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If more than quibbles, these concerns do not deter a hearty recommendation of this book for its well-researched, well-written telling of Blackbird's story, and thereby, a story of Odawa survival in the nineteenth century.

Michael D. McNally
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Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World through Stories. Edited by Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013. 436 pages. \$29.95 paper; \$23.95 e-book.

This anthology lays the foundations of the field of Anishinaabeg studies, which employs Anishinaabe stories as methodological and theoretical frameworks in a wide range of disciplines such as law, political science, history, anthropology, sociology, education, and environmental studies. In this new and highly innovative field, stories are conceptualized broadly and their significance is not limited merely to literature or the idea of traditional stories. What the Anishinaabeg understand by the term *story* transcends the scope of a literary form in the conventional Western sense to encompass a diverse array of artistic expression as well as historical and legal documents. The twenty-four contributors explore the various ways in which stories can serve as a center for Anishinaabeg studies, following the unifying notion that Gerald Vizenor expressed in a 1992 interview with Laura Coltelli: "You can't understand the world without telling a story. There isn't any center to the world but story" (*Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak*, 156). This particular approach allows for a tribally centered field which, though focused locally and specifically on Anishinaabe issues, does not limit its intellectual possibilities to a narrow specialization, but broadens our view of the world through a variety of disciplines, thus constituting a form of global studies.

The editors organized *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies* into seven *bagijiganan*, or offerings, to use the English translation. Conceiving this whole collection as an offering, they aspire to "engage, affirm, and inspire relationships with all who read it" (xv). The seven parts—Roots, Relationships, Revelations, Resiliency, Resistance, Reclamation, and Reflections—dialogically interact with one another to form an interconnected whole, reflecting the open-endedness and the perpetually developing knowledge processes inherent to Anishinaabe stories. The seven-part structure points to the deep symbolic meaning of the sacred number seven in Anishinaabe teachings, where it appears in connection with the transfer of spiritual guidance and knowledge. That the volume is opened by

John Borrows and concluded by his daughter Lindsay, the youngest contributor, also renders circularity to the book's structure and evokes the familiar phrase "all my relations." This phrase reminds the Anishinaabeg who they are and what responsibilities they have, not only to their relatives but also all creation.

Written mostly, but not exclusively, by Anishinaabe scholars, the anthology focuses on topics important to Anishinaabe cultural sovereignty. Due to the scope of the collection, it is not possible to discuss each of the individual essays here, as remarkable and insightful as they are. Nonetheless, I recommend that readers read the anthology in its entirety. Each person will find different aspects important for them individually. This anthology, like a story, does not impose its interpretation on us and encourages us to make our own sense of the essays and to act accordingly. I will first mention some of the inspirational sources the contributions draw on, and then I will focus on the goals of the anthology with regard to the wide applicability of stories.

The work of Basil Johnston, who is one of the preeminent Anishinaabe intellectual elders, can itself be regarded as a major inspirational source for the anthology. The editors made a wise decision to place Johnston's essay "Is That All There Is? Tribal Literature," first published in 1991, at the very beginning of the essay collection. Johnston's essay can be understood as a foundational work that preconceives the editors' intention to see stories as a center for Anishinaabeg studies. It shows stories as roots of Anishinaabe identity, beliefs, ways of knowing, and human relationships, based on moral values and the deep meaning of the word *k'zaugin* (love that endures). Johnston points out the inseparable connection of stories with the Anishinaabe family of Central Algonquian languages, in which meanings important for tribal perception and attitudes in life are encoded.

Many contributors turn to the significance of Anishinaabemowin as active in forming and regenerating stories. Margaret Noori's essay deals with the significance of language in mediating intergenerational transfer of knowledge and preserving a living testimony of a unique world in which this knowledge is embodied. When translated into English, this world inevitably disappears and is replaced by a different one. Noori appreciates the wealth of forms that Anishinaabemowin provides for expressing relationship to land and describing the multifarious manifestations of animate and inanimate nature, such as Noori's poem "Wind Sound" (52).

Heid Erdrich, Anishinaabe poet and playwright, sees the main inspirational source in the works of early Anishinaabe writers, which she views as landmarks. Finding these landmarks, expressed by the Anishinaabe verb *namé*, connects contemporary writers with their literary ancestors across time and leads to ongoing presence in the sense of Vizenor's term *survivance*.

In their essay “The Story Is a Living Being,” Eva Garrouette and Kathleen Westcott present new approaches to the study of stories. They treat stories as a living part of the Anishinaabeg and focus mainly on stories’ ability to work in and shape human lives. Through Westcott’s Anishinaabe storytelling perspective, these two authors enter into the dialogue with Arthur Frank’s narratological perspective and reveal stories’ deeper spiritual meaning. Garrouette and Westcott are convinced that stories do not merely create empathic bridges between people but transcend into other parts of reality and change human lives. In this regard, creation stories are of primary importance as they are both *aadizookaanan* (sacred stories) and *dibaajimowinan* (personal stories). As Leanne Simpson points out, in the creation story every Anishinaabe can find his or her own creation story that helps him or her through the Four Hills of Life.

An analysis of ways in which Native people preserve their own political-cultural space within the nation-state requires theories outside the mainstream. Leanne Simpson is convinced that theories based on indigenous thought can eliminate the influence of colonialism and allow the renaissance of *mino-bimaa-diziwin*, sometimes translated as the way of a good life. Simpson argues that instead of searching for ways to “dismantle the master’s house,” it is far better to be “concerned with how we (re)build our own house, or our own houses” (280). In her view, stories, and creation stories in particular, are a source of intellectual tools and creative power for the regeneration of Anishinaabe language, cultures, and nations.

Kimberly Blaeser analyzes Gerald Vizenor’s serial retellings, specifically his wild rice accounts, which were written in order to change mainstream institutional practices and instigate change in Anishinaabe living conditions. In this sense, Vizenor’s storytelling and writing are clearly political acts (243). Blaeser refers to Vizenor’s understanding of story as a circle connecting the past and the present. The retellings of stories lead to their application in new circumstances. Keith Richotte Jr. recommends that legal and political events such as treaties and constitutions be reconceptualized as stories, not histories, because only in this way will these past events remain relevant and useful as “functional tools” for solving present-day problems. As Jill Doerfler points out in her essay, the knowledge contained in stories can lead contemplation on Anishinaabe identity and citizenship criteria in the right direction.

The best example of contemporary application of Anishinaabe stories is the government reform of the White Earth Nation. “Constitutional Narratives: A Conversation with Gerald Vizenor” uncovers the story of a greater-than-ten-year effort for constitutional reform. It is a new story of cultural and political agency and resistance undertaken in difficult conditions requiring resiliency, primarily of Anishinaabe intellectual leaders. As the principal author of the proposed constitution, Gerald Vizenor created a vision of a nation firmly rooted

in traditional values and democratic principles of Anishinaabe governance. Written as a narrative and ratified as a political document, the constitution is an expression of a new political power based on the idea of independent governance, sentiments of survivance, and Native continental liberty. Acknowledging the problems which accompany the process of White Earth constitutional reform, James Mackay argues that, regardless of the outcome, “the idealism of the Constitution . . . will remain . . . an inspiring national vision” (136). In my view, the idea that the constitution would not serve its intended purpose is too depressing. The vision that Vizenor incorporated into the proposed constitution is an offering to his people and should not be wasted. It is a gift given on the basis of a real need. Unlike Mackay, I do not believe that a constitution is “inessential to the business of governance” (134). For a Native nation a good constitution is a prerequisite for effective governance and a defense against the ongoing efforts to eliminate tribal sovereignty.

Centering Anishinaabeg Studies is an anthology that deserves high praise for its unique approach to the study of stories, treating stories not as a dead part of Anishinaabe heritage but as an active power, which opens new possibilities for survivance in the complexities of the constantly changing world. This anthology reclaims cultural, intellectual, and educational sovereignty necessary for the continued existence of the Anishinaabeg as peoples in the land that is rightfully theirs.

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Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War. By C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa. University of North Carolina Press, 2012. 228 pages. \$27.95 paper, \$39.95 cloth.

C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa has written an insightful and highly readable book about the politics of United States federal Indian policy that led to congressional passage of the Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887, which resulted in the loss of some 90 million acres of Indian lands. A strong contribution to the study of that period of nineteenth-century United States federal Indian law and policy, *Crooked Paths to Allotment* provides a detailed understanding of some of the history that led to the Dawes Act, which was intended to force individual land tenure on Indian people, break apart the nations, and assimilate Indians into the social and political fabric of the United States. In his 1901 First Annual Message, President Theodore Roosevelt called the act “a