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From the Stomp Grounds on Up: Indigenous Movement and the Politics of Globalization

If it's true that "New fictions of factual representation" are daily being foisted upon us then the case for inserting a social dimension into modern cartography is especially strong. Maps are too important to be left to the cartographer alone.

—J. B. HARLEY, "Deconstructing the Map," *Writing Worlds*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE POET TAKES OVER THE CARTOGRAPHER'S tools? More interestingly, what happens when the poet is from a group of people who were categorized, colonized, and subjugated in the wake of the colonial moment and implementation of modern conceptions of space? What might the poet say when she sees the detriments of colonial and imperial mapping—containment, restriction, restructuring, and erasure of cultures—continue and live in the buzz of a city or stream of nightly news in short sound bites ordering the people of the world through language and metaphors, the very tools of poets? In her books and performances, the Muscogee Creek poet Joy Harjo is continuing to counter forms of colonialism and imperialism and their dehumanizing and violent effects. Harjo is an artist with an intuitive ability to move from a specific cultural and personal location to the wider scale of humanity—in both its ugliness and beauty, or in her language, "in the beautiful perfume and stink of the world."¹ Her poetics sweep across and connect social, physical, and metaphysical boundaries. In one brushstroke of a verse or sentence we are at once in the past and the present and beholding the future as Harjo maps her place in the world through memory, instinct, and desire. The rich intertextuality of Harjo's poems and her diverse connections with others and awareness of Native issues—such as sovereignty, racial formation, and social conditions—provide the foundation for unpacking and linking the function of settler colonial structures within newly arranged global spaces. Harjo's creativity is about human connection

as a practice that mends the settler condition of isolating Native people as not part of this time or even this world, even while the material conditions produced during this neoliberal movement affect everyday reality. Harjo is *within the world*, not just engaging it from the periphery or margin. Through an attention to poetic language and the geographies in which they arise, Harjo and many other Native women are making worlds and producing geographical knowledges necessary to the survival of Native peoples.

Joy Harjo's use of specific Creek geographies, such as the stomp grounds referred to in the title, and her narratives of a gendered, colonized body on a global scale provide a rich base in which to discuss the strategies that are guiding us toward a discourse that imagines possibilities and influences subjectivity formation and material conditions of Native communities. This chapter demonstrates that the multiple scales of spatialities Native writers use in their work emerge out of broader social contexts that are dynamic, historical, and consistently engaging with the formation of tribal conceptions of human geography. Embodied geographies, whether a thirteenth-floor window, Los Angeles, Chicago, a plane in flight, or the Milky Way, are vital in Harjo's poetry, and an examination of how they relate is necessary to understanding how settler colonialism operates through intersectional gendered spatial logics. The relationship among the individual, community, and other bodies is a driving force that demands we rethink mimetic representations of the map as delineations of closure formed in modernity's propensity toward "objective" science. Remember, bodies are mobile and not fixed identities. How they are perceived, for instance, might often relate to what space one might occupy. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, spatial control was a necessary part of forming the settler state. For Native people whose bodies are highly regulated by the colonial settler state and for whom places are highly relegated by settler discourses of where one belongs, examining embodied geographies is a necessary component to decolonization. In other words, as Linda McDowell clarifies, the body is the most "immediate place": "The body is the place, the location or site, if you like, of the individual, with more or less impermeable boundaries between one body and another. While bodies are undoubtedly material, possessing a range of characteristics such as shape and size and so inevitably taking up space, the ways in which bodies are presented to and seen by others vary according to the spaces and places in which they find themselves."² Native people find themselves in the space of the settler state that enacts technologies of power on individual Native people in place, such as we saw in the previous examination of the urban/rez dichotomy. The

nation-state as a model became the unquestionable entity through which Indigenous politics are forged, even though implemented to refute the very vital process of changing federal Indian law or stopping its colonial extension or working with the government to retain and sustain the Indian Health Service (IHS) agency or more mainstream feminist goals to equalize pay scales. Yet, how in taking this interior approach to spatial justice are we limiting other alternatives? Harjo's poetry provides insight by dealing with embodied geographies on a multiscalar level. Much of what she writes about, though in more poetic and beautiful narratives, is mired in her lived reality during an economic shift that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. This shift created deep gaps between rich and poor as well as displaced people around the globe. As neoliberalism grew and shifted economic power to private entities, exploitation of land and labor also grew on a global scale. In order to push forward a (re)mapping that leads to healthier communities, an exploration of embodied geography is a necessary and important step to (re)map our socialities.

Spatial poetics create new contexts of meanings, disrupting taxonomic and contained racial and geopolitical categories that retain nineteenth-century racial logic. By awakening "dead metaphors"—that is, those discourses normalized through habitual use—and placing them within a context that shifts their normative meanings, I demonstrate that focusing on the production of global space in an Indigenous context and its articulation through language is fundamental to understanding the effects of late twentieth-century relationships among Indigenous people and current immigrants, many of whom are themselves Indigenous and have faced massive land loss. Thus, Harjo's spatial metaphors reposition the relationships between and among Creek people, western Americans, and those deemed in the public sphere as "third-world" immigrants. Here, Azfar Hussein rightly cautions us to be aware of situating Harjo in an "imperial hermeneutic," or what I reference in the introduction as a purely ethnographic reading which tends toward "attempts to control, govern, regulate, or discipline text(s) in terms of policing the boundaries of meaning."³ For Hussein, and in the context of this chapter, Harjo's work is poetic praxis in that it deters from simplicity that depoliticizes and dehistoricizes and instead fetishizes the discursive. In fact, my strategy of placing Native women's writings and (re)mappings in their historical and political moment stems from a Native feminist praxis committed to the material act of spatial justice. "Harjo's words themselves keep producing signs as the sites of ideological battle within historic parameters," suggests Hussein, "while also pointing up a variety of concrete material sites of counter-hegemonic

struggles relevant to contemporary Native Americans as well as to the Third World multitudes suffering and struggling within the spaces of local-global or glocal capitalism, global racism, and glocal sexism.²⁴ In a (re)mapping of settler colonialism, we also come to understand settler colonial spatial logics as undergirded by and producing spatialized violence, territorial property logics, and uneven regimes of capitalist accumulation.

Geographer and linguist Yi-Fu Tuan poignantly relates the relationship between space and language, aptly resonating with Harjo's poetics: "Humans in general know the power of speech in ordinary day-to-day experience. They know that although speech alone cannot materially transform nature, it can direct attention, organize insignificant entities into significant composite wholes, and in so doing, make things formerly overlooked—hence invisible and nonexistent—visible and real."²⁵ In this chapter's engagement with Harjo's feminist praxis, histories, and geographies in relation to a claiming of space and place through language, particularly metaphor, we see the vitality of imagining maps that unsettle colonial domination. Expanding on this chapter's title, I will begin with an example of the wealth of Creek-centered meanings found in Harjo's language, particularly in reference to the stomp grounds, which are not foreclosed but rather open up new possibilities of interconnection. The use of this discourse to rearticulate the mapping process will chart an understanding of how cultural metaphors can resituate our spatial understandings. Too often the past events of colonialism and immigrant experience put forward as the present are seen as discrete, especially in the context and hangover of notions of multiculturalism from the early 1980s through the 1990s. I then turn to the poem "Letter from the End of the Twentieth Century," from *The Woman Who Fell from the Sky* (1994),⁶ to elucidate further how Harjo (re)maps Native politics as important on a larger scale, resisting the dominant narrative that Indigenous politics pertain exclusively to a small minority group within the larger nation-state. By addressing the performance of global intersections in her music and poems, Harjo breaks from the representation of Native and nation-state spaces as homogeneous, closed systems. Joy Harjo's critical insights into the relationship between the local and the global exemplify the importance of focusing on Native women's writing about spatial violence.

Native activists, writers, and scholars have encountered the dilemma of moving from the local to the global many times before, and it is a part of everyday existence and everyday resistances on the part of Native people to maintain cultural specificity while remaining innovative in strategies for

cultural survival. Harjo writes in the context of the state's racialization of Native people into a neoliberal state, which often erases a Native presence or subsumes it in multicultural narratives that elide Native political rights or a human rights framework. Unlike in the previous chapter, where the discourses underpinning the legislation of termination and relocation programs were largely about incorporation into the melting pot or body politic, fear and anxiety drive the anti-immigrant discourses that mark the later twentieth century. The geographies the settler state imagines are not the ones Harjo encounters on the ground as she moves about the world. Scrutiny of embodied geographies and the gendered practices of enforcing settler colonial geographies open up new spatial imaginaries. Harjo, for instance, creates a viable glocality by situating Native knowledge structures as engaging with the world as she simultaneously avoids rendering Native people and communities into neoliberal discourses of multiculturalism.⁷ In this chapter, I link earlier privatization of Native land to the early 1980s to 1990s neoliberal political and economic policies that deepen asymmetries between various peoples as capital becomes privatized and global. Harjo provides us a grounding that remains significant to local communities, even while it operates at multiple scales of human interconnection.

THE STOMP GROUNDS

Harjo poignantly reminds us of her own position and what it means to be a Muscogee Creek woman through a recalling of the stomp grounds, history of Indian relations, Oklahoma territory, and her relationship to the land. The stomp grounds migrate with the Creeks from the origin myths of emergence and journey to the historical relocation of the Creek Nation and Five Civilized Tribes, named as such for their seeming acculturation to European norms. Often the stomp grounds are in relation to the various constructions of the figure of the "house" that Harjo takes up again and again wherever she goes. The spaces and places created in Harjo's poetry are not fixed or statically inhabited, but rather are formed in their own geographic history and in the geopolitics that are ongoing and connected to spatial forces across the planet. Harjo (re)maps the United States through gendered and cultural metaphors that recall a long history of relocation, occupation, and exploitation.

This chapter is deeply indebted to Craig Womack's insights as a Creek tribal scholar and all-around excellent researcher of literature and the Creek Nation. From the very start of *Red on Red*, Womack debunks the idea of the

tainted or disappeared Native—conceptions largely embedded in colonial structuring of lands that rely on these notions in order to narrate and justify colonial occupation. The account of the birth of the Creek (Muscogee) and later the Creek Nation, stories that find themselves again and again in Harjo’s poetry, are pivotal to unfixing these notions. Womack recounts the opening of the earth, emergence of the people, and travel from the continental divide to the Atlantic, where they rested near the Chattahoochee River. The profound nature of the story, which Womack relates through the elder Louis Oliver, is a powerful creation story that marks mobility and migration. This story, like Harjo’s poetry, is a speech act: “To exist as a nation, the community needs a perception of nationhood, that is, stories (like the migration account) that help them imagine who they are as a people, how they came to be, and what cultural values they wish to preserve.”⁸ Creek stories of migration are significant to an understanding of Creek construction of place and its constant recreation through imaging new spatialities; these speech acts enable a reworking through tough times. The introduction of federal Indian law and policy would interfere over and over again in tribal governance, land holdings, and social conceptions to produce those tough times, but as I demonstrate later in this essay through an examination of Harjo’s grounding and ability to connect to the world, these economic and political practices are connected to larger scales of exploitation. The Creek conception, based in movement and the establishment of familial or clan relationship to all those around them, differs greatly from the imposition of fixed land rights and privatization that are foundational to a liberal democracy and enforced through the imposition of colonial law. Even through mass destruction the creation stories traveled through the generations, as they have in most tribes.

The mapping of Indian land and bodies through the narrative of the law is more than a violent event of the past in which the nation must be forgiven: various colonial policies also structure much Indian law, policy, material reality, and socialities experienced by people today. Spatially removed, relocated, and already existing Native people in place are deeply affected as law attempts to homogenize Native people into categories and elide particular histories. The imagining of Native land and people as domestic dependent nations became incorporated in law through the language of conquest, thus leading to individual settler land titles affirmed through the very same process. Settler spatial imaginaries and their enforcement implemented removal, formed Indian Territory, remapped it as the state of Oklahoma, incorporated it into the settler state, and eventually applied the Dawes Allotment Act, all of which

continue to affect Native lands and bodies. What little land legally left under tribal jurisdiction is pivotal to contemporary survivance, even as many must relocate to sustain themselves and their families financially because of economic tyranny exerted through federal Indian law and policy. In knowing historical geographies and temporalities, Harjo's creation of different possibilities is all the more amazing.

Yet the death of tribal lands and people was not all that occurred—many of these unjust spatial policies also culminated in the violent interruption of cultural epistemologies. Throughout her multiple books, Harjo writes of places that converge with multiple temporalities in her poems, and in doing so, she makes numerous connections, forming patterns between the various points in her life. The literal stomp grounds are found in a particular tangible space, Oklahoma, and are a place where Creek dances and ceremonies continue to be held. However, that space is not fixed in time or landscape and has many meanings. Harjo's stomp grounds are present in various moments of global traveling or in examining global restructuring and thus (re)map our nations in significant ways that do not alienate us from the land. Native subjectivity, in this case specifically Creek, is intimately tied to this space of original creation but also to its generative abilities of recreation. Harjo is acutely recalling Creek specifics to help balance human and all life-forms that she finds in other areas of the world—a world increasingly connected through neoliberal politics even while founded in the settler dynamics of colonialism. In fact, much of the landscapes reflected in Harjo's poetry are not fixed, inanimate places to be mapped by grids, surveys, and legalities. In my previous work, I examined the ways that her poetic metaphors based on traditional stories reflect a history that is then passed down to her granddaughter, a necessary step so that the next generation is grounded but not confined.⁹ Harjo's work is an example of recreating new possibilities, even new collectivities, which transform the settler state ideal of transforming Indigenous land into individual private property.

Thus, the stomp grounds are a particularly apt vehicle for Harjo's scalar approaches: the local is already in relation to these larger global forces. The stomp grounds are a place of familiarity—a tangible space of ideological dimensions embedded in politics and memory. It is a space she constantly embodies as she moves and experiences other spaces. "The body that navigates the geography of daily life bears a visible mark," attests Mona Domosh and Joni Seager in their examination of the way space is socially constructed around sets of gendered, ethnic, racial, and class norms. "In all societies there

is an intertwined reciprocity between space, bodies, and the social construction of both—neither ‘space’ nor ‘bodies’ exists independently of a social print.”¹⁰ For Native people in place, overt control by the state on the reservation exists, again as discussed previously in terms of access to resources and residency—which again on many reservations is spatially constructed at the level of the body through blood quantum laws conceived of by the state and adopted by various, but not all, Native nations. Native mobility, however, often reflects an ideology of gendered and spatialized erasure. Harjo instead presents us with a different vision of moving through space. She looks to her traditions and a culture that has already withstood the onslaught of spatial reorganization in U.S. nation-building processes to find strategies for dealing with modern reorganizations of the social, political, and economic construction of places. The violent force and oppressive ideology that marked the days of a colonial “civilizing” of space, a process that entailed the extermination, assimilation, and criminalization of Native people pushed to the unruly boundaries of the nation and erased in the cultural imagination, remains embedded in the modern nation-state. In looking at global spaces and global displacement of Indigenous peoples, Harjo reaches into Native traditions and language to guide her through disputed land and buried histories.

CALLING A MEETING

Many of Harjo’s poems recall the neoliberal shifts of the 1980s and early 1990s and a time when women of color and Indigenous women were organizing around injustices that were occurring at the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality. As manufacturing jobs were exported and social services overhauled, and many people were routed into the prison system, traditional communities of color underwent drastic changes, particularly in deindustrialized cities.¹¹ Reservation communities had a history of and still experience high rates of unemployment, policing, and daily violence despite rich resource holdings on their land. Harjo’s poems provide a base where we can reflect on the affinities among communities that increasingly have become surplus populations as neoliberal politics and economics shift to transnational finance capitalism. Federal Indian and military policies have continually categorized Native people from the continental United States to its territories in Pacific Islands as surplus populations. Thus, settler restructuring of Indigenous land is closely linked to the rise of the United States as a settler colonial society to a global settler nation-state superpower. The trope of vanishing

continues, despite evidence to the contrary, and the rhetoric of majority need versus small “special interest” populations proliferates as a part of mapping bodies and land. Harjo’s poetry provides a narrating witness to the burgeoning collaborative politics that arise in this moment. Many women of color, disillusioned by the disparities between them and their “white sisters” who were benefiting from the focus on private property, sought to intervene in a mainstream feminism based on the experience of the white woman as a property-accumulating liberal subject. Gaining more individual property in the form of civil rights, or individual rights, was of less interest to Native women than was, and still is, a commitment to protect land, community, and kin.

Collaborative and grassroots forms of organizing arising during this time period are still pivotal to collective cultural and political rights. Grace Hong, in her examination of the genealogy of liberal capitalism, national narratives, and women of color writing as an intervention, understands the use of culture not as something that is bounded, pure, individual, and merely about identity expression. Rather, the use of culture, and how I use it within this book, “encompasses a system of meaning-making, a system ordered by relations of power.”¹² I find this redefinition important, considering legal policies that seek to rid the system of meaning-making of Native people by its simplifying and narrowing definitions of classification that then trickle down to what constitutes a tribal nation or even at times our own narrow definitions of what should be the aim of sovereignty. Harjo, as part of this group of women writers, produces counternarratives to founding mythologies that Native people are dangerous, primitive, or nonexistent, and in doing so, she creates meaningful knowledges through her positionality as a Creek woman living in a world that too often renders Native people, issues, and land invisible or hypervisible in a temporal past.¹³ Furthermore, by putting forth an analysis of the social and spatial as sets of relationships, she provides an intervention into the reduction of sovereignty as merely territorial in terms of dominant geographic knowledge.

In her poem “We Must Call a Meeting,” found in her earlier volume *In Mad Love and War* (1990), Harjo calls for social action mirroring the discussions around race, poverty, and gender that were occurring throughout the United States. To this discussion Harjo adds the experience and historic memory of Indigenous women. In situating metaphors of colonization—both internal and external—in a struggle over language and language production, the poem begins with meeting at a place of fragility, a vulnerability that often occurs

and the moon.

And the stars to guide us called promise. (9–10)

The alliteration and repetition of the “and” and “a” produce a rhythm and pattern in the poem. The shortened length of the lines and the capitalization represent quick dance steps in the pattern of the spiral returning to its center. The center, however, is vast and ubiquitous, filled with “promise” and “madness” rather than stability, foreclosure, and limitation. “The design,” or colonial reasoning, breaks down into “madness” as the poem spirals into the fertile chaos of the lower world. These spiral metaphors, such as the curled serpent and the spiral of the sky, are recurring mythic images present throughout Harjo’s poetry. The spiral of memory, the spiral of creation, the spiral path, the spiral of time, and the spiral of power are all images of Creek epistemologies that bring forth balance as Harjo connects to the world around her, yet other meanings are not narrowed in this moment. Language, culture, and history converge as the meaning of the spiral transcends the root of Harjo’s traditions. The spiral becomes an epistemological retooling of spatialities produced in the organization of market economies that increased global migrations in the early 1990s. These cultural geographical elements become foundational in a (re)mapping of the global city built on Indigenous land.

In my discussion of the three worlds of Creek tradition represented in the spiral and in many other such literary insights, as noted earlier, I am indebted to Craig Womack’s book *Red on Red*. In speaking of the division between the three worlds, he states:

These divisions are spiritual as well as geographic and stratospheric. Upper world and lower are opposed to each other, and humans are in the middle, in a fragile balance between the three worlds. Creek medicine often involves playing one side off against another to restore things to a proper scheme when someone is sick or events have gone awry. The upper world is a realm of order and periodicity because of the lunar cycle and planetary orbits. Thus, the “spiral of the sky” actively reaches out to celestial bodies symbolizing order and peace. The lower world is one of chaos, though also of fertility. This world, where humans live, is a less ideal version of the Upper world. Rivers, lakes and caves are entrance points to the underworld.¹⁷

“The sun,” “the moon,” and “the stars” are all images of the upper world, “the house” the middle world, and “the snake” the lower. The language of the poem

reflects the moment when chaotic thought turns to action and language with a capacity to “build a house.” The poem restores balance between the three worlds, symbolized here as a relationship between “the serpent” that occupies her subconscious and the “stars” that hold promise. The “curled serpent,” or the narrator of the poem who moves between worlds just as the snake does, waits to break free from an abstraction of colonial space that relies on disconnection through producing difference and a fear of the other. This is symbolized in the form of the pottery vessel as a container that holds our nightmares that are a living subconscious fear. This ordering of space, in the sign of a container or traditional form of pottery or the cage, obfuscates other ways of knowing. The “dreaming animal who paces back and forth in my head” illustrates the danger of a pent-up process of thought and its repression. Aboriginal scholar Irene Watson questions the mobility of Indigenous movement across space and thus theorizes the detriments of containment of bodies in relationship to the theft of land and neoliberal politics that seek to contain through multicultural policies of inclusion. In reflecting on post-Mabo era reconciliation politics, she asks if these politics of the settler state altered “the capacity to roam the land of our ancestors.” Like Harjo, she questions neoliberal politics and asks, “or have we witnessed merely the illusion of change?” Ultimately, Watson concludes, “We must be able to imagine alternative spaces in which our thoughts and bodies are free to roam.”¹⁸ To me, the work of both of these Indigenous scholars is necessary in investigating the link between the local and the global as it pertains to the material conditions of Indigenous people.

The lines of the house meet in the shape of the poem itself; the continuous lines run without a stanza break, only shifting spatially and rhythmically as they move into the center. The poem uses the cultural material of the spiral to break free from internal and external restraints assembled through the social processes of colonization. This use of traditional spatial images associated with the three dimensions frequently appears as a theme in her poetry, as we see in this meeting. Building houses out of our own material, largely embodied material as Robert Warrior notes, is necessary to decolonization. Warrior, in his examination of the importance of the erotic in Native writing, reminds us of the connection among “the erotic, bodies, and Native survival,” claiming that “our bodies—or our skins, which are the parts of us that most immediately touch and relate to the rest of the world around us—are not only the most immediate site of the battle for ourselves, but also the primary guide to where we ought to be headed.”¹⁹ Finding freedom in language—and

applying it to our politics—becomes the mechanism for producing a space free from subjugation; the act of calling, praying, and “hold[ing] conversations” is the precursor to building a house strong enough to deal with the madness of colonized life.

A new house designed as cyclical and unbounded with possibilities, unlike the house of the nation based on exclusions of citizenship, gendered conceptions of the public and private, and transfer of Native land to private property, is built to create connections. By centering the poem on the house, the domestic realm is emphasized as an interiority that must also be politicized. The importance of theorizing that women’s spatial imaginaries materialize as solutions to world issues is sought—issues that are not relegated to the house but are part of the economic and political spheres rendered as masculinized space in settler state discourses. The metaphor of the house is coupled by the exchange of pronouns throughout the poem. In the closing lines, the shifting pronoun usage signals a struggle taking place. “New ancestors” and a broader “we” must partake in this collaborative call to action and as such the poem ends with the celestial images of order and the inclusive pronoun “us.” The poetic narrator recognizes that the enemy is also found within her and that it is the past ancestors and spirits as well as the new that have to meet if she is to build a house based on possibility and not foreclosure.

The methods of communicating across difference—devoid of collapsing into neoliberal models of multiculturalism meant to absorb difference into the state without creating any real difference in the structures that dominate—are not easy. Tokenism, omission, and appropriation will not change the structures of the settler state.²⁰ The necessity of balancing the spatial relationships between the local and global is at the heart of many of Harjo’s current poems that are trying to mediate through the reality that difference poses without essentializing the experience. Her poetic ponderings work through the complexities of the human condition. In an interview, Harjo tells us that she sees “memory as not just associated with past history, past events, past stories, but non-linear, as in future and ongoing history, events, stories. And it changes.”²¹ If space is socially produced through memory, history, and events, as Henri Lefebvre and subsequent human geographers have argued, it stands to reason that we must constantly interrogate the ways in which we approach changes in spatial production. For Harjo, as for Leslie Marmon Silko, who will be discussed in the next chapter, the past is living and calls one to action, so that even changes reflect multiple moments in time.

In other words, conceptions of self in relation to space are not inscribed on a tabula rasa. Some traits of the old are remembered and incorporated into the present, some forgotten, and other socialities may unconsciously reside in our current conceptions of space. Yet, as I will discuss below, our actions are not merely determined by the spatial structures set up by state powers. This is evident in Harjo's uses of traditional images or mythic figures entwined with contemporary images and given everyday qualities. Her belief that "we are part of an old story and involved in it are migrations of winds, of ocean currents, of seeds, songs, and generations of nations" is the backbone of her poems, especially those dealing with (re)mapping the world. Traditions inform a way of knowing, and this epistemological basis produces material conditions as they are acted out in the world. The related concepts of the spiral and the stomp grounds, for instance, prompt Harjo's action to call a meeting. The locality of traditions does not have to be static, fixed, or marked as a moment in time that has passed; rather, traditions migrate through time, ideas, and places. These migrations, however, are not always "easy" or smooth, especially as bodies are relocated in the name of advancement and development.

NATIVE LOCALITIES AND GLOBALIZATION

In her poems, Harjo often connects and relates her individual story to that of the people in the space of "contact zones," understanding the constant creation that takes place among "strangers" who find themselves in the same place through global political and economic forces. In "The Path to the Milky Way Leads through Los Angeles," Harjo reflects her concern with space and the forces that disconnect people from one another:

There are strangers above me, below me and all around me and we are all
strange in this place of recent invention.

This city named for angels appears naked and stripped of anything resembling
the shaking of turtles shells, the songs of human voices on a summer night
outside of Okmulgee.²²

Deeply moved by the forces of globalization on Indigenous people in the world, Harjo writes of a world devoid of the markers of identity evident in the imagery of the turtle shells and reference to the place stomp dances are held. In many ways, we can liken Harjo's words to the critique by many that

globalization has flattened the world in the proliferation of consumerism, a point that arises in much of Harjo's work. Through "imagining" she seeks to address this alienation that relates to an abstraction of space and construction of humans as consumers, declaring, "We must matter." Los Angeles is only one such city, Harjo imagines; she also writes poems of Chicago (addressed in the next section), San Juan, Mexico City, Honolulu, Albuquerque, New York, and many more places where people from all over the world meet.

To demonstrate the movement between the local and global, I created the title of this chapter with two metaphors of the ground on up in mind. "From the ground on up," a common expression in global studies, is a metaphor that implies restructuring the way centers are examined and the way the world is structured in terms of identity, culture, and relationships by starting with the local and particular to understand the global. Harjo in the above lines is imagining the stomp grounds in order to make a connection to those she finds in the city, but "we can't easily see that starry road from the perspective of the crossing / of boulevards, can't hear it in the whine of civilization or taste the / minerals of planets in hamburgers" (45). Global restructuring involves processes of communication that have an impact on the way we conceive of space. In these lines, Harjo is using the spatial metaphors of the upper Creek world to seek balance in a world of fast food and "several brands of water." Global restructuring orders and systemizes local communities and nation-states and is historically contingent on previous conceptions and reordering of space. The idea of the ground on up in globalization is a metaphor often used in the media, popular culture, and academia to discuss spatial relationships and the problematic of a world under threat of being consumed by multinational or even transnational corporations. It conveys the idea of starting with specific communities and working out to the larger-scale global community. Usually the meaning conveys economic and political nation-state status—or civilization for those deemed to be on the "periphery."

Harjo uses the metaphor of the stomp grounds and other specific Creek and tribal metaphors to locate herself within a Creek tradition, to note her connections to others, to recenter those normally left out of knowledge production, and to thwart the violence of global designs, a term Walter Mignolo defines as a "hegemonic project for managing the planet."²³ Geographer Derek Gregory tells us that "it is possible to use maps, landscapes, and spaces *and also* images of location, position, and geometry in ways that challenge the Archimedean view of knowledge, in ways that insist the geographies of

knowing make a difference. But these are not absolutes and the differences that they make depend on the specific ways in which they are used.²⁴ Gregory's statement opens up possibilities in mapping, possibilities that are at play in Harjo's use of spatial metaphors that require an understanding of various knowledges too often erased. Harjo's metaphorical use of the stomp grounds, in its various forms, is of utmost importance in examining what happens when the Native of this country confronts an immigrant Native from another continent who has been displaced through similar mechanisms of the privatization of land and detribalization of people that brings Harjo and many Natives to the cities and landscapes she speaks of in her poems. First contact with Europeans set in motion the first stages of globalization as markets were established on Native lands and resources exported to Europe. Mignolo speaks to this moment of contact as engendering the "first global design of the modern/colonial world system and, consequently, the anchor of Occidentalism and the coloniality of power drawing the external borders as the colonial difference."²⁵ Concerned with knowledge production that is centered in universalism and colonial difference, Mignolo links the aggressive suppression of the Other's local histories and forms of knowledge as an expansion that "has not only been a religious and economic one, but also an expansion of hegemonic forms of knowledge that shaped the very conception of economy and religion."²⁶ Harjo's poetry, as is true in the theorizing and writing of many women of color, provides important feminist analyses of these masculinist universal global designs. She describes how her common experience of constant Native displacement and positive Native continuity is embodied: "When I am home in Oklahoma at the stomp grounds we may talk about the complexities of meaning, but to comprehend it, to know it intimately, the intricate context of history and family, is to dance it, to be it."²⁷ Harjo's poem counters forms of knowledge that would erase and deny Native presences.

In reading Harjo's poetry, I address her rethinking of globalization and seek to answer the question of what happens when the Indigenous person acts as an agent of global restructuring. The question that arises from this discussion of the colonial and gender politics of globalization is, where do extremely marginalized peoples, often erased citizens with histories of violent repression within their own state, fit into the analysis and theories of globalization studies?²⁸ For instance, many of the people who are migrating and creating diasporic communities are displaced Indigenous people, and yet much of the work being done on globalization concentrates on economies, capital

mobility, transnational corporations, and labor. In this arena, the Indigenous is replaced by national identities; rather than tribal specificities being named, they become Mexicans or Salvadorans. What is lost, and how is this gendered, in this refusal to identify whose lands continue to be exploited and whose bodies are displaced by ongoing global expansion? Harjo's use of spatial metaphors and world-making helps raise these significant questions, as well as demonstrate how the silenced are living and maintaining their culture while acting as important agents in global restructuring. The way we relate to land and to place changes on a regular basis, though this does not preclude consistencies. In working toward a spatial justice, it is important to continually ask questions of the metaphors we use to describe the literal space, what that space signifies, and the context from which the metaphors emerge.²⁹

Global restructuring, the act of producing space, is not accomplished by anonymous global forces, however, nor is the force purely in one direction.³⁰ Harjo dispels the notion of anonymous force in the poem and again calls us to action:

Everyone knows you can't buy love but you can sell your soul for less
than a song to a stranger who will sell it to someone else for a profit
until you're owned by a company of strangers
in the city of the strange and getting stranger. (45)

The repetition of "strange" in this passage simulates what happens in the city for Harjo. The forces of capitalism would alienate Native subjects from culture, relationship to land, and autonomy. Harjo, however, counters this process, by asking the trickster Crow, "So what are we doing . . . parading on the ledge of / falling that hangs over this precarious city?" (45). The global city does not have to be anonymous or make you a stranger as crows are everywhere "finding gold in the trash of humans" (45). Out of the scraps of consumer waste and displacements, Crows maintain kinship. Harjo's local metaphors (re)map a global restructuring of space. Doreen Massey examines the political space of the local in theorizing concepts of global space arguing against interrogating the small scale as mere descriptive analysis of the impact of globalization on specific communities. Instead, she emphasizes the importance of utilizing locality studies as the starting point, but also understanding that the local is comprised also of complex processes.³¹ Harjo's work correlates to Massey's idea that the local is an important starting point and is also heterogeneous. In much Native thought, the local is always connected

to multiple stories that move across time and space. In order to disrupt the global designs produced and productive of colonialism, it is necessary to collapse the dichotomy of the global and local and (re)map knowledges that would differentiate them in ironclad theories whose power is hidden behind the word “objective.” Harjo contends: “There is no such thing as a one-way land bridge. People, creatures and other life will naturally travel back and forth. Just as we will naturally intermarry, travel up and down rivers, cross oceans, fly from Los Angeles to Oklahoma for a pow-wow” (38). Movement and mobilization are naturalized in Harjo’s stories, upsetting a terrain of Western knowledge *about* Native peoples, a colonial knowledge used to control, regulate, and discipline the supposed static space and time colonial subject. Again, Harjo’s spatial justice approach to the global city mirrors the words of Soja:

The urbanization process and along with it what can be called the urbanization of (in)justice are generated primarily in and from dense urban agglomerations, but in the present age of accelerating globalization the urban condition has extended its influence to all areas: rural, suburban, metropolitan, exurban, even wilderness, parkland, desert, tundra and rainforest. In this sense, the whole world has been or is being urbanized to some degree, making the search for social justice relevant at many different geographical scales, from the global to the most local, and everywhere in between.³²

Deep-well drilling on Native land, coal mining in Dinétah, or the damming of the Colorado River may begin on Native land and in Native places, but those resources are extracted to the urban centers. Meanwhile, Native people are left with the residue. Harjo addresses the intensity of capitalism she finds in the city of Los Angeles, a capitalism that hides “the path to the Milky Way”: “But we can buy a map here of the star’s homes, dial a tone for dangerous love” (45). The local map linked to capitalism’s “illusion of the marketplace” and “someone else[’s] profit” obscures the “starry road” bringing the world into imbalance or in many ways makes us all strangers as we are prevented from seeing how “we revolve together in the dark sky on the path to the Milky Way.” Local spaces and studies of them or tribal perspectives are not isolated and provincial. They are ever moving and fluid, and it is this vantage point that can provide valuable insight into human interaction and spatial justice.

The debate concerning local tribal studies recurs in the field of Native literature and broadly in Native American studies as well. The need to derive

literary theory from tribal culture remains an important approach in Native American studies, yet it is often one that can mire us in pure ethnographic readings devoid of any political context or one that does not acknowledge Native people as part of and influencing a global world. Often the call for an emphasis on cultural centers is a call for an emphasis on place and positioning oneself in a particular community. Harjo's use of the local to theorize the global is critical to Indigenous people whose land and labor are exploited in global finances. In order to substantiate the importance of the local in Native conceptions of the global, Harjo's literary use of the stomp grounds is key, as it details the intersections between the local and global. The local spaces of Harjo's production are more than descriptive—they call for action and a rethinking of space, time, memory, and culture.

The current topic of the relationship between globalization and social violence has permeated many theories of globalization across disciplines. Tyron Woods, for instance, takes globalization scholars to task for the confined emphasis on globalization as an economic and political science construct, asserting that instead there is a need to examine globalization as “referring to certain political strategies to resolve the crisis of the capitalist state,” such as immigration and trade policies.³³ His argument is significant for the way I examine it in the next section: “The process of globalization includes a set of spatial rearrangements, and, second, space is reconfigured through race and gender. [Woods's] contention is that far from signaling a diminution of boundaries, globalization more often than not reinforces and fortifies geopolitical and racial borders.”³⁴ Violent ongoing racializing and gendering projects continue to be carried out against Indigenous people in the Americas by nation-state governments. An emphasis on the effects of globalization processes on Indigenous communities is vital to disrupting political and economic discourses of globalization in which Native people are acted upon.

Two general approaches arise when globalization theory rests on the assumptions of Western hierarchies. The homogeneous approach attempts to adhere to nation-state borders and boundaries when studying the consequences of globalization in terms of world systems. The heterogeneous approach concentrates on particulars apart from a larger framework of systems and connection. Both general conceptions are inadequate methods for examining how Indigenous people are positioned politically, culturally, and economically. These approaches to culture found in simplified definitions of globalization obfuscate particular historical practices, such as the subjugating, assimilating, or murdering of Indigenous people. Too often, Indigenous

people and their communities are overlooked—perhaps due to “perceiving” a lack of a political and economic body, marginalizing “real” Indians to the borders, creating homogenized subjects from national identities in which the Native is erased in national narratives, or rendering Indigenous people as invisible in the national cultural imagination that represents them as relics of the past.³⁵ Regardless of the reason, the end result is a violation of legal and human rights and a lack of access to resources.³⁶

Fredric Jameson's view of the ideological structure of globalization as “a communicational concept, which alternately masks or transmits cultural or economical meanings,” is pertinent to an examination of how global imaginings affect Native people.³⁷ This corrects the heterogeneous approach referred to above of mapping subjectivities based only on isolating political or economic concepts of the global, which materially and ideologically affect Indigenous people even as they are dismissed from globalization discourse through the ideological apparatus of the nation-state. By this I am referring to the way Indigenous people from Mexico or Guatemala are not recognized as Indigenous people but as immigrants from another nation-state. The erasing of their indigeneity results in a dismissal of the context of their situation. As Young asserts, examining globalization as a purely institutional, abstract space of the state and a network of world systems omits the agents of global restructuring. If the world is left mapped in this way, only a story about continued global imperialism and the splintering of communities is left. Harjo imagines a different story, however, and creates an awareness of Native people in cities and in nation-states, telling us that it is easier to “perceive” beauty and place “when those who remember us here in the illusion of the marketplace / turn toward the changing of the sun and say our names” (45). The force of globalization, as the ideology of manifest destiny, preordains the fate of supposedly vanishing Indigenous people as a consequential geography of capitalist development. Harjo recognizes the tensions of globalization in line with Jameson's position but extends it to recognize our relationships to the nonhuman as well, and interrupts the narrative with an alternative examination of social spaces in a native context. Indigenous peoples' movements begin to burgeon in the 1980s and 1990s, informing the discourses and practices around space.

In a 1996 interview by Greg Sarris (a Miwok/Pomo American Indian writer, political activist, and American Indian studies scholar), Harjo was asked how she believes we can break barriers (later referred to as boundaries) as American Indians. Standing in for abstract margins and the material life of Native Americans, these barriers and boundaries are spatial metaphors both

ideological and very tangible for American Indian people. In her response, she extols the power of communication theories, declaring that she strives for a space in which there is no room for lying. Her poetry seeks the truth, as she tells us in an intimate postscript to a poem: “If I am a poet who is charged with speaking the truth (and I believe the word poet is synonymous with truth-teller), what do I have to say about all of this?” (19). Her poetry addresses issues of identity, locality, justice, and politics—all of which are called into question when the Indigenous person of this land encounters another Indigenous person who has been displaced and exploited by global economies. Many of Harjo’s pieces begin from the ground up with her personal experiences as an Indigenous woman living in a colonized space; yet in this constant invention of settler colonial space, Harjo finds ways to remember, reminding us that “like the crow I collect the shine of anything beautiful I can find” (45).

LETTER FROM THE END OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Harjo’s poem “Letter from the End of the Twentieth Century” seeks to undo the damage of a Western mapping that homogenizes and defines Natives. By combining global forms of music and poetic verse, she addresses the forms of globalism I spoke to above. Harjo has often said that she sees her poems in music form before the language comes, and in fact she took up the alto saxophone in her early thirties as a result of trying to express language through sound. This performative dimension has truly influenced much of her current poetry, and she continues to create CDs based on her poems.³⁸ Music, visual arts, and language are deeply connected in Harjo’s work, creating multilayered dimensions in the imagery and metaphors of her poetry. The musical form of Harjo’s verses emanates from the beat and pace of the poetic words. The sound and the backbeat to the poem not only add an aesthetic dimension to the work, and to my analysis, but also illuminate how Harjo rearticulates space, restructures globalization in terms of Indigenous peoples’ movement on the global scale, and collapses time so that history is always present.

Harjo (re)maps the place of the Indigenous in the global through the musical forms of jazz and reggae. These genres of music are an unmistakable mixture of the cultures of Indigenous people and Africans brought to the Americas as slaves. Harjo herself suggests that both runaway slaves and Natives, with whom they often intermingled while hiding from slave catchers, influenced the formation of jazz. In an autobiographical note preceding

a poem about the jazz musician Jim Pepper, Harjo confides: “I’ve always believed us Creeks had something to do with the origins of jazz. After all, when the African peoples were forced here for slavery they were brought to the traditional lands of the Muscogee peoples. Of course there was interaction between Africans and Muscogeese!”³⁹ Aware of musical forms and the historical implications of colonization, Harjo chooses a musical genre that originates in Africa, forms anew from a system of subjugation, and continues to exist and creates a path toward decolonization. The instrumental elements with their political connotations are a constitutive element of the overall meaning of the poem, an aesthetic choice mired in historical, economic, and political materialities. The skank guitar is an instrument that came about through the slave trade. It has African roots and found its current form as a cultural innovation of the Caribbean. It has been important in the foundation of ska music, a combination of jazz and Caribbean rhythms. Cowbells, African indigenous instruments, and the conga drum create meaning together with poetic language and metaphor. The instruments and the musical forms employed by Harjo, too, have migrated and been (re)invented in the wake of the first waves of forced (im)migration during colonization that I discussed in more detail above. The globe was reshaped by the slave trade, and its consequences produced diverse communities and cultures—Africans, people indigenous to the Americas, and the European settlers. Like new music, new socialities were produced and productive, literally shaping the world around us. The cowbell from Africa makes its journey to the Caribbean, where it joins with the innovative skank guitar to produce a new cultural sound. In the song, the travels do not stop there, as the music itself migrates to the Southeast where it joins the beats of the stomp grounds. This restructuring of people’s relationship of space through colonial practices, such as Creek removal to Oklahoma to make room for immigrant Europeans, finds itself in this contemporary milieu of jazz, ska, and Indigenous beats that continue to mix with displaced people from multiple and overlapping places. Through the use of various instruments that signify the paths of colonization and original displacement of Indigenous people, the musical form of the poem adds an important pathway to discuss a history of violence, slavery, rape, massacres, and death at the hands of colonizers; more importantly, the music represents a history of cultural survival and beauty still to be found in the world.

The connections between the local and global produced in Harjo’s language fortify the “Letter from the End of the Twentieth Century,” pushing the language in the poem beyond rhetoric or mere reflection of the economic

conditions of the dispossessed. The poem tells the tale of an encounter with a cab driver who picks up the narrator from the transnational space of the airport. They begin a conversation, telling each other stories—particularly stories of their individual histories—in hopes of creating understanding. In sharing both beautiful and violent stories of immigrant men working in the dangerous world of cab drivers and her own stories of colonization, Harjo is able to reckon distances between the abject subjects of immigrants who are deemed as not belonging to the nation, but whose labor is necessary to sustain an exploitative capitalist system. Native people who haunt seemingly from the past but practice the everyday reality of fighting for land and their people are also abject subjects. By articulating these connections in the stories of the terrifying and random murders of individuals, Harjo comes to grips with the violence produced by global restructuring and destruction of communities and our connections with one another.

Mapping and narrative converge in Native intellectual discourse, not just as a way to counter colonial processes, but also as a way to create relationships among land, people, and cultures. Harjo, along with many other Native writers and activists, is not just deconstructing the terms of nation mapping. Nor does Harjo replicate statist maps with the same effects of exclusion from/inclusion into the nation-state. Rather than mimicking Cartesian forms of mapping, Harjo supplants this methodology with Native knowledge that deals with an ever-spiraling world. Black, Caribbean, and Native (specifically Muscogee Creek) converge in Harjo's musical and poetic compositions to fight what Andrea Smith frames as the three pillars of white supremacy; she argues that in order to overthrow the larger structure, we must examine the logics of slavery, colonization, and orientalism in our models of liberation practices.⁴⁰ Harjo's poetry is in constant dialogue with these logics, which are key to understanding how we relate to each other and how we hold each other accountable after we hear a story.

By creating relationships through narratives or a sharing of stories and by determining the spatial metaphors used to create a subject position, Harjo builds relationships among community, land, culture, and history—relationships that counter the fragmentation and loss created through colonial exploits. She says in the autobiographical note to this poem, "As an Indian woman in this country I often find much in common with many immigrants from other colonized lands who come here to make a living, often as taxi drivers" (38). Far from being an American Indian closed off from the world, Harjo deeply engages with it from the minute to the vastness of space. As a

result of this multiscalar perspective, she is aware of how the movement of people on a global scale is connected to the first wave of immigration by European settlers. Indigenous people face an astonishing rate of displacement as a result of increased globalization and privatization of land through free market principles. Yet this accumulation of land and labor is not new, as you may recall from the above historical content. Harjo in this instance draws another map, created through the sharing of stories, that connects her to the waves of displaced people entering her homeland. Rather than denigrating these forms of music and narrative stories as “other” or not of her nation, Harjo connects histories without losing the particularities of being Muscogee Creek.

The very structure of this poem, in the shape of the spiral, reflects a commitment to connect stories. The composition of the music and the breaks in the poem produce three rhythmic shifts in the song, written in the form of a letter telling us about violence on a global scale. Letter writing is personal, intimate, and directed. Above all else, the form of a letter demands a response. Harjo begins her letter poem by positioning herself (“I spent the morning”), yet moves outward to encompass a global community (“with Rammi, an Igbo man from northern Nigeria”). In the end stanza/rift, the poem spirals back to the personal beginning, as if signing her name at the end of the letter (“It sustains me through these tough distances”). By dividing the letter poem into three parts based on shifts in the rhythm of the music and a correlating shifting subject position, three related times, spaces, and relationships arise: first, the present of Harjo in Chicago; second, the in-between of the murdered man’s ghost searching for his killer; and third, the past or memory that is deeply personal to Harjo and many tribal communities. The literary device of the spiral structure serves to layer and converge stories, time, imagination, and reality as it seeks answers, justice, and our response.

The poetic imagining of the Creek idea of the spiral is a powerful tool for (re)mapping our nations. The spiral has many meanings in the cultural context of Creek people; in this particular poem, the spiral correlates to the three worlds of Creek cosmology represented by Harjo in the shifts of the music, lyrics, and voice. As in her poem “A Map to the Next World,” Harjo rejects the linear Cartesian model in favor of the Creek structure of the spiral and stomp grounds to draw a new global map. Harjo’s map does not imply “real” or “objective” space that categorizes, contains, and isolates humans by representing homogeneity within its border, regions, and nations implementing policies to force their stableness; rather, she creates a space that converges time,

space, and human relationships. For example, the instrumental choices discussed above invoke a connection between past times and ongoing forms of music. Rather than categorizing the saxophone as purely an Afro-American instrument, she makes it a historical tool that produces poetry and political theory.

In performing the poem Harjo deploys a variety of poetic strategies to mend from the violence. After establishing a steady jazz beat with the saxophone, the poem opens with the conversation with the driver. The spiral image enters at this point: “Chicago rose up as a mechanical giant with soft insides / buzzing around to keep it going. We were part of the spin” (35). In this postindustrial image of the stomp grounds, Harjo depicts the cityscape as “mechanical” and “buzzing,” but not necessarily as alienating. The buzzing insides are reminiscent of the stomp dancers positioned around the fire, dancing in circles and counter-circles. The word “rose” has many important connotations about the use of language as a call to social action. In reference to the phrase “rising up” used by Silko and Harjo throughout their works, Womack suggests, “If one has racial memory, then one of the primary recollections has to be the fact of genocide and land theft, and the ancestors may have more in mind than quick spiritual highs; perhaps a call to action is being elicited.”⁴¹ The image of dancing and the act of doing so was so powerful that it elicited the response of being outlawed by the settler state and enforced through sheer brutality. I believe that the point here needs to be elaborated on. The Creek stomp dance, in particular, represents a part of Creek culture and cultural continuity, as well as its innovation. The history of the origins of the Creek dance relates to the displacement and diasporic condition that colonization creates and the history I mentioned above. The loss of loved ones was compounded by what those lives meant for future generations. Creek knowledge and way of life were threatened by the massacres and disruptions of the transmission of culture. In this light, given such a momentous blow, these dances came to sustain the Creek people and the Nation.⁴² The practice of outlawing Native expressions—ceremonial, artistic, social, and political—was about the control of land and creating a spatiality that forces Native peoples out of existence.

In Oklahoma, many tribes were thrown together in the process of “civilization” and nation-building, forcing them to interact and find new ways of being in a new space. The displaced Indians pushed to the frontier found dance to be an important communal aspect and kept their traditions despite official policies and U.S. governmental terrorism that took away any rights

to religious practice. In Harjo's poems, Indigenous people are displaced into the global cities. While assimilation policies are not as outright brutal and violent as in the days of boarding schools and earlier, they are still an everyday part of Indigenous life in the United States. For Indigenous peoples from the global South, English replaces the previous colonizing language of Spanish, and these Indigenous people face immense pressure to conform to American culture and values. This is all too similar to pressures felt by American Indians—Indigenous communities from both locales are deeply affected by national policies seeking to homogenize a national subject. The continuity of resistant movement in Harjo's poem counters the continued efforts of nation-building to form an "American" citizenship rooted in the ideals of settler whiteness. Using the images of dance ("buzzing" and "spin"), the narrator rises up even in the new landscape of Chicago.

In the first lines, the words are accompanied by a consistent rhythm, until the last line of the stanza when the beat speeds up with the celestial metaphor that brings order, "We were all part of the spin." This line is spoken in double time with the music. In this quickening of pace, which reoccurs in later stanzas, Harjo brings all those in the city of Chicago into her circle. At a stomp dance, the outer ring of dancers moves faster than the smaller inner ring. Where people are placed is determined by many factors, including age, race, and role in the community. Harjo's spoken words mirror this as they extend from the personal, the beginning of the poem that opens in the first-person, "I shared an hour of my life," to the more general "We." Through these particular spatial metaphors, the Creek stomp grounds merge with the bustling city landscape of Chicago; through the trope of dancing, the displaced are brought together. Dance can create a community that resists the practices of the nation-state.⁴³ In dancing, people refuse to stay still and static in a collaborative politic that becomes a mechanism of resistance. Harjo is simultaneously positioning herself through this image in the stomp grounds, a Creek gathering, and the city of Chicago, a place in which she is making a call to action.

Harjo is telling a narrative of a contemporary Muscogee woman, but within her story, her historical and contemporary encounters direct her to other narratives. The second stanza of the poem is Rammi's story about the murdered friend. The "I" of the poem does not meet the young man in person, yet he becomes a core part of how she perceives the world. Through narrative she makes the connection reminiscent of Silko's words in *Almanac of the Dead*: "One day a story will arrive in your town. There will always be disagreement over the direction—whether the story came from the southwest

or the southeast . . . But after you hear the story, you and the others prepare by the new moon to rise up against the slave masters.”⁴⁴ The power of story resounds throughout these writings, and in this poem in particular Harjo depicts a woman deeply affected by an African immigrant’s tale. By recapitulating the narrative in Harjo’s own language of both words and music, she makes the story a part of her and a part of her larger community, connecting the routes between two seemingly disparate subjects of the state—the immigrant and Native.

The layers of the story are signified further as we learn about the importance of story for the murdered Igbo man as well. His mother’s story of the sun performs the function of what Elizabeth Deloughrey refers to as a heliotrope, found in a global collective imaginary. Deloughrey builds on Jacques Derrida’s understanding of a heliotrope as “the father of all figures of speech,” to speak of the fallout from post–World War II ecological policies that have resulted in mass devastation for Pacific Islander people. She speaks to the ways that the heliotropes are indicative of the ways solar and atomic energy have produced both environmental crisis and at times been presented as their potential solutions. In Deloughrey’s analysis of the “complex relationships between Cold War ecology and radiation,” she engages the heliotrope “and its byproduct, radiation, as traces for modernity, figures for alterity, and the material legacy of the militarization of the Pacific Islands.”⁴⁵ In many ways, Harjo’s use of the image of the sun as a heliotrope maps the connections between the global and local; its meaning in a specific Creek context can also have great depth to (re)map relationships between seemingly closed-off (both geographically and temporally) Indigenous populations.

This brings us back to our earlier discussion of difference, displacement, and the abstraction of land into jurisdictional, state-run zones and the naturalization of space and military occupation. The mass devastation of island land from nuclear tests or resource mining results in the land no longer being able in many cases to sustain its original inhabitants. This has led to the displacement of large island populations and other Indigenous populations facing neocolonialism who also find themselves in the urban centers of places such as Los Angeles and Chicago. In the poem, the heliotrope connects the Igbo man’s specific story to a larger global scale by the presence of the sun. The sun becomes the focus: “As the sun broke through the grey morning he heard his mother tell / him, the way she had told him when he was a young boy, how the / sun had once been an Igbo and returned every morning to visit / relatives” (35). The repetition of the rising and falling sun and the story

sustains him, and gives him a way to cope with poverty, work, and foreign lands. This recollection of the sun's image brings him home. Through myth, memory, and imagining, his homeland is brought to the city of Chicago, preventing the alienation of the global city or the violence of absorption: "These memories were the coat that kept him warm" (35). In the poem's use of solar metaphors, an alternative spatial poetics is conceived. The traveling or movement of the sun, whether held in memory or from the act of looking up, provides an alternative to complete alienation or declension narratives. While the city structures the everyday, it does not determine the practices and relationships forged in the meeting of stories. The sacredness of places and myths enabling a return "home" are constant themes in Indigenous cultural production.⁴⁶ Harjo enables a return or memory to create a relationship or map to the land we are standing on, even if it is "in a labyrinth far, far, from home" (35). While many critiques, especially William Bevis's development of the important concept of "homing in," have spoken to Native writers' relationships to home, health, embodiment, and the theme of return and consequent healing, Harjo provides a model for examining Native people always in movement across space.⁴⁷ As Bevis states, "Nature is home then to Native Americans . . . Nature is not a secure seclusion one has escaped to, but it is the tipi walls expanded, with more and more people chatting around the fire."⁴⁸ I think of this, also, from the Haudenosaunee perspective of extending the rafters, a concept briefly approached in the first chapter. These are concepts that allow us to not mark difference as threatening or dangerous—and I mean this in its spatial differences as well—but as a moment to be incorporated into our knowledge systems. Accepting different knowledges and rethinking them in relation to specific cultural traditions does not necessarily mean replacement, erasure, or assimilation, but rather it means that Native peoples decide what knowledges are important to their communities' health. As Harjo's poetry suggests, the planet is always in movement, spinning on an axis, and always part of something much larger, as are we.

Just as dance creates connections through the rhythm of the words and music in the first stanza, in this second stanza we are brought into the Creek woman's story and the story of Rammi and his friend by the image of the sun. Harjo doesn't lose the sound of the stomp dance but repeats the sound double time by speeding up the line "And the same sun, the same Igbo look- / ing down on him in the streets of the labyrinth far far from home" (35). Again, an established tempo, and the image of the sun ties to a story that we can only imagine, yet we're imagining the story and its ability to determine the

everyday practices of this man as it provides “sustenance,” “warmth,” and the strength “to keep him going one / more year until he had the money he needed to return” (35). Possibility in the form of the story connects these global participants. The history of colonization and globalization that brings these stories and people together is ever present in Harjo’s images, asking us to think about the ways that the terms “Indigenous” and “immigrant” have primarily worked to create disparate identities, supposedly at odds, rather than peoples with specific histories and coalescing reasons to work together in this neoliberal world created by humans.

Harjo sets up the middle world of humans, and as she does so she brings globalization into a local Creek knowledge system through the structure of the poem and use of spatial metaphors. Yet the form is not only nationalist (that is, purely Creek), nor is the content indeterminate cosmopolitanism; rather, the story complicates the often strict categories of positions in the field of Native studies. Her use of Creek metaphors intersects with the global story of a Native Igbo man from Nigeria. The Igbo people were colonized by the British and have a similar, though, of course, not exact, history as Native tribes in the United States. The Igbo, too, have fought for recognition, independence, and the right to act as a nation-state. While representing this history in the context of this chapter would be dense, I believe that it does suggest that thinking of these histories as separate from ours as Indigenous people severs possibilities for rethinking justice. The stories presented in this letter poem take a step toward representing the reality of Native people interacting in the world rather than confining the representation of Native people as existing only in the past or confined to a geographical place located only on the reservation or even solely in U.S. relocation cities. The letter addresses the violence of settler colonialism and imperialism at multiple scales of economic processes and spatialized injustices.

Another shift occurs at Rammi’s friend’s violent death, marked through the syncopation of the drums and sax. The event of a shooting at the gas station is motivated by poverty, greed, confusion, and alienation; it is a moment of global violence that upsets the balance of the middle world laid out in the conversation between the poetic narrator and Rammi in the first five stanzas. The change of pace in the music and poem is marked by spatial metaphors of the upper and lower worlds of Creek cosmology that are signs of Harjo working through the deaths of Indigenous peoples and their meaning to an Indigenous woman in this century. She struggles to bring the worlds into balance by mapping the path to justice in Creek epistemology:

As we near the concrete plains of O'Hare, I imagine the spirit of Rammi's friend at the door of his mother's house, the bag of dreams in his hands dripping with blood. His mother's tears make a river of red stars to an empty moon. (36)

Through the water image (particular to the lower world of Creek cosmology that denotes chaos) of "his mother tears," Harjo is able to imagine the beginning of the healing process. As she slips into the lower world through the image of water, she imagines the young man searching for his killer to set things right. From the lower world of tears, she pulls the world into tension in the images of red stars and empty moons, planetary symbols of the upper world of order. The young man rises in an effort to put things in balance again from the chaos and disruption caused by violence. His story does not end with his death.

At every shift in the poem, marked by the sound of the drums and sax, the Indigenous woman places herself physically and in connection with others, even if it is a painful connection that recalls past violences she has witnessed. In this instance, she is in the present, indicated in the "concrete" landscape description of a modern-day city. But rather than feel disconnected to the earth, she modifies her description and imagines O'Hare as "concrete plains," presenting a historical continuity of land. The transnational space of the ever-moving and unstable airport is a global metaphor—it represents moving and transitory space—but it is a Creek metaphor of the upper world as well; the ability of the metaphor to be global and local simultaneously enables Harjo to (re)map her subjectivity. She is not an anachronistic Native woman displaced by the construction of cities, industrial movements, and policies that abstract Native lands and bodies into profit. Stories are key to unpacking these everyday realities and contemporary complexities—they are a matter of sustenance.

Harjo's poem, dated as written at the "end of the twentieth century" as the title and letter form of the poem suggest, is about rising up to advocate for a justice that entails love and forgiveness. This is not easy, however, and requires a long look at historical violence and spatial construction of the city: more importantly it calls for action. At the young man's death,

The whole village mourns with her. The ritual of tears and drums
summon the ancestors who carry his spirit to the next world.

There they can still hear the drums of his relatives as they accompany

him on his journey. He must settle the story of his murder before joining his ancestors or he will come back as a ghost. (36)

Inner-city violence and death become abstracted in the media, as are the bodies who feel the everyday violence in the postindustrial city. Domosh and Seager pinpoint many of our assumptions of the modern city, especially in its conceived, represented, and produced masculine rationality, as beginning in the age of “discovery” of the new worlds. They contend that these gendered conceptions of the city—and their correlation to freedom and excitement—are largely contrasted to the countryside or the modern suburbia as a feminized domestic space. The domestication of reservations, as legally conceived domestic nations, seems to mirror these principles, and in large part reflects some of the previous chapters’ work with the masculinization and urbanization of Native communities during the relocation and termination era. After all, many people left the “stifling” space and poverty of the reservation in part to have new experiences and seek new fortunes that the legacy of spatial restrictions and imposed poverty through economic and political policies denied. Domosh and Seager’s examination of the global city, defined as “shar[ing] certain characteristics typical of the postmodern era: declining industrial and inner-city areas, pockets of gentrification, suburban expansion, the dominance of consumer economies,” aids in our understanding of the gendered city and our “perception of cities as dangerous, almost pathological, spaces inhabited by minorities and single mothers, was self-fulfilling—more and more businesses, jobs, and services left the city.”⁴⁹ For Native people, however, the city was and is often seen as an escape from violence at home, and for others, as pointed out last chapter, the city occupies their homelands. Yet the violence is never over there. As Harjo’s witnessing attests, the violence stems from centuries of exploitation of certain bodies across various spaces and must be recognized or it will continue to haunt. In deconstructing the binaries of the violence of the global open city/domestic reservation and immigrant/Native, we all are held accountable.

Harjo’s letter implies that there is a participatory reader and intended audience who must address the subject of urban violence consistently reflected and produced through media sensationalism in the early 1990s. As spaces were deemed too dangerous to raise a family in, economies were moved to the fringes. The city norm in cultural production is too often conceived of as inherently violent, while the connection to material forces that sets up violent conditions is too often denied. The death of the man, a man who

“saved every penny because he knew when / he returned he’d be taking care of his family, a family several houses / large,” is not inconsequential, forgotten, or isolated. His family understands the loss on a very real material and emotional level, and the poet and the immigrant communities note the death of the man, acknowledging it through rituals and a sharing of culture. Harjo in this poem pays homage to the man and others like him, acknowledging the social violence produced through economic exploitation stemming from the privatization of Indigenous lands. Yet she also acknowledges the effect social violence has on both of these communities. The young man may come back as a ghost, not just in an individual sense, but his ghost will return on a community level, conjured up through memory and the continuity of historic acts of violence. Harjo collapses the “distanced” space of the city and instead connects violence as interconnected at both the global and local “domestic” scale.

As the young Igbo man searches for his killer, or justice, the music shifts in tempo, and the conga drums are incorporated to evoke a stalking effect. The hunt through poverty-stricken areas of the large city inhabited by the displaced furthers the mood, which in turn becomes exacerbated by the description of the cramped jail cell where he is eventually found. In this moment, many scenarios arise:

The smallest talking drum is an insistent heart, leads his spirit to the killer, a young Jamaican immigrant who was traced to his apartment because his shirt of blood was found by the police, thrown off in the alley with his driver’s license still in the pocket.

He searches for his murderer in the bowels of Chicago and finds him shivering in a cramped jail cell. He could hang him or knife him—and it would be called suicide. It would be the easiest thing.

But his mother’s grief moves his heart. He hears the prayers of the young man’s mother. There is always a choice, even after death. (36)

The ability of the ghost avenger to see relationships across space and time gives him agency. While he has agency, however, he is held responsible to his community through familial ties. The choice of how he will reconcile the violence done “even after death” is the ultimate agency to commit (in)justice. The past is brought into the present; the Igbo community is brought to the jail cell in Chicago in the beat of the drum. The ambiguity in “but his mother’s

grief moves his heart” focuses the decision on community and family relationships. The personal pronoun does not have a direct referent; “his” could refer to either man. The grief could signify his own mother’s loss or it could mean his killer’s mother’s loss—either way, they and their communities lose in the continued destruction of life. The enactment of the ritual in the poem engenders the intactness of the community—it becomes a way to heal not only from an isolated and random act of urban violence, but also a way to enact justice that will be most beneficial for future communities. Families and communities have the ability to make choices, and it is this ability that allows for the tangibility of (re)mappings’ healing significance and revolutionary power.

When the murdered man finds his killer, he decides to love him—not to do “the easiest thing.” As in many of Harjo’s poems, love becomes the answer, but not in a trite, over-romanticized way. The Muscogee poet specifies actions that demonstrate how to love or to begin that process of balance. Though the men are from Jamaican and Nigerian communities, and Rammi, who tells us this story, is from India, it is human relationships that overcome the violence of a global market. Instead of centering on the colonized/oppressed dichotomy, Harjo refocuses her poem on a Creek center, bringing the worlds into balance through her consistent use of the Creek spatial metaphors of the three worlds. She does not leave it at that, however, and expands her lyricism to encompass those of other tribes who have also been displaced by colonial practices. The Afro-Caribbean beat and drum, as well as the imagery in the stanzas, resemble a heartbeat. This affective (re)mapping of our relations in the world in these instances refocuses the discussion of globalization and U.S. imperialism not on difference, but on connection and practices of healing and choice. It is a choice that advocates a responsibility to see relationships between people, places, and times seemingly at odds.

For many centuries people have needed to try to achieve balance and had the means to do so in traditional medicines and knowledge. The space Harjo maps in the Creek images is not merely a counterspace to colonization. Rather, it is a space defined by tribal cultural knowledge, relationships, and experiences. Not only does this knowledge predate Western cartography and its implications for race, gender, and nation-making, but Harjo’s relationships (re)map in a manner that extends beyond territorial claims and the borders that exert them. This is signified in the rebirth of the young prisoner; his enemy’s love and forging of a new relationship with him enables the young man to come to terms with a history of colonialism. Harjo relates

this in the following renaming of the young man, which signifies rebirth. The Igbo man calls him brother and thus binds him in a familial relationship:

He gives the young man his favorite name and calls him his brother.
The young killer is then no longer shamed but filled with remorse
and cries all the cries he has stored for a thousand years. He learns
to love himself as he never could, because his enemy, who has every
reason to destroy him, loves him. (36)

In her imaginings, Harjo makes connections between people and at the same time situates these connections in a Muscogee framework. The man haunted by his death brought about through the economic process of displacement is also haunted by the legacy of colonization and imperialism. Harjo dates evil, sorrow, and disruption *before* colonization: “He cries a thousand cries he has stored for a thousand years” (36). She positions the world before Columbus landed and repositions human hierarchies by connecting through the most basic of all relationships—that of the mother/child. Thus, she is not just dealing with colonization, but with human imbalance. The colonizer/colonized dichotomy disintegrates when Native people enact their agency. This maneuvering between local epistemologies and global frameworks strengthens the notion that Indigenous people, though they experience the material realities of globalization, do not necessarily have to be determined by a global world of faceless systems and institutions.

In the last shift, apparent again by an emphasis on the drums and saxophone, we return to Harjo’s voice, time, and space. She tells us that this is the story that follows her “everywhere and won’t let me sleep” (37). She lists the many places where she resides, travels, and has connections, “from the Tallahassee grounds to Chicago, to my home near the Rio Grande. / It sustains me through these tough distances” (37). In a previous personal note to the poem, Harjo relates the story of a man in Albuquerque killed in circumstances similar to those of Rammi’s friend. The exile felt by these subjects may be repaired and does not have to be an unhealed rift resulting from the spatial dichotomies that discipline and control our movements and interactions throughout various spaces. Harjo, through Creek literary symbols and places such as the Tallahassee stomp grounds, is able to connect the story of the young Igbo man, the Jamaican man, the man killed in Albuquerque, and the men and women who have destroyed themselves in trying to cope with displacement and diasporic conditions. By forming a global poetic narrative from tribal

cultural contexts, the poet represents diverse narratives that constitute the central tale of the Muscogee author. In this end-of-the-century tale, the diasporic displacement of Indigenous people affected by globalization is highlighted as well as the social violence that results. Yet, imagining possibilities beyond declension narratives is spoken in the power of narrative to help travel “these tough distances” (37).

Through memory and connections created through myth, language, and love, Harjo is able to place and center herself—wherever that may be. At the end of the poem, distances become bearable through acknowledging pain, sharing stories, and performing acts of forgiveness. Thus, in Chicago, the poetic voice still holds the communal event of the stomp ground with her. Though the poem opens with a global conversation, it is still a Creek image she recalls; this is an important convergence of the local and global enabled through metaphor and poetic verse. These literary strategies allow for an expansion of healing to a global level without losing the specificity of individual tribal culture. Although the poem’s musical form and voice return to the beginning, Harjo is not in the same place, physically or metaphysically.

CONCLUSION: SOVEREIGNTY AND SPATIAL JUSTICE

While this chapter focuses on Joy Harjo, she is just one example of how Native writers are examining our material socialities and looking for solutions that (re)map our relationships along the lines of our ancestors’ paths. This couldn’t be more important in the wake of neoliberal global politics and economic policies. Just as Harjo has influenced many lives, many of the poet’s greatest influences are other writers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. She is able to create vital “spaces” by “reinventing the enemy’s language”⁵⁰ and looking at traditional story and narrative mapping as ways to map our futurities. The breadth of her influences and her ability to incorporate them into her poetry through the density of language generate an imperative intertextual dialogue.

To become part of the “modern global culture,” Harjo does not have to lose her culture or forget her history. The insertion of the local into her poetry allows for a (re)mapping of our nations—both Native nations and nation-states. (Re)mapping is a multiscalar process able to recast the discourse establishing the paradox of being Indian. We can adjust the discourse surrounding immigrant Indigenous identity in the United States into one that culturally fits our communities, many of which used to be based on making connections with others and respecting those differences. Immigrants are not coming and

giving up their epistemological bases in favor of becoming “American,” but instead are finding the mechanisms to retain and perhaps return to their lands, provided that there are healthy lands to return to. Many Native peoples and Indigenous immigrants from other continents are holding on to their cultures, not out of pure nostalgia or self-discipline, though that undeniably happens, but the epistemologies found in stories often create the maps that guide us to important relationships to land, people, and place. Native people have been remembering and practicing their culture in order to fight colonialism, economic exploitation, and erasure as well. Holly Youngbear-Tibbetts, the dean of outreach and director of the Sustainable Development Institute of the College of the Menominee Nation, writes about the use of spatial metaphors in feminist scholarship to elicit connections among the “metaphor-maker,” landscape, and culture. By invoking spatial metaphors to talk about the personal or positioning of Native women, Youngbear-Tibbetts deconstructs some of the dichotomous relationships that have been set up in the use of spatial metaphors, such as mobility and home. Home, travel, mobility, and immigration are concepts that are particularly important to Native communities. In the closing to Youngbear-Tibbetts’s essay “Making Sense of the World,” she writes of the relationship between spatial metaphors and alliances with immigrants to the United States:

While the broad outlines of communities in discord with one another regarding their identification with particular metaphors of space and place are undeniable, almost invariably native women would comment that there were women of immigrant ancestry who had proven to be exceptions to the rule, feminists with whom they felt more than a sense of camaraderie, who evinced real solidarity with Indigenous communities, places, and struggles. When native women commentators would talk of these women—and sometimes communities of women—or when I would later have the opportunity to see them interact, it became clear that these women were in no sense displaced. They shared with native women a genuine fidelity to place, a sense of shared living experiences, and a sense of shared destiny that was unmistakable.⁵¹

In mapping new landscapes through language Native people possess an important means of articulating self, but it is not a closed system of ahistorical referentiality. Harjo can examine the detriments of globalization, such as the economic exploitation and fragmentation evoked in “The Letter from the End of the Twentieth Century,” while engaging with her tribally specific

relationship to these patterns of destruction. The Indian is not anachronistic—she has always played a part in the mapping of the world. Culture is not an irrelevant tool for fixing world issues. In fact, the ability to see the connections and nodes of comparisons among cultures is vital to understanding the making of the world. Harjo restores balance in both traditional and contemporary narratives by revising the spatial discourses in terms of culture and the migratory spaces of Indigenous people.

Harjo does not view culture as an isolated way of knowing, and in fact she takes into account the multifarious experiences and changes that have affected her own ways of knowing. Harjo takes on the polemical task of trying to create self-determined and community-driven geographies—not a space that is either haphazardly new or nostalgically old. Instead, she highlights the inextricably linked spheres of time, memory, discourse, and Indigenous geographies. By sifting through the memory of her people, the discourses that have created them anew in the Western cultural imagination, and the remnants of a tattered history she fashions a place for Native people that is contained by colonial and imperial ideas of spatiality. “In the dark. In the beautiful perfume and stink of the world” (135), Harjo is moving us toward a spatial sovereignty and a spatial justice. In a global world, we need to find strategies to cope and remain connected. Narrative and telling, as well as the trope of mapping to work out new relationships, allow us to explore many future possibilities that go beyond positioning the Indigenous in colonizer/colonized, modern/pre-modern, civilized/uncivilized, oppressed/oppressor binaries. Harjo’s poetry exemplifies many such sovereign spaces, constructed through metaphors, metonymy, and other aspects of poetic language—in both the English language and, increasingly so, the Muscogee language. Yet these are part of Indigenous peoples’ everyday lives as we recreate each day, for “the red dawn now is rearranging the earth / thought by thought” (128). Our thoughts map our world. We engage relationships to the world around us and posit solutions for contemporary issues—whether they are located near the stomp grounds or in the bowels of Chicago, or the superimposition of the two.