ERIC GARY ANDERSON
George Mason University

South to a Red Place: Contemporary American Indian Writing and the Problem of Native/Southern Studies

THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL ISSUE OF *MISSISSIPPI QUARTERLY* GOES TO PRESS about forty years after what Jace Weaver (Cherokee) calls "the signal event in Native literature" (121): the 1968 publication of the novel *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa).[1] "After [this] novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969," Weaver writes, "it was as if floodgates had been opened, and through them poured a steady stream of books by Natives" (121). At about the same time, some of these Native books began to find moorings in an increasingly multicultural American literary canon. Southern literature was already there, having been "invented" and subsequently admitted, by the late 1920s or early 1930s, to a less multicultural—but not utterly white and Euro-American—version of that canon.[2]

Even today, however, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, Indians continue to be generally absent—sometimes by design—from the critical and institutional conversations about Southern literature. They often go completely unmentioned in non-Native-authored literary histories and critical studies of Southern literature, wherein one of the dominant paradigms has for a long time now been "the South in black and white."[3] Likewise, Southern Studies degree programs, conferences,

---

[1]A word about terminology might be helpful here. Within the field of Native American Studies, the terms "American Indian" and "Native American" are often used interchangeably, though, as even a quick survey of the major critical and theoretical studies makes apparent, particular critics have clear preferences for one or the other. Neither term comes without problems; for one, "American" tends to apply to tribal nations within the boundaries of the "lower 48" United States, thereby erasing or downplaying tribal-national relations among indigenous peoples of Canada ("First Nations"), Alaska, the US, and Mexico, to name but four. A good rule of thumb is to be as specific as possible, using the names tribal nations use when possible.

[2]See Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature* and "Toward 'A New Southern Studies."

[3]One bracing exception is Roberta Rosenberg's entry on "Native American Literature" in *The Companion to Southern Literature*.

and journals rarely acknowledge this less monochromatic "black, white, and red" South; in turn, Native scholars and teachers rarely see these professional venues as intellectual home places. All told, in such a climate, the ranks of those who teach, research, and/or publish on the intersections of Native literature and the South remain very slim; to date, there has been no critical monograph that focuses explicitly on American Indian literatures and cultures of the South.[4]

The situation is not entirely grim, however. Within the American Studies Association (ASA), for example, Native scholars have joined and to a large extent led a critical conversation about finding an indigenous place on non-Native ground. Indian intellectuals have participated regularly in the last several ASA conferences, served on ASA committees (including the program committee), and collaborated on a 2003 "Forum on American (Indian) Studies: Can the ASA Be An Intellectual Home?" published in the Association's journal, *American Quarterly*. The 2007-2008 President-elect of the Association is Philip J. Deloria, a distinguished Standing Rock Sioux scholar and the son of legendary intellectual Vine Deloria, Jr. But a great deal of work remains to be done, and, as I argue in another forum, it is important to bear in mind that "American Indians have not only been made separable from the South, especially in its literature; American Indian literature of the South also *makes itself* both separable and inseparable from Southern literature and the South" ("On Native Ground"). This special issue of the *Mississippi Quarterly*, then, marks a real beginning as it reveals, first of all, that Native writers of the South are doing important work and that they look at the South from a variety of places and perspectives, write with consummate literary skill in a variety of genres, and stand in respectful relation to one or more particular tribal-national literary histories. This issue also presents ways of seeing the various literary histories of American Indian nations of the South as interconnected and understandable as a cohesive intertribal literary canon, provided that one

---

[4]What we do have includes the valuable anthology edited by Littlefield and Parins; an outstanding monograph by Annette Trefzer focusing on Indian discourses in fiction by Faulkner, Welty, Lytle, and Gordon; and critical studies, in various stages of development, by Melanie R. Benson and Eric Gary Anderson. We also have several critical studies by American Indian intellectuals—among them books by Daniel Heath Justice, Robert Warrior, and Craig Womack—that discuss Native writers, texts, and nations of the South without taking an explicitly regional or Southern studies perspective.

also bears in mind the distinctions among various tribal-national literatures—the ways in which, for example, Cherokee literature differs from Muscogee Creek.[5] And it argues persuasively that the Native literary work under discussion contributes, much more significantly, and subtly, than has generally been acknowledged, to Southern as well as to American Indian literature.

Of course, as I have already begun to suggest, Native texts, cultures, and histories differ from—even as they often intersect with—non-Native texts, cultures, and histories; this is as true of Southern Native and non-Native texts as it is true of Native and non-Native texts from or about other American regions. But the situation in the South is exemplary because it illustrates with such clarity the cultural persistence of Indian removal, as well as the critical problems that crop up when one unskeptically applies regionalist paradigms to American Indian texts. The removal of Indians from non-Native literary-critical discussions of the South, for example, persists despite the abundance of contemporary Native literary texts, from and/or about the South, that discuss both Natives and the South from indigenous points of view. By listening to these Native Southern voices speaking about Native cultural histories and contemporary experiences both inside and outside "the South," one can get a clearer sense of how and why American Indian writers unname and displace, much more frequently than they buy into, this regional construction.

To begin the work of encouraging a much more visible Native/Southern presence in the criticism, let me reiterate that Native writers occupy Southern territory both physically and discursively, turning to and talking about the South from Southern homelands and (more frequently) from points outside the South. For example, as I have argued elsewhere, Linda Hogan (Chickasaw) predicates her novel *Power* (1998) on an invented Florida Indian tribe that survives to the extent that it can remain, by design and self-determination, strategically inaccessible to larger "Southern" and "American" worlds ("Native American Literature"). In an "Author Note" at the end of her novel *Shell Shaker* (2001), LeAnne Howe (Choctaw) "urge[s] more Choctaws to investigate the documents and their family histories to write their stories" (227) as a way of practicing the Choctaw intellectual sovereignty her book

---

[5]See Womack for critical discussion of Muscogee Creek national literature and Justice, *Our Fire Survives the Storm*.

exemplifies. Stephen Graham Jones (Blackfeet), my primary subject in this essay, pursues a somewhat different path, ignoring and refuting regionalist and other confines of personal and cultural identity with gleeful impunity.[6] In contrast, Native theories and practices of intellectual sovereignty, self-determination, literary separatism, and literary nationalism emphasize Native cultural identities, looking to Muskogee Creek, Cherokee, and other tribal-national and tribal-transnational Southern homelands and, in the process, operating as a form of strategic counter-removal.[7] Indians have lived there since long before the places in question were denominated "the South," and a complicated, continuing, and politically charged tradition of oral storytelling joins with written Native texts (from the early nineteenth century on) to form a considerable, lasting Southern American Indian literature that, for a variety of compelling reasons and in a variety of challenging ways, both embraces and repels its Southernness.

Jones's 2003 *All the Beautiful Sinners* is difficult to identify, let alone to interpret, as "Southern." This strategic difficulty allows Jones to preserve (rather than invent) complicated and unpredictable indigenous textual and cultural identities. This novel may well seem, at first blush, a strange vehicle for a critical study of Native literature of the South, for Jones, a Blackfeet from west Texas, neither "homes in" to a particular, Native-centered Southern place nor evokes anything so pat and accessible as a "middle ground" between Indians and non-Indians. The plot summary from Jones's website begins to get at the intricacy of the story the book tells:

> Deputy Sheriff Jim Doe plunges into a renegade manhunt after the town's sheriff is gunned down. But unbeknownst to him, the suspect—an American Indian—holds chilling connections to the disappearance of Doe's sister years before. And the closer Doe gets to the fugitive's trail, the more he realizes that his own involvement in the case is hardly coincidental. A descendant of the Blackfeet Nation himself, Doe keeps getting mistaken for the killer he's chasing. And when the FBI's finest three profilers descend on the case, Doe suspects the hunt has only just begun.

---

[6]Throughout this essay, I follow standard tribal-national practice: "Blackfeet" (which is both singular and plural) indicates US residence, while "Blackfoot" designates First Nations Canadian.

[7]On nationalism, see Weaver, Womack, and Warrior. On strategic counter-removal, see Anderson, "Rethinking Indigenous Southern Communities."

For now, I would add only that the killer described here is an apprentice, and a sort of agent, of the primary serial killer, a peripatetic man with loose and ambivalent blood connections to First Nations Blackfoot, who abducts Indian and non-Indian children, then either trains them to be criminals or kills them.

In numerous ways, this Native text challenges regionalist designations in general and turns to Southern places in a darkly touristic way—in the form of an "on the road" novel about serial homicide—without explicitly or sentimentally embracing the South as some sort of home place. (In this novel, home places are devilishly hard to come by.) What I argue in a 2002 essay about Hogan's novel *Power* largely holds true of Jones's novel:

> Access to the old ways, to the natural world that drives them, to the small Florida tribe that still bears responsibility for both, and to the American Indian South writ larger, is a form of literary and multicultural power—but power, as Hogan understands it, is a deeply fraught, deeply ambiguous entity that defies all desires—characters' and readers'—for instant gratification and confident cultural authority. Her welcome reminder of an Indian presence in the South carries with it a number of unwelcome, or at the very least vexing, complexities. ("Native American Literature" 167)

If anything, Jones goes further than Hogan in his evocation of an uneasy, traumatic, ambivalently (re)occupied indigenous South. He makes it possible to argue that the most radical of these Native/Southern texts, such as *All the Beautiful Sinners*, are in fact the ones *least* readily identifiable as "Southern"—which is to say that they are the ones most purposefully and strategically bent on undoing US regionalism in the interests of either tribal-national sovereignty or some other indigenous articulation of local, national, continental, hemispheric, and/or global presence and action. West Texas, where Jones—like Sheriff Jim Doe—hails from and still lives, is at most an ambiguously "Southern" place *and* an ambiguously "Native" place: "Like it was an excuse. Like he needed one. Or needed to tell her, explain how he really was Indian, just in Texas" (49).

Jones's fiction, and particularly *All the Beautiful Sinners*, is germane to this argument precisely because it moves into and out of the South and various other US regions while erasing, joking about, and otherwise rejecting regionalist and other comparable ways of categorizing. His

drive-by (or perhaps more accurately his drive-through) renderings of the South are not markedly different from his turns to other American locations: similar problems obtain, giving rise to similar critiques of colonialism, capitalism, forensic science, constructions of racial and other forms of identity, and generic predictability. Instead, in *All the Beautiful Sinners*, particular American locations—houses, towns, forests, rest stops, and various other places—all constitute what might be called roadside America, a place both mundane and menacing that functions, or is capable of functioning, as a site of both routinized tourism and routinized trauma. Canvassing a suspect's vehicle, for example, FBI agents note that "The RV was clean, too. Like the spoons and forks. No maps of Kansas, no snapshots of children, none of the pamphlets they hand out at the state lines, about diverse cultures, some Indian dancer backlit by the dying sun, the feathers of his bustle shadow-black" (253). The "recreational vehicle," parked in a driveway in Fredericksburg, Virginia, holds no recreational materials; it holds out the prospect or expectation of tourism but also frustrates and even negates that expectation. Somewhat analogously, in this convergence of darkening shadows ("the dying sun," the "shadow-black" feathers) and an overarching absence (none of the above is there, except in the shadowy realms of touristic, investigative expectation), a fleeting, imaginary Native visibility quickly recedes into nothingness. Or, as Jones writes near the beginning of Sheriff Jim Doe's pursuit of an Indian who kills: "There was no trail, just miles and miles of blacktop spooling out over the prairie" (48).

Within these eerily empty built environments, where the "Indian dancer," never more than an imagined absence, is quickly displaced and forgotten, and paved roads cannot be mistaken for trails that lead to or from anywhere, male-female pairs of bodies keep turning up in places with biblical names: Bethlehem, North Carolina; Bethlehem, Connecticut; and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Jerusalem, Rhode Island, and Jerusalem, Georgia. Jericho, New York. Canaan, Connecticut. Ararat, Virginia. "Eight pairs; one a year since 1991. Sixteen bodies. That they knew about. All along the Atlantic seaboard" (24). Many serial killers commit their crimes within a more strictly demarcated region, to the extent that, as Mark Seltzer argues, the killers become attached to, and thereby participate in the definition of, a particular region. Serial killers and their crimes betray

> an extraordinary absorption in place and place making: an absorption in place and place construction that becomes indistinguishable from programs of self-making and self-construction. . . . The effects of violence and horror precipitated by the radical failure of distinction between subject and place are absolutely crucial in understanding cases of repetitive violence. (34)

In *All the Beautiful Sinners*, though, the forensic areas in question work quite differently; they do not seem to coalesce into a single definable, nameable place, not "Green River" or "Hillside" or "Atlanta" or even "North" or "South" or "New England" only, but "all along the Atlantic seaboard" as well as scattered throughout numerous landlocked states.

Jones presents these dispersed criminalized places as very problematically indigenized. One of the crime scenes presents "two scaffolds, made the old way, with lodge poles and leather ties. The bodies were eight feet off the ground, wrapped in sleeping bags. One had cartoons on it, *Space Chase*; the other was just blue, with ragged tears trailing fibers of unnatural white" (115). There are also feathers and a turtle-shell rattle. Insidiously, the Indian killer is not only killing Indian children but also presenting their bodies in ways he takes to be traditional. But whose traditions? Here and at various other crime scenes, he also poses the bodies so that all the dead boys are looking in a particular direction: "They didn't point to a common center—the killer's *Evil Dead* compound . . . but out to sea. Each one of them. Europe? Some set of stars low down on the horizon?" (66). And each dead girl is "looking up to him, the boy. Meaning she was looking *away* from the Atlantic. To the west" (66). So the dead Indian girls face westward, in a twisted parody of a feminized Manifest Destiny, while the dead Indian boys face eastward, toward the Atlantic, as if to confront incoming European colonists from a position of extreme, complete, insensate helplessness. The reference to *Evil Dead* (1982), a low-budget horror movie set in Tennessee, allows Jones both to acknowledge his strong interest in non-indigenous horror film (and fiction) and, more importantly, to argue against the "common center" or causal, explanatory force or entity that such non-Native popular genres often presuppose—in this instance, a supernatural explanation for killings and reanimations of the dead. Failing that sort of explanation or association, Jones suggests, the murders must be understood as bizarre race crimes that, for reasons yet unclear, reenact Western representations of Euro-American colonialism. Cody Mingus, one of the FBI agents investigating

the case along with Sheriff Jim Doe, locates online an image of "Manifest Destiny the fifty-foot woman, striding bare-breasted above a ragged line of covered wagons. One breast, anyway. Milky white," and he realizes that "Her head was tilted at the same angle as all the girls from the crime scene photos: looking west past the boy, the boy who was a man. The man who was painted white" (66). As the narrative unfolds, this painting and whitening of American Indian corpses indicate more and more clearly that this Indian killer is not so much an Indian who kills (though he does have the blood connections, noted above, to First Nations Blackfoot) as a killer of Indians—one who, like the white Europeans and Euro-Americans who invent and rationalize Manifest Destiny, seeks to remove Indians by murdering them and/or making them white.

That the crime scene in question is situated in Deerfield, Kansas, matters less than that these crime scenes are replicated "all along the Atlantic seaboard," including the South and at various points west. Each of the fifty-eight chapters in *All the Beautiful Sinners* begins with a specific month, day, and year as well as the name of an American town and state. But as I've begun to suggest, Jones does not regionalize. Instead, he sees America—by which he means the United States, with brief, passing glances at Canada—as a hyperactive, volatile place where cultural categories and distinctions regularly collapse. The absence of regionalism in his book is both an indigenous strategy and a symptom of numerous large and alienating non-Native things: a homogenizing globalism, for example, or a voracious criminal narrative that is always just out of sight and out of reach. As various distinctions and categories, racial as well as regional, collapse, the novelistic strategy of meticulously "documenting" each chapter by way of a particular place name and a particular date seems like a last stand against utter homogeneity, an ironic insistence that "Lydia, Kansas," and "Calhoun Falls, South Carolina," communicate something about identity in this America where a routine, mundane postmodernism intersects with these regressive yet unextinguished replications of nineteenth-century anti-Indian hate crimes, ideologies, and representations.

The novel begins in Bethlehem, North Carolina, with two children breaking out of a van. "Tied to the rearview mirror was a plastic war bonnet, red white and blue" (1), which acts as a metronome for the children and as a confused signifier for any reader who sees here a crass

commodity Indianness coated with layers of nationalistic and homicidal irony. The captive children

> moved from shadow to shadow, the moon gibbous above them, the leaf litter inconstant, shuffling with inattention, and, forty yards from the trail, they saw them, the other children, the ground beneath their feet rustling, the tree above them bent. It was an oak, one of the old ones, that had been tied over from the top when it was a sapling, back before America was America. An Indian tree, a marker. It made an arch. This was a holy place. (6)

The two living Indian children come face to face with a staged representation of one of their possible pasts as well as one of their possible futures, linking an ancient and longstanding sense of holiness to an ancient and longstanding practice of colonial genocide. The dead Indian children and what they represent are rooted in place and at the same time are part of a larger pattern of serial Indian removal, up and down the Atlantic seaboard and all across the midsection of the continent. The dead children are not necessarily from the area where their bodies have been so stagily deposited; the "Southernness" of this North Carolina scene signifies little if at all, as it is neither specifically marked as Southern nor peopled by Southerners.

The serial killer's method is to dress as a fireman and abduct pairs of Indian children between the ages of about eight and fourteen while tornadoes strike the children's home towns. He then trains some of them to be killers like him, kills the others (or has them killed), and deposits (or has others deposit) pairs of dead bodies in various, deliberately chosen locations such as the ones discussed above. During the course of the novel this killer occasionally gets named and described as Whirlwind Man, mostly by minor characters rather than by the narrator, but in more important ways Jones twists and distorts a white figure into a *faux* Whirlwind Man who "takes the people the wind missed" (147) and, most often, kills them. That is, Whirlwind Man himself never appears in the book, as he does in, for example, two works by Laguna Pueblo writers: Paula Gunn Allen's "Whirlwind Man Steals Yellow Woman" (in *Spider Woman's Granddaughters*) and Leslie Marmon Silko's "Yellow Woman" (in *Storyteller*, in which he manifests more implicitly, as Silva). In *All the Beautiful Sinners*, Blue Kettle, an Indian man whose two children fall victim to the serial killer and who might himself be a sort of embodied spirit helper, advises Jim Doe to talk to some Pueblos in Texas about Whirlwind Man: "How he liked to take people away" (122). But

Jones goes no further than this; he eventually discloses that the killer does not see himself as Whirlwind Man but styles himself a "Friend of the Indian" who even trains some of the Indian children he abducts, such as "Jane Doe," to become passionate Indian killers in their own right. "Jane Doe" reports that there are three houses with

> Basements full of us. He lets us out sometimes, though. For field trips, socialization. The occasional concert. Oh, and you know the kachina dolls he makes?. . . that's where he does the . . . first parts. With the legs. And arms. It's like sex with him, reaching his hand in. . . . It's like school. . . . He's always . . . *teaching* us stuff. Indian stuff, I mean. About who we are. Like the trees. (209)

Later, Jones describes how this killer loves to quote and otherwise play off of other serial killers (without, again, mimicking their geographical self-identifications), making arcane allusions to their victims, aliases, and other such details, in ways that move all over the continent, from David Berkowitz in New York City to the Zodiac Killer in California. Here again, a loving, fetishistic attention to details feeds into a horrific transcontinental network of serial criminality that feeds on itself and, in the process, opens up yet another way in which Jones expels Southernness and other forms of regional identity—as well as a predictable and, here, parodically and terrifyingly diluted "indigenous" mythology: "Indian stuff. . . . Like the trees." Identified as one of the killer's best students, "Jane Doe" reveals that she has *not* learned much about "Indian stuff," which in turn solidifies readers' suspicions about her teacher's "Indian" pretensions and aspirations.

What happens, moreover, when textual details are much more specific and local than "the trees" yet do not home in on and verify a regional identity? What happens when these details instead operate, as they often do in Jones's fiction, as a transcontinental, homogenizing, and discomposing force? When the narrator of *All the Beautiful Sinners* says, for example, that "The bottle caps and glass embedded in the asphalt glittered underneath them like snake eyes" (3), he is describing a highway in North Carolina, but this is apparent only because this sentence appears in a chapter with a header identifying the site as Bethlehem, North Carolina. The links between specific local details and the identities of the places do not necessarily come clearer when these details pile up. Here, for example, are four local details about one of the places described early in the novel. First, the narrator notes four

broken-down houses, "each with a utility pole behind it. Full of birds now, and worse" (12). Second, the central character calls up a childhood memory of moving to higher ground to get free of the deadly H2S gas that has produced "a nearly perfect circle of dead animals. Rabbits and moles and ground squirrels and pack rats and birds. It had been unholy. His father had made him look, remember" (12). When Jim Doe, the child in question, nearly steps into that low-lying gas, his father says "*not yet*" (12). Third, returning to the narrative present, the narrator remarks: "That was the way you could tell it was March again: large blades slitting the earth open" (12). And fourth, high school authorities display a "prom car"—a badly wrecked 1982 Corvette on a trailer. Assuming (as I do) that Jones is not simply an indifferent regionalist, my question is this: since these details do not converge to indicate a single, clear, nameable regional identity, what *do* they signify?[8]

Like the glittering asphalt that conjures snake eyes, the details clearly insinuate something menacing; moreover, the familiar presence of agrarian violence and an exemplary death car could mark a variety of American locations, not just a North Carolina highway or small-town Texas. At times the local also takes the form of fleeting, unsettling symbolic gestures—such as a red handprint counting coup on the driver's side door of a pickup truck in Garden City, Kansas, or perhaps the notion of an "unholy" but "perfect circle"—from one traveling and/or effectively homeless Indian to another. As even this small collection of textual examples begins to make clear, the South is—like the Midwest and New England, two other regions this novel enters into—an unprivileged, unexceptional place. In this regard, it is telling that Jones has published a story, "Domestic Man," with the online journal *Southern Hum*: "When Hattie and Len came back from their Weekend Craft Extravaganza their husbands had gone feral," this story memorably begins, trafficking in what sounds like a vaguely Southern lower-middle-class world gone awry but at the same time situating this world in a nebulous, multi-locational cyber-environment. Or, as in *All the Beautiful Sinners*, he channels William Faulkner in the phrase "all feathers and colors and sound and fry bread" (421), indigenizing the title *The Sound and the Fury* but also injecting this line into a chapter set in Dodge City, Kansas.

---

[8]For those who are curious, the four local details describe Nazareth, Texas.

All told, *All the Beautiful Sinners* powerfully demonstrates Jones's critical fascination with the damaged and damaging geographies of this roadside America, the partially and inconsistently indigenized traumas that visit and shadow small towns and byways and quiet, otherwise nondescript suburban homes. Many of the places Jones describes are but brief, lethal pauses by the side of one road after another in the context of a larger and increasingly frenetic search for something that might not be locatable. It's a disconcerting mix: people and places absorb the traumas wrought by serial homicide, find themselves reluctantly, obsessively, cynically, sickeningly caught up in something that they can't quite put a word or a name to; serial murder breeds serial absorption, serial interpretation that in disturbing ways partakes of the very crimes it sets out to arrest. Local criminalized particulars accumulate, and engagement with them is both intimate and surprisingly fragile, impermanent. In contexts such as these, the South is present but difficult to discern; figuratively as well as literally, it often has no name.

Jones's indigenous unnamings of the South (and other American regions) act to some extent as glosses on earlier removals of Indians from the South (and other American regions)—but he also energetically, happily embraces his own self-appointed role as a trickster who transgresses and deconstructs boundaries and isms and redefines Native ground (physical, cultural, intellectual, literary) in the process. As I will propose in the closing section of this essay, Native Studies and Southern Studies scholars might do well to follow Jones's lead and examine the ways in which their prospective collaborations risk replicating or otherwise extending longstanding historical and cultural problems, including the pitfall that I have been describing as an intellectual as well as a geographical regionalism. In other words, to locate literary-critical ways of bringing Native and Southern together, we would do well to take Jones's novel as a sort of map or analogy that allows us to recognize more fully that the most interesting Native takes on the South are the ones *least* recognizable as Southern, and that these texts do not easily or willingly lend themselves to additive, inclusionary projects such as the expansion of either Southern or Native studies by way of each other.

In addition to raising the possibility that it might be time to stop talking about the South, Jones's work suggests that contemporary American Indian literature—particularly texts that are invested in the

South—is already unnaming, remaking, repossessing, resituating, or otherwise disburdening itself of this strange, cumbersome, fragile, contentious, escapable, and not-so-inevitable collection of qualities that have for so long now been prioritized as "Southern." In this vein, an interviewer for the online "writing about writing" site *Slushpile* holds fast to the category "the South" much more than Jones does:

> Barry Hannah once said something that stuck in my mind about how he wanted to read stories about the South but a different culture than what usually gets portrayed. He mentioned a story he really enjoyed about Armenians in Atlanta as opposed to the usual screen-door-slamming shut, dirt-roads, pickup truck version of the South.

Here "the South" remains "the South," only with urban Armenians added. But the question this interviewer then poses to Jones links this supposed "new" or "different" South to textual constructions of Native cultures: "Is there an element of the Native American culture you'd like to see explored more?" Jones replies:

> Yeah, the element that doesn't go for drums and suns and bears. Not saying that's not a part of the culture, just that, always writing about pipes and chants and stuff doesn't help disabuse non-Indian readers that we aren't still wearing loincloths. As for elements missing in fiction specifically, I'd say parody first—we need to make fun of ourselves, if for no other reason than to get a jump on everybody else—and next, some kind of reappropriation-fantasy mode. Violent, hostile stuff, that doesn't pull any punches just to get on the shelves. John McClane with a headband, yeah.

As this interview exchange makes clear, Jones rethinks and performs outside not only the category "the South" but also the category and presumptive home space of "American Indian literature," within which parody in particular has been in relatively short supply. One of Jones's favorite writers is Philip K. Dick; he has a voracious appetite and affection for non-Native popular/genre fiction, and professes to being as influenced by Stephen King as he is by Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe). As he says in another interview, this one under the auspices of Fiction Collective 2, publishers of his first two novels, *The Fast Red Road: A Plainsong* (2000) and *The Bird Is Gone: A Manifesto* (2003),

> I like to read Vonnegut, Pynchon, John Barth, Rushdie, Ishmael Reed, that whole crowd. And DF Wallace, that guy can really write dialogue. And Neal Stephenson, you can learn how to put a scene together just by reading him, I suspect. But "kinship." It's a hard word for me. "Influence," yeah, no problem. Or, "Longing

> Vainly To Be Like." But kinship. That entails resemblance, it seems. How about Terry Gilliam, then, or David Lynch? If their films had been novels, my stuff might resemble theirs at some level. I mean, if they were all abridged by one of Oliver Sacks' patients—someone with just the right blend of aphasia and compulsion.

How is it that Jones "doesn't sound like any of the rest of us?," as Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene) puts it in a back-cover blurb for *The Bird Is Gone*. Jones manages this in part by writing fiction that shows such a healthy (and at times parodic) disrespect for stable notions of place and of homing in, in part by situating himself within such a relentlessly masculine network of literary and artistic influences, and in part by way of work that both embraces and collapses genres; a quick online search reveals that *All the Beautiful Sinners* has been assigned to a variety of generic categories (detective fiction, suspense, horror, and Native literature, to name four). Commercial booksellers don't quite know what to do with him, and I would unsympathetically tell them that the book also works as another example of American gothic and travel narrative—the road novel in all its frenetic energy—to mention but two more possibilities. And, though no bookstore I know acknowledges such a category, the novel also operates as a purposeful mutation of the contemporary Native novel's alienated male warrior plot.

But Jones also takes a skeptical attitude toward that plot as well as to various other moves that have perhaps grown familiar to readers of American Indian fiction. An interviewer observes to Jones: "You've said in interviews elsewhere that you're trying to redefine the Indian Novel because it's grown stagnant. Plus it's known that you're a self-proclaimed thriller/horror buff. What appeals to you about the two?" Jones's reply is worth quoting at length:

> Not to get on a political high-horse or anything—or, just for a moment, here, anyway—my problem with the Indian Novel is that it seems to be falling victim to the very thing it's claimed to be resisting: essentialism. Saying something's "good" or "right" just because it is what is. Here, just because it's Indian. Example: the homing pattern most Indian Novels seem to incorporate. This is where the lost or exiled protagonist finds himself meandering back into the community, which is of course an inversion of the "American" novel, where it's those who want to individualize themselves who are the heroic ones, the champions, the winners. Think *Cuckoo's Nest*, then *Ceremony*, say. What's a comic narrative for one culture's a tragedy for the other. And resisting the tragedy, reappropriating the comic narrative, yeah, that makes pretty good sense, is one of the better forms of resistance. But then, oops,

> suddenly everything *involved* in that reappropriation gets a positive charge, just by association. Which is bad. Essentialism. Saying that [in] the Indian community the hero's *pro*gressing towards is automatically "good," that its "goodness" is beyond reproach here, sacrosanct. That's just another way of erasing the Indian with motel paintings, calling us all Noble, Conveniently Vanishing Savages. ("LPTape 1")

In *All the Beautiful Sinners*, even the protagonist's name, Sheriff Jim Doe, affords a potentially essentialist "Indian" link between a human and an animal as well as a possible reference to *The Doe Boy* (2001), a film by Randy Redroad (Cherokee). But "Jim Doe" also comes very close (though interestingly not exactly) to "John Doe," the highly generic name used, typically in some sort of official capacity, as a placeholder that "names" and "accounts for" but does not identify anonymous victims of crimes. Another Sheriff with a suggestive surname, Debs, visits Jim Doe in a local jail, where he is busy reenacting the role of "Noble, Conveniently Vanishing Savage": "He looked to Debs like Indians he'd seen in the movies who just pined away to nothing, looking out the window of their jail. He looked like every other Indian after a night in the drunk tank" (114). In some ways, *All the Beautiful Sinners* riffs off of the predictable Indian novel narrative Jones alludes to in the "LPTape 1" interview, in which a disaffected young adult Indian man gets involved in something much larger than himself, some big and really significant pattern. In Jones's iteration, Sheriff Jim Doe encounters Indians who might or might not "really" be there, in the flesh. He goes to Indian basketball games. He waxes ironic and cynical about people who use phrases like "All my relatives." But in at least one huge way, Jones turns that narrative on itself: his young Indian male protagonist never reconnects with his latent and patiently waiting indigenous self. Sheriff Jim Doe is not N. Scott Momaday's Abel or Leslie Marmon Silko's Tayo or Louis Owens's Cole McCurtain or Susan Power's Harley Wind Soldier.[9] And, as a Blackfeet Indian from west Texas whose path takes him to a deregionalized South by Southeast rather than a barely mentioned North by Northwest,[10] he never reconnects with, or pines for, or for that matter develops, anything resembling a regional, let alone a

---

[9]N. Scott Momaday (Kiowa), *House Made of Dawn*; Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo), *Ceremony*; Louis Owens (Choctaw-Cherokee), *Bone Game*; Susan Power (Standing Rock Sioux), *The Grass Dancer*.

[10]The Blackfeet Nation's tribal government is based in Browning, Montana.

national, identity. For him, as for Jones, a sense of region—as home base or nostalgic desire or geographic demarcation or even as general, available category—is simply not there.

"Of what use is a Native Studies curriculum," Daniel Justice asks, "if it is expected to simply be a road map for white tourism through Indian Territory?" ("We're Not There Yet" 259). Similarly, of what use is a Native novel if it is expected to map out the trails, the state lines, the regional boundaries, and even the predictable "Indian" motifs and gestures that somehow confer something that is taken for authoritative, explanatory, one-size-fits-all knowledge? Jones not only displaces "Indian Territory" but also questions various beloved chestnuts of Native fiction—like the homing-in narrative[11] —which, he asserts, all too often gets tangled up in essentialism. *All the Beautiful Sinners* evokes a variety of seemingly ordinary yet deeply scarred and haunted places; these woods, basements, small-town parks, cars, front porches, backroads, and other such sites constitute a terrifying, lonely, alien, profoundly insecure and damaged yet strangely beautiful place that, perhaps more than anything else, evokes the invaded, destabilized west Kansas of Truman Capote's nonfiction novel *In Cold Blood* (1965). Jones's novel spends a fair amount of time in Kansas, and even goes out to *In Cold Blood* territory, Garden City and Holcomb, without making any other readily apparent gestures toward Capote's book, as if to propose implicit, passing intertextual relations, but nothing more, with its deep investment in a retrograde, fractured, yet still powerful American regionalism. All the while, Jones haphazardly signifies on an Indianness that seems to be part plastic red, white and blue war bonnet and part unrequited desire; as I have suggested, only rarely does he situate this Indianness with any security inside something resembling an indigenous reality or thought world. Instead, Indianness even seems at times to be disturbingly inseparable from colonial serial homicide. Sheriff Jim Doe, repeatedly described as bearing a startling resemblance to one of the killer's most murderous Indian protégés, works to save the younger generation from those who would save the younger generation; the analogy here would in effect compare postmodern serial killers and their theaters of operation to Colonel Richard Pratt and Indian boarding school conditions. Along the way, Doe and others locate a host of empty graves of Indian children, metaphors of depatriation in the name of a twisted,

[11]See Bevis, "Native American Novels: Homing In."

delusory, criminal recovery project masquerading as indigenous. All the while, Jones's novel is generically restless and strategically chaotic; popular commodities—like the plastic war bonnet, the various components of roadside America, and genre fiction—seem both inescapable and unsustainable, both replicating and collapsing.

All the Beautiful Sinners includes two brief epigraphs. The first is from Bruce Springsteen—"God have mercy on the man who doubts what he's sure of"—and the second simply says "some of the names have been changed." I've argued here that one of those names is the South—but that Jones has done more than simply change the name. What I've also tried to suggest is summed up in the tension between these two phrases as they grope toward both absolute certainty and casual changes of identity. In some ways this tension smacks of an old and violent colonial story. But in other ways Jones positions "the South" and "the Indian" and "American Indian literature" in ways that suggest a new kind of tension, one in which the Native and the Southern repel and remove each other and in the process do productive damage to the received terms of regional, generic, and even racial engagement.

At this incipient stage of Western academic study of American Indian literatures and the South, I would ask, then, that we pause to consider whether these categories really should be brought together, in their present form, in the first place. In particular, I suspect that mainstream, familiar concepts of a bordered South and a categorizable, recognizable Southernness, however permeable and flexible these concepts may be, are mostly dysfunctional when it comes to American Indian literature. The South is not unique among American regions in its positions as both a cooperating and a coopted part of a colonial-minded US nation, but—again—it *is* exemplary; both the region and the nation are complicit in the economic and racialized politics of colonization, dispossession, and genocide unleashed against Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Seminole, and other Indian peoples. In other words, the imposition of an imagined yet tenacious regionalism onto Native peoples, writers, and texts thus replicates more than it redresses the constrictive and often deadly excesses of colonialism, not least because such regionalist designations, contingent as they are on notions and practices of US nationalism, prolong and encourage a still-

depatriated indigenous dependency and/or imprisonment on non-Native ground.[12]

Efforts to incorporate Native literature and Native studies into Southern studies risk protracting this persistent colonial-mindedness. As Philip Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux) points out,

> [T]he call for a dialogue with American [and, I would add, Southern] studies might be perceived, among some Indian scholars, in terms of a developmental narrative, perhaps even in terms of incorporation. In that perception, one field of inquiry (Native studies) finds itself subtly framed as being *behind* another (American studies) and suddenly intellectual exchange begins to look uncomfortably like American history writ small, with Native studies assimilated into America(n studies) and raised up in the process. (679)

"[E]ven the barest hint of this frame," Deloria observes, "*forces* one into a rigorous anti-assimilationist position" (679). In a similar way, attempts to incorporate Southern (literary and cultural) studies into Native (literary and cultural) studies may superficially appear a bit more promising but also risk crowding out the Native; any effort to indigenize the [Western] academy carries with it the risk of de-indigenizing.[13] And thus far, these efforts have not, from a Native studies perspective, met

---

[12]Judith Fetterley and Marjorie Pryse make an analogy between rigid demarcations of regions/regionalism and the reservation system, arguing that regionalized (and regionalizing) women and reservation Indians alike are confined and constricted for purposes of disciplinary social control by a socially dominant force, be it gendered and/or racialized and/or political. Their assumption here seems to be that regionalist texts reflect or replicate this problem and do not consistently critique it. "The reservation system" translates less clearly into textual form, but non-Native representations (textual or not) of American Indians often exhibit and/or elicit a similarly limited critical range and similar assumptions about social and cultural hierarchies and power relations. As Fetterley and Pryse assert, "We use the term 'regionalism' . . . to articulate the perspective from ruled places that includes the perception that 'regionalization' is not natural; it is not a feature of geography, though topography may play some part in changing economic conditions. Rather, regionalism asserts that the regionalizing premise concerns the consolidation and maintenance of power through ideology and is therefore a discourse . . . rather than a place" (7). This, they say a little later, is an argument that downplays "geographical determinism" (11). The reservation system, in contrast, would seem to extend and exemplify an ideologically driven "geographical determinism" to the extent that Indian removals and reservations are understood to operate as an arm of "manifest destiny."

[13]See Mihesuah and Wilson.

with great success.[14] It may well make sense, then, to resist not only the institutional merging of the categories "Native studies" and "Southern studies" but also the implied notion of intellectual regionalism or home spaces that these categories imply—not to perpetuate the "intellectual homelessness" (683) that Robert Warrior (Osage) discusses as a condition familiar to many Natives in the Western academy and critiques accordingly, but to insist to the extent possible on an indigenous intellectual homeland that turns back ideas and practices of US-defined regions, anthropological "culture areas," and well-intentioned but overly Eurocentric "studies" programs in favor of tribal-national and other Native-driven self-definitions, practices, systems, politics, and pedagogies.

For instance, as Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) observes, "Traditional Cherokees today can still tell stories about the sacred places in Georgia and North Carolina that illuminate the tribal history" (122). Craig Womack (Muskogee Creek-Cherokee) adds, "Sovereignty is inherent as an intellectual idea in Native cultures, a political practice, and a theme of oral traditions; and the concept, as well as the practice, predates European contact" (51). Womack makes abundantly clear in *Red on Red* that "oral traditions . . . performed in their cultural contexts have always been nationalistic and are told for the purpose of cultivating a political consciousness" (61) that works to connect Native peoples not to "the South" (or any other regionalist designation) but to the land. Although he argues against accepting "the classic notion of sovereignty as the framework for discussions of political relations between indigenous peoples and the state" (53), Taiaiake Alfred (Rotinoshonni) agrees with Womack that in Native American political traditions "Land, culture, and government are inseparable in traditional philosophies; each depends on the others, and this means that denial of one aspect precludes recovery for the whole" (2).

But these traditions and other "cultural contexts" are precisely what anti-Indian settlers and colonialists invested in the South and the United States serially reject and work to remove. Anti-Indian colonialism in and of the South, far from being limited (or limitable) to a discrete, singular, historical event or past condition (such as the "Trail of Tears" or the

---

[14]For helpful discussions of this situation, see, in addition to Philip Deloria's essay, essays by Warrior, O'Brien, and Washington that constitute the "Forum on American (Indian) Studies: Can the ASA Be an Intellectual Home?" in *American Quarterly*.

holding of Indian prisoners at US forts such as Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida), spills across both time and space, resurfacing again and again.[15] Theda Perdue and Michael Green provide a useful example: "A majority [of Southern Indians] were removed west of the Mississippi to what is today eastern Oklahoma where they reestablished their nations, only to lose them once again at the end of the nineteenth century" (3). This sort of colonialist cycle, in which one act of dispossession does not preclude subsequent acts of dispossession, actively continues its attempts to disempower and erase twenty-first-century Southern Indians and therefore continues to be acknowledged and resisted by Native writers with Southern stakes as well as by a growing number of Native studies scholars who see any critical-theoretical turn toward postcolonialism as problematic and inadequate.[16] In this sense, however, if Native studies is positioned somewhere "behind" postcolonial studies and deemed in need of "catching up" and possibly even being incorporated, then this critical and theoretical positioning becomes hard to distinguish from serial colonialism. Faced with such a situation, Native studies once again must devise a "rigorous anti-assimilationist position" that seems to be inevitably reactionary (as the terms "anti-assimilationist" and "separatist" imply) but also creative in maintaining, developing, formulating, and encouraging indigenous constructions. But, as Perdue and Green point out,

> The greatest challenge faced by the Native people who remained in the South after removal was racism that distinguished only between black and white. The dominant white society often refused to acknowledge any distinction among "people of color" and placed African Americans and Native Americans in the same category. This biracial obsession denied the distinct cultures, histories, and problems of Native people. (136)

Natives in the South faced and continue to face a persistent serial experience of colonization, loss, and an enforced inseparability from settler culture that doubles as an erasure of the Native by way of this obsessive, simplifying biracial paradigm of a "south in black and white."[17]

---

[15]I draw here upon an unpublished paper by Melanie R. Benson, "Florida's Other Disneyworld: Fort Marion as Colonial Fortress, Indian Prison, and Tourist Attraction."

[16]See Chadwick Allen, *Blood Narrative*, especially 28-36.

[17]See Benson in this issue of *Mississippi Quarterly*.

Locally, regionally, and nationally, Natives have, since at least the end of the nineteenth century, faced a situation in which many Native peoples are *from* multiple Souths but (legally, politically, geographically, and otherwise) *of* none of them.

These continuing experiences of serial constriction and displacement often come to seem an inevitable topic or element in Native texts, a seemingly endless, unbreakable, reactionary re-enactment of dispossession that sometimes blurs distinctions between decolonizing and recolonizing. But, as Craig Womack says,

> I have felt that literature rises out of land and language and stories, and given that tribal nations have different landscapes, different languages, and different stories from the United States and England (and, importantly, tribal members and their nations are defined, legally, differently from the rest of the American citizenry, including America's minorities), those differences must suggest rejection of the approach to teaching Native literature as simply some kind of "minority extension" of the American canon. (76)

Clearly, a wide variety of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century American Indian writers and intellectuals, simultaneously associated with and dissociated from the South, have no pressing investment in agreeing to the imagined but tenacious, shifting but constricting boundaries that divide the United States and the Americas into regions and EuroWestern, non-Native nations. These writers implicitly if not explicitly reject being subsumed into "the American citizenry" writ large or situated as a "minority extension" of that body, and they do so by contributing to a body of Southern Native literary texts that operates intertextually on Native ground and subverts any expectation that Native texts must inevitably reflect and react to non-Native impositions such as regionalism and "the South." Ironically, despite Barbara Ladd's optimistic assertion that recent studies of "Intersections of southern with Hispanic and American Indian cultures" in "the Deep and coastal Souths" promise to "reveal some of the richest sites in the United States for the study of creolization and hybridity" (1634), this vein remains very difficult for non-Native critics to discern, let alone to tap. This relative absence within the confines of Western academic discourse both replicates, however unwittingly, Indian removal and enables, however unwittingly, the formation of new approaches that do more than simply install Natives within these confines.

Of course, Native writers associated with other US regions (and other historical eras) also downplay if not refute the notion of a regional identity superimposed by a dominant, non-Native US culture that has already acted, in various ways (reservations, forced assimilation, etc.) to denationalize Indians. While recent writers with Southern connections face an undeniably traumatic colonial and genocidal history, it is not a history unique to Indians in the South, and this too militates against parceling Native cultures and literatures into regional "culture areas" rather than respecting both Native rights of self-determination and the self-determinations themselves. In this context, it is well worth remembering that the concept of regionalized culture areas is no more an indigenous construction than the concept of regionalism but instead was defined by early twentieth-century non-Native anthropologists such as Clark Wissler (1917) and Alfred Kroeber (1939).[18] This is not to claim that Native writers overlook the particulars of local topographies or ecologies—far from it—but it is to argue that the regionalist space that falls somewhere between the local and the US national, or between the local and the broad contours of a transnational Indian Country, carries relatively little weight. Janet McAdams (Alabama Creek) ranges in her poems across a broadly defined, hemispheric "New World" and sees various sites—Mexico, Central America, Texas, southern California, others—as occasions for (post)colonial critique; Craig Womack moves in a different direction, reaffirming a Muskogee Creek nationalism that is separate from rather than defined in relation to US regionalism; Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee) argues that "the borders that determine the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Central and South American countries are all drawn with the blood of indigenous people. . . .[W]e should not continue to replicate such a system" ("We're Not There Yet" 262); LeAnne Howe moves, in *Shell Shaker*, toward a long-deferred reunification of Mississippi and Oklahoma Choctaws; and Stephen Graham Jones, as I have elaborated, dislodges "American Indian fiction" from the reliable, stable, much-vaunted constructions of home that, he argues, too often essentialize Indian identity in the act of reappropriating colonially co-opted selves and home places. Jones makes the paradoxical and parodic case for an American Indian fiction that is new to the extent that it challenges itself to be less rather than more readily identifiable as "Indian"—more homeless in one sense but also more trickily and

[18]See Kroeber and Freed and Freed.

restlessly able to claim multiple creative and intellectual home spaces. More broadly, he makes the case against what he sees as an exhausted, overcautious reliance on identity categories and identity politics, whether the identities in question be racial, ethnic, regional, cultural, or generic. In *All the Beautiful Sinners* (2003), for instance, Sheriff Jim Doe's father Horace is 17/52 Blackfeet-Piegan, which makes him both mildly redundant (Piegans *are* Blackfeet) and mathematically absurd: what does his father's 17/52 blood quantum make *him*? And, more to the point, what does such a "making" amount to, anyway? This detail alone begins to get at how Jones's decentering and parodying of blood quanta and his various other ways of constructing and construing Native identities make it possible for him to place ideas and practices of region and indeed nation under seriously playful indigenous pressure.

Near the beginning of her novel *Four Souls* (2004), Louise Erdrich (Anishinaabe) writes of "homesick Italians who first hated the state of Michigan and next Wisconsin and felt more lost and alien the farther they worked themselves into this country" (5). I want to suggest in closing that such a literal and figurative anti-nostalgic homesickness is all too often absent in Southern studies, Thomas Wolfe notwithstanding, as it is perhaps all too often present in Native studies; I want further to suggest that the sensation of feeling progressively more rather than less "lost and alien" may well be something to be encouraged within both fields. That said, I also want to reiterate that the potentially decolonizing strategies I have tried to describe here indicate an active, subversive, indigenous presence: indigenous hands and minds are working not to replicate the old plots but to change and ultimately expand and reawaken the field itself. I have, however, argued against the idea that Stephen Graham Jones and others—Janet McAdams, Daniel Justice, Craig Womack, LeAnne Howe, and Louis Owens (Choctaw-Cherokee) among them—are practicing a decolonizing indigenous version of what Chadwick Allen calls "forceful colonial inclusion" (34), wherein the Native writer opts forcefully to include him- or herself inside a variety of extant and established discourses, genres, marketplaces, and other sites, in the process indigenizing them (sometimes quite prominently and thoroughly, sometimes more implicitly and occasionally) simply by being there. As Womack points out, Native writers are in fact doing

much more than infiltrating and overlaying extant non-Native constructions, including American regions and literatures.

In other words, Native writers today, like many of those who came before them, have ambivalent though strong associations with the South, and "South" does not tend to be a term or concept Native writers find useful and reliable when writing about this place. This indicates that a turn toward a Native Southern studies or a Southern Native studies, however promising and hopeful and well-intentioned, may well be unnecessary, or (at least) may not be, from a Native studies perspective, a necessary or obvious move in a right direction. In particular, gestures that merely add Native material to Southern studies or Southern to Native do little justice to the complexities of the fraught intersections and disconnections I have only just begun to describe here. Along these lines, the recent back-to-back publication in *PMLA* of two field surveys, Shari Huhndorf's "Literature and the Politics of Native American Studies" and Barbara Ladd's "Literary Studies: The Southern United States, 2005," aptly represents the current state of Native-Southern affairs by making no explicit editorial or intertextual attempt to connect the two essays (or the two fields) or to comment on the problematic relationship between them.

In response to another question from the *Slushpile* interviewer, Stephen Graham Jones acknowledges but also questions the expectations that Native and non-Native readers visit on Native writers and texts. He says that, for Native writers,

> "[R]esponsible" presentation is a huge issue. My take is that art isn't and shouldn't be responsible. If it is, it isn't functioning as art. The problem with that of course is that, as Indian writers, we're supposed to be practicing resistance, demonstrating it, something like that. By reinforcing stereotypes, though I don't know: like shooting yourself in the foot, yeah? The truth is, though, poverty's the environment for alcoholism, and the reservations aren't rich. Maybe cleaning people up in fiction is just as dangerous as presenting them unfiltered. Too, with Indian fiction anyway, part of this question has to become who's the target audience: if it's non-Indians, then maybe some "Indian Joe" figure's most palatable; if it's Indians . . . not sure. What seems to work best uses comedy, or some sort of exaggeration. Ridiculous, overblown stuff that, once we wash all that fun off, is more real. A lot of the stuff from [Sherman Alexie's short story collection] *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* seems to work like that.

But, in dislodging "South" from "region" and "nation" and "Native," Jones's sense of the irresponsible begins to look "more real," not because

this is also what *PMLA* does (however inadvertently) or because he rejects forms of indigenous resistance but because he rejects too-easy suppositions that that is what Indian writers do. In other words, he rejects the categories, be they literary or regional or something else entirely, that remove or diminish his own considerable capacities for authorial self-determination.

All in all, American Indian writers such as Jones radically redefine and perhaps even repossess "the Native American South" not by grounding themselves and their work in particular Southern places but by refusing such groundedness. Jones's engagement with the South is much more casual than it is vested, and the glancing though attentive nature of the acquaintance is precisely what allows him to resist and even expunge the received term "Southern" as well as the received term "Native." As Womack says, Native landscapes and stories are different—perhaps too different to really make productive exchange between Native and Southern studies people possible; I have built on his point that the radical nature of the difference needs to be acknowledged, respected, and foregrounded. Standing with Womack, Robert Warrior cautions that this difference militates against optimistic notions and practices of "inclusion"; Warrior calls for a Native American studies that has "a provocative presence in American studies, challenging old and new orthodoxies and demanding attention to the still-present realities of the foundational history of this continent" (686). This is crucial but taxing work. I am well aware that my argument—that American and Southern studies would do well to begin reimagining their own provocative presences and absences within Native studies—does not make the path any smoother. Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere ("On Native Ground"), I would encourage non-Native practitioners in the fields of American and Southern studies to go further still: to rethink the histories and governing assumptions of these disciplinary regions and to remain ever mindful of the ways in which they are not Natives but newcomers who can't go home again because they were never home in the first place, but who might at the same time find *a* way, if not *their* way, South to a red place.

Works Cited

Alfred, Taiaiake. *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto.* Toronto: Oxford UP, 1999.

Allen, Chadwick. *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts.* Durham: Duke UP, 2002.

Allen, Paula Gunn. *Spider Woman's Granddaughters: Traditional Tales and Contemporary Writing by Native American Women.* Boston: Beacon, 1989.

Anderson, Eric Gary. "Native American Literature, Ecocriticism, and the South: The Inaccessible Worlds of Linda Hogan's Power." *South to a New Place: Region, Literature, Culture.* Ed. Suzanne W. Jones and Sharon Monteith. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2002. 165-183.

—. "On Native Ground: Indigenous Presences and Countercolonial Strategies in Southern Narratives of Captivity, Removal, and Repossession." *Southern Spaces*, August 9, 2007. <http://www.southernspaces.org/contents/2007/anderson/1a.htm>.

—. "Rethinking Indigenous Southern Communities." *American Literature* 78: 4 (December 2006). Special Issue on "Global Contexts, Local Literature: The New Southern Studies." Ed. Kathryn McKee and Annette Trefzer. 730-732.

Benson, Melanie R. "Florida's Other Disneyworld: Fort Marion as Colonial Fortress, Indian Prison, and Tourist Attraction." Unpublished paper.

Bevis, William. "Native American Novels: Homing In." *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature.* Ed. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat. Berkeley: U of California P, 1987. 580-620.

Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood.* 1965. New York: Vintage, 1994.

Deloria, Philip J. "American Indians, American Studies, and the ASA." *American Quarterly* 55.4 (December 2003): 669-680.

Deloria, Vine, Jr. *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion.* 1972. Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 1994.

Erdrich, Louise. *Four Souls.* New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

Fetterley, Judith, and Marjorie Pryse. *Writing Out of Place: Regionalism, Women, and American Literary Culture.* Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2003.

Freed, Stanley A., and Ruth S. Freed. "Clark Wissler and the Development of Anthropology in the United States." *American Anthropologist* 85.4 (December 1983): 800-825.

Howe, LeAnne. *Shell Shaker*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 2001.

Huhndorf, Shari. "Literature and the Politics of Native American Studies." *PMLA* 120.5 (October 2005): 1618-1627.

"Interview: Stephen Graham Jones, Author." *Slushpile.Net*. 16 July 2006. <http://www.slushpile.net/index.php/2005/07/01/interview-stephen-graham-jones-author/>.

"Interview with Stephen Graham Jones." *Fiction Collective 2*. 16 July 2006. <http://fc2.org/jones/interview.htm>.

Jones, Stephen Graham. *All the Beautiful Sinners*. New York: Rugged Land, 2003.

—. *The Bird Is Gone: A Manifesto*. Normal, IL, and Tallahassee: Fiction Collective Two, 2003.

—. "Domestic Man." *Southern Hum*. (Issue One). 16 July 2006. <http://southernhum.com/stephen-graham-jones/>.

—. *The Fast Red Road: A Plainsong*. Normal, IL, and Tallahassee: Fiction Collective Two, 2000.

—."LPTape 1." Author's webpage. 16 July 2006. <http://www.stephengrahamjones.net/index.php?p=39>.

Justice, Daniel Heath. *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2006.

—. "We're Not There Yet, Kemo Sabe: Positing a Future for American Indian Literary Studies." *American Indian Quarterly* 25.2 (Spring 2001): 256-269.

Kreyling, Michael. *Inventing Southern Literature*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1998.

—. "Toward 'A New Southern Studies.'" *South Central Review* 22.1 (Spring 2005): 4-18.

Kroeber, A. L. "The Cultural Area and Age Area Concepts of Clark Wissler." *Methods in Social Science*. Ed. Stuart A. Rice. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1931. 248-265.

Ladd, Barbara. "Literary Studies: The Southern United States, 2005." *PMLA* 120.5 (October 2005): 1628-1639.

Littlefield, Daniel F., Jr., and James W. Parins, eds. *Native American Writing in the Southeast: An Anthology, 1875-1935*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1995.

McAdams, Janet. *The Island of Lost Luggage*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2000.

Mihesuah, Devon Abbott, and Angela Cavender Wilson, eds. *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2004.

Momaday, N. Scott. *House Made of Dawn*. 1968. New York: Perennial, 1989.

O'Brien, Jean M., "Why Here? Scholarly Locations for American Indian Studies." *American Quarterly* 55.4 (December 2003): 689-696.

Owens, Louis. *Bone Game*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1994.

Perdue, Theda, and Michael D. Green. *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Southeast*. New York: Columbia UP, 2001.

Power, Susan. *The Grass Dancer*. 1994. New York: Berkley, 1995.

Rosenberg, Roberta. "Native American Literature." *The Companion to Southern Literature: Themes, Genres, Places, People, Movements, and Motifs*. Ed. Joseph M. Flora and Lucinda MacKethan. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2002. 526-530.

Seltzer, Mark. *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin, 1977.

—. *Storyteller*. New York: Arcade, 1981.

Trefzer, Annette. *Disturbing Indians: The Archaeology of Southern Fiction*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2007.

Warrior, Robert. "A Room of One's Own at the ASA: An Indigenous Provocation." *American Quarterly* 55.4 (December 2003): 681-687.

Washington, Mary Helen. "Commentary." *American Quarterly* 55.4 (December 2003): 697-702.

Weaver, Jace. *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.

Weaver, Jace, Craig S. Womack, and Robert Warrior. *American Indian Literary Nationalism*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 2006.

Womack, Craig. *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999.