

Introduction: Gendered Geographies and Narrative Markings

THIS PROJECT WOULD BEGIN BEFORE I WAS EVEN COGNIZANT OF THE power of place and its relationship to colonialism, race, and gender. Yet, even as young children, many of us learn the constraints and limitations of the socially constructed spaces we find ourselves in. While I may not have known the history of how reservations came to be or how colonial governments enacted power in that space, I was deeply aware of the difference when I passed the lines of trees that mark the territories between off-reservation and on-reservation. I knew, on a deeply emotional level, that this was sovereign land without knowing the precise legal history. In my childhood migrations, I learned at a young age what it meant to be and how to act as a young Native girl in small-town rural Maine, or white suburban Connecticut, or a predominately black part of the city of Apex, North Carolina—and I knew it required adaptability and awareness of my own embodiment as I moved through tumultuous geographies constructed around differing and constantly shifting power structures. Yet I would not consciously reflect on these geographies and what they meant for years to come, even as I navigated them throughout the various stages of my life. In many ways this book theorizes my encounters within these spaces and what the geographies and maps we have created mean for the past, present, and future of not only Native people, but all of us.¹

In this book, I interrogate the use of historical and culturally situated spatial epistemologies, geographic metaphors, and the realities they produce; examine the discourse of spatial decolonization; and trace a trajectory of

spatial configuration in Native women's writing. Yet this is not a treatise on Native women's construction of self, nor do I believe that such a text would be appropriate apart from a lengthy discussion of individual cultural construction that coincides with tribal specificities as well as those that interrogate how the United States, Mexico, and Canada map difference. The texts with which I have chosen to work are documents: they provide evidence of the reality of Native women imagining and partaking in a future that produces possibilities for Native people. Rather than stand on the periphery, Native women are at the center of how our nations, both tribal and nontribal, have been imagined. The Native literature I discuss reorganizes a space that was never blank or fixed in time or space. Examining discourses of spatialized power dynamics in literature was a strategic move on my part. The imaginative possibilities and creations offered in the play of a poem, imagery of a novel, or complex relationships set up in a short story provide avenues beyond a recovery of a violent history of erasure and provide imaginative modes to unsettle settler space. That is, the literary (as opposed to other forms of discourse, such as journalism, surveys, BIA/field reports, Indian agents' diaries, etc., in which Native women are continually a shadow presence) tenders an avenue for the "imaginative" creation of new possibilities, which must happen through imaginative modes precisely because the "real" of settler colonial society is built on the violent erasures of alternative modes of mapping and geographic understandings.² The Americas as a social, economic, political, and inherently spatial construction has a history and a relationship to people who have lived here long before Europeans arrived. It also has a history of colonization, imperialism, and nation-building.

The authors I examine in this project employ elements of Native conceptions of space in their narratives to (re)map a history of what Mary Louise Pratt terms a "European planetary consciousness," a consciousness that is deeply patriarchal in nature.³ This "planetary consciousness," which still largely orders the world, has had major implications for Native and non-Native communities alike. It has its historic roots in early geography and travel writing, a point I attend to in my last chapter, on Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*. Colonization resulted in a sorting of space based on ideological premises of hierarchies and binaries, and Indigenous women did not fare well in these systems of inequity. Settler colonialism continues to depend on imposing a "planetary consciousness" and naturalizing geographic concepts and sets of social relationships. Yet geography and the language we use to order space are formed in a "contact zone" in which various cultures

interact. A main point of this book is to examine Native narratives that mediate and refute colonial organizing of land, bodies, and social and political landscapes.

(Re)mapping, as a powerful discursive discourse with material groundings, rose as the principal method in which I would address the unsettling of imperial and colonial geographies. The various intersections constructed by the colonial geographies enframe the boundaries of the state and manage its population, thus affecting our current actions in the world. Aboriginal scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith reminds us about the connection among policy, people, and the mapping of space: "Imperialism and colonialism brought complete disorder to colonized peoples, disconnecting them from their histories, their landscapes, their languages, their social relations and their own ways of thinking, feeling, and interacting with the world."⁴ The relationships among Native peoples and between others begin to be ordered along gender, sexuality, and racial regimes that exert power and bring into being sets of social, political, and economic relationships. (Re)mapping, as I define it throughout this text and in my previous work, is the labor Native authors and the communities they write within and about undertake, in the simultaneously metaphoric and material capacities of map making, to generate new possibilities. The framing of "re" with parentheses connotes the fact that in (re)mapping, Native women employ traditional and new tribal stories as a means of continuation or what Gerald Vizenor aptly calls stories of survivance.

My objective to chart women's efforts to define themselves and their communities by interrogating the possibilities of spatial interventions, such as those found in literary mappings, reflects my belief that power inheres in our stories. My aim here, however, should not be mistaken as utopian recovery of land through mapping pure ideas of indigeneity (which I find troublesome) on top of colonial maps. Even if we were to recover the historical and legal dimensions of territory, for instance, I am not so sure that this alone would unsettle colonialism. Recovery has a certain saliency in Native American studies; it is appealing to people who have been dispossessed materially and culturally. I contend, however, that it is also our responsibility to interrogate our ever-changing Native epistemologies that frame our understanding of land and our relationships to it and to other peoples. In this vein, (re)mapping is not just about regaining that which was lost and returning to an original and pure point in history, but instead understanding the processes that have defined our current spatialities in order to sustain vibrant Native futures. I

will examine the consequential geographies, a term Edward Soja uses to foreground a concept of spatial justice, albeit one that problematically does not address settler colonialism, in order to examine “spatial expression that is more than just a background reflection or set of physical attributes to be descriptively mapped.”⁵ As such, my interests lie in examining the theoretical dimensions of power that struggle over geography’s hold, rather than a recovery project. What are the relationships set forth during colonialism that continue to mark us today? What happens when non-normative geographies are examined? I use the parentheses in (re)mapping deliberately to avoid the pitfalls of recovery or a seeming return of the past to the present. (Re)mapping is about acknowledging the power of Native epistemologies in defining our moves toward spatial decolonization, a specific form of spatial justice I address throughout. It is about recognizing that “our geographies, like our histories, take on a material form as social relations become spatial but are also creatively represented in images, ideas, and imaginings.”⁶

For me, Native women’s literature presents ways of thinking through the contradictions that arise from the paradoxes and contradictions that colonialism presents and that Native people experience on a daily basis. Whether it was within the crisp white pages of Joy Harjo’s book *How We Became Human*, or my musty working copy of Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Almanac of the Dead*, which traveled with me across the country four times, accruing black coffee stains, strange smells, and creased corners, I begin to see a pattern of confronting the epistemologies that sought to incorporate Native people through their disappearance or social deaths. As I wrote the chapter on *Almanac* (particularly on the “Five Hundred Year Map”), I began to unravel more of my own stories. As a Seneca woman from a family that moved and migrated around the East Coast, these experiences made the nodes, centers, and webs formed in *Almanac* comprehensible. The layered geographies in Native literature intersect with many of my own experiences and understanding of social, cultural, and political space. My dad, a “traditional” Iroquois ironworker, would pack up our gray Chevy pickup and make my brother and me a cozy spot in the bed of the truck among all our belongings: our clothes, my mom’s cookware and beadwork, my dad’s tools, and an odd piece of furniture or two that always changed with each move.⁷ We would drive for hours huddled up in the back of the truck, fighting and playing until we arrived at a new destination or one of our home bases. We would go either to Tonawanda or, more frequently, to northern rural Maine, a place called Twelve Corners named and claimed by my grandfather. Much of this depended on where my father

had a paying job. The literary narratives involved in Silko's compiling a story about History (capital H intended) and its visual representation catalyzed my introspection into the geographies that prevail in my own life and my navigation through these very different terrains. Unlike the maps that designate Indian land as existing only in certain places, wherever we went there were Natives and Native spaces, and if there weren't, we carved them out.

Critical explorations of space, as figured in feminist geographer Doreen Massey's book *For Space*, delineate the possibilities that space holds rather than glance over it as a surface upon which we act. Much about Native mobility sees space as such, whereas in my experience we literally influenced the spaces and people around us as much as these spaces imprinted upon us. So, what exactly is space, and how do we pin down a definition when we have been conditioned to think of it as a surface of expanse and enormity? Even if we delimit our definition by the modifier of Native spaces, the term still holds up as boundlessness. In fact, I struggled with constraining the geographies in this book until I settled for a discussion of the spaces between Mexico's northern border and Canada's southern border for pragmatic reasons, but I am well aware that these spaces are influenced by and intersect with much broader spaces. Massey's turn to uprooting normative modes of thinking of space defined as that which becomes "obvious" in the "tellings" that position space as "an expanse we travel across" is helpful as we progress throughout this text that wishes to (re)map our geographical knowledges. In order to reconceive space, Massey opens with a telling of arrival to "new" spaces that will be named the Americas, formed through the "crossing and conquering [of] space."⁸ Specifically, she begins her exploration with stories of the Spanish conquistadors and the positioned narratives of "discovery." The "we" implied in this instance is that of Europeans, for as Massey's analysis of this moment continues, this depiction of space "immobilizes" and "differentiates" Europeans as the history and mapmakers carrying with it "social and political effects." Massey asks to reimagine space and "to question that habit of thinking of space as surface" and instead think of it as a "meeting-up of histories." In many ways this project is interested in the constant meetings that compose space: meeting between Native peoples, between Native and non-Native peoples, between people of color, between different migrating populations and especially meetings of different conceptions of land and ways of being in the world. As such, Massey's work with space is incorporated throughout the following chapters as she distills space into three functions that I posit are of utmost importance in decolonization projects: first, space

can be defined “as the product of interrelations”; second, “as the spheres of possibility”; and third, “as always under construction” or a “simultaneity of stories-so-far.” This definition moves us from essentialism, a common accusation made of Native scholars as we labor to maintain tribal traditions, political ground, and our lands, in that alternative spatialities are not mired in individual liberalism, but maintain their political viability. Alternative spatialities that I examine in this book imagine that many histories and ways of seeing and mapping the world can occur at the same time, and most importantly that our spatialities were and continue to be in process. As Massey effectively contends, “only if the future is open is there any ground for a politics which can make a difference.”⁹

As I thought through space, I kept returning to Silko’s map of characters, Tucson, and the borderlands that in no way present as a realist map, one that we too often take for a transparent form or depiction of objective reality, nor did the “Five Hundred Year Map” act as a stabilizer of space-time. That is, the map itself made no gestures toward veracity or Truth (intended with a capital T) in its representation. The map and its accompanying text complicated the narratives of what it means to live in this land. The spatialities I navigated through daily were complicated as well—the maps of my experience did not reflect those learned in grammar school or mediated through pop culture. What would a map of my trajectory look like if I set aside prescribed notions of what it means to be Indian, a woman, light-skinned, non-Seneca speaking, and other such constructed but materially real modifiers? How would the multiple histories it would take to create a representative map affect its comprehension? What power structures have deterred certain maps and produced others through the choices I have made or through others with whom I have come into contact or through those who have preceded me? Most importantly, I questioned what it would mean not to have the stories to accompany a map that represented my location.

I am the daughter of a Seneca man whose job as an ironworker resulted in migratory patterns of movement on and off our home bases. Gender was a significant aspect of our family’s movement and tribal histories. We did not live on the reservation, as my mom was white, and in my Nation, women largely govern the land. So we—and I mean entire sections of my family—moved from city to city to rural areas, from place to place. Unlike many narratives would have us believe, I did not feel isolation from Native communities, even though I lived on my small reservation of Tonawanda in upstate New York only briefly when my father’s job site was near, or when my

aunt invited us. I was encircled by extended family, adopted uncles, and many, many cousins who also moved to their fathers' ironwork sites, or I was surrounded by the Natives who already lived in the area who gravitated toward hanging out with other Natives. This experience reflects the fact that in these cities and places are many Native people, often only brought up in our field of study in relation to the 1950s construction of the urban Native. According to the 2000 census, 60 percent of Native people reside in areas off-reservation, but many of the models map research into tight constraints of reservation bases or urban relocation centers.¹⁰ Our family's mobility causes me not only to pause at the dichotomy of the urban/reservation Native, as we exist somewhere outside that paradigm, but also to question the very acceptance of colonial spatialities that, rather than reflect deeper meanings of spatialities, look at distance and closeness in terms of dichotomous differences.

My own "directional memory," a term coined by Esther Belin that I address in the second chapter, (re)maps my trajectories and was formed from early migratory patterns. Most importantly, the stories I heard about who we were provided me strength and remained with me as we moved from place to place. The stories we continue to make reflect these earlier stories and influence our everyday practices. I start with this reminiscence about the origins of this project and its personal trajectory, because, like Native writer and academic Gloria Bird, "I am motivated . . . by the belief that it is only through a critique of where I come from that the act of witnessing and the testimony I offer can become a decolonizing strategy."¹¹ Addressing the way the literal and figurative production of space constructs my realities quickly arose as a primary concern in this book. Rather than my story not fitting the mold of geographical imagining of Native people—or at times even Native peoples' imaginings—I instead believe it is a story much more prominent than the mapping of Native bodies and place reveals in the current research. Much of the work in Native literary studies did not present an analysis of intricate mobility and only now is beginning to do so.¹²

To further complicate ideas of space that figure so prominently in the way Native people construct their politics, identity, and strategies for dealing with the pressures of colonization, there were my grandparents, Vera Swanson and Theodore Goeman. Originally from Minnesota, they imagined and constructed their own Native landscapes in Penobscot territory, or what is now known as Maine. In the mid-1960s, my grandfather bought two hundred acres of land and proceeded to build a house for his family—my great-grandmother and my several aunts and uncles. It was a tarpaper house with

cement floors, built briskly and not very well, and thus holding an air of impermanency around it. There was a kitchen, one back room, and the living room—no bathroom, as we hauled our water from the undrinkable well about six hundred yards away at the bottom of the hill. In this small house lived multiple families and multiple generations—it was never quiet or a place of respite; one went into the woods to play, hunt, fish, or wander for that. Eventually, another room was added, meant to be an Indian jewelry store, which then turned into a convenience store. This capitalist endeavor best describes a meeting space in which we interacted with old Mainers, other Indians, tourists, or Europeans who fascinated me with their strange ways. These failed endeavors lapsed either when Indians went out of fashion in the 1980s or because it was too provisional to make any money. The room was then used to accommodate new cousins and eventually my great-grandmother as she grew elderly and needed care. This was the only room built with wood floors, a place where we huddled to avoid the lightning strikes that bombarded the bottom of the valley and the bottom of our feet on cold cement. Twelve Corners drew many forms of lightning to it.

Twelve Corners was the most vivid place of my childhood memories and consciousness of who I was as a young Indian girl. It was our imagined space of the rez, complete with aunts and uncles who eventually built on various sections of the land and whose land was invariably lost after my grandfather's passing when it was sectioned into private lots. In the early 1970s, a large canvas hung in the front, prominently displayed with its red-lettered words on white backdrop that stated my family's politics, "WE SUPPORT WOUNDED KNEE." It looked like the rez, too, with its beat-up cars, free-ranging dogs, and unwelcome cats. It was a safe space for Indians traveling from Canada down to Boston or New York in the 1960s and 1970s, or wandering hitchhikers from Europe, or drifting hippies enthusiastic to be picked up by one of my long-haired, good-looking Native family members, who would bring them home and play with their imaginings of Indians. It was a place of stories, laughter, anger, incredible turmoil, unimagined strength, and a deep sadness that spanned generations. In all aspects, it wasn't just a surface we crossed, but a place built through intersecting histories, longings, and belongings.

This home base for me in rural Maine provided much of the little stability and simultaneous instability I felt growing up. Twelve Corners, while it was marked as individual property by state authorities, was more than a piece of land owned or occupied. It was a stretch of land I knew completely and a place to which family would always return even if they left for a while. Native people

from Canada and the United States, from a number of tribes, stayed with us at various times. Passamaquoddy and Penobscot folks from the reservations closest to us, whose lands constitute what is now Maine, would stop by and swap goods for artwork or stories for laughter. The decade of my first memories was a politicized time, and my aunts and uncles were young and hopeful about changing the world in which we lived. Before coming to Maine, where my parents had met, they had lived in cities and Indian ghettos as well as on Tonawanda until my grandparents split. Maine was supposed to be a place to get away, but upon arrival, with their long hair and tough beauty, they quickly realized the inherent racism that knew no borders or specificity in place. My family was the closest most people in Maine would come to encountering the racial conflict that was taking place on a national level. This was a time when Native people were organizing across national borders (both in terms of the larger nation-states of Canada and the United States and in terms of tribal Nations' borders), and my family was quick to participate. Even as a young child, I felt the tension, excitement, and air of possibility.

While place here references the point on the map in terms of latitude and longitude as well as a locale, or a definition of place where material setting provides a mechanism for social relations to take place, I conceive of Twelve Corners as a place of belonging connected to other such places of belonging, such as Tonawanda. This sense of place becomes more than a fraction of space and/or a historical or material construction. Yet my affective attachment to this place is also accompanied by an acute awareness of what it meant to grow up in rural, predominately white, poverty-stricken Maine where everyone knows who belongs and who doesn't. In this spatial schema, Twelve Corners was criminalized in the outer community. At play here was more than the material location or even more than the present material social relations; instead evident here was the idea of Indians as criminals already, in a long history of colonial/Native relationships. All the same, this made my family's attachment to place, to Twelve Corners specifically, all the stronger, as it was protection against violence that accompanied us outside of these lines, even while at times violence took place within them. Place, and the way I will speak of it throughout this book, follows along the lines of geographers who have worked to expound the boundaries of place as more than just the point on a graph or locale, but that which carries with it a "way of being-in-the-world."¹³ As mobile Indian bodies, we did traverse the safe—and at times not so safe—parameters and boundaries of the reservation or Twelve Corners, carrying

with us these epistemologies that helped us navigate settler terrains. In a state where the murder rates are continually in the lowest one-eighth in the United States, two of my uncles have been brutally murdered and their aggressors received minimum jail sentences.¹⁴ Racialized violence was a common occurrence in my family's experience, and often still is as we were the only people of "difference" from the 1960s through the 1980s. Understanding spatiality and the places you occupied were and continue to be a significant means of survival. The demographic makeup of this area would evolve as changes were implemented in urban and immigration policies in the 1980s, which I discuss in relation to Joy Harjo's work. I use the personal here, to theorize place in terms of humanistic geographers, because it complicates notions of place as purely locale and the site of our identity formations, a mutually constitutive definition particularly problematic for hyperspatialized Native people. Too often in this hyperspatialization, we are left with little room for imagining connections to other people, alternative histories, places, or even futures.

While my story may be very different from that of other Native people (though I suspect it is not as rare as might be believed, and it is becoming much more common), the construction of the geographies at various scales and its impact on our family and cultural relationships have remained the cornerstone of my politics and who I am as a scholar, friend, mother, and family member. I speak of the place from which I come because it is the base of my memories and politics of location; it is also what forms the base of my academic work. Again, Bird's words best summarize why I am telling my story, which is much more complex than I could possibly delve into in this introduction:

In and of itself my story is not important either. What makes it important are the other relevant issues that surround us as Native people and that are the context in which I am presenting my story. Without that discussion, telling my story would be parading my ethnicity. I need to believe that my story serves a useful purpose.¹⁵

Often my memories correspond with places, movement, and my own gendered and racialized, or tribal, identity. My personal geographies or politics of location in reference to feminist Adrienne Rich intimately tie the spaces of body, Twelve Corners, the reservation, region, state, and nation together to map a place. When I speak to the spatial discourses (re)mapped by Native women, I also encourage us to move toward spatialities of belonging that do

not bind, contain, or fix our relationship to land and each other in ways that limit our definitions of self and community. I rely on the creative strength my grandparents taught me as they tried to imagine a safe place for our family, even if the ruptures at times were powerful. I also carry forth the responsibility they taught me about the politics of language, for instance, asserting sovereignty through language by choosing not to use “tribe” and only referring to Tonawanda as a nation. This reference to locating myself was an early lesson in the power dynamics of spatial metaphors.

Unsettling colonial maps is what drives this study of colonial spatial violence in twentieth-century Native American literature. The stories fill in the spaces between Native lives mapped onto reservations or urban centers or somewhere in between, or those lives relegated to a romanticized American past; the stories I am attuned to provide a window into the complexities of spatial subjectivities and geographic histories, giving us a richer understanding of how Native people imagine community and create relationships. My personal story ties the multiscale spaces of body, Twelve Corners, the reservation, region, state, and nation intimately together. By accounting for the various scales of geography in relation to Native peoples and a history of conquest, we can begin to understand the relationship between lands and bodies as more than just a surface upon which we travel or a descriptive geography. “Multiscale discourses of ownership,” contends Katherine McKittrick, who examines black women’s geographies during the transatlantic slave trade, is “one of the many ways violence operates across gender, sexuality, and race . . . having ‘things,’ owning lands, invading territories, possessing someone, are, in part, narratives of displacement that reward and value particular forms of conquest.”¹⁶ When I speak of the (re)mapping discourses created by the women in the pages of this book, I am speaking of the move toward geographies that do not limit, contain, or fix the various scales of space from the body to nation in ways that limit definitions of self and community staked out as property. My intervention into these various colonial scales and my interrogation of Native women’s geographies should not be read as a longing to further construct or revamp that elusive “Indian” that is propped up through racial and gender codes, nor is it a putting of Indians in place or taking them out of it temporally and geographically. Instead, I am concerned with producing decolonized spatial knowledges and attendant geographies that acknowledge colonial spatial process as ongoing but imbued with power struggles. I ask a similar question to that of aboriginal scholar Irene Watson: “Are we free to roam?” and if so, “do I remain the unsettled native,

left to unsettle the settled spaces of empire?"¹⁷ Rather than construct a healthy relationship to land and place, colonial spatial structures inhibit it by constricting Native mobilities and pathologizing mobile Native bodies.

Embodied geographies thus become pivotal to address in decolonization projects, and it is here that Native feminisms can play a major role in our thinking about the connections between land, individuals, and constructions of nations. Bodies that are differently marked through the corporeal or through a performance—whether through gender, race, sexuality, or nationality—articulate differently in different spaces. As Native bodies travel through various geographies, they are read differently and thus experience lived realities that are constantly shifting. For as Michel Foucault and ensuing scholars have argued, the body never exists outside of space and is connected to other indicators that are used to relegate power relations between the bourgeois and those deemed as degenerate subjects.¹⁸ For Indigenous people traveling through constructed colonial and imperial spaces, the body can be hypervisible as the abnormal body, and at times hyper-invisible as it becomes spatially disjointed from the map of the nation in both physical and mental imaginings. In "Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference," geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore speaks about "the range of kinds of places—as intimate as the body and as abstract as a productive region or a nation-state,"¹⁹ and it is in this range of connected places that I will discuss how Native women have mapped their lives.

In much Native American cultural production, place continues to hold these fragile, complex, and important relationships. But as Foucault's work with space and the body indicates, the state and citizen subjects' roles that come into being also had to perform a self-regulating mechanism in a field of surveillance. I contend that instead of ingesting the norm of immobile Native women, we open up the possibility of (re)mapping the Americas as Indigenous land, not only by rethinking dominant disciplining narratives but also critically examining how we have become a self-disciplining colonial subject. How might our own stories become the mechanism in which we can critically (re)map the relationships between Native peoples and communities? As Gilmore states, "if justice is embodied, it is then therefore always spatial, which is to say, part of the process of making place."²⁰ In examining Native women's (re)mapping of the nation-state, my intention is not to focus on previously neglected texts, though I do believe the texts I include deserve more attention in the field of American literature and in race and ethnic studies as well as in cultural geography. Neither do I aim to create or affirm an

essential “female” or essential “Indian” category to address “common oppression.” Rather, the focus on the gendered body in these texts provides sites in which we can examine gendered, sexualized, and racialized differentiations in relation to imagined geographies that buttress colonialism and enact violence in our daily lives.

Secondly, my focus on Native women’s texts and the gendered scenarios they present takes into account Robert Warrior’s foundational work in *Tribal Secrets*. In particular, I take seriously his call to examine the intellectual histories of Native writers and put forth a “generational view . . . [that] provides a new historical and critical site that invites us to see contemporary work as belonging to a process centuries long, rather than decades long, of engaging the future contours of Indian America.” Warrior’s work demonstrates the vitality of Native literatures to imagine a future for Native peoples who are not simple, exotic, insubstantial, or easily erased. Rather, Native stories, generations old and often labeled traditional or pure even when they are not, and new stories too often dismissed as tainted by Western literacy so therefore not Native enough, incite us to imagine literary possibilities that deconstruct tired colonial paradigms. My choice to put forth Native women’s literary engagement with space and politics at various scales was very much influenced by Warrior’s assertion that determining our future depends on “critically reading our own tradition[, which] allows us to see some of the mistakes of the past as we analyze the problems of the present.”²¹ Though some critiques suggest there is an element of essentialism because of an emphasis on literary nationalism, they too often overlook Warrior’s careful assertion that we must contextualize the writers as engaging with the world around them. A fruitful acknowledgment of the pain and chaos of colonization provides the fertile ground needed for decolonization. By “making ourselves vulnerable” and recognizing how “outside influences” have affected “our consciousness, and our imaginations,” Warrior insists on an intellectual sovereignty as “a process of asserting the power we possess as communities and individuals to make decisions that affect our lives.”²² The women whose texts I have chosen assert a spatial sovereignty literally grounded in their relationships among land, community, and writing. It is not a remythologizing of space that is occurring, such as that often performed by nationalist groups, but a (re)mapping that addresses the violent atrocities while defining Native futures.

My choice to concentrate on Native women’s literature in relation to mapping new spaces is threefold. First, by examining Native women’s engagements

with twentieth-century spatial restructuring, I am able to delve critically into the construction of gender, heteropatriarchy, and race categories as instrumental to colonial logics. Rather than privilege writing as a hegemonic form of resistance, I contend that the Native women's writing I have included reflects the instability and mobility of the categories of race, gender, class, and sexuality at times when these intersections were most operable in colonial spatial restructuring. Kimberlé Crenshaw's feminist theory of intersectionality as a method to examine power relations influences much of my analysis. Although speaking to violence against women of color in general, Crenshaw's problematizing of the way identity has been conceived as a method of analysis is useful to my own thoughts on the spatial violence inflicted on Native communities:

In the context of violence against women, this elision of difference in identity politics is problematic, fundamentally because the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class. Moreover, ignoring difference within groups contributes to tension among groups, another problem of identity politics that bears on efforts to politicize violence against women. Feminist efforts to politicize experiences of women and antiracist efforts to politicize experiences of people of color have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains. Although racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices. And so, when the practices expound identity as woman or person of color as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling.²³

By examining Native women writers through an intersectional approach, I am choosing a feminist method of analysis that presents us with a multiple grounded "telling" of violence and its impact on the structural, political, and representational lives of Native peoples and their communities.

Second, Native women's alternatives to heteropatriarchal representation of national space, referred to as traditional geography, are fundamental to understanding the ways in which nation-states in North America have built themselves through gendered spatial metaphors of dominance. For instance, civilization and frontier are metaphors that are engrained in Americans' imagining of their place in North America and on the global stage. Instead of presuming the naturalness of "Indians' relationship to the land" and Indians'

victimization from land theft through masculinized Indian wars, I explore how E. Pauline Johnson (Mohawk), Esther Belin (Diné), Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo), and Joy Harjo (Muscogee Creek) attend to gender and land contesting U.S. nation-building *while they imagine a future for Native nations*. The patriarchal and racist nature of displacement becomes very clear in such policies as the Indian Act and relocation, which I discuss in the first and second chapters, respectively. Understanding these categories as stemming from the project of Enlightenment and tied to contested spaces enables a rethinking of settler nations by exposing the worldviews that rationalize the settler state and the project of liberal democracies, which rests on the individual.

Third, this approach to the relationship between gender and space demonstrates that Native people have had and continue to have their own discourses regarding the production of the world around them—discourses that produce a different set of economic, political, and social relations than the ones intended by implementation of various Indian policies in the twentieth century.²⁴ My intent in mapping twentieth-century geographic imagining by Native women is to put forth sets of social relations that lead us in directions beyond a settler heteropatriarchal mapping of space. In thinking through the poetics involved in imagining new landscapes, I find Édouard Glissant's work important, though he is speaking to transatlantic blackness in the Caribbean and American South.²⁵ For Glissant, who speaks to black alienation from the land, poetry and the narrative open up the production of space, providing alternative geographies. These alternative geographies contest dominant histories and geographies, even if they do not displace the regimes of power that assert spatial hierarchies. The Native women's texts with which I work are documents of the violence inflicted on their communities and a critique of the spatial restructuring of their lands, bodies, and nations; they are what Glissant refers to as a grammar of liberation that seriously engages alternative spatial practices to that of making land into property or treating land as purely a surface upon which we act. These women's stories and my Native feminist analysis are not testaments to geographies that are apart from the dominant constructions of space and time, but instead they are explorations of geographies that sit alongside them and engage with them at every scale. Even though these geographies may be marginalized, dismissed, concealed, or erased, they still constitute a part of our daily lives. These women's imaginative geographies are the stories that construct, contest, and compose a mapping of the Americas.

MAPPING EMPIRES

In these pages, I reiterate past concerns and link them to contemporary mappings of indigeneity, race, gender, and nation to unsettle the spatial ideologies at the foundation of nation-states. Maps, in their most traditional sense as a representation of authority, have incredible power and have been essential to colonial and imperial projects. The commission of surveying projects by both the Canadian and American nation-states was not a simple act of scientific research, but implicit involvement in creating empire. While many authors have examined this earlier period and mapping of the Americas as a colonial project, I argue that these mappings of Native land and bodies continue well into the contemporary time.²⁶ I intend to interrogate the process of mapping, both as a metaphor and as the physical mapping of lands and bodies, as one that supports and naturalizes race, gender, heteronormativity, and colonial power relations. The mapping of settler nations is too often misunderstood as a “deceptively simple activity,” while the power exerted through state structures is made normative through this deceptiveness. As human geographer Dennis Cosgrove tells us: “To map is in one way or another to take measure of a world, and more than merely take it, to figure the measure so taken in such a way that it might be communicated between people, places, or times. The measure of mapping is not restricted to the mathematical; it may equally be spiritual, political, or moral. By the same token, the mapping’s record is not confined to the archival; it includes the remembered, the imagined, the contemplated.”²⁷ As “a spatial embodiment of knowledge,” maps can reveal much about the processes of producing settler colonial nations. As a “stimulus to further cognitive engagements,” the mappings in Native women’s literary texts challenge the organization of land and bodies into categories generated during the age of enlightenment, past surveying of Native land; and the continued use of these categories, albeit in different forms, sustains the settler nation-state. The literary mapping in the texts I work with in the following chapters represents and “communicates” a Native ethics and politics of their place in the world with potential to contest the ever-developing settler/imperial nations.

While the literary works I discuss begin in the twentieth century, I would like to step back a bit further into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when European nations sought to solidify power, and newly forming nations, such as the United States, Mexico, and Canada, sought economic independence. It is no surprise that maps were instrumental to these projects, just as

they were to early empires that sought domination of Native land in the Americas. Ricardo Padrón, in his book *The Spacious Word*, investigates the trajectory of cartography, specifically of the Spanish empire, as foundational to modern conceptions of space and the “invention of America” by the West. He traces not just the practical use of maps, such as planning of military operation, delineating control, or even those that laid out “the faithful or idolatrous” Indigenous peoples in order to proselytize them, but also the ideological uses of maps in early modern Spain. It is the residue of these ideologies that continues to influence contemporary understanding of space and authorize state force over Native land and bodies.

In speaking of the aesthetics used to “flatter” a monarch or contemporary uses of the “image of territory that inspires our affection, demands our loyalty, calls us home,” Padrón discusses the ideological purposes of cartography at a time when European empires “were only beginning to learn how to imagine their world, relate to it, and transform it in ways that depended upon the unique conceptualization of space that lay at the heart of modern map.”²⁸ Padrón makes clear that in the Middle Ages the words “map” (*map-paemundi*) and “space” (*spatium*) were rarely found or used outside the context of traders and mariners, and, in fact, maps were limited to a few uses and not used by many people. The conception of space and “the cartographic revolution” ushered in new notions of space that would hold sway as America became invented in the European imagination. In this book, I aim to look at the ideological mapping that continued from these early formations. The development of the “scientific” modern map—one of geometric, abstract grids—is a development that coincides directly with Europe’s war on Indigenous people. As Padrón, invoking Said’s *Orientalism*,²⁹ makes clear, however, and as I examine in my reading of Leslie Marmon Silko’s novel *Almanac of the Dead*, the “invention of America” through the trajectory of cartographic development did not just reflect the Americas as “a purely natural object” but also defined Europe and its colonies. Padrón states, “America is indeed a slice of the natural world, but it is one that has been cut from the globe by a particular people, at a particular time, interested for particular reasons in carving the world up in the first place . . . this process of ‘inventing America’ can be understood as the process or ‘remapping’ the European imagination in ways that bring to light the connections between the early modern cartographic revolution, a larger process of cultural ‘mapping,’ and deep change in Europe’s conception of itself and its world.”³⁰

While maps were essential to earlier projects of exploration as well as the documentation of explorers and literate traders before the nineteenth century, it was in the 1800s that maps were understood by many to simultaneously represent the “real” as they symbolized the destiny of settler states. These early maps differed from their predecessors and were often naturalized and understood to project the real through the use of grids and mathematics. No longer were the maps laden with religious icons or pictorial symbols of the aristocracy that commissioned their making, yet the ideology behind the earlier forms of these maps remained. Hidden in the rhetoric and its visual presentation—in particular in the intent—was still the imagery of colonial empire. Exploring the discourses of mapping is necessary in understanding the way worldviews are represented. Maps exert political control by manipulating the representation of space into a language of normativity. For instance, the Louisiana Purchase as an inventive claiming of territory is still rarely questioned in the public imagination. Though we know that Sacagawea met with other Nations and translated languages, the relationship of Native people to place is absented and obscured. Without these stories, or in the suppression of them, the entire West is depicted as a blank slate, even though Native people were and are acknowledged as inhabiting the land. There remains a spatial imaginary of vast landscapes filled with flora and fauna. Native people in this unjust spatial imaginary become part of the flora and fauna open to settlement, while the state supports its fantasy through the law.³¹

The development of modern nation-states depended on sending out official mapmaking expeditions as a state tool to find information that would enable the assertion of political force over territories and all contained within. For instance, it was President Thomas Jefferson who commissioned the famous mapmaking Corps of Discovery expedition led by Lewis and Clark. Interestingly, Jefferson was inspired by Enlightenment tales of the West and sagas of those who traveled to hostile lands, yet he was also prompted by the threat that the British were sending expeditions to Western lands.³² The famous expedition arose from the geographic imaginings of Jefferson, who often engaged in voyage and travel literature and for whom territorial accumulation was pivotal. His assignment to Meriwether Lewis reflects the goals of empire; the future of Jefferson’s fledgling nation meant expanding the territory and exploring “for the purposes of commerce.” In the instance of the Great Basin Indians, Ned Blackhawk contends that these early mappings were crucial to conquest: “Their maps, reports, and journals ultimately carried

greater influence than the thousands of beaver pelts and horses ferried to market in St. Louis. By producing the knowledge from which conquest could flow, those who extended American claims in the region became agents for the most violent forms of imperialism. The settlement, law, policing, and governance—the mechanics of colonial rule—that followed within a generation overturned the worlds of Great Basin Indians forever.”³³ While Lewis and Clark’s journey has perhaps been the most celebrated in United States history as an event that opened up the West to incorporation into the nation-state, there were many other cartographic projects that sought to survey and explore lands as the Indigenous world was carved up in settler imaginations and writings in a push to map and consolidate empire.³⁴ In the imagination of Jefferson and his companions, these early expeditions into the West laid claim over the land and resources. While several studies have connected the geographical knowledge produced during colonization with that of the making of the modern nation-states and the advance of capitalism, I am also concerned with how these early events have set up gendered colonial structures that continue to dominate and enact violence at both the interpersonal and state level on Native peoples.³⁵ The spatial violence asserted through the geographical imaginings and subsequent mappings would be tremendous throughout the West in what is now Canada, the United States, and Mexico securing an ongoing and violent spatial legacy.

Native nations, however, had and still have their own claims on the land, beginning with creation stories. Colin Calloway opens his book *One Vast Winter Count: The American West before Lewis and Clark* with a mapping of Native nations’ place-based creation stories in the West. By centering these stories in relation to the Bering Strait theory’s assumption of a land bridge in the context of a history of this region before Lewis and Clark’s mapping expedition into those lands, Calloway adeptly tackles ongoing disputes over representations and relationships to time and space, or to history and place. He asserts: “Often in history what we think we know turns out to need revision and what we dismiss as nonsense proves to make a lot of sense. ‘Other’ stories of coming into America—whomever may be telling them—may not be any more or less ‘accurate’ than those we think may be true. Indian peoples had many stories to explain their presence in the West.” He provocatively proposes a reconsideration of the archeological, historical, and anthropological narrations of understanding Native people as “first immigrants” by shifting the paradigm, suggesting that “perhaps the first pioneers did not come to the West; perhaps they were made in the West.”³⁶ Oral stories, often

embedded in contemporary literature, predate the European maps made by Lewis and Clark and other early surveyors of the East and West who sought to claim land for their respective nations.

These colonial maps were instrumental in treaty making and creating national boundaries; they are still used to regulate and determine spatial practices. Dispute of these maps was not uncommon, and tribal leaders would often draw on their own geographical interpretations to dispute the treaties.³⁷ Native scholars, researchers, and mapmakers who now have more access to the archive are also using maps and documents as sources for land reclamation. The exchange of knowledge that took place in the early years was common, as Malcolm Lewis acknowledges in his essay “First Nations Map-making in the Great Lakes Region,” though, in fact, acknowledgment wasn’t often given, and when it was, “ambiguously so.”³⁸ In fact, it was the oral stories or words that would convey distances, villages, landmarks, and so forth. The additive oral component, according to Lewis, could be beneficial and at other times could lead to omissions or errors. At any rate, what is made clear in cartographic historians’ engagement with colonial maps was the power that they would continue to have after these early years. Cole Harris situates domination in the early surveying of Native territory: “My conclusions are these: the initial ability to dispossess rested primarily on physical power and the supporting infrastructure of the state; the momentum to dispossess derived from the interest of capital in profit and of settlers in forging new livelihoods; the legitimating of and moral justification for dispossession lay in a cultural discourse that located civilization and savagery and identified the land uses associated with each; and the management of dispossession rested with a set of disciplinary technologies of which maps, numbers, law, and the geography of resettlement itself were the most important.”³⁹ Harris continues with his investigation by turning away from cultural studies discourse, or what he frames as a concentration on the word, and by concentrating on the “disciplinary technologies” of mapping as the instruments of colonialism and later empire that *do* the dispossessing.

While I agree that to understand colonialism we must begin with asking the question of how colonial power was deployed, it is important to see mapping as a means of discourse that mapped an imperial imaginary. Later it would map discourses of spatial identities that would have the real effect on access to resources, such as on-reserve/ation or off-reserve/ation.⁴⁰ Native people did resist the technologies of colonialism, as Harris reminds us: “Like oppressed people everywhere, they engaged in a virtually constant

micro-politics of resistance: moving fences, not cooperating with census enumerators, sometimes disrupting survey parties. There was a stream of letters and petitions, often written with missionary assistance, to officials in Victoria, Ottawa, and London, and meetings with cabinet ministers, prime ministers, and even, on one occasion, the king.”⁴¹ Yet, in the end, it was the power of the word and marking of Native place passed on through stories that refuted settler power.

I start this book shortly after the signing of the 1870s Medicine Treaties and the corralling of Native people onto reservations as if they were wild animals needing containment. Not coincidentally, it was also in 1876 that Canada became a confederation, severing its ruling ties to the metropole of Britain. Academics have too often separated the Native policies of Canada and the United States and not explored junctures of power that support ongoing spatial violence. I contend that, while we must scrutinize the particularities around how each nation-state has incorporated and expunged Natives, and must do so at the local scale as well, it is also important to examine how inflicted violence supported suppression and colonization *throughout the Americas*. In this instance, the brutal physical violence inflicted by the U.S. Army led to signing of treaties and brutally forcing Native people onto reservations. Many of these Native nations’ traditional homelands spread into what is now known as Canada and Mexico. The restrictions placed and enforced by the U.S. Army helped to settle the southern borderlands of Canada and the northern boundary lands of Mexico. Cities grew, white immigration flourished, and the colony no longer needed to rely on Britain for military protection. The settler nation-states of the Americas, in recognizing one another’s boundaries and overlooking colonial violence, legitimate the settler state as an entity while overlooking the injustices toward Native people under its guise of the affairs of a sovereign nation. While mapping was indispensable to brute colonization of Native land in North America through genocide, it is at this point colonial logics took a spatial turn that changed the everyday practices of Native people. Colonial governmentality articulated and implemented structures that would regulate Native spaces and Native bodies through a variety of state practices. Family, clan, and intra- and intertribal relationships were reformulated in ways readable to the state. The authors with whom I work address the severing of these relationships by the pounding discipline of state force. Once territories and land were claimed by Western empires turned settler states, violent state practices were read as internal affairs. It is in this era I begin my project.

By drawing the connections between maps and what Andrea Smith refers to as the three pillars of heteropatriarchy in the forms of colonialism, slavery, and orientalism, we can think about Smith's call for us to combat heteropatriarchy by seeing beyond assertions of a "common property of all oppressed groups," which in many ways has become operating controlling spatialities such as the urban, ghetto, barrio, and reservation.⁴² Maps were instrumental in the navigation of the slave trade in the Black Atlantic that provided labor instrumental to conquest, maps erased Native land claims and sacred sites, and maps situate the borderlands that mark the immigrant as a foreign body to be policed and disciplined. So, while this project examines Native peoples in particular, it also is concerned with interlocking systems of oppression and other locations. The mapping and invention of America required the brute force of slavery and colonization and the ideological framework of orientalism—all of which were and are gendered forms of violence. Mapping as a tool of traditional geographies, then, becomes a site in which to explore the exchange of power and struggle over the ordering of cultural, physical, and embodied space and explore heteropatriarchy.

While I have spoken above of historical processes of mapping, and the book itself is arranged in chronological order, my aim is not to document a stable, historical, geographical discourse in the history of twentieth-century Native women's writing. Rather, I posit a study of spatial discourses that are always in movement and colonialisms always in contradiction in order to illuminate the fact that space is shifting, layered geographies with connecting and complex histories, histories that are too numerous to discuss in one book. My decision to strategically address historical elements that provide important context is meant to strengthen a social criticism of our approaches, which are too often spatially bounded. This book is not meant to be a decisive history of the spatial construction of our nations, but rather a social criticism that opens up and questions, through a study of the language and physicality of geography, normative nation-state maps that inform the present. Writers and artists work to free us from imposed rigid definitions set in place through Western interpretations and definitions of "Native," "Native land," "Native Sovereignty." The attempted interruption and displacement of Native spatial concepts by colonization has had a profound impact on our communities. By placing Native women's writing in a historical context, alternatives to the normative arguments arise. Ever present is the flexibility of tribal stories to hold communities together despite displacement from lands, the corroding of tribal ways of thinking, and a litany

of Indian policies that produce self-surveillance and community inter- and intra-tensions.

READING NATIVE MAPS

The Native women writers discussed in the following chapters challenge the seemingly objective and transparent forms of Western mapping by including narrative experiences and cultural systems that tell and map a story of survivance and future. This literary work challenges hegemonic conceptions of race, gender, and nation too often mapped onto Native people both ideologically and physically. The material reality of inequities and hierarchies result from the mapping process of naming and symbolically defining and enframing land. Cosgrove, in speaking about the history of maps, finds the key to distinguishing “variations” in histories and the different “intellectual and visual universes” is to consider the map beyond “the frame of the history of sciences and of geographic knowledge *stricto sensu*.” He states that the map “encompasses many other components of a culture: its conception of the world, physical and metaphysical, its cognitive categories that bring truth within reach of the human mind, the social construction and sharing of such knowledge about the world.”⁴³ To unmap these settler maps is to decolonize “social constructions” and “such knowledge.” While critics such as Edward Said, Eric Bulson, Allan Trachtenberg, and Richard Phillips have examined literary mapmaking and its importance in supporting nationalism at home and empire abroad, their projects are mainly concerned with European or settler-nations literature.⁴⁴ These discussions of empire in relation to the literary canon, while important contributions that have influenced this project, leave out the voices that have also shaped our current world. Absent in the discussion are the hopes of those who are claimed in the rhetoric of empire. This project turns to an examination of the steps that Native people have taken to mediate the maps of colonial and national imaginative geographies. To begin to (re)map the settler nation, we must start with Native forms of mapping and consider Native-made spaces that are too often disavowed, appropriated, or co-opted by the settler state through writing, imagining, law, politics, and the terrains of culture.

In speaking of normative maps used in colonial processes, J. B. Harley states that “the social history of maps, unlike that of literature, art, or music appears to have few genuinely popular, alternative, or subversive modes of expression. Maps are preeminently a language of power, not of protest.”⁴⁵

Harley's failure to recognize that Western literature and maps have often formed a nexus, supporting and inspiring exploration, conquest, and imperial projects, perhaps led to his inability to distinguish Native stories and forms of telling as maps.⁴⁶ These are maps that have contested power relations in the Americas even before European settlement. Harley, though instrumental in upsetting the modernist notion that maps merely reflected "reality," fails to recognize the intricate relationship between maps and literary discourses that protest settler ideological and physical dominance in the Americas. Concerned largely with Western forms of representing and marking space, he overlooks forms of spatial production that existed before Europeans arrived. The literary maps of Native people presented in oral stories, or later in writing, are the subversive or alternative geographies I will engage in this book.

Alternative mapping projects, the focus of scholars such as Matthew Sparke and Marc Warhus, do exist as counter projects to colonial narratives and capitalistic endeavors. Even the western mapping project is to some extent affected by these alternative maps as demonstrated in the earlier discussion of Sacagawea and the role of *coureur des bois*. After all, explorers produced many of the earliest maps, and their main source of knowledge resided in the Indian guides, many of them women, who helped navigate through terrain these newcomers found foreign. Sacagawea, one of the few Native women who occupy space in the cultural imagination of most Americans, was instrumental to the Lewis and Clark trip. Without her knowledge of the land and its resources, translation abilities, familial relationships, and overall presence, the Corps of Discovery would have surely faced death. Native people have always had maps of their own, and women in the earlier years, as spouses, companions, and day laborers, were part of this exchange of knowledge.⁴⁷ Native peoples' knowledge, relegated to the realm of the primitive, was not acknowledged and made absent on the "official" maps of the state. Native women, however, were doubly excluded from the realm of a seemingly objective and masculine world of science and cartography. These erasures have had an enormous impact on the archives of colonial maps.

Historian of cartography Marc Warhus, however, was able to collect various such forms of Native maps dating from before 1492 to the present, though most were made by men. These stunning visual maps have several different formats and are printed on various materials, such as bark, hide, and paper. The maps in *Another America* present unique constructions. Warhus articulates the methods for understanding Indigenous maps:

To read these Native American maps it is necessary to suspend western preconceptions of what makes a map. Unlike western cartography, where the primary document is the physical map and the conventions of scale, longitude, latitude, direction, and relative location are believed to “scientifically” depict a landscape, Native American maps are pictures of experience. They are formed in the human interaction with the land and are a record of the events that give it meaning. Far from being unsophisticated or “primitive,” these Native American maps were as functional and transmissible as the products of *Rand McNally* or *National Geographic*.⁴⁸

I stress that elements of these maps remain today in oral traditions, contemporary stories, and experiences conveyed through story, and these stories are often carried on through women. These mental maps found in the stories shape relationships around us and serve to imagine identity and community differently. They are a significant component of Native survival: “Unlike western society, maps were not created as permanent documents in Native American traditions. The features of geography were part of a much larger interconnected mental map that existed in the oral traditions. The world was experienced and perceived through one’s history, traditions, and kin, in relationships with the animal and natural resources that one depended upon, and in union with the spirits, ancestors, and religious forces with whom one shared existence.”⁴⁹ Even though Warhus refers to “the missing oral components of the map,” I contend that they are not missing, but may have changed form just as changes in cartographic practices have produced new forms of maps that differ greatly from their early roots.

The stories, songs, and rituals still remain and continue to be passed down through the generations. Unlike Western maps whose intent is often to represent the “real,” Native narrative maps often conflict, perhaps add to the story, or only tell certain parts. Stories and knowledge of certain places can belong to particular families, clans, or individuals. These maps are not *absolute* but instead present multiple perspectives—*as do all maps*. While narratives and maps help construct and define worldviews, they are not determined and always open for negotiation.

While explorers and later government agents relied on these maps made by men of empire to assert truth claims that rhetorically assert power over the land and those living in those spaces, it wasn’t too long before Native people recognized their power to hold onto their land and the relationships it engendered. From the earliest moments of contact, Native people

understood the power of Europeans' production of physical maps and written literary accounts to reinforce colonial claims and the importance of Natives' own Indigenous forms of cartography and knowledge to dispute territorial takeover. Production of Native maps is quite different from European forms, as the work of many geographers, including Malcolm Lewis, Matthew Sharpe, and Mark Warhus, has pointed out. Lisa Brooks, in *The Common Pot*, writes at length about the symbolic and formal ways that Native New Englanders claimed space, rebuffed colonial claims on their land, and maintained relationships to each other, other nations, and the land by examining texts written by from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Her examination of writings, such as treaty petitions, treaty literature, journey journals, letters, and diaries, engages with a recovery of space putting forth an analysis of how writers in the nineteenth century imagined themselves in New England.⁵⁰ This "recovery of space" largely depends on those stories that accompany the normative maps put forth. This project differs from those of Brooks, Warhus, and Lewis, not only in the time frame, but in my approach to interrogating the geographical power/knowledge of the map itself and the sets of relationships that change in the contestation over space.

MARK OUR WORDS: MAPS AND DECOLONIZATION

How do poetry and literature intervene in the colonial logics that continue to erase Native presence on the land and continue to accumulate Native land and bodies into the imaginative geographies of empire? A spatial analysis of the social and geopolitical imagining of the colonial nations of Canada, Mexico, and the United States is pivotal in answering these questions that make up a critique of settler nation-states. The works of Native women writers address the intersections of economic, social, political, and cultural institutions that are mapping out their surroundings and constituting their lived realities. Native women, however, have engaged a changing geopolitical field by narrating geographies that unsettle the heteropatriarchal institutional structures that use race and gender as tools to support settler colonialism. Just as the colonizer never left the Americas, neither did the Native people who continue to engage with land, nation, and community in their own tribally specific and gendered ways.

In the excerpt below from the poem "Mark My Words," Diane Schenandoah (Oneida, Wolf Clan) marks Native existence on the land, reclaiming it from "a wally world that would peddle clothes made by small / children in

some foreign country that truly reeked of / poverty.” She begins by marking the “cycles” of collective Native harvesting and care for land:

as i walked past the storage pits thinking of all
 the hands that helped dig and fill this deep hole every
 harvest hoping it was enough to last the winter until
 spring would provide the necessary sustenance to continue
 the cycle of survival in a spiritual existence . . . i saw the
 bulldozer ready to erase the way of life that had been the
 only supermarket in town for centuries . . .⁵¹

Most importantly, Schenandoah maps a Haudenosaunee existence that pre-dates “all the surrounding communities [who] will come to the grand opening of red white and blue balloons.” As a contemporary Native woman writer, Schenandoah uses “words” to (re)map sets of Native relationships to the land and to those who seek to develop it without regard to human relationships. She claims the land as Haudenosaunee, reflecting on the hands that worked the earth through multiple generations, juxtaposing alongside and against the United States or commercial entities’ stake on the land that is as fleeting and fragile as a balloon.

Across disciplines, Native American literature is often spoken about as signifying Native relationship to the land. Interpretations of these spatial moments in critical articles abound in discussions of Native American literary production in both its oral and written forms. In academia, the relationship between land and Native people is often evoked in discussions of histories, legalities, cultures, and the consequences of environmental destruction. While there are books and articles that analyze specific cultural relationships between specific tribal literature and tribal concepts of the land, most do not engage the complex relationship between changing cultural practices of producing Native spaces and the pressure of colonization and the rise of nation-states and capitalism. By thinking through critical geographies’ assertions that the nation-state uses nationalism to make place out of space, we can begin to think of the power of cognitive maps produced through narrative. Peter J. Taylor’s work in particular is useful to an analysis of how colonial spatial structuring depends on nation-states and their use of certain geographical technologies such as maps, jurisdictions, education, community descriptions, and statistics to create “deeply felt emotions of place.” Taylor addresses the move in the nineteenth century, the point where this book begins, by

states to use affective narratives and mythologies to create allegiance to place. Yet as Taylor states, even twentieth-century politics of inclusion did not move regimes of spatial production, “becoming a national place made no difference to the fact that the state was fundamentally dis-enabling, a de-humanizer of places as a producer of spaces.”⁵² Certainly part of what Schenandoah’s community is experiencing is the restructuring of space around dominant modes. Yet, Schenandoah’s narrative destabilizes nation-state place-making by revealing the act of producing abstraction. She invokes the temporality and construction of the U.S. nation through the balloon colors “red,” “white,” and “blue,” which make up the American flag and are symbolic of a deeply driven nationalism dependent on colonial erasure and the myth and practice of American exceptionalism.

Describing Native relationships to land is riddled with pitfalls and paradoxes, many of which are impossible to avoid given the nature of power and colonialism. I do not take the phrase “relationship to the land” as a given, unchanging, and naturalized part of Native American identities, especially as capitalism and colonization have produced new ways of experiencing time and space as exemplified above. On one hand, Native relationships to land are presumed and oversimplified as natural and even worse, romanticized. In this, the politics of maintaining and protecting tribal lands drop out of the conversation. Notions of the warrior on the plains, the medicine man communing with nature in solitude, or Iron Eyes Cody with one tear in his eye as he surveys the destructive world that capitalism produces, appeals to the realm of the emotional, rather than reflecting on the intellectual and critical work that Native people undertake to pass on these sets of relationships for generations and generations. Respecting the environment is not encoded in the DNA. In fact, tribes have experienced many travesties of justice in regard to environmental destruction.⁵³ We also have a tendency to abstract space—that is to decorporealize, commodify, or bureaucratize—when the legal ramifications of land or the political landscape are addressed; too often we forget that reserve/ations, resource exploitation, federal Indian law, and urbanization are relatively new phenomena. The stories that connect Native people to the land and form their relationships to the land and one another are much older than colonial governments, such as conveyed in the poem above. Stories create the relationships that have made communities strong even through numerous atrocities and injustices.

Schenandoah’s poem marks the transformation of human and land relationships from harvesting to a consumer society that unravels and abstracts

those connections by reorganizing human relationships and geographies on a variety of scales. Schenandoah is from a community where women were the farmers, harvesters, and delegaters of the resources within their communities—the longhouse, the storage space referred to in the poem, was a substantial space used as a framework for community relationships. The changing distribution to an abstract producer of goods undermines these gender roles. The mediation between Native peoples and colonial entities throughout twentieth-century spatial restructuring has reframed and gendered our “relationship to the land.” This book aims to think through the gendered colonial constructions of space and place in order to address regimes of power that have positioned Native women as insignificant. Maps reflect and constitute geographical imaginations defined by Derek Gregory “as sensitivity towards the significance of place, space, and landscape in the constitution and conduct of social life.”⁵⁴ Native maps perform similar functions, as we see in the importance of marking the harvest pit and warning against desecration in the construction of a supermarket. If, according to Harley, “cartography remains a teleological discourse, reifying power, reinforcing the status quo, and freezing social interaction,”⁵⁵ then Native maps are writing against this traditional geographical grain. We need to complicate our conceptual maps in Native nation-building as they are necessary in defining new terrains that move away from an ordering of abstract nation-state space and the asymmetrical relationships they produce.

Remembering important connections to land and community is instrumental in mapping a decolonized Native presence. The poem is an example of making visible colonial and imperial maps and (re)mapping our relationships. Alternative conceptions of borders, nations, and place are subversive to the masculine project of empire building. American Indian women are seeking to (re)map first encounters and mediate ongoing spatial projects seeking to solidify nation and power relations by writing in the form of these alternative maps. While maps are often understood as “a drawing or other representation of the earth’s surface or a part of it made on a flat surface, showing the distribution of physical or geographical features (and often also including socio-economic, political, agricultural, meteorological, etc., information), with each point in the representation corresponding to an actual geographical position according to a fixed scale or projection; a similar representation of the positions of stars in the sky, the surface of a planet, or the like. Also: a plan of the form or layout of something, as a route, a building, etc.,” according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. I expand that notion to coincide

with the strategies Native people used and developed to map space and how they are still present in our everyday lives.⁵⁶ Considering discourse as a type of mapping is crucial to understanding Native peoples' conceptions of space and their place in the world. In order to speak of the power relations involved in mapping space, it is important to reframe place-based discourse, which has tended toward ethnographic readings of local Native places, and instead look at these discourses as engaging with the forces that construct our understanding of space—whether it is at the scale of the Nation, a sacred site, or the body. Maps produce wider realities and gesture outward.

For instance, Schenandoah's description of the opening of a Kmart on Oneida land and a culturally marked area moves beyond the mere destruction of this important site as well as the political moment or event of the construction of a Kmart. The poetic imaginings address the fact that settler colonialism sets up a structure that undermines a way of life. In "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," Patrick Wolfe positions settler colonialism as a continuous structure rather than an isolated historical event that "employs a wide-range of strategies of elimination that become favoured in particular historical circumstances."⁵⁷ Thus, the production of space, referring to landscapes that arise out of social practices and geographic forms of organization along the lines of gender, race, and class, are structured to maintain a sense of stable colonial histories and power.⁵⁸ In relation to settler colonialism imposing colonial geographies must be understood *as yet another method to eliminate or eradicate or absorb that which is Native*. If applied to geographies, we can come to understand the simultaneous unmarking of the area as Native land with a mapping of it as private corporate property as part of the geographic knowledge regimes. Early Native writers often wrote and pleaded with the public and the government about the effect of a newly mapped-out social order.⁵⁹ Current writers and contemporary Native communities continue to struggle with the legacy of U.S. land acquisition and the development of unstable colonial policies and their uneven implementation. Various forms of territory—from that of the body of the individual, to the tribal nation, to colonial nation-state—become contested in the struggle with competing concepts of social ordering. The implementation of colonial geographies into Native spaces are critical to address as "depending on the historical juncture, assimilation can be a more effective mode of elimination than conventional forms of killing, since it does not involve such a disruptive affront to the rule of law that is ideologically central to the cohesion of settler society."⁶⁰ Stealing land, or property, is unacceptable in a liberal

democracy, but structuring Native lands as part of the abstract space of the nation eases public outcry. Native experiences are too often marginalized in the colonial processes, and the use of geographical power to limit or expand a territory is too often disguised as a simple, transparent process. Also is the way our minds are assimilated to believe our place, literally and figuratively, in the world.

Schenandoah's poem opens up the question of property as stable, calling for us to consciously assess our relationships to capitalism and the land. Her knowledge of the land stems from the mental maps of her community that Warhus speaks to above, maps that make possible different visions of the world. For Schenandoah, memory is mapped in the locale of the poem, recalling the importance of that place along with the sets of social, political, cultural, and economic relationships that comprise a community. Yet this place is not just closed off, nor is it just a Native issue or just a Haudenosaunee issue. This particular erasure of a way of life is deeply tied to economic exploitation in other global spaces. Schenandoah's marking of place connects exploitations of the nation-state to those structured beyond the borders it seeks to ideologically maintain, thus elucidating the connection between imperialism and colonialism: "the surrounding communities . . . throw their cigarette butts on the ground and / not give a second thought to the race that existed / just below their feet and not give a second / thought to the small hands that toiled over / their blue light special."⁶¹ The disrespect, emphasized through the misuse of tobacco in the form of cigarettes and then abuse of the environment in the fact that the butts litter the ground versus tobacco's use in prayer, extends to disrespect for human life and the earth in the name of capitalism. While this poem reflects the local displacement of land, it also troubles the nation-state's transnational ties to exploitation, a point that will be further elaborated on in chapters 3 and 4.

What happens when you map out a place in the form of a poem that recalls its meaning to Oneida people, such as in "Mark My Words"? The words in the poem "mark" the place of harvest, recalling the stories tied to it, and remind the reader of the importance of place-based relationships. Like so many Native authors before, this Oneida woman (re)maps a relationship to land, community, and memory to defy imperial geographies of closure. The literary (re)mapping of land at the opening of a new Kmart unsettles the idea of blank space waiting to be transformed or *terra incognita*. She ends the poem by reminding us of our responsibilities, because "somewhere, somehow, / someway, there will be a time when we will be asked

why.” Throughout the twentieth century, Native women’s writing has asked “why” as colonial spatial restructuring constructed borders, maps, places, and nations to displace Native people and possess water and land.⁶² The poem “Mark My Words” not only protests the building on an important Haudenosaunee site, but its figurative map creates geographical imaginations that undermine the settler state and refuses to silence global exploitation. By deconstructing the ground of Kmart, and moving into a new space that accounts for a past and forewarns of a future that must be reconciled, Schenandoah and the Native American women in this book open a space where a new kind of spatial politics is possible.

DECOLONIZING SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

A spatial analysis of the social and geopolitical imagining of the colonial nations of Canada, Mexico, and the United States is pivotal in a critique of settler nation-states. The works of Native women writers address the intersections of economic, social, political, and cultural institutions that are mapping out their surroundings and constituting their lived realities. Native women, however, have engaged a changing geopolitical field by narrating geographies that unsettle the heteropatriarchal institutional structures that use race and gender as tools to support settler colonialism. Just as the colonizer never left the Americas, neither did the Native people who continue to engage with land, nation, and community in their own tribally specific and gendered ways.

As Native nations maneuver for power in the liberal nation-state, it is important not to be coerced by the power of abstracting land and bodies into territories and citizens. Henri Lefebvre’s pivotal work warns about the roots of the abstract space of capitalism and the alienation of individuals from the everyday reality of living on, or with, the land: “As a product of violence and war, [abstract space] is political; instituted by a state, it is institutional. On first inspection it appears homogenous; and indeed it serves those forces which make a *tabula rasa* of whatever stand in their way, whatever threatens them—in short, of differences.”⁶³ Native people in North America have not only been made a *tabula rasa*, but also have been incorporated into national discourses in often unrecognizable forms. Liberal discourses that arose along with a budding nation-state have recently recognized past wrongs and past Native presences on the land, and, at times, current issues as well. Yet these discourses, rather than serve Native people, become incorporated into settler myths. Land remains the territory of the settler nation, and the stories

of its birth are celebrated; this occurs simultaneously with the recognition of Native peoples' loss of land, political control, and many relatives—all of which are conceived of as an unfortunate *national* past even though colonization is ongoing. Bolstered by ideas of progress, both moral and in terms of the nations coming into adulthood, time and space are mapped, as are the material realities of Native people whose few small land holdings and lives remain threatened.

Native space is delegated to exist outside national settler terrains, even while it is controlled and manipulated by settler governance. As Native bodies are constructed as abnormal and criminal, they, too, become spatialized. Natives occupy certain spaces of the nation and are criminalized or erased if they step outside what are seen as degenerative spaces. Colonialism is not just about conquering Native lands through mapping new ownerships, but it is also about the conquest of bodies, particularly women's bodies through sexual violence, and about recreating gendered relationships.⁶⁴ Thus, the making of Indian land into territory required a colonial restructuring of spaces at a variety of scales. Native bodies, as I speak to in relation to allotment in Joy Harjo's work, were conceived of as part of the flora and fauna. This animalization of Native bodies and subsequent codification of the doctrine of discovery during the 1830s that resulted in legalizing conquest and incorporating Native lands into the regimes of geographical knowledge produced by the state may not be apparent consciously, but they do order our reactions and relationships to those around us.

In *Human Territoriality*, Robert Sack, a foundational scholar in the field of human geography, denaturalizes territory by looking at its processes. It is not "biologically motivated . . . but rather . . . socially and geographically rooted."⁶⁵ Humans do not ally themselves naturally along nation-state borders or contain themselves within those borders. The narrations of national myths normalize colonial closures, but the many creation and migration stories of Native people attest to their presence. This "deeply spatialized" story of the settler states "installs Europeans as entitled to the land, a claim that is codified in law."⁶⁶ Sack uses the Anishinabeg band systems as an example of the social and geographic processes and sets out to discuss conceptions of the "modern" versus "premodern." Imposing European concepts of territory was a strategy of control and a method of creating empty space. While I appreciate this intervention, Sack detracts from his argument by not considering the storied relationships to the land that intricately tied together what Sack perceived of as "minimally territorial" bands. The power contained in

stories of the Manitous, for instance, exert a control and regulation of human relationships to one another and the land beyond that of law and continue to do so.⁶⁷ The Native literature I discuss does not portray land as blank, fixed, and linear in time, nor is it aligned mystically to Native people. Stories teach us how to care for and respect one another and the land. Responsibility, respect, and places created through tribal stories have endured longer than the Western fences that outlined settler territories and individual properties that continue to change hands.

Territory is not a simple artifact, impenetrable in the wave of economic and political power, but rather is constitutive of cultural, political, and economical practices. By recognizing the historic processes of enframing space and its corresponding cyclical turns and layering, the tangled threads produced in the claiming of Native lands and erasure of bodies begin to unravel.⁶⁸ Walter Mignolo's definition of territoriality "as the site of interaction of languages and memories in constructing places and defining identities" speaks to the way Native stories create a literary map.⁶⁹ Like Mignolo, I argue that territoriality develops not only through geographic place but also through time. The process of making territory extends beyond legal court systems that set in place political authority and borders, and relies on narrations and mythmaking. By proposing to examine the historical engagement among Native nations and the United States, Canada, and Mexico as it concerns the various overlapping, contested, and agreed upon concepts of geography, I am proposing that we need to see *through* the concept of territory and understand the processes and concept as a social product. Native literature provides a mechanism to see the limits of territory, as it is legally interpreted from original treaties, and give sustenance to Native people's relationship to the land. The scales of the interpersonal to the international in the texts I have chosen reflect a wide array of possibilities for political and social movements in Indian Country.

I am advocating that we take into account territories narrated through stories—both contemporary and those, much, much older—that interrogate and complicate state-bounded territory by examining the social orders expressed and denied in its representations. As one aboriginal scholar concludes about the possibilities of reconceiving territory for both Native and non-Native sums up: "Is aboriginal sovereignty to be feared by Australia in the same way as Aboriginal people fear white sovereignty and its patriarchal model of the state—one which is backed by power or force? Or is aboriginal sovereignty different . . . for there is not just one sovereign state body but

hundreds of different sovereign aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal sovereignty is different from state sovereignty because it embraces diversity, and focuses on inclusivity rather than exclusivity.⁷⁰ A spatial and literary analysis of settler colonial nations as examined in Native women's literary maps will put some teeth into Native political and social movements by exposing spatial practices that construct and maintain a white settler society.

Conceiving of land through narrative process, however, is not unique to Native people. Property law, European concepts of environment, and concepts of Nation all rely on tales to lend meaning to nature and ordered space. It is for this reason that James Scott opens with lines from the epic of Gilgamesh to talk of the "tunnel vision" of a "fiscal lens" by which the early modern state viewed its forest as revenue and created a "vocabulary used to organize nature . . . focusing on those aspects of nature that can be appropriated for human use."⁷¹ Colonial ideologies make truth claims and attempt to empty Native people's relationship to land and place through naturalizing of the relationship of people to land and naturalizing the conquest of both.

J. B. Harley and Denis Wood explore mapmaking cultures' obsession with terra incognita, particularly as it is narrated and represented in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Terra incognita, a concept of blank space in European thought, disavows Natives' socio-relationship with land and the communities that spring forth from this relationship. Blank spaces not only "stir the geographical imagination," but provide the means of "opening up" new territories: "But [a passage from Conrad] demonstrates the map's double function in colonialism of both opening and later closing a territory," Wood notes, and continues on to "argue that Conrad's thirst for blank spaces on the map—like that of other writers—is also a symptom of a deeply ingrained colonial mentality that was already entrenched in seventeenth-century New England. In this view the world is full of empty spaces ready for taken by Englishmen."⁷² Maps in this case also provide the narrative backbone of conquest. In this narrative of conquest, maps have affirmed "the truth" of territories. The "closure" of blank spaces or mapping of territories is a strategy to limit Native legal rights, ownership of land, and tribal imaginations. It is a means of transfiguring Native land into colonial territories in the socio-imaginary. As those imagined territories become liberal nation-states, the mythic narratives of exploration and heroic achievement remain part of the national terrain. Inclusiveness of a Native past becomes celebrated under multiculturalism, yet, as my work with the authors in this project demonstrates, the national space does not become imagined as Native space. If anything

multicultural narratives serve to undermine the Native subject, and her land becomes abstracted and incorporated in the national polity.⁷³ And, as Andrea Smith demonstrates by showing patterns of interpersonal and state violence in her important treatise *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, gender violence functions as a tool for conquest.⁷⁴ Conquest of land required a conquest of Native bodies both in its physical manifestation and in the mental maps produced.

By examining the writing of Native women, I unmoor settling narratives used to dislocate Native people and address concepts that extend from land that move us beyond simplistic and naturalized notions of “Indians” that began with contact. National mythmaking is key to the organization of space: it determines who belongs and does not belong. White settler societies’ disavowal, erasure, and enslavement of labor are necessary to the project of the state and rely on the mapping of bodies into abstract national terrains. Bodies are organized, categorized, surveilled, and made readable to the state by mapping national and non-national spaces and appointing the appropriate bodies in those spaces. In the case of many Native people, this has supported genocide, containment on the reservation, or imprisonment in controlled spaces such as boarding schools or prisons. This colonial spatial construction is not unidirectional, and Native people have mediated these spatial constructions with the best tools at their disposal—storytelling, writing, and sense of place. When passing the Kmart that now stands on top of “storage pits,” the poem is recalled, Native presence remembered, and experiences shared.

In simplifying the relationship to land as purely political or as evidence of governmental control, stories are understood in particular ways and bound into court cases and territorial claiming, tending to lose the sets of social relations regularly laid out in their structures. Stories keep us together—not court systems—and it is time we listen, as Schenandoah reasons, to answer our questions “why.” Why do the dissolution, erasure, and denial of Native spaces continue even though there is recognition of a violent and torrid past? How are we caring for land and each other? What are the moral geographies we have come to in the twenty-first century? How do the stories that bear witness in many forms and map our intimate and social geographies guide us in the past, present, and toward a healthier future? These are questions that guide me throughout as I examine gendered patterns of twentieth-century spatial production in settler states.

My project attempts to move away from concepts of pure and unconnected Native spaces and acknowledges colonialism in its past, present, and even

contradictory forms. The process of spatial restructuring is continual and substantiated through a variety of mechanisms such as force, laws, and ideology, and often these are not in agreement with one another, but nonetheless support domination and settlement. In (re)mapping Native lands and bodies in the twentieth century, my main goal is to ask the “why” so that Native nations will rethink spatializing and organizing our communities around the heteropatriarchal structure of the nation-state model. By replicating abstract space in Native nation-building, Native communities move away from imagining new possibilities beyond that mapped out for Native people in settler societies. Like Schenandoah, I want us to understand what is at stake, so that we can make the best decisions in our communities.

From a young age, many Native people are taught where revered points in the landscape are located, some are taught the stories that accompany the landscape, and many forge sets of relationship entwined in the responsibilities that come with this knowledge that belongs to past, present, and future generations. Unfortunately, the spatial violence inflicted on generations of Native peoples has also led to a disruption of this grounding knowledge, whether it occurs through environmental destruction, incorporation into capitalism, language eradication, displacement from lands, and a myriad of other disciplining geographic structures. Native stories speak to a storied land and storied peoples, connecting generations to particular locales and in a web of relationships. By exploring the narrative mapping of land, nation, community, and bodies in the works of twentieth-century Native women authors, I link the reconceptualization of Native land from the beginning of North American nation-building to current struggles with the settler state that continues to undermine the power of Native nations, Native women, and community relationships.

The pitfalls of simplifying Native peoples’ relationship to land into romanticized and mystical or merely political categories are that these studies too often overlook the gendered and violent nature of colonizing Native lands, and in this book it is my intention to complicate the narrative maps constructed in the twentieth century and to intervene in the harsh realities of spatial violence that continue to produce colonial logics. These chapters bring into focus the importance of literature in enabling a (re)conceptualization of static assumptions of “Indian,” borders, and gender. How do these women actively engage in the movement for representational, intellectual, and political sovereignty? “Sovereignty, community, and the vitality and power of a tradition that is constantly *evolving* are fundamental categories for the Laguna

author,⁷⁵ says Weaver, but I would also apply this statement to Belin, Harjo, and Johnson. In their fictional work, these women not only reflect at times their lived realities but they also conceptualize race and gender as evolving, and this is the key to understanding their power to disentangle Western geographical power/knowledge regimes.

As more Native people become mobile, reserve/ation land bases become overcrowded, and the state seeks to enforce means of containment, it is imperative to refocus Native nation-building efforts beyond settler models of territory, jurisdiction, borders, and race. Recent attempts at land acquisition by the Oneida, Narragansett, and Pequot are instances of the reversal of the colonial project of spatial dominance, but these have been met with much resistance by the state and its citizens who fear dispossession of “individual property.” Other nations, such as the Cherokee and Menominee, hold elections in urban areas where large portions of their population reside off-reservation. Still, even others are creating maps in their own languages and with knowledge from the elders as a tool for land claims, environmental activism, fighting large corporations, and teaching the next generations. The Nunavut mapping project is exemplary of a decolonial project with immense potential.⁷⁶ This reimagining of what constitutes Native space is important to antiviolence projects. As I document and explore Native women’s writing and challenge Western forms of “narratives and maps [which] become violent when literalised, [and] mapped directly onto real people and places,”⁷⁷ I continually ask how rigid spatial categories, such as nations, borders, reservations, and urban areas, are formed by settler nation-states structuring of space.

While I study contemporary Native American literature and not stories from time immemorial (which is the case with many scholars who have looked in depth at the relationship of Native people and land), its tendency in a single breath or word to recall hundreds, even thousands of years back by employing community, personal, and historical stories in intertextual moments allows us to see these sets of relationships outside the mapping of the state. It allows us to see that the map is an open one and the ideological and material relationships it produces are still in process.⁷⁸ The breadth of scale in terms of time, geography, and worldviews provokes a deep reflection on the landscape, and its meanings to Native people beyond the mere political or assumed corollary of Indian is to nature or land is to territory or resource. It comes down to power. In (re)mapping, we as Native people hold the power to rethink the way we engage with territory, with our relationships

to one another, and with other Native nations and settler nations. And it is our stories that will lead the way as they have for generations. Native stories extend beyond a beautiful aesthetic and simple moral or fable. These connections are powerful in the struggle against colonialism and empire building—yet they are fragile and need tending. I venture that these stories in their contemporary forms are that tending and will continue to map our future. Mark my words, these imaginative geographies will open up new possibilities and inaugurate new and vital meanings.

