weeks in Paris 'to soak up the atmosphere' (34):

> From there I went to Rome and to more remote places in Italy and viewed magnificent paintings and sculpture and architecture. After travelling Europe I knew I would put great works of art on my canvas when I got back to Osage country, but that night I sat staring at the canvas wondering how the cathedral fit onto that blank white space. (34)

John finds that his appreciation and experience of European art and architecture does not translate onto the canvas when trying to paint within and about Osage country. Though he finds the 'grass-covered Osage hills' to be aesthetically similar to Tuscany, and both landscapes invoke artistic feelings within him, he cannot put pencil to sketchpad in Osage country the same way he did when 'sketching the cathedral in Orvieto that was off the beaten path and was unbelievably beautiful' (44). These frustrations are embedded in tensions between his European instruction and his need to creatively express his Osage identity and values. At one point, he abandons the idea of painting the cathedral because the day is too beautiful and turns to that natural beauty for inspiration, but still finds himself unable to paint:

> Sometimes watercolors are nice to work with and on that day I took the water paint and brushes and walked over the hill and waited in a stand of blackjack trees by a deer trail that leads down to water. I had seen a large buck with three does there…My plan was to catch a glimpse of them then quickly paint the small herd, but it was getting dark and watching them make their way down the trail was enough. I would paint them on another day. (88)

John carries these frustrations through much of the novel, where he often comments on the paintings he could create from the sunsets, hills, and buildings around him but which never actually produces. Barbara K. Robins notes that Red Corn's decision to have a frustrated artist as his protagonist reflects 'identity issues that would emerge through the works of many real-life Indian artists over the course of the twentieth century.'[241] In the 1920s, Americans expected Indian art to be flatly styled in a two-dimensional manner and depict traditional scenes and dancers. Robins points to the way in which these expectations informed and were informed by the notion of the 'vanishing race', a stereotypical artistic vision of the Indian that Americans would continue to hold well into the mid-to-late twentieth century.[242] Red Corn alludes to this history when Mon-tse-no-pi'n agrees to let John paint his portrait. John notes that '[p]hotographers and artists have travelled through Osage country often', and although most older Osages know *how* to sit for a picture, many of them choose not to (205). Mon-tse-no-pi'n, an older Osage who lives at the Indian camp on the outskirts of town, gives his consent to be painted by John, who feels lucky to be given such an opportunity. In contrast to the elaborate traditional dress many American photographers encouraged their Indigenous subjects to wear , Mon-tse-no-pi'n

[241] Robins, 'Review: Charles H. Red Corn. *A Pipe for February*', 77.
[242] Ibid., 76-77.

chooses to wear buckskin leggings and a shirt, keeps his ornamentation simple, and holds a well-used war club 'marked with nicks and scratches' (206). Red Corn conveys an unspoken understanding between John and Mon-tse-no-pi'n, from one Osage man to another, both attempting to capture an authentic Osage experience without reproducing the stereotypes so often represented by non-Indigenous artists and photographers. Painting Mon-tse-no-pi'n finally alleviates John's creative blockage and John's relief is palpable as Red Corn indulges the reader with a two-page ekphrastic description of John's painterly preparations involving pencils, charcoal, cotton cloths, turpentine, and oil paints. It is worth reproducing here in full for its illustrious rendering of John's competency and technical skill as a painter, as well as and the mediative, almost transcendental state with which he narrates his process:

> The canvas easily attached to the easel. Not quickly, just easily. I would not work fast nor would I purposefully work slowly. I just wanted to paint well.
>
> The canvas was ready but the pencils and charcoal sticks were not sharpened and I sharpened them with a knife and smoothed the lead with a piece of fine paper.
>
> I began sketching the image of Mon-tse-no-p'in onto the canvas and stopped. The pencils would not work. Then using a brush I mixed some light yellow ocher onto the palette so that the paint was thick. It would dry quickly and would not run.
>
> Doris found a piece of cotton cloth for me and I tore the cloth into four small pieces and dipped one of the pieces of cloth into the thin paint. Using the cloth as a brush I rubbed the paint onto the canvas in the outline of the image of Mon-tse-no-p'in's body and darkened the paint just a little to create the basic image

of his head and his arms and his hands. I would start and complete the painting sitting face-to-face with Mon-tse-no-p'in but this would be a good preliminary piece and I would learn from it.

I mixed titanium blue paint with paint thinner and took another clean cotton cloth and rubbed the blue sky onto the canvas with three or four spaces left white so that I could paint clouds.

I was working at a steady pace.

The earth colour of the garden went on next, then the very light green that would be the trees and grass. All of the paints were still thin and went on quickly. This took only a few minutes and I stepped back and sat on the tall chair and looked at the canvas.

...

The canvas was dry enough so I could put on more paint. I mixed some turpentine with the tallow ocher paint and added paint thinner to make it thin like before. With a wide brush I put thin yellow ocher onto the canvas. Mixing the turpentine with the other colours, I went over the canvas and added a layer of thin paint to the canvas that would hold the image of Mon-tse-no-p'in.

I did not want to wait for the oils to dry, but I had no choice. The paint would control a certain amount of the process.

It turned out I would wait a full day before adding more paint. The paint and the canvas and the brushes did control a great deal of what happened from that point on and as always I hoped I was an equal with those materials. I suppose the final picture would determine that. (207-208)

The portrait is resplendent with light yellow ochre and titanium blue, earthy browns and very light greens. John returns to the painting over a number of days, dedicating himself to the finest of details so that he may capture the insight he perceived in Mon-tse-no-pi'n's eyes (213-214). It is of no small significance that in a novel that seeks to negotiate the benefits the discovery of oil brought alongside the Reign of Terror, John's preferred creative medium is oil paint. Whilst oil paints are not crude/petroleum based, the resonance of his use of oils still stands in relation to the wider subject matter of the novel. Oil paints make up the figure of Mon-tse-no-pi'n and may in the future make up John's depiction of the Osage experience. Oil and Osages are materially intertwined in expressive and aesthetic form, emblematising Red Corn's entangled representation of that complicated relationship across the novel. Scholar and author Stephanie LeMenager has theorised at length on the aesthetics of oil and petroleum in literature. Addressing what is considered one of the earliest and most foundational petrofictions, Upton Sinclar's *Oil!* (1927), LeMenager writes,

> …Upton Sinclair's novel *Oil!* (1927) […] is committed to international socialism, equating the oil business with the technophilic horrors of World War I and a global economic restructuring that denies human-scale values. Yet this "committed" book also generates a series of aesthetic images and environmental emotions that valorize driving and even the process of oil extraction…Even for one of the most ideologically driven American novelists, the aesthetic pleasures of petroleum undermine political solutions… [Oil] has supported overlapping media environments to which there is no apparent

> "outside" that might be materialized through imagination and affect as palpable hope.[243]

For LeMenager, even one of the most 'committed' petro-critical novels still fails to imagine a world beyond or 'outside' of oil; the aesthetics of oil are too alluring, all-encompassing, and overlapping for the author to disentangle himself from, even when the novel is intended to be an unambiguous reproach of the oil industry. Red Corn's novel is similarly considered by some scholars to be a petro-critical text though it has received substantially less attention.[244] LeMenager's arguments about *Oil!* may, in the first instance, be applied to *A Pipe For February*, a novel that is anchored to the human cost of oil extraction and profit but where the 'aesthetic pleasures' of oil – here symbolised through the protagonist as oil painter – undermine the imagination for political solutions beyond it. Whilst this may be the case, it is important to bear in mind that Red Corn's text is more invested in demonstrating the multiplicitous and entangled relations between Osages and oil than in exploring the possibilities of a post-oil Osage future. *A Pipe for February* is deeply ambivalent about that relationship, at once embracing all loses and gains for the Osage that have come from oil discovery on their lands; a position that sets Red Corn apart from other, more polarising depictions (Hogan's *Mean Spirit,* for example) of the same historical era. Red Corn's decision to make his Osage protagonist creatively expressive with oil pants is a pertinent example of Donna Haraway's notion of 'staying with the trouble'; it feeds a

[243] Stephanie LeMenager, 'The Aesthetics of Petroleum, after Oil!', *American Literary History*, Vol. 24, No.1, 2012, 69-70.
[244] Graeme Macdonald cites *A Pipe for Februrary* as an oil extraction text that focuses on dispossession as a consequence in his article '"Monstrous transformer": Petrofiction as world literature', Journal of Postcolonial Writing, Vol. 53, No. 3, 2017, pp. 289-302. Maximilian Feldner similarly cites the novel as 'a paradigmatic example of the concept of petroculture', in his article 'Representing the neocolonial destruction of the Niger Delta: Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2011)', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing,* Vol. 54, No. 4, 2018, pp. 515-527. The refences to the novel are brief in both articles.

wider reading of the novel as one that refuses to deal in binaries, offering neither 'awful or edenic pasts [nor] apocalyptic or salvific futures'.[245]

Whilst John ultimately needs to find his own style and voice in his own creative expressions, it does not come at the disavowal of his European training. Instead, John inwardly reflects on his experiences as a college student in order to help him better understand his personal and Osage identities. We experience John's world as the reader through his painterly perspective, and travel with John on his journey to discovering his artistic calling towards the final chapters of the novel. Painting Mon-tse-no-pi'n is the turning point that leads to John's realisation of this calling, as the distinction between the protagonist and the author becomes virtually non-existent. As the novel progresses and moves towards its ending, John's artistic desire moves from material representation to the abstract, and he prepares to paint a series of paintings that will articulate the Osage experience:

> The concept must include the clans, and the ancient philosophy, and the newfound wealth. That would include the many good things that have come from oil.
>
> It is a difficult undertaking. An enormous, complex undertaking. (266)

Accepting the enormity and importance of the task before him, John wonders how to start such a project, 'searching to find that moment in time to start painting the Osage history' (267). He briefly considers whether he should paint 'a life symbol, like the elk or an eagle or a star' (267). Then on the final page and in the novel's closing sentence,

[245] Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene,* Duke University Press, 2016, 4.

John finally settles on what he will paint: someday, when he is a capable artist, he will paint Grandpa. In a quietly confident self-reflexive move that demonstrates Red Corn's identification with his protagonist, the reader comes to see that the work of art that represents Osage life as it is lived is in fact the novel itself, whose first chapter offers a well-defined description of Grandpa's appearance as he travels in the back of John's car with his friend:

> Grandpa and Mi-keh-wa-ti-an-kah dressed alike. They wore buckskin leggings with cloth shirts, and moccasins. They had blankets wrapped around their waists. Mi-keh-wa-ti-an-kah wore his hair in two braids. Grandpa wore his hair in a strip from the top of his head to the back of his lower neck. (8)

Life itself: the fetishization of oil under capitalism

Another of Red Corn's engagements with oil culture extends beyond John's painterly inclination, but its presence is far more subtle compared with Mathews' *Sundown* or Hogan's *Mean Spirit.* Mathew Huber's emphasis on the everyday patterns of thinking and feeling in his analysis of oil is particularly useful for a novel largely concerned with the daily domestic lives of its protagonist and his surrounding friends and family, since 'a focus on everyday practice…can unite both the materiality of life and the cultural politics of life as simultaneously reproduced through the rhythms of daily practice.'[246] In the opening chapter of *Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom and the Forces of Capital* (2013), Huber sketches a rough outline of the various ways in which oil is and has been endowed with certain kinds of social, financial, and geopolitical power since

[246] Ibid., 9.

the twentieth century. Depending on the context, oil promises wealth, prosperity, opportunity, technological and social advancement, power, geopolitical domination, conflict, corruption, violence, and death. 'Unifying these discourses is a remarkable agency bestowed upon oil itself,' writes Huber, 'How does it do it? My wager is that *it* doesn't do anything.'[247] Huber posits that oil has no inherent power beyond the sociopolitical relations that produce it, and according oil with power as a 'thing in itself' obfuscates those sociopolitical relations. In this way, oil is a prime example of Karl Marx's theory of commodity fetishism, whereby oil is continually rendered as a kind of autonomous figure, imbued with a 'thinghood' that appears to be rooted in its objective physical properties – 'its versatility, its abundance, its liquidity – rather than the particular historical geographies and social relations that harness these capabilities in particular ways.'[248] For Huber,

> There is no such thing as a natural resource – no such *thing* as oil-in-itself. Oil is better understood as a social relation. That is not the same as saying that oil is a cultural construction or that nature is simply a cultural product of human discourse. Rather, it is a simple assertion that oil's biophysical capacities only come to be mobilized in specific historical circumstances and through particular social relations.[249]

Consequently, Huber takes up the task in *Lifeblood* of understanding the historical and contemporary sociopolitical contexts that have produced the *idea* of oil – a fetishised notion that has emerged and is sustained by particular geographies, lived practices, and meanings, beyond tracing the (pipe)lines of material production. In order to

[247] Matthew T. Huber, *Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital,* 3.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid., 4.

understand oil as a social relation, Huber argues that we 'must not only fixate on the corporate board rooms of "Big Oil", the "War Rooms" of the architects of empire, and the coffers of the moneyed petro-state' but must further analyse the 'complex and ordinary patterns of everyday life'.[250] Understanding the influence of the *idea* of oil over our 'everyday practices of thinking and feeling' enables us to simultaneously confront petrocapitalism's persistence and longevity, and to understand the particular ways it harnesses capitalist hegemonic ideals regarding 'freedom, security, national pride, and *life itself*.'[251] The early twentieth century gave rise to normative hegemonic ideals over what constituted 'life itself', or 'the good life'; a 'universal' mode of living built upon oil-based privatism, namely the individual ownership of private property and of the automobile.

With Huber's framework in mind, I consider two factors when it comes to Red Corn's text–first, the fact that the narrative is set during a time when such oil hegemonies were beginning to emerge, countering the perception that they are in some way atemporal and here-to-stay (as is oft-repeated regarding capitalism more generally). Second, the story is told entirely from the perspective of John, an Osage man in his early twenties, managing his newly acquired oil wealth against a rapidly expanding and increasingly violent settler state all whilst maintaining his Indigenous identity, customs, and cosmology. John's positionality makes him primed to investigate the unique way early twentieth century oil-based privatism intersected with Osage life - destructive in some ways and creative in others – principally via the growing presence of private property and automobiles.

[250] Ibid., 6.
[251] Ibid. Emphasis added.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's 1978-79 lectures on neoliberalism, Huber lays out the connections between capitalism, private property, and the ability to 'make a living'. '[A] society regulated through competition requires the generalisation of the enterprise form', a form which is assured through private property, where private homeowners run their homes like businesses.[252] 'So-called responsible homeowners are supposed to construct a family budget tracking spending against revenue, make investments with savings and pensions, and maintain a healthy long-term relation with credit markets.'[253] In this way, 'your *very life* is seen as a product of your entrepreneurial choices'; your ability to 'make a living' for yourself. A "successful" life under a such society 'is expressed through the material requisites of oil-based privatism – a home, a car, a family.'[254]

However, there is a significant oversight in Huber's linking of private property and capitalism in *Lifeblood*: the necessity of Indigenous dispossession that allows private property to exist in the first place. Indigenous dispossession in relation to capitalist-colonial state-formation is a matter of concern for Glen Sean Coulthard in *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014). Coulthard brings Marx's theoretical framework together with a comprehensive understanding of settler-colonialism and Indigenous critical thought and practice, arguing for a contextual shift in the application of Marxist theory away from an emphasis on capital relation to the colonial relation instead.[255] For Marx, proletarianisation was a priority of interest, whereby colonial dispossession was part of the process but not a central concern. Coulthard contends that, since settler states first and foremost required

[252] Ibid., 20
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid., 21.
[255] Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition,* 10.

land, dispossession instead of proletarianisation shaped and continues to shape the relationship between Indigenous nations and settler states.[256] Any analysis of the individual ownership of property that had formed a 'universal' mode of living by the 1930s in the United States, as per Huber's suggestion, must be grounded in the acknowledgement that, at its very core, individual property ownership is form of colonialism, necessitated on the theft and sale of Indigenous lands and legislatively formalised by the Dawes Act. Dispossession in the context of the Osage experience is a significant concern for Red Corn in *A Pipe for February*.

As discussed at length in Chapter 1 in the context of Mathews' *Sundown* (1934), the close of the nineteenth century saw a great upheaval in the federal designation of lands for Indigenous peoples. Prior to the General Allotment Act of 1886, or the Dawes Act, the Osages had communal *ownership* over their reservation lands in Oklahoma after purchasing the land from the Cherokee following the Removal Act of 1870. This meant the Osages were in a markedly different position compared to other tribes, the majority of whom were granted right of occupancy rather than right of ownership. The Osages' ownership of their lands was a significant factor in their ability to delay the Dawes Act coming into effect on their lands for twenty years, though an amended version eventually passed in 1906. The original Dawes Act meant that individual Indigenous families would be granted 160-acre portions carved from their reservation lands, and any land left over after allocation would be deemed 'surplus 'and therefore available for settlement by white families. By 1921, the intention of the Dawes Act was

[256] Ibid., 13.

fully realised: the vast majority of lands previously a part of reservations in 1887 was now in the hands of white settlers.[257]

One of the amendments to the Dawes Act decreed that there would be no surplus lands available to settlers after allotment, meaning that all Osages listed on the 1906 tribal roll were allocated 657 acres of land each, as opposed to the 160 acres per family laid out in the original Dawes Act. Whilst, at first glance, this meant that there were no 'surplus' lands for settlers to colonise in Osage country, Red Corn highlights ways in which entitled settlers found other ways to seize assets from Osages. Early in the novel, John informs the reader that the Osages' oil wealth had financed most of the large red-brick buildings in the town of Pawhuska, settled in exclusive arrangements between the Agency and the new (usually white) business owners. John's grandfather financed the building where the tailor, Harry Kirk, rents space; a place where John supposedly gets a good price for tailoring, but the bill goes directly to the Agency so John isn't certain (13), and John himself financed the Grand Hotel building: 'I loaned the funds to build the Grant Hotel, but I knew nothing about it. I was told I had loaned the money and that I held a mortgage on the hotel.' (14) In legislation set out by the federal government, most Osages were deemed incapable of handling their own finances, and so their permission was not necessary in Agency arrangements such as these. This was one in a long list of failings of the federal government in protecting the Osages and their wealth. Red Corn highlights this failure though the Grant Hotel storyline, which weaves throughout the entire narrative. As *A Pipe for February* progresses, the Grand Hotel becomes a conduit through which Red Corn illustrates how federal law was set up to enable settler "businessmen" in

[257] Roger Hall-Lloyd, *Osage County: A Tribe and American Culture 1600-1934,* 307-308.

Oklahoma to swindle John out of his money and assets, which in turn enables Red Corn to critique the burgeoning emphasis on economics and business – entrepreneurial opportunities largely only available to and for the benefit of white men – at the turn of the neoliberal century (this line of enquiry forms the backbone of Chapter 4). Ultimately, John's loss of the hotel emblemises Coulthard's position that capitalistic individual ownership of private property is rooted in a long historical context of colonial displacement and dispossession for Indigenous peoples, which, in turn, characterises the uneven relationship between settler-states and Indigenous nations.

'Automotive Citizenship' in A Pipe for February

In addition to the kinds of citizenship denoted by land and property, the Osage were also subject to other forms directly linked to and promoting oil culture, which were to become a key indicator of an American 'life itself', as per Huber's assessment in *Lifeblood*. In *Driving Women: Fiction and Automobile Culture in Twentieth Century America* (2007), Deborah Clarke provides analyses of what she terms 'automotive citizenship' in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977). Clarke offers a reading of Betonie, an older mixed-blood Navajo healer in the novel, who cooks on a grill he has recycled from a wrecked car:

> ...[Betonie] opens a space for negotiating between technology and nature, between white and Native American, highlighting the hybrid identity that comes off as the hope for the future in this text, from Tayo himself to the hybrid spotted cattle. To incorporate the car into Native American culture is to practice a form

> of automotive citizenship, a way of negotiating around boundaries and accepting a fluid sense of belonging.[258]

Clarke's analysis rests upon an alignment of white culture with the technological, to the exclusion of 'natural' Indigenous cultures that may dismiss the car as 'an alien machine'. Binarisms of this kind reinforce Enlightenment thinking regarding the divide between culture and nature in Western sciences, and assume the position that 'Native American culture' (Clarke's broad usage of this term is used in place of referring to the specific Navajo and Pueblo cultural contexts that are a vital part of *Ceremony*) was un-technological and unscientific on their own terms. Indigenous cultures, including the Navajo and Pueblo, across the centuries have been and continue to be scientific innovators and cultivators of technology, in ways borne out of lived relationships with the natural world. In this context, Gregory Cajete (Tewa Pueblo) writes that 'Native science encompasses such areas as astronomy, farming, plant domestication, plant medicine, animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, metallurgy, and geology'.[259] Native science encompasses 'a wide range of tribal processes of perceiving, thinking, acting, and "coming to know" that have evolved through human experience with the natural world'[260]; a practice that 'does not attempt to categorize…through an analysis bent on a specific discovery, as is the case with Western scientific analysis.'[261] Red Corn's use of automobiles in *A Pipe for February* contests Clarke's preliminary preposition that Indigenous characters would 'dismiss the car as an alien machine', and demonstrates that traditions can be transitional, or 'grounded in negotiating boundaries and a fluid sense of belonging'.

---

[258] Deborah Clarke, *Driving Women: Fiction and Automobile Culture in Twentieth Century America,* John Hopkins University Press, 2007, 177-178.
[259] Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence,* 2.
[260] Ibid., 2-3.
[261] Ibid., 72.

Nineteenth and early twentieth century American policy gave rise to the reservation system, which sought to forcibly move tribes from their ancestral lands to reservation lands, subsequently containing tribes within clearly defined boundaries under the supervision of the federal government. Deloria argues that Indigenous use of automobiles to travel across and between reservations undermined settler expectations that tribespeople would stay fixed in place and enabled them to easily evade federal supervision. 'The *auto* and the *mobility* that made up the word *automobile* pointed exactly to the ways in which mobility helped Indian people preserve and reimagine their own *auto*nomy in the face of the reservation system.'[262] Automobiles became an important mechanism for enabling tribes to take back a portion of control over the land, and 'allowed Native people to imagine an even broader vision of Indian country, one that transcended individual tribes and places'.[263] Car ownership in *A Pipe for February* allows the cousins (and the vast majority of other Osage characters) to be highly mobile–historically seen as a direct threat to settler freedom and ownership of the land – as they easily traverse vast spaces and travel between a diverse array of places on and off the reservation.

In *A Pipe for February,* Red Corn's multiplicitous relations between Osages and their cars collapses any desire to read Indigenous peoples and automobiles as easily and/or naturally oppositional. Such desires are rooted within an American cultural proclivity to separate the idea(l) of Native peoples from notions of modernity, technology, mobility, and thereby the automobile itself. Though still pervasive in the present, these kinds of narrativisations regarding Native people and modernity were particularly prevalent in the early twentieth century, when 'according to most American

[262] Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places,* University Press of Kansas, 2004, 153.
[263] Ibid.

narratives, Indian people, corralled on isolated and impoverished reservations, missed out on modernity – indeed, almost dropped out of history itself.'[264] On my reading, Red Corn's novel develops Philip J. Deloria's intervention in *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004), in which Deloria presents the case for reconsidering the symbolic systems and expectations imposed upon Native people and the automobile, since 'automotive Indians may not have appeared in American culture as often as warlike Indians did in Hollywood film, but they have lived behind the wheel in all kinds of powerful ways.'[265]

Automobiles are prevalent in *A Pipe for February* from the very first chapter. The inside of a Pierce Arrow, belonging to John's grandfather Xui-tha-ho-tse, is the first material space that grounds the opening of the novel, where Red Corn immediately establishes the Osages' buying power:

> On that day in February Grandpa and his friend Mi-keh-wa-ti-an-kah sat in the backseat of the long and luxurious Pierce Arrow and I drove. I was with Grandpa when he purchased the car. The salesman kept repeating that it was a luxurious car. It was as long and large as any car Grandpa looked at, so he bought it. Grandpa always sat in the backseat and I would drive. Sometimes Tom would drive. (7)

The Pierce Arrow is well known for being a luxury brand throughout the twentieth century. In 1909, President Howard Taft ordered two Pierce Arrows to serve as the first official cars of the White House, and according to the Pierce Arrow Museum, the brand

[264] Ibid., 6.
[265] Ibid., 139.

has continued to serve American presidents from Taft to Roosevelt.[266] With this passage, it is not only apparent from the outset that the Osages have extensive buying power, but also that the older generation of Osages are perfectly comfortable with (luxury) automotive transport. Grandpa was born in 1848 and 'lived the life of an Osage'; a man who 'hunted buffalo on horseback with a bow and built his home from willow branches, bark, and buffalo hides.' (12) It is now 1924, and Grandpa seems to have adjusted to new technology with ease. Across the course of the novel, other older Osages are shown to be just as comfortable with their cars, with John noting at one point that elderly couple Nom-tah-shkah and her husband He-se-moie – a dedicated Road Man of the Native Church – are driven to the Mercantile store in a long black car, both wearing traditional clothing. John adds that 'He-se-moie had tried wearing white man's clothing, but he was self-conscious and went back to Osage clothing.' (95) Note that wearing white-man's clothing makes He-se-moie self-conscious but being driven around town in a large black automobile, does not. He-se-moie's identity as an Osage man is not compromised by the automobile, illustrating that car ownership is as much a facet of Indigenous culture as in white.

Grandpa does not dismiss his Pierce Arrow as something alien; instead he views the car in terms of its utility as opposed to its luxury. Its luxurious qualities purported by the salesman are not part of the car's appeal; it is spacious, and it is just like all other cars. For Grandpa, the value inherent in a spacious Pierce Arrow, beyond just transportation from A to B, soon becomes apparent:

[266] 'Pierce Arrow History', *The Buffalo Transportation Pierce Arrow Museum,* nd. Accessed via [http://www.pierce-arrow.com/history].

> On the drive to Mi-keh-wa-ti-an-kah's home, Grandpa explained the several ways to describe months of the year, generally called moons. One of the phrases describing February may be interpreted as "Don't let it fool you." In other words it is not always what it seems to be, so do not get caught out away from shelter during February because the weather may change and you could be in danger.
>
> [...]
>
> They sat in the backseat and at times like this I would drive and listen. I did not always hear anything because they often communicated in the sign language they knew as people who relied on hunting for food and who moved and worked quietly because they were warriors. I would hear nothing for a while and then they would laugh. (8)

In contrast to the burgeoning individualistic culture surrounding automobile ownership during this period, Grandpa does not travel in his Pierce Arrow alone. The inside of the Pierce Arrow is a communal and familial space where Grandpa can share stories, impart wisdom, and convey ancestral knowledge with his grandson and friend. The meaning behind an Osage phrase describing February contains both ancestral ecological knowledge regarding the changing seasons and allegorical implications that are bound up in the Osage experience alongside oil and oil wealth. To this end, Red Corn immediately follows Grandpa's February warning with the first contextual description of the discovery of oil on the reservation and the equal division of headrights. Grandpa's February warning – 'it is not always what it seems to be' and 'the weather may change and you could be in danger' – may also be interpreted to include the ecological and environmental implications of automobile ownership.

Red Corn establishes from the outset of the novel that Osages had the capital to purchase new cars. A portion of Native people in the early twentieth century had access to small amounts money as a result of forced allotment and land leases. However, many Native people never saw that money, and even if they did, it largely remained under the control of the federal government due to incompetency legislation. The modest sums of money that were gained by some tribes would come at the cost of a collective land loss that ultimately marked the early twentieth century as one of the most tragic and vicious eras of American colonialism. Though the Osages were not subject to the selling off of their 'surplus' lands under allotment, their wealth was generated through a combination of the forced sale of their Kansas lands in the nineteenth century, land leases and, most financially significant, oil leases. Spending that money on cars was not unique to the tribe. Deloria finds in *Indians in Unexpected Places* that the money that Native people did have access to was often spent purchasing cars, much to the disapproval of the local Indian agents:

> At Yankton, the agent noted: "The Indians found it hard to resist the temptation to own a car when they saw their neighbours riding in one." On the Crow reservation, 80 percent of the proceeds from allotment sales went for "cars and other luxuries." … At Cheyenne River, the agent lamented that almost every Indian who received a patent bought a car if the money was sufficient. The Round Valley, California, agent reported: Many of the Indians who received patents in fee sold their lands or mortgaged them – bought automobiles and spent their money."[267]

[267] Deloria, 151.

Deloria notes that Indian automobile purchase compares to Indian adoption of the horse, fitting smoothly into a long-standing tradition of utilising the most useful technologies that non-Indians had to offer.[268] This history is invoked in *A Pipe for February*. Many of the Osages in Red Corn's novel are either thinking of buying or have bought top-of-the-range automobiles and in some cases, have made multiple purchases. Ted speeds around the reservation in a yellow Stutz Bearcat convertible; Aunt Mary drives a black Buick; Cloud, a Sioux cowboy who is close with the cousins, drives a Ford Model T; Sonny considers buying a Pierce Arrow like Grandpa's; numerous cars and trucks are always haphazardly parked around various venues and events. In a demonstration of Osage innovation, Molly orders a new car in the exact colour of her blue dress, and, in an apparent dig at Henry Ford ('Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants so long as it is black'[269]) John observes that Molly may have started a new trend where someday people might be driving cars in all sorts of colours as opposed to the standard black (89). John himself owns four cars; Grandpa's inherited Pierce Arrow, a 1923 Oldsmobile, a truck, and a white Buick convertible. Red Corn's repeated inclusion of a vast array of vehicles in various brands, sizes, and colours repeatedly emphasises oft-ignored interwoven history between Indigenous buying power and the emergent automobile industry during the early twentieth century, as outlined by Deloria.

Over the course of the novel, John and his cousins take many trips in their cars across Osage country and beyond. John drives between his friends' houses, to shops and restaurants in Pawhuska, and further afield to visit with older relations in rural

[268] Ibid.
[269] Henry Ford and Samuel Crowther, *My Life and Work,* Garden City Publishing Company, 1922, 72.

areas. Towards the beginning of the novel, John hires a touring car when he, Molly, and Ted visit Colorado Springs after Grandpa's funeral. The cousins drive up into the mountains, visit Garden of the Gods Nature Centre, and take lunch at a small café called Joe's. Red Corn's inclusion of this tour harks back to the "road book," a genre of writing that was newly emerging in the early twentieth century–the period in which the novel takes place. 'Similar in nature to many of the early fictional accounts of cross-country motor trips, road books are distinguished by their "search for America" and self-discovery themes. As such,' writes historian Michael L. Berger, 'they reinforce observations of many that motoring is somehow conductive to self-analysis.'[270] Whilst not a typical 'search for America' per se, Red Corn's inclusion of the touring car trip to Garden of the Gods invokes the spirit of this type of self-analytical 'road book' narrative. For John, the trip 'came at a good time in [his] healing' (23), enabling him to have his picture taken in the same spot that as a child he had been photographed with his now deceased parents, a picture he sends as a postcard to reconnect with an estranged friend, Barbara Williams. John's numerous visits to Joe's café during the trip invoke warm memories of his father and travelling with his parents as a child. On the journey home from Colorado Springs, John takes the time to self-reflect on his desire to 'get started', on painting, or sculpture, or 'a business of some sort.' (23) American road books of this era would not have been a genre traditionally associated with or likely to be open to contributions from Indigenous people, likely in large part due to Indigenous mobility being considered a threat to the settler-state[271], but that does not mean that Indigenous drivers were not participating in analogous automotive experiences. The

[270] Michael L. Berger, *The Automobile in American History and Culture: A Reference Guide*, Greenwood Press, 2001, 225. Berger attributes the beginnings of the genre to Theodore Dresier's *A Hooser Holiday* (1916) and James Montgomery Flagg's *Boulevards All The Way – Well Maybe: Being an Artist's Truthful Impression of the USA from New York to California and Return, By Motor* (1925).
[271] Deloria writes about this at length in *Indians in Unexpected Places*.

touring car trip around the mountains of Colorado providing John with crucial space for healing and self-reflection can be read as Red Corn writing such Indigenous automotive experiences and histories back into a genre, and indeed an era, that sought to write them out.

In depth treatments of the car in American literary criticism are surprisingly few, given the centrality of the car to American culture. Less surprising is how little Native perspectives and Native texts have been considered in this genre. Up to the 1970s, critical texts were largely focused on reading the road in "canonical" American literature. For example, *In the Drivers' Seat* (1976) by Cynthia Golomb Dettelbach draws from Fitzgerald, Kerouac, and Steinbeck to argue that the automobile is typically associated with dreams of youth, freedom, and success. Dettelbach further argues these same texts demonstrate the inverse is also true and the automobile is equally as associated with nightmares of experience, constraint, and failure. Dettelbach's intervention highlights how mainstream American authors of the twentieth century recognised a kind of dualism and ambivalence towards the car as it encapsulates often contradictory thoughts and emotions. In my reading, Red Corn's depiction of the automobile in *A Pipe for February* goes some way to mirror this ambivalence and contradiction.

However, Dettelbach's automotive dreams of freedom and nightmares of constraint are ultimately the dreams and nightmares of white American men. To this end, in her analysis of automotive freedom, Dettelbach uncritically relies upon the notion of 'virgin land', 'now buried under faceless structures and macadam

highways'.[272] *In the Driver's Seat* thus inadvertently highlights the need for a critique of the road narrative that examines the relationship between twentieth century American colonialism and white male desires for (auto)mobility.

Fast forward twenty years of scholarship and there are two academic publications that go some way to take up that opportunity. First, Ronald Primeau's *Romance of the Road* (1996) offers a broader, more fluid interpretation of what constitutes a road narrative, drawing connections between automobiles, roads, frontierism and colonial control over land. Whilst Primeau aligns with Dettelbach's theory that road narratives 'open dialogues between oppositional elements' which 'make space for each other in an exploratory mode'[273], automobiles also constitute a 'unique merging of the frontier spirit and the worship of the machine as a complex icon.'[274] For Primeau, road narratives borne out of this frontier spirit often feature various myths – 'paradisal, frontier, individual, success, growth – [which] reinforce one another in the open spaces and on fast roads in powerful machines.'[275] Primeau invites non-white, non-male voices into a dialogue with dominant discourses, acknowledging that '[w]omen, African Americans, and Native Americans have travelled the literary highways for over five decades'[276] and 'have brought to the road a new range of heroes who rechart the course.'[277]

Kris Lackey brings colonial analyses of the road to the forefront in *Roadframes* (1997). Lackey provides substantial historical context to illuminate the inexorable relationship

[272] Cynthia Golomb Dettelbach, *In the Drivers' Seat: The Automobile in American Literature and Popular Culture,* Greenwood Press, 1976, 35.
[273] Ibid., 5,
[274] Ibid.
[275] Ibid., 8.
[276] Ibid., 125.
[277] Ronald Primeau, *Romance of the Road: The Literature of the American Highway,* Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1996, 111.

between frontierism and early motoring. He draws lines between the death of the last surviving member of the Lewis and Clarke expedition, the first published account of a transcontinental automobile journey thirty-three years later, and early automobile routes lain over bison traces and trails left by Indigenous travois. Lackey notes that road romanticism and '[t]he rhetoric of discovery – issuing from the wish to re-enact pioneer hardships, to recreate an innocent country, and to imaginatively possess the land – remains vital after almost a century of American nonfiction automotive narratives and road novels.'[278] Turning to William Least Heat-Moon's nonfiction autobiographical travel book *Blue Highways* (1982) Lackey explores the relationship between post-Vietnam interrogations of American history, rediscovery of the land, and romantic visions of the past and future. Of English, Irish, and Osage ancestry, Heat-Moon's book documented his extended road trip around the US using only minor rural roads, or "blue highways". Lackey contends that *Blue Highways* 'combined older road book conventions with secularized but deeply ambivalent notions of the past [it was] appropriating'[279], and featured 'an informed sympathy for the western tribes' resulting in a humanising, if still romantically associative, treatment of Native Americans.[280]

There are some commonalities that unite this collection of road analyses across time. First, all of these theorists and authors have identified that the car itself is a multiplicitous symbol; Dettelbach and Fitzgerald to Lackey and Heat-Moon alike have identified a deep ambivalence in our relationship with automobiles. The second commonality is a better defined as an absence: a lack of Indigenous perspectives and voices in the critical theory-making of the road and automobile, and an even greater

[278] Kris Lackey, *Roadframes: The American Highway Narrative,* University of Nebraska Press, 1997, 4.
[279] Ibid., 51.
[280] Ibid., 52-53.

lack of consideration for Indigenous literatures. Whilst there are a few exemplary exceptions to this generalisation in the twenty-first century – namely Daniel Miller's sociological collection *Car Cultures* (2001) which adopts a global trans-Indigenous approach across its essays, and Philip J. Deloria's *Indians in Unexpected Places* (2004) – Indigenous relationships with the car and the road are sorely understudied. Whilst the relationship between cars and colonialism has been previously examined, Indigenous theorists and perspectives remain underrepresented.

A Pipe for February makes for an interesting and complex candidate, as it picks up on the deep ambivalence of the car from an Osage perspective and extends that ambivalence outwards to oil itself. Whilst theorists such as Dettelbach and Primeau have highlighted the car's embodiment of opposition (dreams and nightmares, freedom and constraint, old and new, tradition and innovation), Red Corn's text instead demonstrates the constructed (Western) nature of these oppositions by showing that they are not inherently oppositional in twentieth century Osage culture. In other words, the old and new, and the traditional and innovative, are not understood to be in binary opposition to one another but are rather part of a complex web of relations. The central characters' relationships with their cars reflects this worldview – none more so than John's maternal cousin, Molly Thunder.

Molly's automobility

Clarke argues in *Driving Women* (2007) that cars do more than just reflect American identity, they also determine a kind of American citizenship, particularly for those perceived as outside the mainstream based on race, class, gender, and ethnicity.[281]

[281] Clarke, 166.

Particularly in novels by nonmainstream writers, cars function as vehicles that span and collapse the divide between private and public realms, providing 'a flexible and unstable location from which to negotiate among the various sites that constitute American identity'.[282] For Clarke, this kind of automotive citizenship 'confers a sense of belonging, and grants access to public, civic life, 'resonate[s] particularly strongly for women; automotive citizenship refigures home, elides boundaries, revises standards of inclusion, and foregrounds the body'.[283] Molly's auto-mobility as an Osage woman in Red Corn's novel provides a useful entry point into Clarke's assertions.

Molly and Barbara are the two central female characters in the novel and they have significant, if different, influences in John's life. Molly is John's lifelong childhood friend and cousin, whilst Barbara is estranged from John at the novel's commencement but becomes a slow-burn love interest as the plot progresses. Both Molly and Barbara are shown to be highly mobile; they both own cars – in Molly's case, more than one – and both enjoy driving, spending a large portion of their time on the roads between towns, houses, and settlements. They share the experience of being affluent women behind the wheel in a largely male American car culture, but their experiences on the road diverge when considering their gender alongside their race and class. Molly is a newly wealthy Osage woman, and Barbara is an affluent white woman born into her wealth. Whilst driving gives both women access to a certain amount of freedom that 'elides boundaries [and] revises standards of inclusion',[284] Molly's continued presence on the road is a far more dangerous and radical act of resistance when compared with Barbara. Molly's auto-mobility both makes her a target for

[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid., 168.
[284] Ibid.

violence and plays a fundamental part in her agency and resistance toward the encroaching settler violence endemic to the Reign of Terror.

Molly Thunder is John's cousin on his mother's side, though John describes her as 'the closest thing I will ever have to a sister.' (121) Molly appears in the narrative almost as often as John and they are usually found in each other's company. She is kind, generous, welcoming, and adventurous. John describes her as 'always ready to do something a little different' (198); that it takes 'practically nothing to put Molly in a mood to take a trip.' (197) Molly is one year younger than John and they were raised together as children. Growing up, Molly attended grade school before her parents boarded her on weekdays at the Saint Louis Convent, a Catholic School for Girls. As an adult, she lives between two homes; an apartment at the centre of town and the house she inherited from her parents where the Half Moons reside, a Delaware Indian family who look after the house and 'worry about Molly as if she was a daughter.' (53)

Just like John's parents, Molly's parents died when she was a child, apparently killed in a car accident. As the Reign of Terror begins to close in around the central characters in the novel, Molly's cousin Martha Thunder is the first victim, killed in another car "accident". Molly hears the details of Martha's death from her guardian, Alan Sanders, who, unbeknownst to the cousins, orchestrated Martha's murder to make it look like a car crash. Sanders describes the incident as a 'freak accident' informing Molly that according to the police report, 'the car had very little damage, and… Martha received a severe blow to the head and that was what killed her'. (49) Molly later observes that her parents' 'freak accident' 'was just as odd as Cousin Martha's accident' (55). Molly is deeply upset by her cousin's death and John worries

about her, noting that she has 'not [been] doing much since Martha died' (68), which is unusual for someone as active and sociable as Molly.

After Martha's funeral, Molly asks John to accompany her on a visit to Saint Louis Convent, where she spent weekdays boarding as a child. Red Corn uses this scene to convey Molly's innate inner strength, as she reminisces on her memories of living in the convent. Red Corn alludes to the forced participation of Indian nations in the boarding school system when Molly comments, 'We were told by the people of at the Agency and the church that this would be best for me. I knew [my parents] would rather have me at home.' (55) Whilst at the convent, Molly asks Sister Mary Nadine whether it is true that 'the tribe was paying the church very well for educating us.' Sister Nadine responds, 'Yes, Molly, and I have always tried to see that the tribe got its money's worth.' (55) Red Corn's inclusion of this brief conversation aligns with current Chief of the Osage Nation Geoffrey M. Standing Bear's comments in an interview with *Missouri Life Magazine* regarding the Osage experience with boarding schools:

> Every tribe has had [the boarding school] experience. But we were very fortunate, in that we sent our children to private boarding schools. We saw it as a great opportunity, whereby our people learned to speak English and Latin. The difficulty in not being allowed to speak the Osage tongue didn't come from the private boarding schools, but from the federal government schools, where the Osage language and customs were discouraged.[285]

Loretta Fowler echoes Standing Bear's comments in *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Great Plains* (2003), writing that Osage wealth provided a 'cushion

[285] Geoffrey Standing Bear, 'The Osage Nation Today', *Missouri Life Magazine,* 2018. Accessed via [https://missourilife.com/the-osage-nation-today/]

against some of the repression and discrimination faced by other Indians' in the context of the boarding school system.[286] The conversation between Molly and Sister Nadine constitutes an acknowledgement on Red Corn's part of this facet of Osage historical experience. Despite this, another exchange between Molly and Sister Nadine whilst they are walking around the convent highlights that Molly's experiences at the convent were not necessarily positive:

> 'The way the nuns were dressed in your black-and-white habits fascinated me and scared me just a little. No, I was scared a lot.'
>
> 'You didn't show it, Molly.'
>
> 'Good. I tried not to. This is the fourth floor and this room was home during those years. My parents would leave me here Monday morning. On Friday I would sit by the window and watch for them. When I saw Dad's car turning into the driveway I would run downstairs and meet them.' (55)

Red Corn's inclusion of this interaction between Molly and Sister Nadine is the first indication of the resilience of Molly's character. It illustrates ways in which settlers have imposed their will on her since she was old enough to remember, and Molly's determination and force of will not to show fear in the face of the colonial mission is a part of her character that remains essential to her ongoing resistance in adulthood. Additionally, in this scene, Molly remembers waiting all week to see her father's car turn into the convent driveway to pick her up and take her home. For Molly, this car is a symbol of freedom and mobility, carrying her away from the dark stairwells of the convent and darker habits of the nuns. At the close of the scene, Molly stands with

[286] Loretta Fowler, *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Great Plains,* Columbia University Press, 2003, 106.

John outside of the convent, looking up at the large building in silence. She does not speak until she and John are in John's car and on the main road, at which point she smiles and says 'Okay, let's go eat.' (56) As an adult, access to a car means that she is able to visit the convent on her own terms and leave on her own time. Molly's inner strength will carry her onward through later scenes, just as her car will, as the Reign of Terror closes in.

Not long after the gathering at Molly's, Evelyn Thunder, another of Molly's cousins, is murdered whilst out driving. Rather than attempting to cover the murder up with the appearance of a car crash, as in Martha's case, Evelyn is shot whilst behind the wheel and her car is left completely undamaged. Despite her friends' suspicions, the death of Evelyn, 'the girl who loved life so much' (155), is immediately written off as a suicide by state officials without investigation. The differences between Martha and Evelyn's deaths indicate that the murderers of Osages are becoming increasingly uncaring about the possibility of any consequences and are no longer trying to make the murders look accidental. Subsequently, the local newspaper publishes reports by the police department and the town's doctor, both claiming Martha and Evelyn's deaths to be accidental. The sheriff comments on 'how tragic the wrecks were and how hard he was going to work to keep Osages from drinking poison whiskey'. (177) Osage reliance on and enjoyment of the solitude and autonomy that car ownership can bring has become an opportunity for un-witnessed violence against them.

Clarke writes that '[Cars] can serve as a bridge between dominant and nondominant cultures. One may not be able to drive into the mainstream, but the car

facilitates movement among different locations, both physically and figuratively.'[287] As we have seen, the cousins in Red Corn's novel use their cars this purpose. For Molly especially, the car becomes a site of defiance and resistance over the course of the novel as murderous settlers make driving an increasingly dangerous act. The 'bridge' to which Clarke refers is not a 'one-way street', as it were – just as Osages' automobility facilitates movement between the 'dominant' (settler) and 'nondominant' (Osage) cultures, these same roads allow settlers to target Osages in their cars. Martha and Evelyn are both murdered whilst out driving, demonstrating that 'dominant' culture pushes back, hard, along that bridge.

In response to Evelyn's murder, Molly resolves to 'face whatever is going on. Whatever that is' (153).) Molly gathers her cousins and friends and declares that she has an announcement to make that she wants everybody to hear:

> While we were gathering around her, Molly climbed up and stood on the bench with her hands on her hips. "My announcement is this. I refuse to allow anything to interfere with the way I live my life. If I cannot live my life the way I want, then I'd rather not live at all."
>
> Our little group of friends applauded Molly.
>
> She shook her head negatively. "I am not going to be reckless and I'm not going to be careless. But this business of being afraid is not for me. If somebody wants to shoot me, then they are just going to have to shoot me, but I am going to go on enjoying myself and live my life the way I want to." (179)

[287] Clarke, 166.

Molly's defiant speech represents an emotional turning point in her narrative. The determination, dignity, and resilience essential to her character–already established by Red Corn through Molly's childhood memories–are on clear display in this scene as she takes a stand against encroaching settler violence and colonial control. John describes Molly's defiance 'as if a burden had been lifted' (180) for her gathered friends and cousins. After the speech, Molly's first act is to drive to church on her way into town with John. From this point until the final climax of the novel, she continues to live just as she did before her cousins were murdered–taking her car on the roads around town; driving to and from John and Ted's houses; driving to town for wedding supplies for Ted and Mavis' wedding; arranging meet-ups at the local café, and so on. With Martha and Evelyn's deaths on the road in mind, Molly's everyday acts of auto-mobility such as these become transformed into radical acts of resistance and resilience in the climate of the Reign of Terror.

Osage entanglements

On their way to Aunt Mary's, the cousins 'drove across the two bridges and out onto the new paved highway going west' (90). John describes how he put his foot down on the accelerator of his new convertible – much to Molly's approval – and 'took some curves a little fast and the car handled them.' (90) They leave the main highway and join a narrow dirt road that takes them through the Burbank Oil field, where '[w]orkers were putting up oil derricks as fast as they could get timbers and pipe.' John continues, '[t]he derricks were two hundred twenty yards [sic] apart running north and south and east and west and every hole they drilled produced a good well.' (90) Molly askes John

to pull over at the oil field so that they may watch the sunset together, leaning against the fender of John's convertible.

> "What do you think about those derricks? Don't they kind of spoil the sunset?" Molly asked.
>
> "I've thought about that. The first time I saw them I thought they were ugly. Now they really don't bother me."
>
> Molly laughed. "You're no artist."
>
> I laughed too. "I can not explain why I don't mind the derricks. The things are not natural and out of place, but they do not bother me like they did when I first saw them."
>
> "Well," Molly said. "I still think they're ugly."
>
> So, Cousin Molly and I stood leaning against the car watching the sunset. "You know," she said. "Those things really don't bother me that much either." (90-91)

John and Molly stopping by the Burbank Oil field is the only instance of the characters in the novel actually visiting an extraction site. Rather than showing disgust or distress at the effect on the environment, or an implied condemnation on the author's part (as in Hogan's visceral and frequent descriptions of the Earth's suffering in *Mean Spirit* explored in Chapter 2), Red Corn's central characters share a few casual remarks about the view before they both conclude that the derricks are not particularly bothersome. If nothing else, this scene depicts the gradual normalisation of oil infrastructure as a fixture on the landscape during the early twentieth century. What is more illuminating about this scene are the largely ambivalent feelings John, and

eventually Molly, have about the derricks in front of them. This scene encapsulates Red Corn's awareness of Osage entanglement with oil and his resistance to binary readings of oil as good *or* bad. For John, the oil derricks are not natural, they are out of place, but they do not bother him. Molly's feelings are more complicated–she depends on the derricks to maintain her automobility as a site of resistance, which becomes increasingly more urgent as the Reign of Terror continues. And yet, the more derricks in the fields, the more oil is extracted, the more wealth generated for the Osages, and the more they become targets in the eyes of greedy settlers like Sanders. Ultimately, this scene serves as a call for nuance when considering the legacy of oil extraction alongside Indigenous people and their rights. For Osages like John and Molly, oil is mobility, and mobility is liberation from the colonial confines of imposed stasis within reservation status, which serves to hold Indigenous people in time and place.

In childhood as in adulthood, Molly is shown to be courageous, determined, and irrepressible. She becomes a beacon for her friends and family, always full of kindness, loyalty, and empathy for those around her. Molly's practice of transforming her everyday movements into acts of resistance ultimately comes at a great cost when she is shot from a distance by Carson whilst all her friends and family are gathered at the Bon Bon in the final chapters of the novel. She survives, thanks to Walter's military training, and is laid up in hospital, passing in and out of consciousness for a few days. John barely sleeps during this time, visiting her on several occasions and thinking of her often (256). After a week, and despite a great amount of pain, Molly insists on attending Ted and Mavis' wedding in a wheelchair, her shoulder in a cast (259). Just as she did when playing tag with John and Ted in the barn at the Thunder home as a child, Molly has indeed 'jumped up, and kept running.' (124) For Red Corn, Molly's strength of

character is explicitly linked to agency over her own movements and the ability to remain mobile.

In the final chapter of the novel, Molly remains in John's thoughts, as he sits alone with '[m]oonlight shining through the south windows and onto the floor of Grandpa's little rock house' (266), casting his mind over the turbulent events of recent weeks. This is a crucial moment, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, where John is trying to conceive of a way to paint a series of pictures that will depict Osage history and explain the Osage experience:

> I have been searching to find that moment in time to start painting the Osage history. What will the subject of that first painting be? Will it be a life symbol, like the elk or an eagle or a star? Will it be a group picture like those photographs at an I'n-lon-shka dance, or could it be a portrait of a person I know, like Molly? (267)

John's touching consideration of Molly as the starting subject of this enormous and meaningful undertaking means her story and character must be important facets of the Osage experience. On my reading, Molly's story is especially key for representing the complexities of the Osage relationship with oil. Molly and the extended Thunder family suffer greatly during the Reign of Terror at the hands of murderous, entitled settlers intent on stealing Osage oil wealth for themselves. Equally, Molly's story exemplifies 'the many good things that have come from oil' (266)–the wealth generated from extraction, and indeed extraction itself in the production of petrol, has enabled particular kinds of freedom and mobility emblemised by the automobile and not usually afforded by the settler state to Indigenous people and/or women. In a novel

largely concerned with the domestic, everyday patterns of its central characters–John's painting, Molly's driving–Red Corn is careful to represent the relationship between Osages and oil as a deeply entangled one, without polarisation or binary dichotomies.

A short while after Martha's funeral, the cousins are gathered with their elders at Molly's rural residence to discuss the increasing danger the Osages are facing. The conversation turns to fond reminiscing of the good times when the cousins were children:

> Later the conversation drifted to the good times we had shared at the Thunder home, and we exchanged stories about when as children we played in the barn and along the creek bank. Ted told a story about game of tag when we were in the loft of the barn and I was It and I found Molly. She took a good run at the door of the loft and jumped, sailing to the ground and really crashed, but she jumped up and kept running.
>
> Retelling the old stories helped us to relax and gave me some confidence that we would handle whatever we were facing. (124)

Ted's sharing of this story adds another layer to the character portrait Red Corn paints of Molly as the Reign of Terror presses inward. Just as she refused to show fear in the face of her frightening boarding school experience, Molly's fearlessness and bravery is evident in this story, keeping her running even though she must have been in physical pain after she 'really crashed'. Ted's sharing of this fond memory functions as more than just a reminder for the cousins of Molly's bravery and strength, however. The

sharing of old stories is demonstrably an invaluable healing process for the cousins. In these stories, John is reminded of the strength of those around him – especially Molly, evident even as a young child – which reminds John of his own and gives him confidence in facing an uncertain and inevitably dangerous future. And, crucially, stories give John hope – hope that even if the Osages must sail to the ground and crash, they will not be broken. They will jump up, brush themselves off, and keep on running.

CHAPTER 4/DIPTYCH 2

RED CORN, OIL WEALTH, AND OSAGE ECONOMIC THEORY

Our ancient culture was on a collision course with both good and evil forces of economics that would occur early in the nineteen hundreds when oil was discovered on our reservation.[288]

...

Certainly in the case of the Osages, it is difficult to talk about oil without also talking about wealth. Likewise, it is difficult to talk about wealth, without also talking about economics. [289] And yet, as Alexandra Harmon identifies in *Rich Indians,* there is a significant gap in academic literature that addresses Osage economic concepts and the subsequent impact of oil wealth during the first few decades of the twentieth century. This gap becomes more all-the-more glaring when Osage oil wealth is placed within a wider context of the 1920s in the United States, more commonly referred to as the Roaring Twenties. Harmon notes that historical studies of the Roaring Twenties featuring Osage experiences are 'virtually nonexistent' despite the highly public visibility of their wealth. I contend that Harmon's identification of a lack of materials on the topic is in part due to Red Corn's *A Pipe for February* being overlooked. [290] This chapter therefore argues that by positioning Red Corn as economic theorist, *A Pipe for February* provides a sorely needed Osage perspective on twentieth century Osage economics and the impacts of oil wealth.

---

[288] Charles H. Red Corn, *A Pipe for February,* foreword.
[289] For the purposes of this chapter, I am taking a broad definition of economics to be the branch of knowledge concerned with the production, consumption, and transfer of wealth.
[290] Alexandra Harmon, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in America*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2010, 182.

As the epigraph to this chapter demonstrates, Red Corn's foreword to *A Pipe for February* is explicit in its engagement with economics. These 'good and evil forces of economics' are thematised throughout the novel by his representation of the Osages' positionality as simultaneously wealthy and exploited. Thus, his novel functions as a critique of racialised capitalism and white economic supremacy, all the while in careful consideration of the complexities of an Osage positionality as a marginalised community newly empowered by wealth generated from oil extraction from their own lands. *A Pipe for February* is therefore an invaluable text that goes some way to address the scholarly gaps identified by Harmon; it provides an Osage perspective on white economics *and* an Osage perspective on Osage economics. Borrowing terminology from George Lipsitz and developed by Aileen Moreton-Robinson, I contend that the 'bad forces' of economics present in the novel collectively constitute an individualistic capitalist 'possessive investment in whiteness', whilst the 'good forces' of economics are generally informed by an Osage cultural practice of wealth distribution for the benefit of the community. The novel deconstructs the oft-held belief that wealth and enterprise are in some way anti-Indigenous whilst simultaneously highlighting that the white capitalist construction of 'business' is predatory and serves to benefit, maintain, and uphold white supremacy. Further, Red Corn provides an Osage redefinition of the concepts of investment and community necessary for upholding the 'good forces' of economics. In this way, *A Pipe for February* is a pertinent example of what Naomi Klein and George Monbiot (as discussed in the Introduction) identify as literature's, and specifically Indigenous communities', capacity to envision a world radically different to the capitalist economic logics that continue to push our world ever closer to environmental collapse.

As Alexandra Harmon has noted, '[h]istorians' neglect of the prosperous Indian may be due in part to a common assumption that the self-interested pursuit and retention of wealth was not an indigenous American value.'[291] Harmon and other scholars have attributed this assumption in part to a persistent and seductive paradigm that 'contrasts an egalitarian, spiritual, traditionalist ethos with a competitive, materialistic, activist non-Indian ethos…that has drawn historians' gaze away from enterprising Indians.'[292] Harmon recognises a significant gap in the scant literature that *does* analyse Indigenous economic culture and discourses, specifically around Osage economic practices. Whilst there is ample scholarship on the prosperous individual Indians of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, Harmon claims that there is far less on the twentieth century Osages who are discussed at length in chapter five of her 2010 publication, *Rich Indians*.[293] In 'Osage Oil Owners', Harmon relies primarily on newspaper and magazine articles as her sources to interrogate non-Indigenous attitudes toward Osage wealth during the early twentieth century. In doing so, Harmon identifies a lack of direct Osage testimony on the subject of their own wealth during this period and the ways in which that wealth may or may not have influenced a change in tribal economic beliefs. Harmon notes that even John Joseph Mathews' significant contributions to Osage ethnography have 'little to say about whether Osages in the boom years were trying to abide by a traditional economic ethic', before turning to non-Osage historians and ethnographers such as Willard Rollings to discuss the possibilities of twentieth-century Osage economic culture. [294] Whilst the novel is not necessarily direct testimony from the time

[291] Ibid., 9.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid., 8.
[294] Ibid., 185.

it is set, it is still within this context that I argue that Red Corn's *A Pipe for February* provides a much-needed Osage perspective and engagement with the topic at hand.

'Evil forces' of economics

To better understand the driving force behind the 'evil forces' of economics in *A Pipe for February*, it must first be situated within the historical and political context of the year in which the novel is set. The story begins in earnest in 1924, a year into the presidency of Calvin Coolidge, 30th president of the United States. Coolidge's paternalistic attitude towards Indigenous nations continued a century-long federal approach that characterised US-Indigenous relations: that Indigenous nations had no choice but to assimilate into settler culture, with a logical end point of eventual extermination. The Coolidge years (1923-1929), popularly known as the Roaring Twenties, were a period of economic growth and technological advancement, marked by significant rises in employment and wages and the new everyday availability of consumer goods like telephones, radios, and refrigerators. But, as Cécile R. Ganteaume points out, this prosperity never reached Indian lands. The vast majority of Indigenous nations in the 1920s lived in 'stark poverty, without adequate housing, food, clean water, or sewage disposal. Infectious diseases, including tuberculosis and the eye disease trachoma, were widespread.'[295] The consequences of poverty and disease were compounded by federal policies which forbade tribes from following traditional ways of life, 'making them dependent on inadequate government health and

[295] Cécile R. Ganteaume, 'What Calvin Coolidge Didn't Understand About Native Americans', *Zocalo Public Square,* November 30, 2017. Accessed via [https://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/2017/11/30/calvin-coolidge-didnt-understand-native-americans/ideas/essay/].

other services, and by imposing a way of life that (inadvertently) marginalized them economically.'[296]

Partially in recognition of the Indians that had served in the US military in World War I and regarded as 'the greatest civil rights success of the Coolidge years'[297], Coolidge signed the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924. The Act stipulated that 'all non citizens born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States'.[298] Joseph K. Dixon, secretary of the American Indian Association and author of *The Vanishing Race* (1913), argued in a Congress subcommittee on military affairs that granting US citizenship to Indians would be 'a proclamation of emancipation for the North American Indian who has shed his blood for a country and a flag that he could not call his own... the fiat would stand out as the most striking consummation of our wonderful achievements at arms in bringing freedom to all peoples.'[299] Rather than a petition for citizenship by Indian nations themselves, the Act was instead a tool for the further legal legitimisation and extension of decades of US assimilation policies and reflected Coolidge's deeply paternalistic attitude towards Indian nations. '[T]he Act neither automatically granted Indians the right to vote' writes Ganteaume, 'nor did it fundamentally change the U.S.-American Indian relationship, which had been defined by the U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Marshall in the 1831 decision *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*.' In this way, the Indian Citizenship Act extended the 1831 designation of Indian nations as 'domestic

[296] Ibid.
[297] Charles C. Johnson, *Why Coolidge Matters: Leadership Lessons from America's Most Underrated President,* Encounter Books, 2013, 188.
[298] H.R. 6355 (Public No. 75 68th Congress), June 2, 1924. Accessed via [archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=602].
[299] United States Congressional House Committee on Military Affairs, "Reorganization of the Army: report of a subcommittee on the Committee on Military Affairs Relating to the Reorganization of the Army", Government Printing Office, 1919, 2149.

dependent nations'; infantilised wards to an apparently benevolent US guardian.[300] Throughout the 1920s, the many failures of the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) were publicised by a number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous reformers–especially with regards to the corruption of OIA Commissioner Charles Burke. Coolidge never seriously addressed these allegations; instead, he vetoed new legislation that would have allowed Indigenous nations to file suits in the U.S. Court of Claims.[301] Ultimately, despite attempting to address the 'Indian problem' in two of his annual messages to Congress, 'Coolidge never understood that paternalism and federal Indian policy was the real issue.'[302]

In the summer of 1927, Coolidge was formally adopted into the Lakota Sioux nation. The adoption ceremony was highly publicised and seemed to be part of a wider effort to appease photographers and appear as an ordinary 'man of the people' – during his presidency, Coolidge donned traditional headdress with the Lakota, dressed as a cowboy, wore a traditional Vermont farmer's smock, led plough-horses and tossed hay all before photographers and motion picture cameras.[303] But, to the Lakota, 'the adoption was an assertion of their survival', argues Ganteaume, 'as a Native nation that desired equal footing with the United States. But that complicated notion was lost on most Americans, including the president himself, as well as the people

[300] United States Supreme Court, "Cherokee Nation v Georgia" 30 U.S. (5 Pet) 1, 1831. Accessed via [supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/30/1].
[301] United States Senate, 'Vetoes, 1789 to Present: Calvin Coolidge', nd. Accessed via [senate.gov/reference/Legislation/Vetoes/Presidents/CoolidgeC.pdf]. This document details separate vetoes against any Indians of or residing in the states of California and Washington; the Chippewa Indians; the Shawnee Indians; the Shoshone Tribe of Indians of the Wind River Reservation; the Cowlitz Tribe of Indians; the Uintah, Uncompaghre and the White River Bands of the Ute Indians; the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Bands of Indians respectively from submitting claims.
[302] Ganteaume, np.
[303] Niall A. Palmer, *Calvin Coolidge: Conservative Icon,* Nova Science Publishers Inc., 2013, 162.

who witnessed breathless coverage of the adoption ceremony in the press.'[304] Four years previously, the Lakota nation had submitted a claim to Coolidge's office for the repatriation of the Black Hills, citing ongoing U.S. violations of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty which designated the Black Hills for exclusive use by the Sioux. That same summer as the adoption ceremony, Lakota leaders visited the Summer White House to further discuss repatriation, where Coolidge 'informed them he would take the matter back to Washington and report back':

> What Coolidge made of the Lakota claim might best be construed from the speech he made in the heart of the Black Hills, less than a week after his Lakota adoption, as he stood before Mount Rushmore to designate it as a national monument. The president spoke of "the side of a mountain which probably no white man had ever beheld in the days of Washington, in territory acquired by the action of Jefferson …"
>
> He made no reference to the Lakota, nor any other indigenous peoples. It wasn't until more than 50 years later–in 1980–that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Lakota claim to the land was valid.[305]

The underbelly of Coolidge's paternalistic attitude towards U.S.–Indigenous relations was likely made readily apparent for the Lakota and other nations more widely as a result of this speech. The (still ongoing) case of the repatriation of the Black Hills demonstrates federal appropriation and extraction of Indigenous land and resources, all whilst espousing that such federal policy is benevolent and righteous. Coolidge's actions towards the Lakota nation exemplified the nineteenth-century figure of the

[304] Ganteaume, np.
[305] Ibid.

'friend of the Indian'; apparent concern and sympathy for Indigenous plight that ultimately motivates a desire for Indigenous cultural assimilation in order to 'save' them from 'extinction'.

However, I contend that the Coolidge brand of autocratic paternalism is a facet of what Lipsitz has termed a 'possessive investment in whiteness,' both of which are fundamental factors driving the 'evil forces of economics' in Red Corn's novel. Lipsitz defines a 'possessive investment in whiteness' as the combination of public policy and private prejudice which together uphold white supremacy and ensure social and material rewards for white people. The term is a particularly useful tool in the context of this chapter for the analysis of U.S. – Osage economic relations and its representations within *A Pipe for February*. Lipsitz contends that, from the start, 'European settlers in North America established structures encouraging possessive investment in whiteness. The colonial and early-national legal systems authorized attacks on Native Americans and encouraged the appropriation of their lands.'[306] Though his work primarily focuses on possessive investments in whiteness generated by slavery and segregation and the subsequent contrasts between 'black experiences and white opinions', Lipsitz nonetheless contends that 'all minority groups have suffered from it, albeit to different degrees and in different ways.' The possessive investment in whiteness 'always emerges from a fused sensibility drawing on many sources at once…on antiblack racism [and] also the legacies left by federal, state, and

[306] George Lipsitz, 'The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the "White" Problem in American Studies', *American Quarterly,* Vol. 47, No. 3, 1995, 371.

local policies toward Native Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, and other groups designated by whites as "racially other".'[307]

Geonpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson has furthered the notion of the white possession of Indigenous lands and its inextricability from capitalist economies such as those perpetuated in the United States. In her 2015 publication *The White Possessive: Property, power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*, Moreton-Robinson proposes that,

> For Indigenous people, white possession is not unmarked, unnamed, or invisible; it is hypervisible. In our quotidian encounters, whether it is on the streets of Otago or Sydney, in the tourist shops in Vancouver or Waipahu, or sitting in a restaurant in New York, we experience ontologically the effects of white possession. These cities signify with every building and every street that this land is now possessed by others; signs of white possession are embedded everywhere in the landscape. The omnipresence of Indigenous sovereignties exists here too, but it is disavowed through the materiality of these significations, which are perceived as evidence of ownership by those who have taken possession. This is territory that has been marked by and through violence and race. Racism is thus inextricably tied to the theft and appropriation of Indigenous lands in the first world.[308]

The following excerpt from Roger Hall Lloyd's account of Osage history immediately illuminates Moreton-Robinson's proposition and the manner in which it can be applied

[307] Ibid., 372.
[308] Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, power, and Indigenous Sovereignty,* University of Minnesota Press, 2015, xiii.

to the Osage specifically. Describing the town of Barnsdall, formerly named Bigheart in honour of James Bigheart, Hall Lloyd explains how,

> In the 1920s, during the Osage oil boom, the town's name was changed. It is said that an oilman named Barnsdall, who owned the local refinery, promised to pave the streets if the town were named after him. Out of sycophancy or stinginess the town citizens agreed. Though Barnsdall never made good his promise, the town never reclaimed its original, and much more pleasing, name. As if cursed by this, the town now has a shabby and half deserted air. A rusty pump jack, proclaimed as "America's Only Main Street Oil Well", sits in the street, on which there are a few shops, a post office and some half-empty commercial buildings.[309]

Moreton-Robinson credits African-American scholar Cheryl Harris with connecting the appropriation of Indigenous lands with the formation of whiteness specifically as a form of property, which operates both tangibly and intangibly in law. In her 1993 article 'Whiteness as Property', Harris argues that racial identity and property are deeply interrelated concepts, tracing 'the origins of whiteness as property in the parallel systems of domination of Black and Native American peoples out of which were created racially contingent forms of property and property rights.'[310] For Harris,

> In ways so embedded that it is rarely apparent, the set of assumptions, privileges, and benefits that accompany that status of being white have become a valuable asset that whites sought to protect and that those who passed

[309] Roger Hall Lloyd, *Osage County: A Tribe and American Culture 1600-1934*, 304.
[310] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* Vol. 106, No. 8, 1993, 1709.

> sought to attain – by fraud if necessary. White have come to expect and rely on those benefits, and over time these expectations have been affirmed, legitimised, and protected by the law. Even though the law is neither uniform nor explicit in all instances, in protecting settled expectations based on white privilege, American law has recognized a property interest in whiteness that, although unacknowledged, now forms the background against which legal disputes are framed, argued, and adjudicated.[311]

For Moreton-Robinson, Harris' theoretical framework 'opens the door for an Indigenous reading of how white property rights are connected to the internal territoriality of patriarchal white sovereignty in the form of the nation-state. As a form of property, whiteness accumulates capital and social appreciation as white people are recognized within the law primarily as property-owning subjects. As such, they are heavily invested in the nation being a white possession.'[312]

As Lipsitz, Moreton-Robinson, and Harris identify, the United States was founded on a possessive investment in whiteness through the appropriation of Indigenous lands for white ownership and profit, a colonialist practice which was extended through the Dawes Act and continues to plague Indigenous nations in the present day. The Coolidge years (1923-1929) saw a continual (re)investment in whiteness, where the prosperities of the 'Roaring Twenties' largely did not reach non-white communities. White prosperity was predicated on the conception of Indigenous lands as white property alongside the ongoing political and social oppression of Indigenous peoples. In the case of the Osage, the implementation of the Dawes Act,

[311] Ibid., 1713-1714.
[312] Moreton-Robinson, xix.

combined with other federal and state policies such as the guardianship system, was informed by, and informed in turn, a white cultural narrative that identified the Osages and other Indigenous peoples as inferior and incompetent. This narrative served to ensure that the economic privilege of whiteness was protected, and white wealth was jealously guarded from non-whites perceived as undeserving. Equally, it meant that the social privileges afforded by white wealth were preserved too, since the possessive investment in whiteness continually (re)creates and preserves a racialized social pyramid whereby anything that threatens white social, economic, and political status must be eradicated. An engagement with Lipsitz, Moreton-Robinson, and Harris' frameworks allows for a deeper understanding of the difficulties faced by Osages, both within and outside of Red Corn's text, who were significantly wealthier than the majority of other Indigenous nations at the time, but nonetheless faced a magnitude of oppression at the hands of white settlers. Osage experiences in this context illustrate Harmon's contention that '[w]ealth did not afford Indians the power to say which conceptions of Indians and which principles would determine the nature of their relations with Euro-Americans.'[313]

The 'evil forces' of economics: lawyers

In *A Pipe for February,* the 'evil forces' of economics are clearly driven by both the law and the Indian Agency, embodied respectively by Alan Sanders, John's family attorney, and Henry Hugel, the Agency superintendent. Importantly, both also characterise a Coolidge-styled brand of paternalism in pursuit of possessive

[313] Harmon, 15.

investments in whiteness. Alan Sanders is the closest thing to a 'villain' in the novel, serving as a kind of antagonist for John, a relationship that culminates in a confrontation in the novel's final chapters. He is introduced during Grandpa's funeral in chapter three, where John describes how,

> 'Mr. Sanders is always there when our family has a need and I did not want to keep him waiting. He wore a brown suit and a heavy overcoat that he did not remove when he came inside and wore his brown hat.' (18)

This introduction is subtly meaningful. Whilst the dark suit and heavy overcoat later comes to characterise the white American businessmen who seek to do harm to Osages of the novel, it is Sanders' lack of etiquette that reveals his nature here. The non-removal of his heavy overcoat and hat signals that he does not intend to stay and conveys an amount of disrespect, especially at a funeral, separating him from the rest of the mourners. John continues,

> 'Mr Sanders has something of a slump in his posture. It is the posture of a man who has spent too many years bending over a desk working with papers. His hair has more gray than most fifty-year-old men, and in his view a funeral may be the only time when a person should not discuss business.' (18)

Sanders' ethical qualms regarding the impropriety of conducting business at funerals implies he believes only death can (or should) halt the sacred flow of business. And yet, almost immediately, Sanders breaks his own supposed rule – after quickly asking John how he's feeling, he dismisses John's answer by turning to how he has talked with the superintendent about Grandpa's estate. He caveats this intrusion by saying 'I know this is not the time to talk about business, but I want to see you when you are rested.'

(19) This will prove to be the first among many such impositions. A significant portion of John and Molly's interactions with Sanders from this point are characterised by this pattern of deflection: Sanders imposes himself upon the cousins, tells them it is not the time 'talk business', but proceeds to do so anyway. These intrusions initially come across as a vaguely annoying quirk of Sanders' character; a strait-laced businessman who just cannot leave his work at work. However, once the full extent of Sanders' murderous machinations is revealed in the final chapters of the novel, his frequent impositions upon John and Molly in order to 'not talk business' adopt a more sinister and oppressive tone, especially as his appearances usually occur after the suspicious death of an Osage person. When John, Ted, and Molly learn of their cousin Martha's death, they have barely had time to process the news before Sanders appears their table at the Bon Bon café, in a dark reflection of the opportunistic nature of American business and law. Addressing Molly this time, Sanders again acknowledges, twice, that 'this is not the time or place to discuss it' before immediately mentioning Martha's will and estate. This interaction is markedly more egregious than the one between Sanders and John at Grandpa's funeral; Molly has learned of Martha's death only moments before Sanders accosts her.

After many such impositions from Sanders seeking to 'talk business', John decides to visit the long house with Barbara after becoming increasingly anxious 'thinking about business' (164). [314] His anxieties are not abstracted; Sanders has ensured that 'business' has become a matter of life and death for Osages by this point in the story. John worriedly tells Barbara that it has occurred to him that he has 'assets' but doesn't really know what they are, and that he might need to start thinking about

[314] John makes clear to Barbara in the text that the long house is called such simply because it is long; it has nothing to do with the Longhouse religion that nations such as the Iroquois practice.

the property in those terms. (164) The intense pressure John is under is evident here as he begins to grapple with the connection between business, law, and the deaths of his friends and family; from his perspective, perhaps if he had a greater understanding of the way 'business' operates, he might be able to protect those dear to him. Endeavouring to inventory his long house as an 'asset' might be the first step in achieving this somewhat vague goal. As he shows Barbara around, John describes how the long house has 'several tables placed end to end [which] made three long tables with seating for large dinners' (164). It seats around one hundred and twenty people, with over four hundred place settings made up of 'plates and silverware and glasses and cups and serving bowls.' John tells Barbara that when his parents were alive, the long house was often in use, even if they did not always have one hundred and twenty people eating all at once. These descriptions of the long house in the days of John's parents and grandparents depict a time, before allotment and headrights, of communal wealth and happiness, embedded in a centuries-long Osage cultural practice of feasting as ceremony. Whilst John reminisces, there is a lingering sadness to the scene as the reader is reminded of John's familial losses and made aware of the deep spiritual cost of John's attempt to reconceptualise the space as an individual asset. Red Corn's 'evil forces' of economics are at play here: it is deeply rooted individualism invested in the elimination of Osage and Indigenous values.

As ever, Sanders interrupts, arriving at the long house uninvited. Before his arrival, Sanders has driven to Grayhorse (again uninvited) to see Evelyn's parents, insisting that he did not go over there 'to talk business' but to pay his respects (165). His true motivations for visiting John at the long house are immediately made clear: he wants to circumnavigate discussing 'Evelyn's business' (settling Evelyn's estate) by

‘communicating with Molly through [John]’ (166). John rejects Sanders’ approach, twice insisting that Molly should be included in the discussion and refuses to speak for her or Ted. Though the depth of his murderous intent is not evident at this point, the warning signs are very much present as Sanders informs John of his plan for the cousins’ estates to become ‘intermingled’, and has written wills for John, Molly, and Ted to sign. Sanders’ suggestion that the cousins’ estates are ‘intermingled’ seems designed to imitate an Indigenous communality that might appeal to the cousins, masking his true intention to eliminate Indigenous communal ownership of the Mineral Estate entirely. Tellingly, when John asks Sanders to include some items in his will that are not relevant to Molly or Ted, namely: making provisions for long time family-friend Tom in the event of John’s death, Sanders responds,

> “Is he a relative? Is he even Indian?”
>
> “No. He is a friend. He is a white man that drove for Grandpa and worked for Dad. I think you have probably seen him. He is a jockey and he is a small man.”
>
> “Oh yes. I remember him and you may include a small bequest like that. I don’t mind that.” He smiled and the smile seemed almost genuine. (166)

His sinister smile signals his manipulation, an impression which thickens when he goes on to demand that John leave Tom cash, not headright interest, since it ‘isn’t right for us to take care of half of Osage country.’ (167) Darkly ironic, although Sanders is including himself as a white man when he says ‘us’; he is acutely aware of Osage dispossession at the hands of whites and uses it as a weapon against John to influence John’s decision in a manner that suits Sanders’ own obfuscated interests. The double meaning of his words continues when he says ‘take care’: rather than indicating a duty

of obligation, it can instead read as a threat. Sanders' paternalistic patronisation throughout this scene speaks to an absolute entitlement to John's (and Molly's and Ted's) estate and his intent to separate the cousins from their headrights is a concrete example of the possessive investment in whiteness in practice. The fact that Sanders' plan for intermingling the cousins' estates operates well within the bounds of the law – one needs little reminding that Sanders is a well-established attorney and guardian for many Osages in Pawhuska – demonstrates Lipsitz's notion that public policy combined with private prejudice ensured that social and material rewards were reserved for white people and were actively removed from non-white people. Sanders interference with the cousins' headrights in order to ultimately gain the spoils for himself similarly illustrates Moreton-Harris' point about Indigenous communal property rights and white inheritance:

> Since Captain Cook's original choice not to gain our consent, the legacy of white possession continues to function socio-discursively within Australian society. As a means of controlling differently racialized populations enclosed within its borders, white subjects are disciplined (though to different degrees) as citizens to invest in the nation as a white possession. As citizens of this white nation, they are contracted into, and imbued with, a sense of belonging and ownership. It is a sense of belonging derived from ownership, understood within the logic of capital, and, in its self-legitimation, it mobilizes the legend of Cook's discovery of an unpossessed land. The current form of recognizing Indigenous communal property rights reinforces white possession because advantages continue to be accorded to "those who have profited most from present and post racial discrimination . . . especially through intergenerational transfers of

> inherited wealth that pass on the spoils of discrimination to succeeding generations." The legacy of Cook's choice is the continual denial of Indigenous sovereignty rights and the creation of forms of communal title that continue to place Indigenous people within a state of nature attendant only to our immediate needs, such as hunting-and-gathering rights. Against this stands the continued wilfulness of Indigenous people.[315]

For Moreton-Robinson, usage rights keep Indigenous people in a state of nature, rather than allowing them property rights on the same level as the white citizen. The very concept of Osage headrights, as opposed to usage rights, constitute a direct challenge to white possession. Though writing about Australian settler society, Moreton-Robinson's claims here still aid in understanding Sanders' actions, and the actions of other nefarious white characters, as a method of protecting and ensuring that the intergenerational transfer of wealth stays within the hands of white people and is not extended to the Osage. Sanders' entitlement to Osage headrights is borne out of that sense of belonging and ownership over Indigenous resources, lands, and people that white possessive settler society enables.

With this in mind, it is important to note that Sanders does not perceive Tom, another white man, to be an appropriate beneficiary for John's estate. Tom is a close family friend of John and also his employee, whilst Sanders operates under the machinations of a powerful institutional alliance between private law firms and state government. Thus, on the face of it, Tom is a worthy beneficiary of a small portion of John's estate – as a working-class white man he is in a position of less economic power than either John or Sanders. Sanders' move to block Tom's possession of any portion

[315] Moreton-Robinson, 34-35.

of headrights, however, demonstrates his awareness that his machinations can succeed only if he is bolstered by the structural racism that will keep his actions above reproach in the eyes of white institutions of the law. That is: he can murderously defraud Osage people, but his plans will go awry should he be forced into a position of defrauding a white man. Thus, the novel illuminates the ways in which possessive investments in whiteness are structural, supported by a system designed to dispossess Indigenous peoples for the benefit of the settler state.

Sanders has little care for John's wishes with regard to providing for Tom; his directions for leaving Tom cash and not headright interest does not come from a desire to protect Osage country; it comes from a selfish and acquisitive desire to preserve John's headrights entirely for himself. As he leaves the long house, Sanders reaches up to the wall and turns the lights on, departing with a final "A man could use this room for a lot of things." (167) His parting words stand in stark contrast to the description John imparts just a few moments before, of hundreds of Osages dining together and sharing their food and space in kinship. Sanders sees the long house as an asset for an individual, 'A man', namely himself, neatly illustrating Harris' argument that racial identity and property are deeply interrelated concepts. To this end, Sanders' comment that it isn't right for 'us' to take care of 'half' of Osage country is intended to be read as deeply cynical – Sanders and those working with him (and lawyers and guardians and Agency staff all across Osage country) intend to take much more than half. Sanders obstructs and inhibits John's personal decision-making, especially with regards to his finances, despite the fact that he is *not* John's guardian. Even when Osages such as John have no guardian, an intertwined web of smiling attorneys, dark-suited businessmen, and resentful Agency staff find other ways to restrict and exploit the

Osages they are supposed to be protecting in order to benefit themselves and further extend and uphold the power of whiteness in which they have invested. Red Corn utilises the literary form to repeatedly play with double-meaning and irony as devices to demonstrate that the anti-Indigenous 'evil forces' of economics – namely individualism and social and material investments in whiteness – hide in plain sight.

The 'evil forces' of economics: the Agency

As the novel progresses, John is increasingly frustrated at his self-perceived lack of 'business' knowledge, despite being college-educated. He continually reiterates to the reader and to those around him that he knows very little about business or investing, usually positioning them as oppositional knowledge to that gained from being an artist. When speaking with Walter, he insists that '[l]ike most artists, I know very little about investing' (87), which is reiterated in his conversation with Barbara's father when he says 'I've always wanted to be an artist, so I studied art not business. I just do not know much about business. I know I should.' (109) He wishes to support Barbara as she establishes her own career, but laments 'I wish I could help, but I know very little about business.' (119) He often finds himself embarrassed when he feels that his shortcomings in this area are made evident in social contexts. After visiting Sanders in his office, where Sanders (unsuccessfully) pressures John into writing a last will and testament, John takes a moment of reflection on his perceived shortcomings:

> Outside, I stood under the small canvas canopy of the Triangle Building for a moment and watched the rain falling. Mr. Sanders had studied the complex systems of the law and Mr. Baskins must have studied business and I assume

> understood how the hotel business works. I had studied art and knew nothing of business or the law. My raincoat would protect the upper part of me and the boots may keep my feet dry, but part of me would probably get soaked. I was right. (113)

Red Corn uses the rain and John's partial protection from it as a metaphor for the limits of his wealth and education as an Indigenous man attempting to protect himself from the white patriarchal settler state. John initially assumes that Sanders, with his knowledge of the 'complex systems of the law', and Baskins, with his knowledge of 'how the hotel business works' are more financially capable and economically literate than he, and therefore must be working in his best interests. He further identifies that education, or knowledge of 'business and the law', is a form of power and privilege that puts Sanders and Baskins a cut above everyone else, despite their seeming 'like ordinary people'. (114) As the novel progresses, John's desire to learn about 'business' increases as he comes to see it as an opportunity to be taken seriously and considered capable. Financial competency was a standard to which Osages were held before they were considered eligible to manage their own affairs; for John, access to a business education is an opportunity to be considered 'white' enough to gain financial independence.

John does not have a guardian and is therefore not legally classified as incompetent. To this end, he visits Superintendent Hugel at the Agency and tries to convince him that since he 'plan[s] to buy some books and learn about business' and intends to enrol in classes at the college in Tulsa (163), he deserves the right to independently manage his own affairs. And yet, despite not being legally classified as incompetent, John still has to go through Sanders, who then has to go through the

Agency, in order access his own funds. Red Corn's muddying of John's legal classification and subsequent rights highlights the inadequacy and arbitrary nature of the guardianship system for Osages on either side of the competent/incompetent dividing line. Hugel immediately dismisses the notion, patronising John with a pat on the shoulder and the reassurance that, "[w]hile the Indian service is handling your accounts you have the benefit of expert financial managers. John, there are people back east who pay considerable sums of money for services that you receive without it costing you a dime." (163) Hugel's Coolidge brand of white paternalism is emblemised when he draws John's attention to a portrait of Coolidge hanging on his office wall:

> He pointed to the picture of President Calvin Coolidge. "That there is my boss, John, and I have to be pretty darned sure of myself when I make a decision like the one you are asking me to make. And you, you should think long and hard before handling your own affairs." (163)

The pursuit of 'business' in this context is simply not considered to be an option for John as an Indian man and his attempt to attain it is scoffed at. Hugel's attitude toward John reflects the white cultural narrative that defined Indigenous peoples as inferior, not only in terms of intelligence and education but also morally. There is a clear and perpetual connection for white Americans between achieving financial success through conducting 'good' business and moralistic advancement, evident in literature as early as Benjamin Franklin's *The Way to Wealth* (1758). By the logic of this cultural narrative, poverty is perceived as a kind of moral failure, which facilitates and justifies the removal of resources of all kinds from those who are considered incompetent and therefore immoral and undeserving. 'Common representations of Indians…depicted people who clung on an archaic culture,' writes Harmon, 'unable or unwilling to

improve their condition by emulating White American's enterprise.'[316] Whilst Osage wealth meant that, for the most part, the nation was not living in poverty, white Americans considered Osages to be idly and undeservingly rich, not having laboured for their income. In the novel, Franklin Bartholomew, another Agency employee, regards John as an 'ingrate' who has 'never worked for anything in [his] life' (226). Even when John earnestly attempts to participate in these structures by educating himself, he is still denied and patronised, illustrating that these structures ultimately serve to ensure white settlers stay atop the social hierarchy.

Hugel's claim that the 'services' that John receives do not cost him a dime obfuscates the real truth: whilst it may be that Agency are not technically charging John for handling his accounts, the investment in the Grand Hotel made by the Agency on John's behalf leads to a great financial loss for John and a gain for Baskins' brother. John's experience with the Grand Hotel equates to both a simple redistribution of wealth as well as a possessive investment in whiteness, whereby the redistribution from the undeserving to the deserving fits within the racialised cultural narrative that demands the economic privilege of whiteness be protected. Hugel, who is employed in Pawhuska by the U.S. government ostensibly to protect the interests of Osages like John, is instead overseeing a wholesale theft of Osage land, wealth, and indeed lives, at the hands of those 'expert financial managers' like Sanders. Whilst his direct involvement in Sanders' murderous plan may not extend to full knowledge of the details, Hugel is nonetheless culpable for his part as an Agent in a federal system which 'created the conditions that allowed local business interests and law enforcement to conspire to murder dozens of Osage people – and steal from many

[316] Harmon, 179.

more – for years without consequence.'[317] John's experience with Hugel reflects the wider experiences of the Osage Nation with federal financial services over the course of the twentieth century, services which ultimately led to the U.S. government paying the tribe $380 million in compensation in 2011 for their historical mismanagement of trust accounts, lands, and the Mineral Estate. [318]

Red Corn explicitly connects John's vain attempt to access an education in business with Hugel's false reassurance that the Agency is doing right by John. It is here that we see what, for Red Corn, the practice of white 'business' really entails and why John cannot access it despite his best efforts: it is a deliberately exclusionary building-block of the 'evil forces of economics', designed by and for the economic benefit of the white patriarchal class to which characters like Hugel, Sanders, and Baskins all belong, and to which John does not and cannot. John's experiences in trying and failing to gain control over his own affairs perfectly demonstrate a combination of Harmon, Lipsitz, Moreton-Robinson, and Harris' notions regarding wealth, the white possessive, and power: in the case of the Osage, wealth did not necessarily equate to power, since the power generated from wealth was (and still remains) exclusively identified and jealously guarded as white.

The 'good forces' of economics

John's self-perceived lack of a business and economic education by white standards in fact under-sells his personal understanding of both. Almost as many times as he

[317] Matthew L. Fletcher, 'Failed Protectors: The Indian Trust and Killers of the Flower Moon', *Michigan Law Review,* Vol. 117, No. 6, 2019, 1254.
[318] 'United States and Osage Tribe Announce $380 Million Settlement of Tribal Trust Lawsuit', The United States Department of Justice, October 21st, 2011. Accessed via [https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/united-states-and-osage-tribe-announce-380-million-settlement-tribal-trust-lawsuit].

insists he knows nothing of the topic, John nevertheless discusses economics in social settings with his friends and family. He explains Osage funds, profit, and interest to Walter (85-87), and discusses 'ranching and retail stores and I suppose other businesses' with Barbara and her father (110). At one point, over coffees, teas, and French pastries in the Bon Bon café, John and his wider group of friends 'talked about many things such as philosophy, and we talked about economics and music.' (127). These discussions often occur in settings that are relaxed, in restaurants or cafes and typically with a mixed-gender group of participants at the table. John's approach to discussing economics stands in stark contrast to the manner in which Barbara's father, T. E. Williams conducts discussions at his table. Barbara relays how, when she sits down to dine with her father at home, '"Daddy likes to sit and talk. He thinks we are conversing, but it is really just him talking and Mother listening"' (104). Through John, Red Corn highlights an alternative way of doing things, where talks of economics and business do not have to remain the private purview of white, American businessmen – 'the deal makers…dealing in the hotel rooms' (137) – where secrecy and dishonesty are essential. Such discussions can instead be open, collaborative, and accessible. The group discussions are reminiscent of John's mother's childhood stories, where,

> …she would sit and listen when the people gathered. They sat in a circle, and she told me how each of them spoke when it was their turn to speak, and they said what they thought, or they did not speak at all. (191)

Such configurations, borne out of Osage customs and histories, form the backbone of Red Corn's 'good forces' of economics, and demonstrate an alternative economic method. Another way this is highlighted in the text is through a redefinition of investment. Though he may not consider them as such, I contend that John makes

sound investments in a broad sense of the term on more than one occasion. My reading here depends on a redefinition beyond settler definitions of what constitutes wealth: whilst the majority of white Americans in the text (and indeed outside of it) accept the current dictionary definition of wealth as an 'abundance of materials possessions and resources' (which, again, dates back to Franklin's interpretation), the obsolete or older definition is drawn from 'weal'; 'wellbeing', and 'welfare', which links being healthy with being prosperous.[319] This older definition is a closer alignment with Osage and Indigenous conceptions of wealth and its inseparability from community wellbeing; a pre-capitalist, or even anti-capitalist, uncoupling of wealth from profit. This definition aligns with Lumbee author and activist Edgar Villanueva's claims regarding money and wealth in his 2021 text *Decolonizing Wealth*, which broadly aims to educate professionals and businesses looking to philanthropise ethically. Villanueva takes up the position that,

> The separation-based economy exploits natural resources and most of the planet's inhabitants for the profit of a few. It considers the earth an object, separate from us, with its resources existing solely for human use, rather than understanding the earth as a living biosphere of which we are just one part. Money, of course, has been used and is still constantly used to separate people—most fundamentally, into Haves and Have-Nots.[320]

And yet for Villanueva, money is also medicine, whereby medicine is defined as many kinds of things according to an Indigenous worldview – 'a place, a word, a stone, an animal, a natural phenomenon, a dream, a life event like a coffee date with a friend, or

[319] 'Wealth', *Merriam-Webster,* nd. Accessed via [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wealth]
[320] Edgar Villanueva, *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous wisdom to heal divides and restore balance*, 2nd ed., Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021, np.

even something that seems bad in the moment, such as the loss of a job' – that are a part of everyday life. He continues,

> But what is money but a way to measure value, to facilitate exchange? And what is exchange but a type of relationship between people? Money is a proxy for the sweat we spent on growing food, sewing clothes, assembling electronics, coding apps, creating entertainment, researching and developing innovations, and so on. It's just a stand-in for the materials used, the services granted, the responsibility shouldered. Money is a tool to reflect the obligations to each other that people develop as they interact.[321]

Red Corn's 'good forces' of economics in the text are generally demonstrated in actions taken by John that are community focused and unconcerned with profit, whereby money is a tool that reflects the central characters obligations to each other as they interact. Doris, John's non-Indigenous family friend and live-in cook, approaches John to ask for the funds to attend a refresher culinary course in New York, which John happily obliges. Similarly, Tom, another long-time live-in non-Indigenous family friend and general helping hand around the grounds, tells John about a colt for sale that he's had his eye on in this warm interaction over breakfast:

> Tom had breakfast about the time the sun came up. Two hours later he joined me while I had breakfast on the sun-porch. He rolled a cigarette and told me about a colt that was for sale. Tom will always be a jockey at heart, and every so often he will get horse-racing fever. I told him that if he still liked the colt after

[321] Ibid.

> the second look, we would buy it. He smiled and told me that he had looked at it four times already. (162)

Finally, Ted approaches John requesting 'a little *mon-se-ska*' to help pay for Joe and Will's Olympics training. In a minor plot over the course of the novel, Ted takes Joe Eagle and Will Chapman, a Cheyenne man and Caddo man respectively, under his wing with unwavering faith in their athletic potential. John, not limited by the guardianship system in the same way that Ted is, freely obliges the request. John's investment in his wider community signifies more than just his economic sensibilities; it at once reflects 'good forces' of Osage economic values with regards to the sharing of wealth. Crucially, John invests in the future of his community by enabling them to invest in themselves via training opportunities and the learning of new skills, redefining what it means to get a return on an investment. Through John, Red Corn decouples the 'possessive' from 'investment' – John does not invest in order to subsequently claim something as personally or individually his.

Additionally, John's investments serve to challenge popular non-Osage representations of Osages as prone to outlandish and needless extravagance that characterised commentary in the 1920s. 'Article upon article alleged that an Osage "buck" needed no better excuse than a flat tire to buy a new Cadillac,' writes Harmon, 'Osage "squaws" spent thousands per month for groceries, and Osage children could not be bothered to pick up coins they dropped.'[322] Red Corn repositions and de-vilifies exaggerated settler stories about Osage spending. Just as, as argued in Chapter 3, Molly's seemingly lavish spending on automobiles constitutes a necessary demonstration of her freedom and resistance against a violent settler state, John's

[322] Harmon, 182.

immediate generosity with his investments in Doris, Tom, Joe, and Will undermine patronising and derisive depictions of Osages as idly rich and economically incapable.

John's investments in Tom, Doris, Will, and Joe – none of them Osage – reflects a wider conception of community that extends beyond racial or tribal affiliation. Dean Rader writes that Red Corn's novel, along with Debra Magpie Earling's *Perma Red* (1992) and Louise Erdrich's *Plague of Doves* (2008), 'illustrate[s] for both Native and non-Native readers the circularity and simultaneity of individuals and tribes participating in the act of becoming.'[323] Red Corn's 'inclusive process of community making' is key: it stands as a refutation of narrow settler-colonial processes which seek to define, delineate, and demarcate community identity according to often arbitrary rules (blood quantum, for example) as a method of control and elimination. [324] Community in *A Pipe for February* is without borders, functioning as a 'good force' of economics whereby wealth is equally measured by collective wellbeing as it is by individual fortune. Still, a distinction must be made that differentiates Tom and Doris from Will and Joe in this example. Tom and Doris are close family friends of John to be sure, but they are also his employees, and have been employed by the family since before John was born. Doris is employed as a live-in cook, whilst Tom was once a driver for John's father, and now offers a helping hand with grounds and car maintenance. In a novel that, on my reading, exemplifies Lipsitz's notion of the possessive investment in whiteness, it should be noted that John shares his living space with, and invests in, his two white long-term employees. And yet, it is through John's relationship with Tom and Doris that Red Corn conveys another alternative, anti-capitalist mode of

[323] Dean Rader, *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI,* University of Texas Press, 2011, 80.
[324] Ibid., 81.

conducting business. John's investments in Tom and Doris as both his friends and employees demonstrate a duty of care and responsibility, where the relationship is one of mutual respect and obligation to each other.

The 'good forces' of economics: Osage history and practice

John's community-focused economic practices are rooted in a long history of Osage economic history and practice that reaches beyond the twentieth century. Near the novel's opening, John describes financial decisions made by many Osage families when their communal lands were portioned up after the Dawes Act:

> '…in addition to oil royalties each Osage received six hundred fifty-eight acres of land. Roper's land is out on the western side of the old reservation on the prairie and like most Osage families Roper and his family members took their land in the same general area. When several family members put their land together they can create a profitable ranching operation.' (27)

Osage families choosing to put together their individual parcels of allotted land together in such a way demonstrates an active refusal of the core tenet of allotment: the creation of an individual marked by personal land ownership. The settler state's pursuit of individual allotments was intended, among other things, to eliminate communality, which was the basis of Indigenous communities and livelihoods. A communal or family-owned ranching operation made up of individually allotted lands ensures that profits generated do not benefit a singular individual but rather the group. This is but one of a wealth of examples of Osage economic self-sufficiency formed by

adapting or, as in this case, subverting and redirecting settler economic values and impositions.

Though money generated by oil headrights would eventually far outweigh the profits made by leasing and ranching, Osages in the twentieth century were already very familiar with processes by which to generate wealth for the community by indigenising white wealth structures.[325] Twentieth century ranching operations as mentioned by Red Corn were an extension of other forms of wealth-generation secured by Osages across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, against the best efforts of the settler state to eliminate the nation entirely. The manipulation of economic markets was nothing new to the Osage – in fact, by the twentieth century, they'd become skilled at it over several centuries. In the eighteenth century, according to Edwards, 'the Osage became the "true bankers of this region" because women manufactured tens of thousands of hides that fetched "the best prices in the coffeehouse auctions of Montreal and London."'[326] Though the genocidal confinement to Kansas in the nineteenth century by the US settler-state would severely decimate their population, 'the surviving Osage people maintained much of their established religious and economic practices'.[327] When forcibly removed from Kansas to Indian Territory in 1870, tribal leaders intentionally delayed the removal agreement in order to sell their Kansas lands at a higher price to the U.S. government. Though the U.S.

[325] I specify *monetary* wealth here as a way to differentiate between different types of wealth (food, furs, wood, etc. are all forms of wealth) in order to narrow my focus to the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Osages were successful at generating wealth through trading, hunting, and planting for centuries before this; see Tai Edwards' *Osage Women and Empire: Gender and Power* (2018) and John Joseph Mathews' *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters* (1961) for more.
[326] Tai Edwards, *Osage Women and Empire: Gender and Power,* University Press of Kansas, 127.
[327] Ibid., 127-129. According to Edwards, in less than a century, the Osage lost upwards of seventy percent of their population once confined within Kansas territory; the intended consequence of a genocidal American settler colonialist policy which wanted Indigenous populations eliminated to make way for American settlers.

treasury restricted access to these proceeds – over one million dollars – citing the pursuance of Osage cooperation with assimilation programs, selling rather than ceding the Kansas lands and subsequently purchasing their lands in Indian Territory put the Osages in a unique financial position when compared with other Indigenous nations at the time, a position informed by long-accumulated Osage economic expertise. In 1879, Osage leaders travelled to Washington DC and secured these funds as quarterly cash payments in return for the adoption of an American-style constitutional government, and it was via this adopted form of government that the Osage then 'started granting grazing leases to Texas cattlemen and neighboring Kansas farmers, [producing] annual per-capita payments'. 'This economic self-sufficiency, entirely due to Osage initiatives and ingenuity,' writes Edwards, 'finally put an end to half a century of population decline, ultimately preventing their elimination.'[328]

Edwards' position is further illuminated by Red Corn's descriptions of early-to-mid twentieth century Osage knowledge and expertise as economic practices developed over several centuries which sought to both adopt and subvert white American values, often for communal rather than individual gain. Community-focused tribal economic practices that opposed settler impositions are similarly evidenced in John's description of oil income distribution amongst the tribe via the headright system:

> By the turn of the century it was known that the oil on the old reservation was a high-grade petroleum and there was a lot of it. It is also important to know that the old clan system that guided the tribe always had a balance built into its organization. So, in 1906 when we divided up the oil income, each man, woman,

[328] Edwards, 129.

> and child received an equal amount under the new law. A child was financially equal with established leaders under the new law. Women were financially equal with men. Equal in land and oil income. (8)

It is significant here that in his retelling of this part of his tribe's recent history, John emphasises that balance and equality were guiding factors in distributing the wealth generated from oil; principles drawn from the tribe's ancient clan organisational system. As opposed to the imposition of the Dawes Act, where tribes were forced to portion up their lands into individual holdings by the setter state, the Osages' oil reserves remained communally owned, and, in keeping with tribal tradition, gender and age complementarity was built into its distribution. As Osage scholar Jean Dennison comments, although 'it is likely that the oil lobby played a key role in keeping the subsurface from being allotted', it is nonetheless significant that 'Chief Bigheart was able to negotiate a better allotment because the Osage had purchased their reservation and understood the importance of collective ownership.' [329] Clearly, an important established twentieth century Osage economic practice was financial equality along lines of gender and age. Settlers publicly responding to Osage wealth frequently fielded accusations that 'the Indians' problem was not so much a wrongheaded culture as a lack of economic culture', and the traits of oil-rich Indians included 'child-like credulity and an almost total lack of economic concepts.'[330] The contrast between this perspective and Red Corn's illustrates how it wasn't that the Osages were lacking economic concepts, but rather that those concepts (namely women and children as financially equal to men) threatened white settler-patriarchal

[329] Jean Dennison, *Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First Century Osage Nation,* 103.
[330] Harmon, 184. Harmon quotes E. T. Peterson, "The Miracle of Oil", *Independent and Weekly Review,* 26 April, 1924, 229.

hierarchies and so were ridiculed in an attempt to eliminate them. Comparing these opposing white and Osage perspectives also points toward a difference in conceptions around children; 'child-like' is used as an insult and tool of diminishment by white Americans, whilst children are considered independent agents worthy of their own headrights – 'financially equal with established leaders' (8) – by the Osage.

Osage as consumer: the paradox of spending

Whilst white American spending was often portrayed as a positive contribution to the economy, Osage spending was more often publicly portrayed negatively, an out-of-control habit that represented Osage profligacy, stupidity, and waste. By contrast, Red Corn's novel rejects these popular American economic racialised preconceptions by providing an Osage perspective on their own spending. For Red Corn, there is a difference in the portrayal of financial decisions made *for* the Osage – usually by the Agency – and *by* the Osages themselves. Or, to return to Red Corn's terms; the 'evil' versus 'good' forces of economics. The town in which the novel is set, Pawhuska, was quite literally built with Osage funds, as John informs the reader in the opening pages:

> 'Grandpa financed the building where Harry Kirk the tailor rents space. When Harry heard Grandpa had died, he worked late so I could have a new suit for the funeral. Harry tells me I get a good price for tailoring, but the bill goes directly to the Agency so I don't really know. The arrangement with Harry Kirk was set up when I was probably fifteen or sixteen.
>
> …

> I loaned the funds to build the Grand Hotel, but I knew nothing about it. I was told I had loaned the money and that I held a mortgage on the hotel. It is a fine, large hotel.' (13/14)

Grandpa and John's money was signed off by the Agency without their consent (legally, their consent was not needed) in order to fund the construction of various buildings in Pawhuska. As we know already in John's case, though unbeknownst to him and the reader at this point, his loan and mortgage with the Grand Hotel will soon lead to a great financial loss when the current owner, Mr. Baskins, attempts to steal the property from under John through a bankruptcy scheme concocted with his brother. With regard to the arrangement with the tailor, John similarly never sees the actual bill amount for the transactions, and so has no concrete confirmation that Harry is charging a reasonable price for his work. Though not overly explicit, Red Corn seems to be at least gesturing toward historical evidence that local merchants, clerks, tradesmen and the like would routinely overcharge their Osage patrons in such a way, taking full advantage of the federal scheme that was supposedly in place to protect Osages and their money. When financial decisions such as those outlined in the above quote are made *for* the Osage, certainly without their consent and often without their knowledge, it does not seem to be Osages who benefit. We can then identify this as an example of Red Corn's 'evil' forces of economics; a possessive investment in whiteness whereby wealth is extracted from non-white populations to the benefit and profit of the white settler class.

When Osages in the novel *are* in charge of their spending, they are able to support, by choice, a wide range of businesses in and around Pawhuska and exercise a small but not insignificant measure of control over their finances. Harmon notes that

spending is paradoxical in that it can either be a demonstration of power or a dissipation of power, and, in the case of the Osages, spending 'seemed an irresponsible squandering of power'.[331] Red Corn's text rejects such historical preconceptions. By contrast, Red Corn shows that Osages' own spending by their own choice is central to upholding a vibrant economy made up of both locally and internationally owned enterprises. Pawhuska is depicted as a lively, multicultural town where people from all over the globe have come to set up myriad forms of legitimate business amongst and despite those who have more nefarious intentions. Young and old Osages alike are essential spenders, and international businesses in particular are thriving with Osage custom. John and his friends and cousins spend their time and money in internationally owned restaurants like the Bon Bon and Wong's, whilst older Osages 'purchase a lot of blankets and broadcloth from the Mercantile store', and that French cloth in particular 'is a strong and durable cloth and rather expensive and has become a tradition for many Indians.' (96) In real life, Pawhuska's Mercantile emporium was hugely popular amongst the Osage, with one Osage woman in the 1960s recalling:

> "In my mind's eye [...] I can see it now. A big, warm, busy store full of beautiful things to fulfil every wish. Bustling, brightly-lit, bursting with goods of every description, the Osages in their bright blankets roaming about, fingering the goods, nodding their heads solemnly, black braids tossing, moccasins whispering as they moved across the floor, the sibilant hiss of their voices

[331] Harmon, 206.

> arguing and inquiring, in the guttural language they so long refused to give up for the white man's tongue. This was the old time trading post glorified."[332]

Roger Hall Lloyd reads this positive memory as evidence that not every merchant regularly cheated their Osage customers – 'Some simply offered what was wanted; of the best quality and at the highest prices, to be sure.'[333] Whilst likely true, this memory is significant for a number of other, more pressing reasons. As previously noted, popular news outlets at the time were keen to represent Osages as economically incompetent and careless, to which the above quotation provides a necessary contrast. Whilst the businesses I have outlined here may not be Osage-owned, both this real-life memory of the Mercantile store and Red Corn's depiction of a wider cosmopolitan Pawhuska illustrate the endurance of an Osage economic culture which has always been in commercial contact with other cultural groups. To be sure, Osage spending signifies a measure of adherence to the buying practices of wealthy white Americans, particularly during the Roaring Twenties, who can afford expensive purchases, but it is also a deeper enactment of those 'good forces' of economics: longstanding Osage cultural and economic adaptation that stretches back centuries.

As Harmon illustrates in *Rich Indians* (2010), there is a general lack of material that addresses twentieth century Osage economic practices, especially from an Osage perspective. Red Corn's text is invaluable as it provides an Osage perspective on both Osage economic practices and those of the settler-state during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Red Corn is explicit in his immediate address of the 'good and evil forces of economics that would occur early in the nineteen hundreds' on Osage

[332] Qtd in Hall Lloyd, *Osage County: A Tribe and American Culture 1600-1934,* 472-473.
[333] Hall Lloyd, 472.

lands. Though he does not use those specific terms again in the text, a careful and considered reading of *A Pipe for February* provides the reader with a nuanced understanding of the manner in which those forces function. The 'evil forces' maintain, uphold, and benefit the individualistic white patriarchal class of American businessmen, ultimately serving a 'possessive investment in whiteness'. Red Corn's text makes clear the structural racism of the white possessive and shows that he is in conversation with Black and Indigenous theorists - Lipsitz, Moreton-Robinson, and Harris who, taken together, demonstrate the predication of racial capitalism on Indigenous dispossession and repudiation of Indigenous sovereignty. The 'good forces' are informed by an established Osage economic practice of wealth sharing within the community. Red Corn's 'good forces' destabilise settler-state notions of wealth, investment and return, instead emphasising accessibility and reciprocity. *A Pipe for February* functions as Red Corn's intervention on Osage economic theory, an intervention that provides the reader with an alternative, Osage mode of economic practice.

CONCLUSION

The story of the Osage Reign of Terror and the varying ways in which this story has been re-presented by Indigenous authors such as John Joseph Mathews, Linda Hogan, and Charles H. Red Corn exemplifies the complexities, and at times the contradictions of the disciplines of Indigenous studies and the energy and environmental humanities, as well as the need for these modes of inquiry to be brought together to address the pressing questions of our age. As laid out in the Introduction, the history and legacy of extractivism in the United States is intimately linked with Indigenous lands and communities. Whilst aspects of the Reign of Terror can be situated within the long colonial history of extraction from Indigenous lands since European contact, the Osage relationship with oil was and remains complex and multifaceted, as the variations in the ways in which it has been represented in the three texts at the core of this thesis demonstrate.

Careful and considered examinations of *Sundown, Mean Spirit* and *A Pipe for February* such as those offered across this thesis demonstrate that they foster nuanced ways of understanding the Reign of Terror and its legacy in the present day; nuances which crucially claim space for Osage agency within a history and story indisputably informed by colonial and capitalist violence and exploitation in varying degrees. The position of the Osage and the historical and ongoing socio-political significance of their relationship to oil and the ways in which this relationship continues to be explored in contemporary literature serves as a reminder that in the heightened twenty-first-century battle to tackle climate change – a battle where Indigenous activism and climate activism often coalesce – contexts exist whereby oil

extraction and its associated benefits can afford the kinds of agency for Indigenous communities more typically associated with 'Western' capitalist-colonial centres.

That is not to argue that oil extraction has been an overall net-benefit for the Osage – Osage scholar Jean Dennison has argued that the Mineral Estate 'drastically limited [Osage] governance throughout the 20th century, fostering extreme forms of distrust among Osages' – but instead to posit that Indigenous relationships with resource extraction can be vexed, ambivalent, and contradictory.[334] In her 2012 publication *Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First-Century Osage Nation*, Dennison utilised the term 'entanglement' to highlight the contradiction and complexity inherent in twenty-first-century Osage efforts toward national reform, culminating in the Osage Nation adopting a new constitution in 2006. 'The term 'entanglement'', writes Dennison, 'serves to negotiate the easy divide of the colonized and colonizer, illustrating the ways few can escape the logic of settler colonialism that permeates these spaces.'[335] Mathews, Hogan, and Red Corn's varying depictions of oil culture and differing emphases on the Osage's specific relationship to these cultures across their narratives contribute to the notion that the Osage-oil relationship is one very much characterised by entanglement. For Dennison, Osage efforts toward constitutional reform carried out between 2004 and 2006 demonstrated 'how various Osage maneuvered within this entanglement, attempting to bring about their own vision of an Osage future.'[336] *Sundown*, *Mean Spirit,* and *A Pipe for February* depict Osage responses to the embroiling effects of the discovery and exploitation of oil on

[334] For an in-depth examination of Osage governance, see Jean Dennison, *Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First-Century Osage Nation* (2012) and 'Relational accountability in Indigenous governance: Navigating the doctrine of distrust in the Osage Nation', *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies* (1st ed), Routledge, 2020, pp. 295-309.

[335] Dennison, *Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First-Century Osage Nation,* 8.
[336] Ibid.

their lands and the entanglements produced thereafter. For Mathews, oil enables a contentious kind of manoeuvrability that becomes a sticking point for his protagonist, and its contradictions ultimately become stymying for Chal as the violence that affects his community stands in the way of his successful reconciliation of oil's promise and menace; for Hogan, Osage manoeuvrability must be one whereby the Osage move away from oil extraction and its associated destructions; for Red Corn, oil intersects with Osage life as a social relation, enabling social manoeuvrabilities that are creative, artistic, and sometimes literal as in the central motif of the automobile.

These narratives thus bear out Allen Stoekl's contention that oil may be a natural element but everything that is done with it is cultural; 'the pumping, the refining, the grading, the distribution, the use in transport, manufacture, heating, the generation of electricity – is fully cultural.'[337] For Stoekl, we, ('the cultural historian, the literary critic, the geographer, the philosopher') [338] need to answer a series of pressing questions about oil in order to fully understand it, given its centrality to our everyday lives:

> Where does oil come from? How is it extracted from the earth? How is it refined? And, most important…how does capitalism, in conjunction with our government, foster this energy use, and this invisibility? How is capitalism as we know it today totally inseparable from the energy regime of oil?' [339]

Stoekl further contends that there is an invisibility inherent in energy outputs, 'and, most notably in our era, the invisibility of that ultimate fossil fuel, oil. Oil is invisible,

[337] Allan Stoekl, 'Foreword', *Oil Culture*, ed. Ross Barnett and Daniel Worden, University of Minnesota Press, 2014, xii.
[338] Ibid., xiii.
[339] Ibid., xiv.

undetectable'.[340] What Stoekl's analysis leaves out is how Indigenous communities, and the Osage in particular, inhabit a space that is neither purely capitalist, nor under the umbrella of 'our government.' Rather, the Osage have inhabited a space for over a century whereby oil extraction and its physical and socio-political effects are instead hyper-visible. It is a location whereby the often-ferocious physicalities of oil extraction from the land are laid bare, physicalities which are intimately entangled with Osage rights to land, communal ownership, wealth, opportunity, dispossession, and violence. The particularity of Osage experience is therefore a site on which some of the trickiest questions surrounding oil are engaged and answered in fictional form – hence the pressing need for Indigenous studies and Indigenous literature to be considered as itself entangled with the fields of the energy and environmental humanities.

In applying frames of analyses produced from scholarship located within energy humanities, such as Michael Watts' notion of petro-violence, Ross Barrett's deconstruction of *The Driller*, and Matthew Huber's analyses on oil as a social relation in the patterns of everyday life, the three core texts provide useful insights into the formation of oil culture at the turn of the twentieth century and the ways in which that formation has been depicted in Indigenous literatures in the decades since. To some extent for Mathews and to a considerable extent for Hogan, oil extraction is depicted as destructive and violent, disruptive to Osage ways of being and living on the land. In *Sundown,* oil extraction effects a remapping and disjunction of time for the residents of the town, who are continually caught up in a fevered anticipation of a glory, a slippery oleaginous present-future that is at once immediately foreseeable and infinitely

[340] Ibid., xi.

deferred.[341] The moments in the novel where the harsh reality of the processes of extraction are brought to the forefront create deep ruptures in the protagonist's sense of himself and his understanding of the world around him.

Equally, oil enacts social and literal manoeuvrability for Chal – the wealth generated from oil leases enable him to leave the reservation and attend university, and he finds a temporary sense of purpose after training to become a pilot. But these manoeuvrabilities sit uncomfortably with Chal, a discomfort which magnifies when he returns to the reservation and is confronted with the harsh realities that the Great Frenzy has wreaked upon his loved ones and the land around him. For the wider Osages across the novel, as Mark Rifkin has noted, 'oil production takes part in, and helps drive, both formations, encouraging increased non-native presence, federal intervention, and forms of settler expropriation while also enabling the Osage to defer wage work, spend more time in the three reserved villages, and maintain connections with other Osage people.'[342] Ultimately, writing as close to the events of the Reign of Terror as he was, Mathews conveys a deep ambivalence within *Sundown* towards what the future may hold for the Osage, bound up in the vexed and complicated relationship held with oil extraction.

Such ambivalences surrounding oil and its effects are less present in *Mean Sprit*. Oil is depicted as the blood of the earth and the subsequent extraction of it is a cursed act which invites ruin and despair. Oil extraction in the novel bears out Achille Mbembe's notion of necropolitics, whereby oil is a form of necropower (or more literally in the context of oil's materiality, *death-energy*). The processes of extraction

[341] To borrow Ross Barrett's phrasing from his analysis of *The Driller* in 'Picturing a Crude Past: Primitivism, Public Art, and Corporate Oil Promotion in the United States' *Journal of American Studies,* Vol. 46, No. 2, 2012.
[342] Rifkin, *Beyond Setter Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination,* 127.

create a death-world which subjects its citizens to conditions of life that confine them within the status of living dead.[343] The living dead that haunt this death-world of environmental catastrophe are monsters and ghosts, characterised by John Hale and John Stink respectively. Hale is a harbinger of the destructive processes of oil culture who spirits life away from the land and people, a trader in life and death who simultaneously creates and takes advantage of the necropolitical environment around him to secretly amass a wealth which does not belong to him. The symbolic logic of Hogan's depiction of Hale speaks to the capitalist grotesque that David McNally explores in *Monsters of the Market*, and Hogan's version of the Reign of Terror in *Mean Spirit* functions as a kind of 'disruptive fable' that insists something 'strange, indeed life threatening is at work in our world.'[344]

These slippages between life and death that extraction and its agents enable are borne out in a different context with the characterisation of John Stink, whose ambiguous ghostly presence as he haunts the pages of the novel as it progresses. For a large part of novel, Stink's alienation is a manifestation of fear, specifically fear of the various forms of interconnected violence being enacted upon the Osage by an encroaching twentieth century settler-colonial society. But Stink is more than just a reflection of other characters' fear – Stink is also an active participant in his own uncanny narrative who contributes to the novel's overarching themes of Indigenous resistance and persistence. At multiple points in the novel, Hogan is careful to present Stink as well-liked, kind, and humorous, and he is accepted back into Osage society at the novel's close. Crucially, this depiction of Stink can be read as a counternarrative to

[343] Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', 40.
[344] McNally, *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires, and Global Capitalism*, 5.

the persistent white colonial mythologising of the real-life Osage man, Ho-tah-moie, upon which Stink's character was based.

The violence of extraction extends beyond oil to the Osages themselves, who are denied peaceful deaths and proper burials, instead subjected to grave desecrations and lootings at the hands of white settlers. In this way, the unquiet deaths, reburials, and resurrections of the novel similarly contribute to that slippage between life and death that oil culture has made familiar. Hogan's exploration of the politics of repatriation gestures to the way in which way historical fiction such as *Mean Spirit* tends to demonstrate the unfinished business of the past in the present. The novel is not only a reflection of environmentalist themes that characterise much of Hogan's work but also of the enviro-political moment of its publication. In the years preceding its publication, there was a sweeping upsurge in interest in environmental issues across the United States. In George H.W. Bush's 1988 campaign speech, he pledged to use the White House to hold a global environmental conference and address global warming.[345] In 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) under the United Nations completed a comprehensive assessment of climate change and warned that global temperatures and sea levels will continue to rise without urgent action.[346] A Gallup poll in 1990 reported that 71% of respondents thought that the environment should be given priority over economic growth, with 73%

[345] In his speech on August 31st , 1998, Bush *declared "[t]hose who think we are powerless to do anything about the 'greenhouse effect' are forgetting about the 'White House effect'. In my first year in office, I will convene a global conference on the environment at the White House. It will include the Soviets, the Chinese… The agenda will be clear. We will talk about global warming."* Qtd. in Eugene Linden, 'Climate Change Became Politicized in the 1990s. It Didn't Have To Be That Way', *TIME*, April 22, 2022. Linden links this speech to the beginning of the politicisation of climate change in the 1990s, where the battle to contain global warming was lost, and the legacy of which we still live with today.
[346] 'Climate Change: The IPCC 1990 and 1992 Assessments', Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 1992.

of respondents considering themselves environmentalists.[347] With these contextual factors in mind, alongside Hogan's relative distance from the Osage as a non-Osage writer (as pointed out by Osage scholar Robert Warrior), it is perhaps not that unexpected that the intricacies and entanglements inherent in the Osage-oil relationship are not the subject of Hogan's focus in the retelling of the Reign of Terror in *Mean Spirit.*[348]

These intricacies and entanglements are taken up by Red Corn a decade later in *A Pipe for February*, who similarly to Mathews, engages with the social and literal manoeuvrabilities for the Osage that oil wealth brings. Oil and Osages are materially intertwined in expressive and artistic form as Red Corn positions his protagonist as a frustrated painter and the lines between protagonist and author are continually blurred. Artistic endeavour, content, and form are explored to propose and answer questions surrounding who gets to tell the Osages' story and what that story should contain. *A Pipe for February* contains multiple opportunities for the reader to learn about and/or revise Osage culture and customs. For Red Corn, the story of the Reign of Terror must be told by and centre Osages, and it must include 'the many good things that have come from oil' (266). As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the novel can be brought into productive conversation with petro-critical thinkers such as Matthew Huber and Stephanie LeMenager to think through the aesthetics of oil, signified via John's painting and Molly's automobility. In a novel primarily concerned with domestic and social spaces, these entanglements with oil are represented as a social relation by focusing on how the larger machinations of oil extraction and its connections to an emerging

[347] Gallup, 'Environment', updated yearly with new statistics. Accessed via [https://news.gallup.com/poll/1615/environment.aspx].
[348] Robert Warrior, 'Reviewed Work(s): "The Deaths of Sybil Bolton"; An American History by Dennis McAuliffe', *Wicazo Sa Review,* Vol. 11, No. 1, 1995, pp. 52-55.

twentieth century petrocapitalist settler state play out in the patterns of everyday life for its central Osage characters. Molly's automobility in particular is a vehicle through which Red Corn represents the complexities that characterise the Osage-oil relationship. The violence enacted by settlers who feel they are entitled to the Osages' oil wealth deeply affects Molly as she loses family members – family members who are both murdered in their cars and whose deaths are dismissed as accidental by settler authorities. Despite the car being an obvious site of danger, Molly's ability to drive, and outspoken commitment to continue doing so, enables a meaningful level of freedom and mobility not usually afforded to Indigenous people and/or women. The car is a contested site that is at once an emblem of resistance that exemplifies 'the many good things that have come from oil' as well as tool utilised by murderous settlers to carry out violence acts against the Osage without witness. To borrow Donna Haraway's terminology, Red Corn 'stays with the trouble' of oil extraction and its consequences for the Osage.[349]

Whilst *A Pipe for February* does not contain detailed descriptions of the physicalities of oil extraction as can be found in Mathews and Hogan, it is explicit in its engagement with oil wealth and its impacts on Osage and economics and enterprise in the early twentieth century. Though published prior to *Rich Indians*, *A Pipe for February* addresses the gap in literature identified by Harmon regarding a lack of materials focused on twentieth century Osage economic practice from Osage perspectives. I contend that Red Corn stakes his claim for the novel to be understood as such from the outset with his choice of foreword, which draws outright attention to 'the good and

[349] Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene,* 2016.

evil forces of economics that would occur early in the nineteen hundreds when oil was discovered on our reservation.'[350] By bringing Red Corn into conversation with other Black and Indigenous scholars such as George Lipsitz, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, and Cheryl Harris, I have shown that the 'evil forces' of economics in the novel collectively constitute 'possessive investments in whiteness', investments that are at once individualist, paternalist, and capitalist. This is most clearly defined via the characterisations of John's attorney, Alan Sanders, and Bureau of Indian Affairs Superintendent Agent, Henry Hugel. Sanders leverages the structural dispossession of the Osage to (attempt to) ensure that the material benefits of wealth stay within the hands of white settlers, whilst Hugel literally takes John's money to 'invest' it in his brother's hotel. In obstructing John from accessing the educational means with which to protect himself, Hugel and Sanders exemplify a Coolidge-era brand of paternalism that defined Indigenous peoples as inferior and undeserving regardless of their wealth status.

By contrast, the 'good forces' of economics are generally informed by an Osage cultural practice of wealth distribution for the benefit of the community. Drawing on Edgar Villaneuva's theories regarding the decolonisation of wealth, I contend that money in *A Pipe for February* is depicted as a tool which reflects the central characters' obligations to each other as they interact.[351] John's investments in Tom, Doris, Will, and Joe are not profit- or possession-driven, instead demonstrating a duty of care, mutual respect, and an inclusive process of borderless community-making which serves to re-position real-life popular settler exaggerations about the

[350] Charles H. Red Corn, *A Pipe for February,* 2002, n.p.
[351] Edgar Villanueva, *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous wisdom to heal divides and restore balance*, 2nd ed., 2021, n.p.

extravagances and financial illiteracy of Osage spending. John's anti-capitalist, community-focused mode of conducting business is rooted in a long and established history of Osage economic practices that stretch back centuries. Red Corn provides a much-needed Osage perspective on twentieth century Osage economics, as evidenced in John's description of the Mineral Estate itself and in the contrasting outcomes from financial decisions made *for* the Osage versus *by* the Osage. For Red Corn, it is not just the wealth from oil that should be considered 'one of the many good things that have come from oil' (266), but the ability of that wealth that enabled the Osage to exert and maintain economic practices in an era that generally sought their elimination.

There has been a rise in popular literature seeking to provide solutions, not only for the climate but against the toxic ideology of capitalist competition and individualism that enables predatory and dangerous environmental practices to persist. Two mainstream authors in particular, Naomi Klein and George Monbiot, published two titles each in quick succession both emphasising the importance of hope and use of imagination as tools for resisting the manufactured state of permanent crisis and the disorientation of shock politics.

Klein and Monbiot, along with many other scholars, have posited that the irreconcilable notions of sustainability and growth make climate change unthinkable within a capitalist economy. At its core, capitalism is dependent on constant growth, a growth that places economic or financial gain above, and often at the cost of, all else. The same logic is applied to the drive for energy resources; the relentless pursuit of a decidedly finite supply of natural resources, despite a global awareness of the imminent dangers of continuing to do so. The very idea of sustainability is therefore

rendered untenable within Western capitalist ideology, which values growth above all else. And yet, after all, capitalism is just a narrative; a man-made imagined story told so well and often that it pervades American culture to its core. Capitalism is a narrative that relies heavily on other narratives to sustain it, or as Thomas Piketty terms it, an 'apparatus of justification'.[352] Drawing on Piketty, Monbiot argues in his 2016 text *How Did We Get Into This Mess? Politics, Equality, Nature*:

> Without the corporate press, without spin doctors and lobbyists and think tanks, the unnecessary programmes of austerity that several governments have imposed would be politically impossible. Current levels of inequality would be considered intolerable. The destruction of the living world would be the occasion of constant protest. This apparatus of justification, or infrastructure of persuasion, and the justifying narratives it generates allow the rich to seize much of our common wealth, to trample the rights of workers and to treat the planet as their dustbin**.** Ideas, not armies or even banks, run the world. Ideas determine whether human creativity works for society or against it**.**[353]

Monbiot refines his point about the power of ideas by focusing on the function of stories in his following publication a year later. Building on his earlier arguments, he writes 'Stories are the means by which we navigate the world. They allow us to interpret its complex and contradictory signals. We all possess a narrative instinct: an innate disposition to listen for an account of who we are and where we stand.'[354] He goes on, 'The only thing that can displace a story is a story.'[355] It seems that the power and

[352] Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century,* Harvard University Press, 2014, 264.
[353] George Monbiot, *How Did We Get Into This Mess? Politics, Equality, Nature*, Verso Books, 2016, 1.
[354] George Monbiot, *Out of the Wreckage: A New Politics for An Age of Crisis*, Verso Books, 2017, 1.
[355] Ibid., 3.

potential influence of storytelling cannot be underestimated; something which Indigenous communities have known for centuries.

Klein similarly argues in *No is Not Enough* (2017) that,

> It is this imaginative capacity, the ability to envision a world radically different from the present, that has been largely missing since the cry of *No* began echoing around the world in 2008. In the West, there is little popular memory of any kind of economic system. There are specific cultures and communities – most notably Indigenous communities – that have vigilantly kept alive memories and models of other ways to live, not based on ownership of the land and endless extraction for profit.[356]

A means of accessing these memories and models of alternative ways of living lies in Indigenous literature, in storytelling. As we have seen, literary fiction is the vehicle through which vexed questions surrounding oil can be thought through. As Graeme Macdonald notes, '[f]iction, in its various modes, genres, and histories, offers a significant (and relatively untapped) repository for the energy aware scholar to demonstrate how, through successive epochs, particularly embedded kinds of energy create a predominant (and oftentimes alternative) culture of being and imagining in the world; organizing and enabling a prevalent mode of living, thinking, moving, dwelling and working.'[357] Scholarship across the fields of Indigenous studies and the energy humanities is brought into conversation with the three Indigenous novels at the core of this thesis to highlight the ways in which these novels bring fresh perspectives to the matter of oil extraction. These perspectives move beyond a base framework of

[356] Naomi Klein, *No Is Not Enough: Defeating the New Shock Politics*, Allen Lane, 2017, 220.
[357] Graeme Macdonald, 'Research Note: The Resources of Fiction', *Reviews in Cultural Theory*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2013, 4.

Indigenous exploitation to instead explore the complexities and contradictions inherent in the Osage-oil relationship. The interdisciplinary approach at the core of this thesis is in alignment with Métis scholar Chris Andersen's contention that Indigenous studies should be understood as a discipline marked by its density rather than its difference.

The shift and shimmer of iridescence that plays across the surface of oil transforms it in hue and opacity – and density – depending on where it is perceived from. The same holds true for the trio of texts I have explored in this thesis, whose viscous ideas, shifting perspectives and differing emphases are equally as iridescent as the oil that narratively flows, coagulates, and flows again across their pages.

POSTSCRIPT: THE REIGN OF TERROR IN 2023

…

In an editorial piece for *Osage News* in 2017, a few months before his passing, Charles H. Red Corn credited David Grann's *Killers of the Flower Moon: Oil, Money, Murder and the Birth of the FBI* as a 'story that honors our past, present and future'.[358] Red Corn and Grann spent four days touring the Osage Reservation together after Grann read *A Pipe for February.* Reflecting on their time together, as well as a book signing for *Killers of the Flower Moon* at the Waterbird Gallery in Pawhuska, Red Corn writes that there was 'general agreement that this narrative needed to be told in this manner' amongst the attendees of the signing.[359] He continues, '[*Killers of the Flower Moon*] is another resource that will be important for our children, grandchildren, and non-Osages to understand the complicated history of our people.'[360]

Killers of the Flower Moon is structured in three chronicles, all penned in Grann's distinctive narrative non-fictional style; chronicle one, 'The Marked Woman', retells the events of the Reign of Terror as they unfolded around Mollie Burkhart, an Osage woman who was one of the centre-points in William Hale's murderous schemes to acquire Osage headrights. Chronicle two, 'The Evidence Man' – the largest of the three chronicles – narrativizes the parallel formation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, formerly named the Bureau of Investigation (BOI), as it investigated and eventually successfully prosecuted its first major case, brought against Hale and one of his co-conspirators, John Ramsey. Chronicle three, 'The Reporter', brings the reader

[358] Charles H. Red Corn, ''Killers of the Flower Moon' – a story that honors our past, present and future', *Osage News,* May 5, 2017. Accessed via [https://osagenews.org/killers-of-the-flower-moon-a-story-that-honors-our-past-present-and-future/].
[359] Ibid.
[360] Ibid.

to the present day and is narrated from Grann's own perspective as he visited Osage County to meet with various Osage descendants and relatives, as well as his time spent researching in the US National Archives at Fort Worth. In its final chapters, Grann pieces together many more murder plots against other Osages that were not formally investigated or prosecuted before the BOI closed its case after Hale was convicted. Grann details a 'culture of killing' where hundreds of potential homicides had been systematically covered up to the point where justice was no longer a possibility.[361] 'In most cases,' writes Grann, 'the families of the victims have no sense of resolution.'[362]

Killers of the Flower Moon is meticulously researched from a vast variety of sources. In a supplementary note on sources at the back of the book, Grann credits an extensive list primary and unpublished materials, including:

> '... thousands of pages of FBI files, secret grand jury testimony, court transcripts, informants' statements, logs from private eyes, pardon and parole records, private correspondence, an unpublished manuscript co-authored by one of the detectives, diary entries, Osage Tribal Council records, oral histories, field reports from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, congressional records, Justice Department memos and telegrams, crime scene photographs, wills and last testaments, guardian reports, and the murderers' confessions... Moreover, several private papers came directly from descendants, among them the relatives of the victims of the Reign of Terror; further information was often gleaned from my interviews with these family members.'[363]

[361] David Grann, *Killers of the Flower Moon: Oil, Money, Murder and the Birth of the FBI,* Simon & Schuster, 2017, 283.
[362] Ibid., 286.
[363] Ibid., 297.

With Red Corn's own words and Grann's impressive roster of sources in mind, it remains to be said that the three novels at the core of this thesis each bring something to the table that should not be overlooked, not only in aiding greater understanding about the story of the Reign of Terror but perhaps more importantly in centering Osage perspectives and their various entangled relationships to oil, land, and those around them. Whilst Grann's book absolutely deserves to be accoladed on its own merit, its sweeping popularity and subsequent frenzy over film distribution rights may be in part attributed to the growing appetite for true crime stories in popular culture over the past few years.[364,]

Reported as 'the biggest and wildest book rights auction in memory', in a bidding war reminiscent of those conducted under the Million Dollar Elm for oil leases a century ago, Imperative Entertainment won the right to make *Killers of the Flower Moon: Oil, Money, Murder and the Birth of the FBI* into a major motion picture in 2016.[365] At the time of writing, the movie is set to premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2023. *Killers of the Flower Moon* has a star-studded cast and production team attached to it – directed by Martin Scorsese, with a screenplay by Eric Roth, and

[364] With regards to the popularity of the book, it received very favourable reviews in most major publications, including *The New York Times, Rolling Stone, Publishers Weekly,* and *The Guardian*. It was a Sunday Times bestseller, has a 4.5/5 rating out of over 20,000 reviews on Amazon, and won the 2018 Edgar Award for Best Fact Crime. With regards to the growing popularity of true crime as a genre, *The Ringer*, along with media-tracking company Parrot Analytics, reported that the documentary genre was the fastest growing segment of the streaming industry between 2018 and 2021, with true crime its biggest and fastest growing subgenre.

[365] Mike Fleming Jr., 'Imperative Entertainment Wins 'Killers of the Flower Moon' Auction With Bombshell $5M Bid', *Deadline,* March 10, 2016. Accessed via [Accessed via [https://deadline.com/2016/03/imperative-entertainment-killers-of-the-flower-moon-5-million-dollar-book-deal-1201718406/].

starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro. The budget for the film is the largest ever spent on a film production in the history of the state of Oklahoma.[366]

Before filming began, Leonardo DiCaprio requested a major rewrite of the script and switched his character role. He was originally going to play Bureau of Indian Affairs Agent White but is instead now playing Mollie Burkhart's husband and one of Hale's co-conspirators, Ernest Burkhart. Though no further details have been released about these rewrites beyond apparent disagreements between DiCaprio and Roth, it is possible to speculate that DiCaprio may no longer have wanted to play White, ostensibly a 'hero' of the US federal government in the film's source material, given the climate of criticism against white saviour narratives, police brutality and growing support of movements like Black Lives Matter in the US in 2019 and 2020. [367] It seems pertinent to note that complexity remains in responsibly telling the story of the Reign of Terror even today, vexations that similarly trouble the novels at the core of this thesis which challenge neat narrativisations over century later.

Osage reception to the creation of the film has thus far been generally positive. Scorsese consulted with the Osage Nation before and during production, and gave thanks to the Osages that had worked with him to ensure the film's historical and cultural accuracy:

> To be able to tell this story on the land where these events took place is incredibly important and critical to allowing us to portray an accurate depiction

[366] Brandy McDonnell, 'Killers of the Flower Moon adds to cast', *The Oklahoman,* April 15, 2021. Accessed via [https://eu.oklahoman.com/story/entertainment/2021/04/15/tulsa-native-tim-blake-nelson-to-give-virtual-hometown-talk-and-more-oklahoma-film-news/7242782002/].
[367] Adam Chitwood, 'Exclusive: Martin Scorsese's 'Killers of the Flower Moon' is "One for the Ages," Says Writer Eric Roth', *Collider,* April 8, 2021. Accessed via [https://collider.com/killers-of-the-flower-moon-movie-update-role-changes-western-eric-roth-interview/].

> of the time and people. We're grateful to Apple, the Oklahoma Film and Music Office and The Osage Nation, especially all our Osage consultants and cultural advisors, as we prepare for this shoot. We're excited to start working with our local cast and crew to bring this story to life on screen and immortalize a time in American history that should not be forgotten.[368]

During Scorsese's first meeting with Osage principal chief Geoffrey Standing Bear, Standing Bear reportedly said that 'We are very thankful you are here and that you are willing to tell this story.'[369] *Osage News* later reported that members of the Osage Nation performed a blessing ceremony for the cast and crew, which 'gave the filmmakers an opportunity to express directly to the Osage people their great appreciation for welcoming them onto their land.'[370] In 2021 Apple Original Films announced exclusively to *Osage News* that four Indigenous actors will play the four murdered Osage women that *Killers of the Flower Moon* centres on - Tantoo Cardinal, Cara Jade Myers, JaNae Collins and Jillian Dion will portray Lizzie Kyle, Anna Brown, Rita Smith and Minnie Smit – demonstrating that there is Indigenous involvement and representation at all levels in the making of the film.[371] This reflects a recent trend in

[368] Martin Scorsese as quoted in Brian B., 'First Look at Leonardo DiCaprio in Killers of the Flower Moon Arrives', *MovieWeb,* May 10, 2021. Accessed via [https://movieweb.com/leonardo-dicaprio-photo-killers-of-the-flower-moon/].
[369] Andrew Pulver, 'Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese team up again on 'Osage murders' film', *The Guardian,* Jul 31, 2019. Accessed via [https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/jul/31/de-niro-scorsese-dicaprio-osage-murders-film-killers-of-the-flower-moon].
[370] Shannon Shaw Duty, 'Osage Nation conducts blessing for cast and crew of Killers of the Flower Moon', *Osage News,* June 11, 2021. Accessed via [https://osagenews.org/osage-nation-conducts-blessing-for-cast-and-crew-of-killers-of-the-flower-moon/].
[371] Shannon Shaw Duty, 'Scorsese's 'Killers of the Flower Moon' announces Indigenous cast members', *Osage News,* March 11, 2021. Accessed via [https://osagenews.org/scorseses-killers-of-the-flower-moon-announces-indigenous-cast-members/].

ensuring that Indigenous actors and consultants play a genuine part in bringing such stories to the screen.[372]

In March 2022, it was reported that Leonardo DiCaprio was among a group of celebrities that signed a petition urgent the Royal Bank of Canada to stop financing the Coastal GasLink pipeline in Canada.[373] A few months prior, Ellis Ross penned an open letter to DiCaprio, calling him 'misinformed' and urging him not to speak over the 'First Nations communities, leaders, and elders, including 20 democratically elected Chiefs whose bands suppose the Coastal Gas Link project'.[374] With this in mind, given that DiCaprio has had a significant role to play in the drafting of the film's script, and given that the coalescing of celebrity activism and climate activism is not particularly known for highlighting the complexities of Indigenous relationships with the resource sector, it will certainly be interesting to see the manner in which the complex issues surrounding Osage entanglements with oil will be depicted on the Hollywood big-screen, if indeed they are engaged with at all.

[372] See Lea Sonza's 'Decolonizing vision: Native Americans, film, and video activism', *Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy,* Vol. 3, No. 12, 2018, and Michelle H. Raheja's 'Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film', *Film & History,* Vol. 43, No. 2, 2013.
[373] Etan Vlessing, 'Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Ruffalo, Scarlett Johansson Sign Petition Urging Bank to Stop Financing Canadian Gas Pipeline', *Hollywood Reporter,* March 16th, 2022. Accessed via [https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/leonardo-dicaprio-mark-ruffalo-scarlett-johansson-petition-canadian-gas-pipeline-1235113120/].
[374] Ellis Ross, 'Leonardo DiCaprio is wrong – the Coastal GasLink Pipeline is good for Indigenous people', *National Post,* Nov 26th, 2021. Accessed via [https://nationalpost.com/opinion/ellis-ross-leonardo-dicaprio-is-wrong-the-coastal-gaslink-pipeline-is-good-for-indigenous-people].

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adamson, Joni, *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism: The Middle Place*, University of Arizona Press, 2001.

Allen, Chadwick, *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts*, Duke University Press, 2002.

Allen, Chadwick, *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies*, University of Minnesota Press, 2012.

Ammons, Elizabeth, *Brave New Words: How Literature Will Save The Planet,* University of Iowa Press, 2010.

Andersen, Chris, 'Critical Indigenous Studies: From Difference to Density', *Cultural Studies Review,* Vol. 15, No. 2, 2009,

Anderson, Eric Gary, 'States of Being in the Dark: Removal and Survival in Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit*', *Great Plains Quarterly*, University of Nebraska Press, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2000, pp. 55-67.

'Andy Warhol: Marilyn Diptych 1962', *Tate.org,uk*, no date. Accessed via [https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/warhol-marilyn-diptych-t03093].

'Arts of Living on Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene', University of Minnesota Press, 2017. Accessed via [https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/arts-of-living-on-a-damaged-planet]

B., Brian, 'First Look at Leonardo DiCaprio in Killers of the Flower Moon Arrives', *MovieWeb,* May 10, 2021. Accessed via [https://movieweb.com/leonardo-dicaprio-photo-killers-of-the-flower-moon/]

Bailey, Garrick Alan, *The Osage and the Invisible World: From the Works of Francis La Flesche*, University of Oklahoma Press, revised ed., 1999.

Balthaser, Benjamin, 'Native American Literature in the 1930s', *The Cambridge History of American Literature,* Cambridge University Press, 2020,

Banta, Martha, *Taylored Lives: Narrative Productions in the Age of Taylor, Veblen, and Ford,* The University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Barnett, Ross (ed.); Worden, Daniel (ed.), *Oil Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Barrett, Ross, 'Picturing a Crude Past: Primitivism, Public Art, and Corporate Oil Promotion in the United States', *Journal of American Studies,* Vol. 46, No. 2, Oil Cultures, 2012, pp. 395-422.

Bentley, Andrew, 'My Grandmother Was A Cherokee Princess', *Nativepartnership.org*, October 8th 2013. Accessed via [http://blog.nativepartnership.org/my-grandmother-was-a-cherokee-princess/].

Berger, Michael L., *The Automobile in American History and Culture: A Reference Guide,* Greenwood Press, 2001.

Berner, Robert L., 'A Pipe for February', *World Literature Today*, Vol. 77, No. 2, 2003, p. 151.

Bhabha, Homi K., *Nation and Narration*, Routledge, 1990.

Boyd, Coleen E., and Thrush, Coll, *Phantom Past, Indigenous Prescence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History,* University of Nebraska Press, 2011.

Boyer, Dominic; Szeman, Imre, *Energy Humanities: An Anthology,* John Hopkins University Press, 2017.

Boyer, Dominic; Szeman, Imre, 'The rise of energy humanities: Breaking the impasse', *University Affairs,* 12th Feb 2014. Accessed via [https://www.universityaffairs.ca/opinion/in-my-opinion/the-rise-of-energy-humanities/].

Briggs, John; Sharp, Joanne, 'Indigenous Knowledges and Development; A Postcolonial Caution', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2004, pp. 661-676.

Brown, Alleen, 'Five Spills, Six Months in Operation: Dakota Access Track Record Highlights Unavoidable Reality – Pipelines Leak', *The Intercept,* 9th Jan 2018. Accessed via [https://theintercept.com/2018/01/09/dakota-access-pipeline-leak-energy-transfer-partners/].

Brown, Loren N., 'The Dawes Commission', *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 9, 1931.

Bubandt, Nils, 'Haunted Geologies: Spirits, Stones, and the Necropolitics of the Anthropocene', *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, ed. Anna Tsing, Heather Anne Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt, University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Burns, Louis F., *A History of the Osage People*, The University of Alabama Press, 2004.

Cajete, Gregory, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, Clear Light Publishers, 2000.

Calvin, Geoff, *Humans are Underrated: What High Achievers Know That Machines Never Will,* Nicholas Brearley Publishing, 2015.

Caruth, Cathy, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, John Hopkins University Press, 2007.

Casteel, Alix, 'Dark Wealth in Mean Spirit', *Studies in American Indian* Literature, Series 2, Vol. 6, No. 3, Linda Hogan: Calling Us Home, Fall 1994, pp. 49-68.

Chitwood, Adam, 'Exclusive: Martin Scorsese's 'Killers of the Flower Moon' is "One for the Ages," Says Writer Eric Roth', *Collider,* April 8, 2021. Accessed via [https://collider.com/killers-of-the-flower-moon-movie-update-role-changes-western-eric-roth-interview/].

Champagne, Duane, 'In Search of Theory and Method in American Indian Studies', *American Indian Quarterly,* Vol. 31, No. 3, 2017.

Champagne, Duane, 'The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies in the United States', *American Indian Nations: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow,* ed. George Horse Capture, Duane Champagne, and Chandler Jackson, 2007, pp. 129-147.

Chapman, B. B., 'Dissolution of the Osage Reservation,' *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 20, 1942.

Churchill, Ward; LaDuke, Winona, 'Native America: The Political Economy of Radioactive Colonialism', *Critical Issues in Native North America -Volume II*', International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 1991.

Clarke, Deborah, *Driving Women: Fiction and Automobile Culture in Twentieth Century America,* John Hopkins University Press, 2007.

'Climate Change: The IPCC 1990 and 1992 Assessments', Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 1992.

Collins, Glenn, 'When Cars Assume Ethnic Identities', *NY Times,* June 21, 2013. Accessed via [https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/23/automobiles/when-cars-assume-ethnic-identities.html].

Columbus, Christopher, 'Christopher Columbus, Extracts from Journal', 1492. Available as part of the Internet Medieval Source Book at Fordham University. Accessed via [https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/columbus1.asp]

Colvin, Geoff, *Humans are Underrated: What High Achievers Know That Machines Never Will,* Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2015.

'Commissioners to the President', 7801 Ind. Div. 1893, Office of Indian Affairs, Aug. 21st, 1893.

Coulthard, Glen Sean, *Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition,* University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Day, Meagan, 'No, you are not part Cherokee', *Timeline.com* ¸ July 5th, 2016. Accessed via [https://timeline.com/part-cherokee-elizabeth-warren-cf6be035967e].

Davies, Thom, 'Toxic Space and Time: Slow Violence, Necropolitics, and Petrochemical Pollution', *Annals of the American Association of Geographers,* Vol. 108, No. 6, 2018, pp. 1537-1553.

Deloria, Phillip J., *Indians in Unexpected Places,* University Press of Kansas, 2004.

Dennison, Jean, *Colonial Entanglement: Constituting a Twenty-First-Century Osage Nation,* The University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

Dennison, Jean, 'Relational accountability in Indigenous governance: Navigating the doctrine of distrust in the Osage Nation', *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies,* 1st ed., Routledge, 2020, pp. 295-309.

Dettelbach, Cynthia Golomb, *In the Driver's Seat: The Automobile in American Literature and Popular Culture,* Greenwood Press, 1976.

'Disinherit,' Merriam-Webster, 2018. Accessed via [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disinherit]

'Documentaries become fastest-growing streaming genre', *Parrot Analytics,* 6th April, 2021. Accessed via [https://www.parrotanalytics.com/press/documentaries-become-fastest-growing-streaming-genre-2/]

Dresier, Theodore, *A Hooser Holiday,* General Books LLC, 2012.

Dwyer, Margaret, 'Carter Revard in Cyberspace: An Email Sampler', *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* Series 2, Vol. 15, No. 1, 'In Honor of Carter Revard', 2003, pp. 109-138.

EarthJustice. Accessed via [https://earthjustice.org/]

Eastman, Elaine Goodale, 'Foreword,' *From the Deep Woods to Civilisation* by Charles Eastman, Little Brown and Company, 1916. Accessed via [https://archive.org/stream/deepwoodsto00eastrich/deepwoodsto00eastrich_djvu.txt]

Echo-Hawk, Walter and Trope, Jack F., 'The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Background and Legislative History', *Repatriation Reader: Who Owns American Indian Remains?*, ed. Devon Mihesuah, University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Edwards, Tai S., *Osage Women and Empire: Gender and Power*, University Press of Kansas, 2018.

Eggers, Dave, 'February's Book Club Pick: 'Killers of the Flower Moon,' By David Grann', *The New York Times,* April 28, 2017. Accessed via [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/28/books/review/killers-of-the-flower-moon-david-grann.html].

Ellwood, Lisa J., Charles Red Corn's 'A Pipe for February' to be a Film', *Indian Country Today,* Jan 21, 2016. Accessed via [https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/charles-red-corn-s-a-pipe-for-february-to-be-a-film-O5fRChl0y0qYM0_7E47I1A].

'Environment', *Gallup,* no date. Accessed via [https://news.gallup.com/poll/1615/environment.aspx]

Erikson, Kathryn, 'Silence, Absence, and Mystery in Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit*, *Solar Storms,* and *Power*', unpublished Master's thesis, University of Central Florida, 2006.

Fear-Segal, Jacqueline, 'Nineteenth-Century Indian Education: Universalism Versus Evolution', *Journal of American Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 33 No. 2, 1999, pp. 323-341.

Feldner, Maximilian, 'Representing the neocolonial destruction of the Niger Delta: Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* (2011)', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing,* Vol. 54, No. 4, 2018, pp. 515-527.

Finch, Christopher, *Highways to Heaven: The Auto Biography of America,* Perennial, 1993.

Fisher, Mark, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, Zero Books, 2009.

Fixico, Donald L., *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century: American Capitalism and Tribal Natural Resources,* Boulder CO: University Press of Colorado, second edition, 2012.

Flagg, James Montgomery, *Boulevards All The Way – Well Maybe: Being an Artist's Truthful Impression of the USA from New York to California and Return, By Motor*, George H. Doran Company, 1925.

Fletcher, Matthew L.M., 'Failed Protectors: The Indian Trust and *Killers of the Flower Moon*', *Michigan Law Review,* Vol. 117, No. 6, 2019, pp. 1253-1270.

Fleming Jr., Mike, 'Imperative Entertainment Wins 'Killers of the Flower Moon' Auction With Bombshell $5M Bid', *Deadline,* March 10, 2016. Accessed via [https://deadline.com/2016/03/imperative-entertainment-killers-of-the-flower-moon-5-million-dollar-book-deal-1201718406/]

Ford, Henry; Crowther, Samuel, *My Life and Work,* Garden City Publishing Company, Inc., 1922.

Fowler, Loretta, 'Reservation Life: 1880s-1993', *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Great Plains,* Columbia University Press, 2003.

Frohardt-Lane, Sarah, 'Essential Driving and Vital Cars: American Automobile Culture in World War II', *Oil Culture,* ed. Ross Barrett and Daniel Worden, Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014, pp. 91-108.

Gan, Elaine; Tsing, Anna; Swanson, Heather et al., 'Introduction: Haunted Landscapes of the Anthropocene', *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, ed. Anna Tsing, Heather Anne Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt, University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Ganteaume, Cécile R. 'What Calvin Coolidge Didn't Understand About Native Americans', Zocalo Public Square, November 30, 2017. Accessed via [ht https://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/2017/11/30/calvin-coolidge-didnt-understand-native-americans/ideas/essay/].

Gavillon, François, 'Magical Realism, Spiritual Realism, and Ecological Awareness in Linda Hogan's *People of the Whale*', ELOHI, 3, 2013, pp. 41-56.

Ghosh, Amitav, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Global Witness, 'Defenders of the Earth: Global killings of land and environmental defenders in 2016', 2017.

Grann, David, *Killers of the Flower Moon: Oil, Money, Murder and the Birth of the FBI,* Simon & Schuster, 2017.

Gray, Jim, ‘Reclaiming the legacy of the Osage Murders story is still elusive to this Osage’, *Indian Country Today,* September 13, 2019. Accessed via [https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/opinion/reclaiming-the-legacy-of-the-osage-murders-story-is-still-elusive-to-this-osage-NoS2cihSfki3sL4Wjb3M6A/].

Grieves, Catron, ‘Indian Car’, *The Iowa Review,* Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer), 1996, pp. 74-75.

Grogan, Maura, ‘Native American Lands and Natural Resource Development’, *Revenue Watch Institute*, 2011.

Guillaume, Kazerouni, ‘Diptych of Jean Carondelet’, *Louvre.fr,* no date. Accessed via [https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/diptych-jean-carondelet].

Hall Lloyd, Roger, *Osage County: A Tribe and American Culture 1600-1934,* iUniverse, 2006.

Halsall Mar, Paul, ‘Christopher Columbus: Extracts from Journal’, *Internet Medieval Sourcebook,* 2020. Accessed via [https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/columbus1.asp].

Haraway, Donna, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene,* Duke University Press, 2016.

Harmon, Alexandra, *Rich Indians: Native People and the Problem of Wealth in America,* The University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Harris, Cheryl, ‘Whiteness as Property’, *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 106, No. 8, 1993, pp. 1701-1791.

Heat-Moon, William Least, *Blue Highways: A Journey into America,* New York City NY: Back Bay Books, 1999.

Heitmann, John Alfred, ‘The Automobile and American Life’, *History Faculty Publications,* Paper 97, 2009. Accessed via [http://ecommons.udayton.edu/hst_fac_pub/97].

Hersko, Tyler, , ‘Martin Scorsese Talking With Apple, Netflix to Distribute Next Film – Report’, *IndieWire.com*, April 10, 2020. Accessed via [https://www.indiewire.com/2020/04/martin-scorsese-talks-apple-netflix-distribute-killers-of-the-flower-moon-1202224149/].

Hoffman, Hillary M., ‘Fracking the Sacred: Resolving the Tension Between Unconventional Oil and Gas Development and Tribal Cultural Resources’, *Denver Law Review* Vol. 94, No. 2, 2016, pp. 319-362.

Hogan, Lawrence J., *The Osage Indian Murders: The true story of a multiple murder plot to acquire the estates of wealthy Osage Tribe members,* Amlex Inc., 1998.

Hogan, Linda, *Mean Spirit*, Ivy Books, 1990.

Holland, Sharon Patricia, *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity,* Duke University Press, 2000.

Holm, Tom, *The Osage Rose*, University of Arizona Press, 2008.

Howorth, Claire, 'The Top 10 Non-Fiction Books of 2017', *Time,* November 21, 2017. Accessed via [https://time.com/5029600/top-10-non-fiction-books-2017/].

H.R. 6355 (Public No. 75 68th Congress), June 2, 1924.
Accessed via [archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=602].

Huber, Matthew T., *Lifeblood: Oil, Freedom, and the Forces of Capital,* University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

Hunter, Carol, 'Historical Context in John Joseph Mathews' Sundown', *MELUS*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Varieties of Ethnic Criticism, 1982, pp. 61-72

Hunter, Carol, 'The Protagonist as a Mixed-Blood in John Joseph Mathews' Novel: "Sundown"', *American Indian Quarterly,* Vol. 6, No. 3/4, 1982, pp. 319-337.

Iovino, Serenella; Opperman, Serpil, 'Theorizing Material Ecocriticism: A Diptych', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, Vol. 19, No.3, 2012, pp. 448-475.

It's About Damn Crime, 'It's About Damn Crime: Ep. 40 – The Osage Murders', Nov 2017. Accessed via [https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/its-about-damn-crime/e/52233662].

Johnson, Charles C., *Why Coolidge Matters: Leadership Lessons from America's Most Underrated President,* Encounter Books, 2013.

Johnson, Jay T; Murton, Brian, 'Re/placing Native Science: Indigenous Voices in Contemporary Constructions of Nature', *Geographical Research,* Vol. 45, No. 2, 2007, pp. 121-129.

Justice, Daniel Heath, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter,* Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants,* Milkweed Editions, 2015.

Klein, Naomi, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate,* Penguin Books: Random House, 2014.

Klein, Naomi, *No Is Not Enough: Defeating the New Shock Politics*, Allen Lane, 2017.

Lackey, Kris, *RoadFrames: The American Highway Narrative,* University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

Lakhani, Nina, 'US supreme court rejects Dakota Access pipeline appeal', *The Guardian,* Feb 22, 2022. Accessed via [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/feb/22/us-supreme-court-dakota-access-pipeline]

LeMenager, Stephanie, *Living Oil: Petroleum Culture in the American Century*, Oxford University Press, 2014.

LeMenager, Stephanie, 'The Aesthetics of Petroleum after *Oil!*', *American Literary History*, Vol. 24, No.1, 2012, pp. 59-86.

Lemmel, Birgitta, 'Alfred Nobel in Krümmel', *The Nobel Prize,* no date. Accessed via [https://www.nobelprize.org/alfred-nobel/alfred-nobel-in-krummel/].

Lewis, Orrin, 'Why Your Great-Grandmother Wasn't A Cherokee Princess', *Native-languages.org*, no date. Accessed via [http://www.native-languages.org/princess.htm].

Lewis, Johnnye; Hoover, Joseph; MacKenzie, Debra, 'Mining and Environmental Health Disparities in Native American Communities', *Current Environmental Health Reports*, Vol. 4., No. 2, 2017, pp. 130-141.

Linden, Eugene, 'Climate Change Became Politicized in the 1990s. It Didn't Have To Be That Way', *TIME,* April 22nd, 2022. Accessed via [https://time.com/6169294/climate-change-politicized-in-1990s/]

Lloyd, Roger Hall, *Osage County: A Tribe and American Culture 1600-1934*, iUniverse Inc., 2006.

Ling, Peter J., *America and the Automobile: Technology, Reform, and Social Change 1893-1923,* Manchester University Press, 1992.

Lipsitz, George, '"Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac": White Supremacy, Antiblack Racism, and the New Historicism', *American Literary History,* Oxford University Press, Vol. 7, No. 4, Winter 1995, pp. 700-725.

Lipsitz, George, 'The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the "White" Problem in American Studies', *American Quarterly,* Vol. 47, No. 3, 1995, pp. 369-387.

Luger, Chelsey, 'DAPL Desecrated Sacred Sites, Took 10 Days to Tell State, as Human Rights Abuses Continue', *Indian Country Today*, 4th Nov 2016. Accessed via [https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/dapl-desecrated-sacred-sites-took-10-days-to-tell-state-as-human-rights-abuses-continue].

Macdonald, Graeme, '"Monstrous transformer": Petrofiction and world literature', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing,* Vol. 53, No. 3, 2017, pp. 289-302.

Macdonald, Graeme, 'Research Note: The Resources of Fiction', *Reviews in Cultural Theory*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2013.

Mathews, John Joseph, *Sundown*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1988 (reprint – first published 1934).

Mathews, John Joseph, *The Osages: Children of the Middle Waters*, University of Oklahoma Press, new edition, 2016.

Mathews, John Joseph, *Life and Death of an Oilman: The career of E. W. Marland*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1951.

Mbembé, J. A., 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture*, Duke University Press, Vol. 15, No. 1, Winter 2003, pp.11-40.

Mcauliffe Jr., Dennis, *Bloodland: A Family Story of Oil, Greed, and Murder on the Reservation,* Council Oak Books LLC, 1999.

McDonnell, Brandy, 'Killers of the Flower Moon adds to cast', *The Oklahoman,* April 15, 2021. Accessed via [https://eu.oklahoman.com/story/entertainment/2021/04/15/tulsa-native-tim-blake-nelson-to-give-virtual-hometown-talk-and-more-oklahoma-film-news/7242782002/].

McKenna, Phil, 'Standing Rock: Dakota Access Pipeline Leak Technology Can't Detect All Spills', Inside Climate News, 9th Mar 2018. Accessed via [https://insideclimatenews.org/news/09032018/dakota-access-oil-pipeline-leak-detection-technology-standing-rock-water-safety-energy-transfer-partner]

McNally, David, *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires, and Global Capitalism,* Haymarket Books, 2012.

Merlan, Francesca, 'Reply to Patrick Wolfe', *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology,* Vol. 41, No. 2, 1997, pp. 10-19.

Meyer, Stephanie, *Twilight,* Atom, 2007

Mihesuah, Devon A., 'Introduction', *Repatriation Reader: Who Owns American Indian Remains?*, ed. Devon Mihesuah, University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Miller, Daniel (ed.), *Car Cultures,* Berg, 2001.

Million Dollar Elm', American Oil and Gas Historical Society, no date. Accessed via [https://aoghs.org/petroleum-pioneers/million-dollar-elm/].

'Minerals Council', Osage Nation, no date. Accessed via [osagenation-nsn.gov].

Missirian, Anouch; Schlenker, Wolfram, 'Asylum applications respond to temperature fluctuations'*, Science.org,* Dec 2017. Accessed via [https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aao0432].

Mitchell, Timothy, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*, Verso Books, 2013.

Mom, Gijs, *Atlantic Automobilism: Emergence and Persistence of the Car, 1895-1940,* Berghahn Books, 2014.

Monbiot, George, *How Did We Get Into This Mess?: Politics, Equality, Nature*, Verso Books, 2016.

Monbiot, George, *Out of the Wreckage: A New Politics for an Age of Crisis*, Verso Books, 2017.

'Monument for Titusville', *New York Times,* 2nd March 1901. Qtd. in Barnett, Ross (ed.); Worden, Daniel (ed.), *Oil Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Morales, Alex, 'Pacific Islanders Plead For Urgent Climate Action as Seas Rise', *Bloomberg UK,* 21st September, 2015. Accessed via [https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-09-21/pacific-islanders-plead-for-urgent-climate-action-as-seas-rise].

Moreton-Robinson, Aileen, *The White Possessive: Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty,* University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

Musiol, Hanna, '"Sundown" and "Liquid Modernity" in Pawhuska, Oklahoma', *Journal of American Studies,* Vol. 46, No. 2, 2012, pp. 357-373.

National Climate Assessment, 'Full Report', *National Climate Assessment,* 2014. Accessed via [https://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report].

Oxford Dictionaries, Oxford University Press, 2018. Accessed via [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com]

Palmer, Niall A., *Calvin Coolidge: Conservative Icon,* Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2013.

Perez, Michelle, 'Whose Land is it Anyway?', *Inter-American Law Review*, University of Miami School of Law, 24th Oct 2016. Accessed via at [https://inter-american-law-review.law.miami.edu/land-anyway-dakota-access-pipeline-protests-arent-oil/].

Peterson, E. T., "The Miracle of Oil", *Independent and Weekly Review,* 26 April, 1924.

'Pierce Arrow History', *The Buffalo Transportation Pierce Arrow Museum,* no date. Accessed via [http://www.pierce-arrow.com/history].

Picq, Manula L., 'Self-Determinism as Anti-Extractivism: How Indigenous Resistance Challenges World Politics', *Restoring Indigenous Self-Determination*: *Theoretical and Practical Approaches*, ed. Marc Woons, E-International Relations, 2014.

Piketty, Thomas, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Harvard University Press, 2014.

Pinkus, Karen, *Fuel: A Speculative Dictionary,* University of Minnesota Press, 2016.

Prampolini, Gaetano, 'American Indian Novels of the 1930s: John Joseph Mathews's Sundown and D'Arcy McNickle's Surrounded', *Transatlantic Voices: Interpretations of Native North American Literatures*, ed. Elvira Pulitano, University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

Primeau, Ronald, *Romance of the Road: The Literature of the American Highway,* Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1996.

Prucha, Franicis Paul, 'American Indian Policy in the Twentieth Century', *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Jan 1984, pp. 4-18

Pulver, Andrew, 'Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese team up again on 'Osage murders' film', *The Guardian,* Jul 31, 2019. Accessed via

[https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/jul/31/de-niro-scorsese-dicaprio-osage-murders-film-killers-of-the-flower-moon]

Rader, Dean, *Engaged Resistance: American Indian Art, Literature, and Film from Alcatraz to the NMAI*, University of Texas Press, 2011.

Rae, John Bell, *The American Automobile: A Brief History,* University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Red Corn, Charles H., *A Pipe for February*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.

Red Corn, Charles H., 'Killers of the Flower Moon' – a story that honors our past, present and future', *Osage News,* May 5, 2017. Accessed via [https://osagenews.org/killers-of-the-flower-moon-a-story-that-honors-our-past-present-and-future/]

'Reform', Oxford Dictionaries. Accessed via [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/reform]

Raheja, Michelle H., 'Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film', *Film & History,* Vol. 43, No. 2, 2013.

Revard, Carter, *Family Matters, Tribal Affairs*, The University of Arizona Press, 1998.

Rifkin, Mark, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination,* Duke University Press, 2017.

Robins, Barbara K., 'A Pipe for February (review)', *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* University of Nebraska Press, Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring 2004, pp. 75-77.

Ross, Ellis, 'Leonardo DiCaprio is wrong – the Coastal GasLink Pipeline is good for Indigenous people', *National Post,* Nov 26th, 2021. Accessed via [https://nationalpost.com/opinion/ellis-ross-leonardo-dicaprio-is-wrong-the-coastal-gaslink-pipeline-is-good-for-indigenous-people].

Rowe, John Carlos, *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: From the Revolution to World War II,* Oxford University Press, 2000.

Russell, Orpha B., 'Chief James Bigheart of the Osages', *Geni.com*, no date. Accessed via [https://www.geni.com/people/Chief-James-Bigheart/6000000040005279728].

Sayles, Justin, 'The Bloody Bubble', *The Ringer,* Jul 9th, 2021. Accessed via [https://www.theringer.com/tv/2021/7/9/22567381/true-crime-documentaries-boom-bubble-netflix-hbo].

Seiler, Cotton, *Republic of Drivers: A Cultural History of Automobility in America,* University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Sharf, Zack, 'Scorsese Begins Scouting 'Flower Moon' Locations, Film Reportedly Unites DiCaprio and De Niro', *Indie Wire,* July 29, 2019.

Shaw Duty, Shannon, ‘Martin Scorsese meets with Chief Standing Bear about ‘Killers of the Flower Moon’’, *OsageNews.org,* Jul 26, 2019. Accessed via [http://osagenews.org/en/article/019/07/26/martin-scorsese-meets-chief-standing-bear-about-killers-flower-moon/].

Shaw Duty, Shannon, ‘Osage Nation conducts blessing for cast and crew of Killers of the Flower Moon’, *Osage News,* June 11, 2021. Accessed via [https://osagenews.org/osage-nation-conducts-blessing-for-cast-and-crew-of-killers-of-the-flower-moon/]

Shaw Duty, Shannon, ‘Scorsese’s ‘Killers of the Flower Moon’ announces Indigenous cast members’, *Osage News,* March 11, 2021. Accessed via [https://osagenews.org/scorseses-killers-of-the-flower-moon-announces-indigenous-cast-members/].

Silko, Leslie Marmon, *Ceremony,* Penguin Books; Anniversary edition, 2011 (first published 1977)

Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake, ‘Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation’, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2014, pp. 1-25.

Smith, Marshall L., ‘John Stink Fiction on Upgrade’, *Tulsa World,* April 18, 1937. Osage Agency Correspondence (NAID 1098605), National Archives at Fort Worth. Available via a digital scan posted to the National Archives at Fort Worth’s Facebook page, posted 24 October, 2016. Accessed via [https://m.facebook.com/nationalarchivesfortworth/photos/archives-and-john-stink-does-the-name-ho-tah-moie-sound-familiar-probably-not-bu/1269686366385842/]

Sonza, Lea, ‘Decolonizing vision: Native Americans, film, and video activism’, *Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy,* Vol. 3, No. 12, 2018.

Snyder, Michael, ‘“He certainly didn’t want anyone to know that he was queer”: Chal Windzer’s Sexuality in John Joseph Mathews’ Sundown’, *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* Series 2, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2008, pp. 27-54.

Stabler, Hollis Dorian, *No One Ever Asked Me: The World War II Memoirs of an Omaha Indian Soldier,* University of Nebraska Press, 2005.

Standing Bear, Geoffrey, ‘The Osage Nation Today’, *Missouri Life Magazine,* 2018. Accessed via [https://missourilife.com/the-osage-nation-today/]

Stoker, Bram, *Dracula,* Penguin Classics; Revised Edition, 2003.

Stoekl, Alan, ‘Foreword’, *Oil Culture*, ed. Ross Barnett and Daniel Worden, University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Strange Country Podcast, ‘Strange Country Ep. 59: The Osage Murders’, Sep 2018. Accessed via [https://strangecountry.libsyn.com/strange-country-ep-59-the-osage]

Streshinsky, Maria, 'Saying No to $1 Billion', *The Atlantic,* March 2011. Accessed via [https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/03/saying-no-to-1-billion/308380/].

Tillett, Rebecca, '"Your Story Reminds Me of Something": Spectacle and Speculation in Aaron Carr's *Eye Killers*', *ARIEL – A Review of International English Lit*, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2002, pp. 149-173.

Tinker, George 'Tink', 'The Stones Shall Cry out: Consciousness, Rocks, and Indians', *Wicazo Sa Review,* Vol. 19, No. 2, 'Colonization/Decolonization', 2004, pp. 105-125.

'Transcontinental Railroad: Nitroglycerin', *American Experience,* PBS, no date. Accessed via [http://www.shoppbs.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tcrr/peopleevents/e_nitro.html]

Turpin, Robert F., *Forgotten Ghost Tales and Legends of the Old West,* self-published ebook, 2013.

Udel, Lisa J., 'Revising Strategies: The Intersection of Literature and Activism in Contemporary Native Women's Writing', University of Nebraska Press: *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* Series 2, Vol. 19, No. 2, Summer 2007, pp. 62-82.

Underhill, Lonnie E., *The Osage Indian Reign of Terror: The Violence of Bill Hale, 1921-1923,* Roan Horse Press, 2010.

'United States and Osage Tribe Announce $380 Million Settlement of Tribal Trust Lawsuit', The United States Department of Justice, October 21st, 2011. Accessed via [https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/united-states-and-osage-tribe-announce-380-million-settlement-tribal-trust-lawsuit]

United States Congressional House Committee on Military Affairs, "Reorganization of the Army: report of a subcommittee on the Committee on Military Affairs Relating to the Reorganization of the Army", Government Printing Office, 1919. Reprinted in Charles C. Johnson, *Why Coolidge Matters,* 307.

United States Senate, 'Vetoes, 1789 to Present: Calvin Coolidge', no date. Accessed via [senate.gov/reference/Legislation/Vetoes/Presidents/CoolidgeC.pdf].

United States Supreme Court, 'Cherokee Nation v Georgia', 30 U.S. (5 Pet) 1, 1831. Accessed via [supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/30/1].

United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians, 448 U.S. 371, 1980. Accessed via [https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/448/371/].

Vlessing, Etan, 'Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Ruffalo, Scarlett Johansson Sign Petition Urging Bank to Stop Financing Canadian Gas Pipeline', *Hollywood Reporter,* March 16th, 2022. Accessed via [https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/leonardo-dicaprio-mark-ruffalo-scarlett-johansson-petition-canadian-gas-pipeline-1235113120/]

Villanueva, Edgar, *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous wisdom to heal divides and restore balance*, 2nd ed., Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021.

Vizenor, Gerald, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Prescence*, University of Nebraska Press, 2008.

Vizenor, Gerald, *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance*, University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

Vulliamy, Ed, 'Killers of the Flower Moon by David Grann – review', *The Guardian,* May 1, 2017. Accessed via [theguardian.com/books/2017/may/01/killers-of-the-flower-moon-david-grann-review].

Vizenor, Gerald, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence,* University of Nebraska Press, 2008.

Wallis, Michael, *Oil Man: The Story of Frank Phillips and the Birth of Phillips Petroleum,* University of Oklahoma Press, 2014.

Warrior, Robert, 'Reviewed Work(s): "The Deaths of Sybil Bolton": An American History by Dennis McAuliffe', *Wicazo Sa Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1995, pp. 52-55.

Warrior, Robert, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction*, University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Watts, Michael, 'Petro-Violence: Community, Extraction, and Political Ecology of Mythic Commodity', *Violent Environments*, Cornell University Press, 2001.

'Wealth', *Merriam-Webster.com,* no date. Accessed via [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wealth]

Weaver, Jace, 'More Light Than Heat: The Current State of Native American Studies', *American Indian Quarterly,* Vol. 31, No. 2, 2007, pp. 233-255.

Weaver, Jace; Womack, Craig S.; Warrior, Robert, *American Indian Literary Nationalism,* University of New Mexico Press, 2006.

Wilson, Terry P., *The Underground Reservation: Osage Oil,* University of Nebraska Press, 1985.

Wolfe, Patrick, 'Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native', *Journal of Genocide Research,* Vol. 8, No. 4, 2006, 387-409.

Woods, Sean, ''Killers of the Flower Moon': Inside David Grann's New True-Crime Epic', *Rolling Stone,* April 17, 2017. Accessed via [https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/killers-of-the-flower-moon-inside-david-granns-new-true-crime-epic-122690/].

Yusoff, Kathryn, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None,* University of Minnesota Press, 2018.

Zinn, Howard, *History is a Weapon: A People's History of the United States,* 1980. Accessed via [http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinncol1.html].