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Author

Velie, Alan R.

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The People Named the Chippewa. By Gerald Vizenor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. 172 pp. \$22.50 Cloth. \$12.95 Paper.

Vizenor's title tells us a good deal about his book if we know how to read it, and there is a knack to reading Vizenor, who can be as slippery as one of his trickster figures. In the phrase "The People Named the Chippewa" "named" is not, as it may appear to be, part of an adjectival phrase modifying "the people," it is a verb in the passive voice referring to an implied subject, white people. This is obvious from the first sentence of the chapter "The People Named the Chippewa," which begins, "In the language of the tribal past, the families of the woodland spoke of themselves as the Anishinaabeg until the colonists named them the Ojibway and Chippewa" (13).

Vizenor's point is that the white settlers misnamed a whole collection of different peoples, the indigenous tribes, lumping them together as "Indians," and then proceeded to misname them individually as "Delawares," (who called themselves "Lenapi") "Sioux," who called themselves "Lakota") and "Chippewa." Having renamed the tribes, perhaps inadvertently, the whites deliberately and systematically tried to make them forget the native languages. Now, when most tribal peoples no longer know the tribal language, "in ethnographic monographs, tribal people are summoned to be proud of their invented Indian and Chippewa heritage as it appears in narrative histories" (19).

It is to set this record straight that Vizenor writes his own ethnographic monograph, or more accurately, assembles it out of the narrative histories of the Anishinaabe themselves.

Of course in this day and age the Anishinaabe have a very different culture from the one they had before white contact. In fact, many of them are only partially Anishinaabe; the others are Metis, mixedbloods who have intermarried with French and Anglos over the years, and have ties to both tribal and mainstream cultures.

But culture to Vizenor is more than a matter of genes, or blood, as we metaphorically say. One of the major points that Vizenor makes in the book is that people invent their cultures; that is, people—and peoples—define themselves existentially by telling stories about themselves. The epigraph to the prologue of the book conveys this. Vizenor quotes N. Scott Momaday: "We are

what we imagine. Our very existence consists in our imagination of ourselves. . . ."

Among the narratives are the accounts by the oldtimers of the Little People, "mixedbloods who wear bright colors, dance and dream out of time, trick their friends, animals and birds, in good humor" (41). The Little People fought to keep their identity from being destroyed by the Tall People who came from the East. Tallest of the Tall People was Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, the geologist/government official who lived among the Chippewa for years, and was the source for much of the misinformation Longfellow drew upon in creating his romantic imitation of Indians in *Hiawatha*.

The most painful stories are those Vizenor tells in the chapter "Firewater Labels and Methodologies." In the chapter Vizenor explores the clichés, myths and facts surrounding Indian alcoholism. The questions are complex, and Vizenor addresses them by synopsizing a good number of the studies that he has read on the subject, but the main thrust of the chapter is delivered in the stories of the alcoholics themselves. One is Cecelia, whose four children have been put out to foster care because she is an alcoholic. Another is Ramon, a doctor who when invited to meet with tribal students at a college to serve as an example of Indian achievement, "stumbled out of the elevator with his trousers unzipped, and vomit stains on his shirt, [so that] the event was cancelled" (119).

Perhaps the most interesting narrative history is that of "Dennis of Wounded Knee," Dennis Banks of AIM, the American Indian Movement. Banks became a media celebrity during the 1973 fracas at Wounded Knee. Many whites as well as Indians viewed Banks as a civil rights leader of some importance and standing. To Vizenor Banks is a hypocrite, a "freebooter of racism" who has made a career of bilking the Indians, the U.S. government, and the American religious establishment simultaneously. It bothers Vizenor that Banks is a faker, of course, but what bothers him worse is that Banks' fakery is so costly, being accomplished at the expense of any real achievements for Indians in the realm of health care or civil rights. For instance, when Banks helped monitor the activities of the police towards Indians in Minneapolis, "The serious issue was police harassment, but the method of trailing police cars in expensive convertibles became an extravagant satire. The rhetoric was colonial oppression,

the press coverage was excellent then, and thousands of dollars of guilt money rolled in from church groups . . ." (129).

When the Justice Department was all set to move in and make arrests at Wounded Knee, Banks and other AIM leaders "threatened to call a press conference and disclose exactly how much financing they had received from the federal government" (133).

Vizenor stitches the diverse narratives together with his vivid prose. He has a style all his own, one which depends heavily on the trope of catachresis, the misapplication of words, particularly in strained or mixed metaphors. For instance, Vizenor writes of "geometric blood," and "eruptions in time." When describing a mixedblood who left the reservation for urban civilization, he states "At the moment of his conversion in a thunderstorm he lost the familiar angles of shared metaphors, the natural seams and wind checks in a woodland tribal world view that can sustain the most radical and troubled wanderers."

Catachresis is, of course, language at its most self-reflexive, and Vizenor employs it to defamiliarize the reader, to force him or her to alter his/her way of looking at things. The technique works; after reading "The People Named the Chippewa" a white reader will never view tribal people the way he had before.

Alan R. Velie
University of Oklahoma

Shapes of Their Thoughts: Reflections of Culture Contact in Northwest Coast Indian Art. By Victoria Wyatt. New Haven and Norman: Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University and University of Oklahoma Press, 1984. 80 pp. Map, 83 black and white ill., bib., notes, index. \$9.95 Paper.

Shapes of Their Thoughts: Reflections of Culture Contact in Northwest Coast Indian Art is a retrospective catalog which documents an exhibition of Northwest Coast Indian art held at the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, from November 1983 to May 1984. In organizing this exhibition, Victoria Wyatt focused specifically on the creative responses of Northwest Coast artists to contact with Euro-Americans in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the innovations which resulted from the ac-