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translate word for word but may translate as an entire idea, such as *jüisakiiwini* or shaking tent doctor (254). The translations are also helpful for anyone who does not speak a specific Native language.

Writing in traditional languages and English is a positive way to blend the old with the new. Beth H. Piatote writes of beading sessions at the university in "Beading Lessons." It's strange that we once were denied schooling with the whites, and then forced into white schools, where so much of our heritage and culture were beaten out of us. Now, you can go to a university and learn Native languages, enroll in "the Native American Experience," and study whatever Native historical accounts have been preserved. Ironically, years after the government boarding schools tried to remove our Native identities forcibly, today we can get some semblance of that identity back while connecting with other Natives in a postsecondary educational setting. Selections throughout the book help to unite the present with the past.

Despite the strength and familiarity of most of the stories in *Reckonings*, two of the included storytellers write tales that are harder to connect to. Reid Gomez's "electric gods" and "Touch. Touch. Touching" and Misha Nogha's "Memekwesiw" and "Sakura" do not flow as rhythmically as the works of the well-established writers or the other newcomers. Many sentences are short and choppy, lending a disjointed feeling to the pieces. The images presented, especially in "electric gods," seem more like a litany of ideas from which to build a character rather than a well-told story. The incoherence makes the storyline hard to follow and does little to engage the reader. These are not the stories that should be used to close the book.

Certainly, new Native writers are being discovered and published every day. Discerning readers will take from this book the lessons that they need. As a whole, this book tells about what is important to the women of our people. Our survival is made possible through our women and our capabilities to bring forth new life. *Reckonings* ensures that these stories, our stories, will not be forgotten. Instead, they will be "brought forth." As a teacher of Native American women's stories, I would highly recommend this book for general audiences, high school English classes, or postsecondary Native American Studies classes.

*Shirley Brozzo*

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**Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel.**

By Sean Kicummah Teuton. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2008. 312 pages. \$79.95 cloth; \$22.95 paper.

Sean Kicummah Teuton's useful and engaging study focuses on a reading of three familiar, canonical texts of twentieth-century American Indian fiction: N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968), James Welch's *Winter in the Blood* (1974), and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977). Teuton's analysis reaches out to other fiction as well, especially more recent novels that explore territory that has been relatively uncharted in the literature (such as Craig

Womack's gay coming-of-age novel, *Drowning in Fire*); but the book's center is the analysis of the three earlier novels. These "Red Power" novels, as Teuton characterizes them and as he reads them, reflect the political movements of the 1960s and 1970s that "made available alternative narratives of tribal lives: new knowledge for a new Indian future" (xvii).

Although Teuton's readings of the three novels are compelling and persuasive—the work of an astute and informed literary critic—there have been many other smart and insightful readings of these particular texts. What distinguishes Teuton's analysis from the others is his use of a consistent theoretical perspective that allows him to speak of the three texts in terms of common agendas, methods, and, most importantly, understandings of the conception of tribal identity. By turning back to the 1960s and 1970s to locate the origins of his critical perspective in the Red Power movement, Teuton deliberately elides many of the theoretical and philosophical positions that have characterized thinking about Native politics and culture (including literature) since the end of the 1970s. Red Power, in Teuton's understanding and use of the term, is "a materialist, political, and artistic vision" that is rooted in "a community of experience" (10, 20). Red Power, therefore, offers an alternative to more abstract and ahistorical modes of interpretation, especially those that have grown out of essentialist conceptions of identity and their binary opposite, the "trickster" position that insists on the instability and unknowability of Native identity. Both of these positions Teuton finds, at base, useless to the real-world concerns of contemporary Indian people and to the intellectual project of clarifying the tribal past. As a result, they must also be argued out of the way of Teuton's own ambitious project in his book, which is to "reclaim American Indian identity" (17). That reclamation is, for him, entirely dependent on the recognition that identity has everything to do with history and community as well as with self-knowledge. The most productive kind of theory is, for Teuton, thoroughly materialist and historicist.

If Red Power offers Teuton a usable model of "vision" or agenda, his theoretical methodology is taken from the practices of the new realists, adapted to become what Teuton calls *tribal realism*. His primary guide to the new realism is the work of a group of interdisciplinary scholars who collaborated on a 2000 volume edited by Paula Moya and Michael Hames-Garcia, *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*. Following their lead, Teuton defines the new realism as a mode of interpretation (of literature and of experience) that posits the necessity for a clear sense of identity as a prerequisite for understanding and evaluating experience; acknowledges the constructedness of identity but at the same time affirms the value and validity of that construction; and sees the ongoing revision of constructed identities as crucial to the process of acquiring new knowledge. In the new realist perspective, therefore, while we may only think we know who we are, it *matters* who we think we are. If our conception of ourselves changes over time, all the better; that process of revision can lead to clearer understandings of what it means to live where, when, and how we do. In the *tribal* realist perspective, specifically, what can be gained is new knowledge about what it means to be part of specific tribal histories, cultures, and communities.

The new realist insistence on accommodating change and even error in the process of seeking new knowledge allows Teuton to assert that his tribal realism is consistent with, and to some extent dependent on, indigenous oral traditions, which also emphasize the importance of error (all those stories of tricksters messing things up) as a way of understanding how things might be done better. This part of his argument, which he wisely does not emphasize strongly, has a slight feel of being forced, as if the value of his undertaking rested on his ability to link his theory to the oldest indigenous theories of knowledge. The case doesn't seem necessary to make, and if it were to be made, it might require a second volume at least as long as *Red Land, Red Power* rather than a simple assertion about valuing error.

Where Teuton's argument is most powerful is (as it should be) in his demonstration of the usefulness of bringing a tribal realist perspective to bear on literary texts. All three of his major texts follow a male protagonist through a process that allows him to reshape his sense of identity and therefore to understand himself better within a historical tribal context and a living tribal community and to better imagine a future for himself. (In making this claim for the protagonists of *House Made of Dawn* and *Winter in the Blood*, Teuton is contesting the conclusions of many other critics who find the endings of these novels much bleaker than he does; he represents their arguments more than adequately and refutes them eloquently.) In Momaday's novel, Teuton sees Abel as learning to recover and reimagine his relationship to the land through a series of ritualized, physical movements on the land. Such a relationship, Teuton argues, is not an essential part of his inheritance as an American Indian; it must be earned through a disciplined practice that is directed toward what Teuton calls "an indigenous principle of dwelling: one must endeavor to know a not entirely knowable land" (78). *Winter in the Blood* provides Teuton with an example of his assertion (contra Gerald Vizenor's tricksterism) that "Indian identities can be grounded in historical facts" (88); Welch's unnamed protagonist revises his understanding of his own identity, and reenvisions the possibilities for his future, when he learns of his grandfather's role in Blackfeet history and Blackfeet survival. This protagonist also illustrates another of Teuton's claims for tribal realism—that identity is an idea of ourselves that helps to make sense of our experiences; as part of that process, we can evaluate the validity of our sense of identity by determining how well it explains our experience. In hearing his grandfather's story, Welch's protagonist, in a moment of almost giddy insight, understands more clearly the contours and trajectories of his own Blackfeet life. Silko's Laguna protagonist, Tayo, is given the explicit task of replacing one set of interpretations of the world with another set that is tribal in its origins, ethos, and discourse. Tayo is physically and emotionally ill, and regaining his health depends on his learning to interpret his history and his experiences in a way that makes ultimate sense to him. Such learning requires mentors, discipline, and the capacity to learn from one's mistakes. Tayo's success in regaining his health is signaled by his appearance in the kiva at Laguna where he relates his experiences to the elders, having acquired a place in the community that had previously not been his to claim. Teuton's description of Welch's

narrator, that by “recursively working through memories, [he] discovers who he never thought he was,” applies equally well to his readings of the narrators of Momaday’s and Silko’s novels (109).

In attempting to track the direction of Native criticism in the last half century and key it to major developments in Native political life, Teuton is not trying something new so much as he is adding his voice to those of others who have come before him, especially those critics that he cites most often, Robert Warrior, Jace Weaver, and Craig Womack. Womack, especially, has compared the essentialist position and the trickster position and declared them limited, ahistorical, and politically ineffective. Teuton’s book, however, extends the existing arguments for a more tribally (or communally) grounded criticism that have been made by his predecessors and constructs, methodically and clearly, a coherent theory for reading and evaluating Native literature as well as for understanding Native selves. In the process, he offers powerful incentive both to turn back and reread the Red Power texts and to turn forward to the new writing that is giving us new, expanded ways to understand tribal histories, communities, and people. His book is a most welcome addition to a newly energized body of Native criticism.

*Lucy Maddox*

Georgetown University

**Running from Coyote: A White Family among the Navajo.** By Danalee Buhler. New York: iUniverse, 2007. 188 pages. \$15.95 paper.

Danalee Buhler began this book as a personal journal for her children. As she compiled her memories, the journal became a memoir of her childhood in the Southwest, and of the turmoil of a family faced with a father’s obsession with golf, a mother’s loss of self, and the straddling of cultural fences. Spanning approximately seven years, the author spins an engaging story of her family’s arrival in Shiprock, New Mexico, where her father is “going to teach Indians to play football and basketball,” through the adoption of her two Diné (Navajo) brothers and the deaths of her grandparents (8).

Following a linear progression, the book lightly touches on dysfunctional families, cross-cultural adoptions, bigotry and racism, identity issues, and the attempts by many people to find *hozhoni* (a sense of harmony and balance) in their lives. Living in a life full of extremes—from her parent’s behavior, to the Globetrotters at Window Rock’s Civic Center; from the announcement that the Navajo Reservation has been declared a disaster area due to the –25 degree temperatures and 14 inches of snow, to the hatred her grandfather has for his two adopted grandsons—Danalee and her sisters try to find meaning and *hozhoni* in a less than balanced world. An epilogue provides a rather rushed chapter on the outcomes of her brother’s lives, but it leaves us wondering what happened to the rest of the siblings.

Constructed around Diné taboos and counterpointed by what was happening in the “white” world, the language used is most definitely that of