

Entering Paradise, Feeling Solace:  
A search for affective community and possible American futures through the land of the  
Chiricahuas, histories of the Apache, and indigenous theory and work

by

Clara Jean Margaret Wilch

BA, Occidental College, 2011

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

University of Pittsburgh

2017

University of Pittsburgh

Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences

This thesis was presented

by

Clara Jean Margaret Wilch

It was defended on

April 12, 2017

and approved by

Michelle Granshaw, PhD, Theatre and Performance Studies

Thesis Advisor: Lisa Jackson-Schebetta, PhD, Theatre and Performance Studies

ENTERING PARADISE, FEELING SOLACE: A SEARCH FOR AFFECTIVE COMMUNITY  
AND POSSIBLE AMERICAN FUTURES THROUGH THE LAND OF THE CHIRICAHUAS,  
HISTORIES OF THE APACHE, AND INDIGENOUS THEORY AND WORK

Clara Jean Margaret Wilch, MA

University of Pittsburgh, 2017

In this thesis project, I consider the site of the Chiricahua Mountain Range in Arizona in the context of personal history, Apache histories and historiography, and US coloniality. I interrogate and seek to better understand the relations between contemporary Native (particularly Chiricahua Apache) communities, artists and activists, the land of the Americas (particularly of Arizona), and non-Native US histories and policies. Ultimately, I seek insight into the character of decolonial Native land-epistemologies based in the repertoire rather than the archive, and of affective understanding. I also seek to learn a mode of performance theory informed by contemporary Indigenous mobilizations, theories and performance that might contribute to a more active and/or healing understanding or participation in a complex whole of history, American land and identification— for myself, for the vast Non-Native population of the US, and in spaces and communities of Native and Non-Native collaboration and/or confrontation. Methodologically, I incorporate the thinking of Affect Theorist Jonathan Flatley, Performance Theorist Diana Taylor, and Indigenous Studies Theorist Mishuana Goeman. Specific objects of study for this research include histories of the Apache, National Forestry histories of Chiricahua parks, the art collaboration *The Edward Curtis Project*, and the speeches of Naelyn Pike.

I present a definition for the affective structure of solace as the alleviation of a sense of missing (melancholia) where the mediated realities of late capitalism can be released, and as an attempt to identify the active power of natural spaces to provide affective change and healing. I argue that solace is an affect reciprocally involved with ways of being in and interpreting historical context and contemporary processes of social formation. That is, I believe that the feeling and structure of solace defines a way of behaving as well as a way of thinking and system of valuation for a contemporary community meaningfully inclusive of and made visible by Indigenous advocacy. I consider that solace maps a future in which wilderness, or environments not dominated by human populations and structures, is protected as a necessary human resource in the context of modernity.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.PARADISE ARIZONA: A PERSONAL NARRATIVE AND A PROVOCATION .....	1
2.REPERTOIRES OF DWELLING AND FEELINGS OF HOME .....	12
3.EXAMINING PLACE BY ITS BORDERS, OUTLINING EPISTEMOLOGIES .....	17
4. EDWARD CURTIS AND <i>THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS</i> : SELF-DEFINITION AND DISSOLVING BORDERS .....	21
5.KNOWING NOW: CONTEMPORARY APACHE PLACES AND VOICES .....	36
6.SACRED LAND, NATIVE LEADERS: THE SAN CARLOS APACHE’S OAK FLAT .....	42
7. CONCLUSIONS: AMERICA’S WOUNDS- ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES, (IN)JUSTICE AND POSSIBLE FUTURES .....	44
8.BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	48

## **PARADISE ARIZONA: A PERSONAL NARRATIVE AND A PROVOCATION**

My family has owned a cabin in the Chiricahua Mountains of Southeastern Arizona for 20 years now. It is a modest building composed of five rooms given a generous conception of “room,” as all are small and only the bathroom and bedroom space are actually separated by doors. There is a little backyard which extends up a hill, and in front, a large wooden porch a friend from the area once built for us. Beyond, there are tracts of highly diverse and largely unspoiled wilderness, varying along the elevations of hills and mountains, and few buildings or people of any kind. A research trip my mom took to the Chiricahuas as an undergraduate was the primary inspiration for my parents’ move to Arizona from Iowa, and in my youth we went there as much as we could afford the three-hour drive from Tucson.

The times I’ve spent in the Chiricahua Mountain range from the age of 8 have been wondrous and formative. My siblings and I learned the names of the plants and animals, undertook long hikes, dressed up our stuffed-animals in forest foliage, painted pictures of the peaks, flowers, insects. We’d race juniper berries in boats made of cottonwood leaves and sticks down streams. On several occasions, we saw a black bear with yellow-white fur (probably due a genetic anomaly that I’ve never heard explained) that led to excited stories of the “Beach-Blonde Bear.” I learned to recognize the huffing of peccary herds, the marching habits of coatimundi, the feathers of turkey vultures, the eyes of bobcats and deer amidst trees. We’d go for long walks to the cemetery or natural pools with our dogs- two of whom eventually lost their lives to incidents in the area, both times human-related (an unchained guard dog and a speeding car.) Throughout elementary school and particularly the terrors of middle school, I’d ask my mom if we couldn’t just move out there and be homeschooled. Nowhere did I feel more peaceful, happy or at home. This connection to the

place of Paradise (as the tiny community of cabins, including ours, is called) has remained a constant in my life, even now that our home in Tucson is sold and my parents have parted ways.

My dad, who nourishes an interest in Native American culture and worked for years of my childhood at an American Indian arts shop, storied the region with anecdotes of the Apache leaders Geronimo and Cochise. Sometimes he'd drive us on the way in or out of Paradise to the Amerind Museum, a collection of American Indian art and artifacts founded by an archaeologist in the 1930s. He also took us to stunning annual Pascua Yaqui ceremonies in Tucson, and through experiences like this, I had some awareness of contemporary Native American communities and aspects of their lives and culture.

Yet it was only months ago, in watching a video about the concerns of the Keystone Pipeline protestors, that I heard a young woman call herself a Chiricahua Indian and realized, with an admix of excitement and shame, that there are people who identify as Chiricahua or Chiricahua Apache.<sup>1</sup> If this was something I had once known, it was not something I had really grasped or processed. A grievous blind spot was suddenly made visible: my conception of this place I consider a spiritual home was ignorant of it being the homeland of a still-surviving group of native people. I undertake this project to consider the site of the Chiricahua Mountain range and begin exploring what and who have been missing from my notions of a place dear-to-my-heart and deep-in-my-bones, why, and how this might intersect with how I do understand and experience Paradise and its surrounds. I also seek to learn a mode of performance theory informed by contemporary Indigenous mobilizations, theories and performance that might contribute to a more active and/or healing

---

<sup>1</sup> Chiricahua designates a subset of a more general American Indian group called the Apache who, prior to the US-Indian Wars lived, in contemporary geographic terms, from central Arizona to Western New Mexico and Northern Mexico and shared a language group and cultural qualities. Sometimes referred to as a "tribe," Griffin-Pierce and others write that this term inscribes Western values and (mis)understanding of Apache associations, in which region and family bonds (rather than dictatorial chieftdom) were determinative, and dynamic allegiances between Apache sub-groups formed and dissipated according to needs and conditions.

understanding or participation in a complex whole of history, American land and identification—for me as an individual, for the vast Non-Native population of the US, and in spaces and communities of Native and Non-Native collaboration and/or confrontation.<sup>2</sup> Methodologically, I wish to incorporate the thinking of Affect Theorist Jonathan Flatley, Performance Theorist Diana Taylor, and Indigenous Studies Theorist Mishuana Goeman.

I leave transparent the personal feelings and impressions that originated these questions in admiring aspiration to the work of affect theorists including Eve K. Sedgwick and Lauren Berlant. Affect theory is a critical mode which examines culture in terms of affect, foundationally “structures of feeling” as described by Raymond Williams. In *Marxism and Literature*, Williams elaborated structures of feeling as ways of discussing the social and cultural as an always-present process of changing relations. Aiming to grasp an alternative to “received and produced fixed forms” in and of culture, Williams addressed the intuitive sense that “practical consciousness is what is actually being lived, and not only what it is thought is being lived.” He defines and explains structures of feeling as existing in interaction with prescribed ideologies, and as important and perceptive tools for cultural description and understanding:

The term is difficult, but ‘feeling’ is chosen to emphasize a distinction from more formal concepts of ‘world-view’ or ‘ideology.’ ... We are talking about characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but *thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in living and interrelating continuity*. We are then defining these elements as a ‘structure’: as a set,

---

<sup>2</sup> I have encountered many names throughout my research to describe the people who have lived in the Americas prior to European contact, and no conclusive indication of what designation is widely preferred. “Indigenous” is often used when referring to global communities of original habitants of land that has been colonized, although I have heard in conversation that the biological connotations of this name is contentious to some. I primarily use “Native American” or “Native” to specifically describe the Apache and other groups centered in the contemporary geographic US, although “Indigenous” also seems appropriate in that the Apache have long-occupied contemporary Mexico, and I use the terms rather interchangeably. “American Indian” or simply “Indian” are also widely used and sometimes preferred terms for the people to which they refer, though I’ve chosen to use them infrequently in this thesis in part for simplicity’s sake. “First Nations” refers specifically to the indigenous people of contemporary Canada.

with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension. Yet we are also defining a social experience which is still *in process*, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis (though rarely otherwise) has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies.<sup>3</sup>

Affect theory seeks to acknowledge and build from *intertwined* cognitive and emotional processes that help shape how human beings live, conceive, and create through particular attention to affective structures. While not disavowing the significance of systems and superstructures (for example, religions or nations or racism or capitalism,) Williams focuses on the forms and consequences of human experiences of these systems. Affective qualities of experience are of particular interest in that they can reveal bonds of subjectivity within historical circumstances. In *Affective Mapping*, Jonathan Flatley usefully and clearly describes his application of and purpose in affect-focused criticism:

“Affective mapping” is the name I am giving to the aesthetic technology—in the older, more basic sense of a *techne*—that represents the historicity of one’s affective experience. In mapping out one’s affective life and its historicity, a political problem (such as racism or revolution) that may have been previously invisible, opaque, difficult, abstract, and above all depressing may be transformed into one that is interesting, that solicits and rewards one’s attention. This transformation can take place, I argue, not only because the affective map gives one a new sense of one’s relationship to broad historical forces but also inasmuch as it shows one how one’s situation is experienced collectively by a community, a heretofore unarticulated community of melancholics.<sup>4</sup>

Flatley’s specific interest is to investigate several modernist literary works to delineate uniting structures of a non-depressive melancholia, not a specific focus of this thesis. However, among my guiding goals is to take up his broader exploration and seek the felt experience of historical pressures and events, to perhaps reveal the presence and character of a continuous communities otherwise sensed but not fully visible or theorized.

---

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132, first emphasis added.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the politics of modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 4.



Using my own positionality as a point of entry for critical and theoretical inquiry, I am interested in the experience of identification with land as home and specifically the affective experience of what I will refer to as “solace.” This can be understood according to the common conception of the word as calm and comfort, a state of relief or cheer or the action of providing that state. It can be further elaborated in contrast to the affective mapping of “melancholia” as construed by Freud, which is a frequent touch-stone of affect theorists including Flatley. Flatley summarizes melancholia it as “an emotional attachment to something or someone lost” characterized by symptoms of “sadness, grief, fear, affective withdrawal, loss of interest” and resultant from a failure to mourn or often even articulate that loss.<sup>5</sup> Flatley argues that Freud positioned melancholia as “an allegory for the experience of modernity,”<sup>6</sup> modernity being life in industrialized society as constituted by technologies such as clock time and train travel, and the many disruptions and costs these effected on time, space and “the destruction of what is now called simply ‘the environment.’”<sup>7</sup> Though a discussion of the loss or threat to relatively unadulterated, wild land is inherent to this discussion and to a post-industrialization planet earth, this paper also offers a counter narrative to the notion that “the environment” is destroyed and that, since industrialization, nature defines modern and post-modern life only in its absence. By contrast, “solace” refers to the alleviation of a sense of missing or melancholia where the mediated realities of late capitalism<sup>8</sup> can be released and

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>8</sup> Late capitalism, as discussed by Fredric Jameson in *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, is a period characterized by both economic and cultural structures (including “social and mental habits”) that began in the 1950’s, after the monopoly stage of capitalism but in “continuity with what preceded it,” including the modes of capitalism described by Marx. Jameson describes its key features as “transnational business,” “the new international division of labor, a vertiginous new dynamic in international banking and the stock exchanges (including the enormous Second and Third World debt), new forms of media interrelationship... computers and automation, the flight of production to advanced Third World areas, along with all the more familiar social consequences, including the crisis of traditional labor, the emergence of yuppies, and gentrification on a now-global

is an attempt to identify the active power of natural spaces to provide an affective state of being changed and healed. Most specifically, I believe that solace heals the common condition Freud and others called “melancholia,” of feeling as though something is missing and something more is needed, a return to the possibility of peace.<sup>9</sup>

Diana Taylor is among many scholars whose considerations of contemporary times point to a distinct absence of solace in a typical lived experience of the contemporary Americas as shaped by late capitalism. Taylor writes in *Performance* that, “In late capitalism, the body is both the consuming subject and the object of consumption.”<sup>10</sup> The affective power of Paradise for me is strongly indicated in contrast to this passage, in that this place offers a total reprieve from this dynamic of insatiable consumption by and of the external world. We do not have internet access in Paradise, and the body of the mountains renders cellphones ineffective. The generally omnipresent capacity and pressure to intake or output information through social media, news, texts and calls, is suspended there; the mile or so of structures that compose Paradise are all residential, so there is no shopping to be done (even driving miles yields only the limited resources of a small store in Portal, Arizona.) The avenues by which we in the late-capitalist US perpetually consume and are consumed according to the body’s (re)inscribed function as worker, shopper, image or identity do not penetrate. The above quote from Taylor points to the extreme rarity of this condition in our contemporary culture. Founding performance theorist Richard Schechner has argued that human performance in the framework of theater and in everyday life is composed of “restored behaviors” that are repeated actions with a “life of their own,” “separate from those who are behaving” such

---

scale.” (xix) Jameson proposes that synonyms for “late capitalism” include “‘multinational capitalism,’ ‘spectacle or image society,’ ‘media capitalism,’ ‘the world system’” (xviii.)

<sup>9</sup> I owe the articulation of this definition of solace in significant part to conversation with my colleague at the University of Pittsburgh, Alex Malanych.

<sup>10</sup> Diana Taylor, *Performance* (Durham: Duke Press, 2016), 97.

that “the social or transindividual self is a role or set of roles.”<sup>11</sup> If the body is a form of media which reiterates restored behavior, in Schechner’s terms, and late capitalism constantly enforces bodily behaviors of consuming and being consumed, the experience of existing outside major structures of and for this consumption introduces the possibility of a radically different repertoire,<sup>12</sup> a unique experience and epistemology.

It is key to note that my particular experience of the Chiricahuas was enabled by the purchase of a building and land with capital, that my access to and survival in this place is derived from a system of capitalism (oil and food purchased at stores) and that the distinction my experience in this place poses is informed by my experience within cities and mediated environments, as well as, highly significantly, the displacement of the Apache and Apache authority over this land. The solace of this landscape is enabled by the forceful and violent displacement of humans and their cultural, economic and social systems. Seeking commonality with the colonized after colonization and as a beneficiary of dispossession is a deeply fraught process, which I intend to continue to address throughout this work. The suggestions of “solace” and possible “peace” is not something easily arrived at or fully commensurate with the many tides of Native and Non-Native conflict in the US throughout the time of contact and thereafter. I wish to maintain conscious awareness of this meaningful dynamic of privilege and dispossession. Simultaneously, this project is made in part in response to calls by Native communities for ally-ship and unity throughout the US, behind Native leadership and toward projects of environmental justice and respect for the free-practice of Native religions. The most visible example is the over year-long advocacy and activity of the self-designated “water protectors,” a coalition of tribes throughout the US who occupied Sioux tribal territory in Standing Rock, North Dakota to resist the construction of a portion of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

---

<sup>11</sup> Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania 1985,) 35-36.

<sup>12</sup> See page 8 for a full explanation of repertoire as introduced by Diana Taylor and as it is used throughout this thesis.

The water protector's concerns were multiple, but primary among them was the risk that the transnational tar sands pipeline poses to contaminating the Missouri River, the drinking water source of millions of Native and non-Native people, and that the construction violated a historic US treaty granting the relevant, occupied land to the Sioux. Some figures of the movement called for non-Native support throughout their resistance. For example, as pressure from a new federal administration pushed the pipeline construction to completion, Dallas Goldtooth of the Indigenous Environmental Network said in an interview, "We have a call to action across the planet, and specifically on Turtle Island, also known as so-called North America, for people to take to the streets, to rise up and rise with Standing Rock in mass mobilization, to support this effort and this fight against the abrogation of indigenous rights, the complete disregard for the law of the land."<sup>13</sup> Though my current experience as a Non-Native in the US and of Native peoples in the US is inextricable from a history of colonialism, I hope in this particular undertaking to find the shape of and amplify the voice of a spirit of collaboration originated in Native American communities.

As in Williams' and Flatley's affect work, I seek to understand solace as an affect reciprocally involved with ways of being in and interpreting a historical context and contemporary processes of social formation. That is, I believe that the feeling and structure of solace defines a way of behaving as well as a way of thinking and system of valuation for a contemporary community meaningfully inclusive of and made visible by Indigenous advocacy. I acknowledge that I have not yet established a basis for assigning solace as a community-defining affect. In the work that follows, I will interrogate the writings, plays, and speeches of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples regarding the Chiricahuas and other land sites within the Americas in search of resonance or discord with my own affective experience of "home" as felt through the experience of solace.

---

<sup>13</sup> "Water Protectors Call for Global Mass Mobilizations as Army Plans to Approve Dakota Access Pipeline," *DemocracyNow.org*, last modified Feb. 8, 2017. [https://www.democracynow.org/2017/2/8/water\\_protectors\\_call\\_for\\_global\\_mass](https://www.democracynow.org/2017/2/8/water_protectors_call_for_global_mass)

The established commonality between the Chiricahua Apache history and my own is the land of the Chiricahua mountain region, and a lived relationship to this land. Diana Taylor's work in performance studies, particularly *The Archive and the Repertoire*, indicates how a study of a lived relationship of daily activities constitutes an important history not captured in dominant narratives. Throughout her writing, Taylor has presented and worked through how Western histories have largely been written from and about the archive— that is, an accessible body of material objects, particularly texts. Taylor demonstrates how this formulation of reality reinforces a hegemonic narrative, as text favors the powerful who have the education, resources and desire to account for their lives and experiences in this way, while generally neglecting the perspectives of those who cannot or do not record or remember history in a manner that has been archived. Her formation of the repertoire centers on a conscious understanding of the body as an equally significant and *reliable* narrator of experience and history to the files, the books, tapes, videos or photographs, of the archive. She writes that “the body is one more media that transmits information and participates in the circulation of gestures and images.”<sup>14</sup> In concordance with affect theory, it is my aim to demonstrate how a repertoire shaped in and by the Chiricahua Mountains (and other relatively natural environments) might themselves exist throughout time, trans-historically, constituting a knowing-of and feeling-for this land and place. The search for a meaningful affective community, then, begins with the place of the Chiricahuas, and the stories told about it from Native and non-Native lenses.

Mishuana Goeman, as both a Gender and Indigenous Studies scholar and Native American woman, discusses Native relationships to colonized places throughout her book, *Mark My Words* and alerts readers that Native and non-Native lenses are never fully extricable from one another given the colossal material and psychic effects of colonization in the Americas and elsewhere. She writes,

---

<sup>14</sup> Diana Taylor, *Performance* (Durham: Duke Press, 2016), 60.

“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.”<sup>15</sup> Yet through an examination of the work of female Native American authors, Goeman theorizes a practice of “(re)mapping” by which Native female thinkers have *always* imaginatively engaged colonized spaces in contest and counter to (white) masculine acts of mapping through domination, territorialization and displacement. Goeman clarifies the significance of land-based projects- what begins as colonization of the land reaches into colonization of the mind, and spatial mapping extends to all manner of knowing with great social consequence:

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.<sup>16</sup>

Goeman’s work, which this project strives to hold as a major theoretical guide, focuses insistently on the endurance and evolution of Native epistemologies throughout and against on-going colonization, forcefully countering narratives of a long-since fallen or passive Native people. To this point, she writes, “I contend... 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.”<sup>17</sup> Goeman is a member of the Tonawanda band of Seneca, so her use of “our” here refers to Native American communities (of which I am not a part) and calls on a conscious effort to understand the contemporary Native knowings of space and belonging. She continues to explicate how this attention to the present is a means of consciously shaping possibilities for the future: “In

---

<sup>15</sup> Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping our Nations*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

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. Imaginative geographies are the stories that construct, contest, and compose a mapping of the Americas.”<sup>18</sup> Goeman’s thinking is an important reminder that even if and where structures of feeling may align between Native and Non-Native experiences, Native epistemologies have been shaped in part by the prolonged aggression of colonial epistemologies. This key caution indicates the need to vigilantly respect the sovereignty of Native experience and knowing. Simultaneously, Goeman’s call to “the responsibility to interrogate... ever-changing Native epistemologies” and relationships to land and other peoples. Goeman is pushing to reframe the discussion of Native land and Native/non-Native interactions, beyond the period of US expansion in the West and as a period of *active* contention and imagining. The call to consider dynamics of belonging in the colonized Americas is taken here from a Non-Native perspective with the aspiration of respectfully contributing some small and particular attempt to learn about and from Native epistemologies and external relations to it. This effort, despite conscious attempts not to intellectually colonize or appropriate Native epistemologies, is not impervious to criticism that may consider such effects inevitable. It seems a worthwhile exercise to explore possibilities of transcultural experience and affective communities in the Americas and instances of collaborative or syncretic aims within US subgroups, to pay mind to instances of Native and Non-Native relationship or possibility today. It seems reasonable to assert that the popular conceptual landscape of Native and Non-Native relationships is still largely dominated by embattled cowboys and Indians, or pilgrims and Indians. The material and psychic effects of the racially and religiously underwritten land theft and genocide that the cowboys and pilgrims enacted are inseparable from the US as it exists. Yet attention to different and perhaps new narratives of today gesture toward an imaginary

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

future geography where perhaps Native epistemologies are central to a newly perceived America(s) and non-Native recognition, respect and cooperation.

## REPERTOIRES OF DWELLING AND FEELINGS OF HOME

The cabin in which my own repertoire is centered was built in the early 1900s, originally as a school-teacher's house, we've been told. This structure is a dramatic instance of how the environment and my embodied experience differs from the Native people who preceded me. Before European colonization of the Southwest, Chiricahua people lived in dome-shaped, thatch and pole wickiups and migrated seasonally within the region.<sup>19</sup> Sites of immediate dwellings were built in recurring patterns but were mobile rather than permanent.

It is possible to imagine that wickiups and seasonal migrations are outmoded, pre-modern technologies, but this presumes a false progression when any notion of dwelling, including typical standards of immobility, is an arbitrary construction. Goeman's article "From Place to Territory and Back Again: Centering Storied Land in the discussion of Indigenous Nation-Building" is particularly invested in illuminating the radically different epistemology of indigenous groups concerning land and human relationships to land. She secondarily quotes a Cherokee chief as saying "When we stopped viewing land ownership in common and viewing ourselves in relation to owning the land in common, it profoundly altered our sense of community and our social structure."<sup>20</sup> This quote, if broadly applicable to indigenous people as Goeman suggests, indicates that a notion of a privately-owned and permanent residence as the definition of a home is anachronistic to native Chiricahuans'

---

<sup>19</sup> Trudy Griffin-Pierce, *Chiricahua Apache Enduring Power: Naiche's Puberty Ceremony Paintings*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 30.

<sup>20</sup> Mishuana Goeman, "From Place to Territory and Back Again: Centering Storied Land in the discussion of Indigenous Nation-Building," *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies* 1, no. 1. (2008): 26-27.



notions, and more-over, antithetical to their geo-politically significant epistemology of land and place.

The Chiricahua peoples' home prior to displacement was not just a built structure, it was a dynamic complex of interactions with the whole environment, including, significantly, its rocks. Sources reiterate the significance of the regions many large boulder and rock structures to the long success of the Chiricahua Apaches as raiders and in the US-Indian Wars. The rocks were not incidental but deeply understood, strategic, and highly valued components of "home," the key to where wickiups were constructed, primary players in defense, and landmarks for navigating during seasonal migrations. Moreover, they were affectively significant. Historian Alicia Delgadillo writes that among the Chiricahua Apache, rocks were regarded as "friends,"<sup>21</sup> indicating a feeling, positive and reciprocal relationship between the mineral forms and humans. Friendship connotes familiarity and respect, and a consciousness and autonomy not necessarily ascribed to rocks nor the inanimate world generally. Delgadillo's observation indicates that the Chiricahua Apache's relationship to the land that shares their name was a deeply felt appreciation for specific elements of the landscape that imbued with individual character and affectively known and appreciated.

A particular example of the place and importance of rocks to the Chiricahua is Cochise's Last Stronghold, a rock outcrop and valley near the Chiricahua Mountains from which Cochise led one of the final armed-resistances to Euro-American encroachment and that he eventually attained as a reservation after surrendering in an 1872 treaty. This reservation was abolished by the US in 1876,<sup>22</sup> scarcely outliving Cochise (who died and was buried in an undisclosed place there in 1874,) though this was a violation of the treaty by which Cochise had intended that the space be retained

---

<sup>21</sup> Alicia Delgadillo, *From Fort Marion to Fort Sill: A Documentary History of the Chiricahua Apache Prisoners of War, 1886-1913*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), xxiv.

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Wegman-French, "Faraway Ranch Special History Study, Chiricahua National Monument," *Intermountain Cultural Resource Management Paper*, no. 72 (2006): 11.

for his family and people. This place and its geology still exist, now the property of the Colorado National Forest and designated as a historic landmark. Goeman argues that the designations of space, property and nation the US has instituted were all violently constructed. She asks us to question this construction, and how an indigenous understanding of land might create alternatives to our current structures. Is this current designation as a “historic landmark appropriate,” or is it participating in a marginalization of the contemporary Chiricahua community? Might it be re-occupied or participate as a lived-in place rather than a space marking past events?

A striking counter-example to the indigenous land-epistemology described above are the geological-human relations evidenced in Wegman-French’s “Faraway Ranch Special History Study.” Hers is a history of the still-extant house of a Swedish immigrant couple who purchased and later settled in territory within the Chiricahua reservation guaranteed to Cochise a few years earlier and only weeks after another Apache resistance leader, Geronimo, surrendered on September 4<sup>th</sup> 1886.<sup>23</sup> She describes an anecdote in which the Swedish-American husband joins a troop “hunting” for an Apache couple who had escaped deportation and raided cattle in the area, and how this incident of defending the area from its native inhabitants, marked the first time that they noticed the rocks.

This foray into Rhyolite Canyon may have been one of the first times that the settlers had entered that canyon. Being preoccupied with tracking the Native Americans, and maneuvering through the tangled undergrowth and boulders in the canyon, they failed to appreciate the unusual rock formations in the area. But according to Erickson family lore, this event marks the first time that someone associated with the family ranch entered what later became known as the Wonderland of Rocks and Chiricahua National Monument.<sup>24</sup>

Wegman-French’s frankly offensive account adheres almost totally to the Euro-American perspective and participates in the language of “wondrous discovery.” Such a description of the rocks— as a novel discovery made well after occupation of the area— stands in stark contrast to

---

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Wegman-French, “Faraway Ranch Special History Study, Chiricahua National Monument,” *Intermountain Cultural Resource Management Paper*, no. 72 (2006): 11.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-16.

how the pre-displacement Chiricahua Apaches deep integration into the geological (and biological) environment defined their survival, epistemology and repertoire. This 2006 history was commissioned and published by the National Forest Service, which was founded in 1905 and currently manage much of the Chiricahua mountain region; not incidentally, the Swedish patriarch of the Faraway Ranch was himself a forest ranger with the Forest Service.<sup>25</sup> In the context of Goeman's provocations, this writing invites interrogation as to how the current organization of ownership of the Chiricahua region understands its history, and suggests how this epistemology is practiced in day-to-day representations and uses of the land. The National Forestry is popularly understood as being tasked with protecting the land— yet in endorsing Wegman-French's history of the Chiricahuas, we must ask from whom and for what purpose this land is “protected.” This document re-inscribes a narrative in which the land is cleansed of and actively defended against indigenous presence while being “discovered” by European-Americans as a playground. The phrase “Wonderland of Rocks” signals an affective structure of pleasure and fun in which rocks are functioning in concordance with the desires of the settlers, and are defined by the distance between the rocks and humans, a novelty that signals newness and (in stark contrast to the indigenous relationship) unfamiliarity from the settlers. This phrase even, it should be noted, is still in circulation by the National Park one-hundred years after settling the territory. The rocks are also understood as mere components of this functionally fun “wonderland,” without the autonomy in indigenous epistemologies of the very same places.

In addition to the non-inclusive re-creation outlined by Wegman-French, the matter of rocks and land-use also points to the dominant historical and contemporary question of mining. It was the discovery of copper deposits that largely sparked westward mobilization of Euro-Americans into Arizona in the 1800s. “Paradise” was hopefully named by prospectors who believed the region

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 18.

contained a wealth of silver. The silver never materialized in significant quantities, and today “Portal,” meant to be only an outpost to the destination of Paradise, outsizes that tiny community of mostly seasonal residents, whose greatest appeal these days is to bird-watchers.

As Goeman demonstrates, however, these geopolitical relations are always constructed and static- an area perceived as a nature reserve and geological “wonderland” could again become a target of mining and dramatic interference. In the current online article detailing the US Forest Service’s policy on mining, it frames the National Forest as functioning for the national good, largely in terms of providing renewable resources, but increasingly, non-renewable resources including minerals.

Within the past few years, the energy shortage in this country has reminded us that the Nation’s mineral resources are limited. As with oil supplies, there will undoubtedly be tightening of world supplies of minerals. Such a trend is leading to considerable expansion of domestic mineral prospecting, exploration and development. Much of this increased activity is on National Forest System lands where open to mineral exploration and development.<sup>26</sup>

In *Vibrant Matter*, political philosopher Jane Bennett argues for a politically and ecologically motivated theory of “things” and vital materialism much more consummate with the indigenous epistemology of Goeman’s article or Chiricahua Apache histories than that espoused in rhetoric of this National Forestry article. Bennett asks that we consider the active and important influence and liveliness of all material matter by also garnering awareness of the materiality of our own bodies and brains. This view grants a life and agency to the rocks and minerals of the Chiricahuas, an idea which is essentially illustrated in the coevolution of native life with geological formations. Bennett’s theory in seeks to counteract the “hunch... that the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter feeds human hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption.”<sup>27</sup> The viewpoint that concerns Bennett is perfectly captured in another phrase from the Forest Service

---

<sup>26</sup> US Forest Service. “Mining in National Forests: Protection of Surface Resources.” 2016. [http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/1975\\_mining%20in%20national%20forests.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/1975_mining%20in%20national%20forests.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010): ix.

which currently stewards the vast majority of the Chiricahuas: “minerals are also important resources of the National Forests. In fact, they are vital to the Nation’s welfare.” We have here the language of service, in which not the presence and personality of the rocks, but their pulverization and extraction, are unequivocally required by “the Nation” of the United States of America.

## **EXAMINING PLACE BY ITS BORDERS, OUTLINING EPISTEMOLOGIES**

The collection *Performance in the Borderlands*, edited by Ramón Rivera-Servera and Harvey Young, provides many modalities for thinking of and with the border as a site of theorization. Rivera-Servera and Young draw attention to the defining influence borders have on constituting the reality and perception of physical areas, highlighting how borders are key to the conceptual transformation of abstract “space” into storied and characterized “place.” In their self-authored introduction, they assert that borders are also instrumental in people’s constructions of identity, materially and philosophically shaping narratives while creating realities of inclusion and exclusion, filtering and forming modes and rates of legal and illegal material and human exchange between places. They also note that despite their profound force, borders are never absolute in their control and “can be surprisingly difficult to pinpoint and identify,” especially when that border is contested or under stress.<sup>28</sup>

The history of the Chiricahua mountains and native people is a definite demonstration of the simultaneous invisibility and power of borders and the dynamics of conflict that can result and reinforce this confusing ambivalence. The story of Chiricahua Apache’s forced expulsion from their

---

<sup>28</sup> Ramón Rivera-Servera and Harvey Young, *Performance in the Borderlands*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011,) 1-2. This work engages with the physical borders of nations and states, but the analysis and language is also useful in application to this discussion of border ontology and indigenous epistemologies.

land originates, across multiple historical accounts, with changing borders. The Chiricahua Mountains were the land of the Chiricahua people not merely by name but through dynamic coevolution, that is the land shaped the people who in turn shaped it. In Delgadillo's concise formulation, "To be Chiricahua Apache was to be of the Southwest. Survival depended upon an intimate knowledge of its natural resources and a clear understanding of its human relationships."<sup>29</sup> The borders between neighboring native groups were defined not by immobile lines but by activities like intermarriage, alliances, and raids,<sup>30</sup> an active and porous negotiation of belonging and identity that ascribed to the dynamic needs of a given circumstance. The pre-colonial Chiricahua border-epistemology seems to have been based in family loyalty and a ceremonial tradition of raiding, in which willfully crossing and moving borders was key. In other words, theirs was radically different from the hegemonic perspective of borders Rivera-Servera and Young challenge, in which the borders' physical reality and its multifaceted ramifications is often denied or ignored, and yet its exclusionary effectiveness and certitude is imagined and presumed. In Chiricahua Apache culture, conversely, boys were considered men after participating in four raids and undergoing attendant ceremonies.<sup>31</sup> Actively negotiating with ever-porous borders for the benefit of the community was a central responsibility of Apache adulthood. As in the relationship with the land, border-thinking in Chiricahua Apache culture operated a radically different epistemology than that of the contemporary U.S. government and hegemony at large.

In addition to dynamic negotiations and renegotiations of Apache subgroups, the Chiricahua people interacted with, raided and fought the Spanish colonialists of present-day Mexico and New Mexico beginning in the 1600s. Euro-Americans didn't begin entering Chiricahua territory until the 1820s, when the Apache political involvement with modern Mexico was already complex. Yet when

---

<sup>29</sup> Delgadillo, *From Fort Marion to Fort Sill*, xxi.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, xxv.

<sup>31</sup> Griffin-Pierce, *Chiricahua Apache Enduring Power*, 30.

the Mexican-American Wars concluded and the Gadsden Purchase (of vast areas of land by the US, including modern-day Arizona) was made in 1853, the United States border was abruptly inscribed further south, at its present location.

Rivera-Servera and Young write of the present day US-Mexico border that “the border exists inasmuch as it is (or has been) imagined as a construct with the capacity to prevent movement.”<sup>32</sup> The subjectivity and imperfect existence of the border is not new. The US government’s *belief* in the validity and reality of this border and its placement, gained through the exchange of capital and made without involvement of a deeply effected party (the Southwest’s native inhabitants,) entitled the US to the Apache territories. As Rivera-Servera and Young’s border theory suggests, the new and more westerly borders of the US existed first through an act of imagination that was associated with capital exchange but primarily validated through the control and constriction of movement. Beginning in in 1853 the border was realized and reaffirmed by controlling which humans could and could not move freely with the US’s expanded territory. To accomplish this control of movement in the context of a long-inhabited area entailed conflict with tribes who had not sanctioned the US’s presence and whose own territories were porous, specific and for some Apache subgroups, transected by the new US-Mexico border. It seems that impassability by non-US citizens was always constitutive of US borders; a corollary of the US government’s establishment of the southern and western border imagined in the terms of the Gadsden purchase was either killing or containing Native populations by demarcating borders of prison camps or reservations around them. Goeman’s book *Mark My Words* describes the ongoing, complex history of reservations as a way in which indigenous sovereignty *and* US control of indigenous movement, identity and legal recognition has been maintained. She even suggests that reservation borders continue to be the frontlines of ongoing efforts by the US nation-state to control and ultimately eradicate Native difference and

---

<sup>32</sup> Ramón and Young, *Performance in the Borderlands*, 2.

identity. For all its transformations since and still uncertain conclusion, the Euro-American and Apache conflict began in an act of imagining an exclusionary border that the Native populations did not see, and this instigated physical violence that outlasted all other major Native American armed-resistance to the Euro-American border epistemology.

Yet as several of the already mentioned theorists note, the displacement of the Chiricahua Apache was not an absolute triumph of the hegemony. Chiricahua people survived. Goeman suggests that not just the placement of borders but the very nature of borders as conceived of by the US are not final- alternate means of conceiving of land without notions of ownership still exist amongst indigenous people. Goeman acknowledges that immediately restructuring the land and human relationships to it in the US may seem “idealistic” and out-of-reach; but, like Rivera-Severa and Young, she also asserts that borders are imagined entities first, whose definitions are always undergoing change. “The ‘rhetorical tools’ of territory, property, and the boundaries—and the meaning deployed by such spatial apparatuses—are always shifting and in flux” Goeman writes.<sup>33</sup> As such, efforts to counteract the hegemonic borders and attendant imbalances can and ought to begin with how we think and communicate about borders.

In addition to the emphatically powerful materiality of spatial borders, the Chiricahua Mountains, the history of native Apache, and modern-day realities of Native American communities have been inscribed with powerful *temporal* borders. In *Performance and Media*, the authors Bay-Cheng, Parker-Starbuck and Saltz each posit potential taxonomies for the discussion of events, specifically art in which performance and media are involved. Their introduction argues that “implicit and explicit taxonomies provide us with cognitive structures that shape the way we perceive and engage with the phenomena we investigate”<sup>34</sup> and that elucidating the axes and dimensions of those

---

<sup>33</sup> Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 32.

<sup>34</sup> Sarah Bay-Cheng, Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, and David Z. Saltz. *Performance and Media: Taxonomies for a Changing Field*, (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 2015), 2.



taxonomies has tremendous conceptual consequences on the basis of the questions we ask and the answers we find. Bay-Cheng's proposed taxonomy draws attention to three axes of occurrence and representation: space, body and time. She locates a meaningful relationship between the categories of space and of time in rendering meaning, whether they are rendered in concordance or in opposition. While drawing on performance specifically, her interrogation into how we might and how we do structure the confluence of live and recorded/past/mediated events invites transposition into matters of historiography more generally. By extension, it invites us to consider how the significance of spatial borders throughout Native American history might also insist on temporal borders, a separation of "now" and "then" that has also attended the shape and perception of Native American communities. If time seems less pliable than land, we need only be reminded of the *imaginary* origins of hugely impactful spatial delineations to begin to understand how temporal barriers might also be perceived and then exercised; temporal parameters and limits are realized through behavior to great effect. In the following pages, I will specifically investigate how the imposition of temporal walls around and within Indigenous experiences and histories may have created an affective and effective legacy of nostalgia and primitivism; I will also engage with constructions of time that have countered and addressed this historiographical legacy, including porous temporal borders shaped by Native American thinkers and artists.

### **EDWARD CURTIS AND *THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS*: SELF-DEFINITION AND DISSOLVING BORDERS**

Whether or not you recognize the name Edward Curtis, you've likely seen his photographs. From 1900-1930, Curtis, a Wisconsin-born white man, photographed Indigenous communities throughout the US and Canada, traveling with funding by J.P. Morgan, Theodore Roosevelt and

other wealthy and prominent figures from American history.<sup>35</sup> Many of the photographs have entered canonical archives, and circulate as icons. For example, Gilbert King's article published by the Smithsonian Magazine refers to Curtis's photographs as "definitive and unparalleled work," and also quotes a New York Herald claim that his collected photos constitute "the most ambitious enterprise in publishing since the production of the King James Bible."<sup>36</sup> According to the same publication, the nature of Curtis's ambition was to "represent ideals and imagery designed to create a timeless vision of Native American culture at a time when modern amenities and American expansion had already irrevocably altered the Indian way of life."<sup>37</sup>

The 2010 publication *The Edward Curtis Project: A Modern Picture Story* documents an artistic collaboration of Canadian playwright Marie Clements, who is Métis (of mixed European and First-Nation descent,) and non-Native photojournalist Rita Leistner. In manuscript combining photography and a play script, these artists revisit and revise the canonized images of Edward Curtis and their legacy to the historicization of Native Americans by looking through contemporary Indigenous conceptions of identity. This Canada-based project actively speaks to construction of Native identity formation broadly, as does the work of Edward Curtis, and is being included here as an illustration of contemporary creative Indigenous subject formation in conversation with outsiders. *The Edward Curtis Project* focuses on the connections between Native history, external perception of Native identity, histories of colonization and what might be called an early and imperfect "allyship" by non-Natives. This (re)mapping of Indigenous identity itself bridges history, historiography and fiction and points to ways of knowing land and to affective structures in a manner both productively imaginative and pedagogically deliberate.

---

<sup>35</sup> Gilbert King, "Edward Curtis' Epic Project to Photograph Native Americans," *SmithsonianMag.com*, last modified March 21, 2012. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/edward-curtis-epic-project-to-photograph-native-americans-162523282/>

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

This discussion feels applicable to a discussion of the Apache in part because the work is much less focused on tribal specificity than “nativeness,” and in part because the Apache were among the subjects of Edward Curtis’ notion thereof. In her artist’s statement, Leistner summarizes about the photographer and legacy to which their project refers:

His life’s work, *The North American Indian*, with its thousands of large-format sepia-toned portraits, as well as interviews and recordings, is both invaluable and problematic to the historical record. As with all art, Curtis’s *magnum opus* is also a record of his own subjectivity and the ideas and assumptions of his culture and times. The irony of Curtis’s work is that he, his partons, and those Americans and Europeans who bought his photographs were demonstrating a longing for something they themselves had destroyed. Curtis’s complicity with this ‘imperialist nostalgia,’ and his lack of interest in social activism is at the heart of the modern controversy over Curtis’s work.<sup>38</sup>

A major point of entry and intervention for both Leistner and Clements is Curtis’s nostalgia, the tone of sepia and fading grandeur that attended the construction of his photos. Curtis’s selection of subjects, costumes, poses, lighting and printing sought to create an image of the unspoiled Native Americans as they faded. Curtis was particularly drawn to children, young women and elderly subjects, who are often rendered gazing at the camera in solemnity or melancholy in the case of female subjects, or gazing stoically into the distance in the case of male subjects. They are shown in iconic traditional clothing, like headdresses or blankets, sometimes on horseback. Among Curtis’s photographs is a famous image of Chiricahua Apache leader Geronimo in profile, wrapped in a blanket, taken a few years before his death in 1907.

Leistner says that Curtis’s subject selection excluded any signs of contemporary technology or modern environs, which, she notes, has led to repeated misunderstandings that Curtis was a 19<sup>th</sup> century photographer. In the laudatory language of King’s Smithsonian Magazine, this editing (some of which was executed in the printing process) was done in a preservationist effort to document a way of life that was being forcibly changed by Euro-Americans and the U.S. government. These

---

<sup>38</sup> Marie Clements and Rita Leistner, *The Edward Curtis Project: A Modern Picture Story*, (Talon Books: Vancouver, 2010), 71.

observations are not necessarily contradictory, but it is an effort of this discussion, as well as Clements and Leistner's artistic intervention, to forge a communication between the critical and the laudatory language that both meaningfully apply.

King's article in the Smithsonian publication revealingly cites an article by Native American (A'aninin) scholar and museum curator George Horse Capture, whose descriptions of Curtis's work are close to but significantly different from King's. For instance, King writes, "Edward Curtis set out on a journey that would see him photograph the most important Native Americans of the time, including Geronimo, Red Cloud, Medicine Crow and Chief Joseph."<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, Horse Capture's earlier piece states that Curtis, "captured the likeness of many important and well-known Indian people of that time, including Geronimo, Chief Joseph, Red Cloud, Medicine Crow and others."<sup>40</sup> These nearly identical sentences set an importantly different tone: the former describes in semi-passive tense a kind of destiny, the latter a deliberate project of collection. Furthermore, "the most important Native Americans of the time" is markedly different assessment than "many important and well-known Indian people of that time," where Horse Capture counters a notion of absolute value by intertwining significance with the condition of wide-spread recognition. Additionally, being among the "important" as in Horse Capture's description, is quite different than the superlative "most important Native Americans," which implies the marginalization and unimportance of all Native people not archived by Curtis.

The issue of the supreme visibility of the legendary individuals in histories of Native American groups is powerful and persistent. US histories of Native Americans tend to be truncated and this is facilitated in part by focusing on a handful of individuals often recognized because of

---

<sup>39</sup> Gilbert King, "Edward Curtis' Epic Project."

<sup>40</sup> George Horse Capture, "Edward Curtis, Shadow Catcher- American Masters," *PBS*, last modified 23 April, 2001. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/edward-curtis-shadow-catcher/568/>

exchanges with Euro-American people. In an opening speech to a 2017 symposium called “Native/Indigenous Peoples Educating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” hosted by UC Santa Barbara, Dr. Scott Manning Stevens noted that education concerning Native Americans in US History typically extends to 5<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum at the latest, and covers primarily “helper Indians” like Pocahontas or Sacagawea in the context of white society.

Efforts to diversify Native representation beyond those few figureheads dominating popular US history are ongoing. This was the subject and aim of a 2012 special exhibit, “Beyond Geronimo: The Apache Experience” at Arizona’s Heard Museum, a museum dedicated to Native American history and art. The exhibit sought to contextualize Geronimo within a larger culture and community. One of the Apache artists featured in the exhibit, Dustinn Craig, explained, “Geronimo has a place of history, but he was part of a brilliant team of Apache people working together. Americans think he was a mastermind, but he was one of many powerful Apache. *Part of the tragedy is this focus on the individual...* It's important to go beyond the story of Geronimo.”<sup>41</sup>

To return to Curtis’s photo-documentation, it seems that his work has both contributed to and complicated the over-shadowing power of legends like Geronimo in Native American history. While his portrait of that leader indicates an intention to photograph him, it is in the company of a 2,200 other photos, many of which are portraits of individuals who would not otherwise be remembered in the archive. A particular momentum of his images in total, however, is the aesthetic decisions to emphasize a sense of gazing backward in time, in which the figures seem to have passed on from the time of their documentation, in which perhaps all North American Indians are legends who are not and never were living, active people.

---

<sup>41</sup> Matthew Erikson, "'Beyond Geronimo: The Apache Experience' At Heard Museum," *The Arizona Republic*, last modified June 12, 2012. Emphasis added. <http://archive.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/ae/articles/2012/05/22/20120522beyond-geronimo-apache-exhibit-heard-museum-phoenix.html>

In *Performing Remains*, a study primarily of Civil War re-enactor culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century US, Rebecca Schneider offers an interesting insight into the matter of truth or authenticity in photography, specifically in contradistinction to perceptions of theater. In reference to re-enactments of performance art she writes: “the sometime resistance to theatricality as aesthetic tool...is extremely curious, given the ways so much work across the twentieth century (in photography particularly, but also in appropriation art generally) has been mining the theatrical, or overtly stagey, unauthorized, or re-authorized copy for precisely its curious ability to pry open, tear open, the irruptive and always re-mediated real.”<sup>42</sup> It would seem that whatever Curtis’s intentions in staging and re-authorizing a Native American past has been accepted as archival documentation of that authentic experience by some, following the accounts currently circulated by the Smithsonian Institute.

Meanwhile, *Horse Capture* points to Curtis’s deliberate choice of costumes and settings with an attention to the group repertoire entailed in the eventual archival product:

He presented his subjects in a traditional way whenever possible and even supplied a bit of the proper clothing when his subjects had none. Reenactments of battles, moving camp, ceremonies and other past activities were also photographed. These efforts provided extended pleasure to the elders and preserve a rare view of the earlier ways of the people.<sup>43</sup>

His use of the word “reenactment” is noticeable in that this connects precisely to the terminology and theory of Schneider’s project. She describes Civil War reenactments as neither fully the past they imitate nor the present but rather, a negotiation, both active and incidental, between times. She wonders specifically, “What if time (re)turns? What does it drag along with it? I am interested in the attempt to literally touch time through the residue of the gesture or the cross-temporality of the pose.”<sup>44</sup> Schneider’s enquiry into the permeable/porous nature of time delves into the many modes

---

<sup>42</sup> Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), Kindle Edition, KL 3303-3306.

<sup>43</sup> George Horse Capture, "Edward Curtis, Shadow Catcher."

<sup>44</sup> Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains*, KL 178-187.

by which re-enactors purposefully interface with time, past and present. Curtis's work diverges notably from these re-enactors because both he and his subjects are often subsumed to the sense of historicity and seriousness his photographs evoke through (conscious aesthetic decisions.) Horse Capture's description points to Curtis's play with time, a choreographed return to the past, but the play itself is veiled. Perhaps conscious framing and canonization as an archivist is the "timelessness" King ascribes as both a quality and consequence of their beauty. King states that Curtis's "photographs became known for their sheer beauty," a summary of the portraits' aesthetic effect which also signals that this beauty has overshadowed and perhaps foreclosed a widespread questioning or knowledge of what scenario is captured in the archival image. One distillation to be taken from Schneider's quote regarding a "resistance to theatricality" is that staged-ness is generally disreputable; theater and, more broadly, an awareness of conscious rehearsal or reenactment, is not, in dominant contemporary terms, aesthetically beautiful. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century re-enactors she studies are frequently positioned as hobbyists rather than actors or artists. It follows that the "sheer beauty" of Curtis's photographs results from and/or insists on an absence of acknowledgement of construction and of playing-along or playing-with between photographer and photographed. This is an illusion cemented in the archival nature of the photograph, whose materiality Taylor has argued we are conditioned to associate with reality, while the line of exchange between those people— Curtis and the indigenous people who posed for him— is invisible and generally ignored.

Yet simultaneously, it deserves attention that these photographs might be, truly, beautiful. Their wide and continued circulation may result most immediately from the aesthetic pleasure they provide for many. I'll set aside the complex and limitless potential discussion of whence and what "beauty" constitutes, and the ramifications of that aesthetic quality; accepting the beauty of the photographs, there is a question lingering as to whether, with or without staging, this beauty belongs

to the (perhaps honorably intentioned) collector of images. Horse Capture's article offers an eloquent intervention to this point:

In spite of the dedication and hardships the photographer had to endure, the ultimate beauty of *The North American Indian* lies not only with the genius of Curtis, but also and most importantly, within his subjects. The native beauty, strength, pride, honor, dignity and other admirable characteristics may have been recorded by photographic techniques, but they were first an integral part of the people. While Curtis was a master technician, the Indian people possessed the beauty and their descendants carry on these same traits today.<sup>45</sup>

It is this matter of continuity, of descendants carrying on ancestral ways and experiences, that is the entryway for *The Edward Curtis Project: A Modern Picture Story*. In its photos and dramatic text, this project forefronts contemporary, non-mythologized indigenous figures both within the play's fiction and the photo archive. In the play, engagement with the repertoire, staging the (imagined) movement and moments of shared-space and interaction that necessarily historically surrounded and enabled the circulated and re-circulated documents of Curtis and the indigenous people he met, dismantles the spatial border which sets them on opposite sides of the camera. Simultaneously, the linear temporality of progress which places indigenous traditions in the past and contemporary life beyond it, are dissolved throughout the play and images.

As a photographer, Leistner set out to retrace Curtis's footsteps in visiting communities of "North American Indians." She created, in happenstance conversation and collaboration with a teenage boy she photographed, the first of a series of "diptychs" in which Native people posed twice at the same site: once in traditional or heritage clothing and once in their everyday clothing. She made a point also of documenting modern elements of the context (cars, for example) even in the

---

<sup>45</sup> George Horse Capture, "Edward Curtis, Shadow Catcher." I would add in light of the collaborative preparation and reenactment suggested across histories of interactions between the photographed and the photographer that the American Indians' ingenuity, aesthetic and technical awareness might also be on display in this archive. In that context, it is notable that Geronimo's status as legendary warrior adjoins a seemingly anachronistic and/or incommensurate career in Hollywood, where he appeared in numerous Westerns after the US-Indian Wars (Erikson.) There is a sadness or cruelty often used to interpret this passage of events, but following Schneider's urging to reexamine the degradation of theater and dismissal of re-enactment, we might seriously reconsider the contours and the significance of his acting career.



images featuring traditional clothing. Hers is a document countering the backward-looking nostalgia of Curtis's American Indian, community documents with an attention to fluidity, adaptability, multi/cross/inter-culturalism, co-evolution and co-existence. For instance, she shows First Nations people who value and use cars *and* moccasins in their day-to-day lives, sometimes at the same time.

In the play accompanying these photographs, Marie Clements interrupts the fable of the disappearing and fading Indian by inserting Curtis into a dialogue with current day Métis characters—primarily the sisters Angeline and Clara. Clements' play moves through the crossing lines of multiple and simultaneous perspectives and time-frames, the ancient past, recent past and present day.

Angeline, a newspaper reporter, is darker-skinned than Clara, and lives by external circumstance with greater daily awareness of being indigenous. She also alleges that she lives with greater internal, affective closeness to what that identity and heritage signify than her sister. Clara, meanwhile, is a psychiatrist who's called Dr. Clara throughout, and has lived, worked and succeeded within the dimensions of modern and predominantly white American striving. In some scenes, the two actresses transform into Princess Angeline, the historical subject of Curtis's first photograph of an indigenous subject, and Clara Curtis, the photographer's wife, while the actor playing Edward Curtis intermittently plays Angeline and Dr. Clara's father.

Curtis, whose character is drawn in part from his historical memoirs, is depicted as loving and admiring of the Native American characters and communities. He called himself "Chief" as a nickname historically, and this particular effort to connect with (or co-opt) Indian culture carries into the play. His distance and difference from the culture is also present, though not simply condemning. In a deliberate staging of a manifestation of porous time, Curtis enters the play when Dr. Clara gives Angeline *The North American Indian* as a gift. This exchange engages both sisters in a dialogue not just with his photographic works as they're projected on stage, but also the transmission of him as a person—a person who believed he loved Native culture, but also,

evidently, mourned and exploited it continuously. We might say that Curtis (historically and as imagined by Clements) was bound by the affective structure of melancholia and an obsessive, life-long dedication to archiving the people and culture he felt were being lost. Angeline is troubled by the gift, and weary of Curtis himself- she laughs and derides his nickname for one, and the simultaneous pitying and longing it emblemizes. She ultimately interrogates and challenges his life's project as a photographer.

Despite the tensions between the three characters' understandings of identity and authenticity, in staging the repertoire of the fictionalized interaction, Clements permits a disruption of any binary categorization as to whether Curtis's work is good or bad, collaborative or exploitative. Debate over Curtis's motives and the effects of a nostalgic imperial gaze are carried out over coffee or soup that Curtis has made for Angeline. In between challenging questions, Angeline eats and despite the intensity of content, tells him how good it tastes, or smells. This abiding activity, the staging of the repertoire of lived interaction between photographer and subject, intervenes powerfully in the narrative of the archive Curtis made famous; daily interactions of physical shared-space, conversation and sustenance were lost to the archive but, given his decades of visiting and photographing willing indigenous peoples, likely enabled Curtis's canonical documentation in some form. The play thereby reminds spectators that the spatial border erected by the camera between archivist and subject was fleeting and never absolute. The lives of the "North American Indians" are complex and unique mosaics of tradition and modernity for both Angeline and Clara, and are set in the moment of the play's performance (2010 at its debut.) The porous time of Clements's play forcibly contradicts the temporal constructions inherent in popular histories drawn from Curtis's archive, like that of the Smithsonian magazine. It shows Native Americans have survived, contending in the present with Curtis, and the US's, insistent past-ward gaze— and talking back.

The set of the play is an amalgamation of Dr. Clara's office and Angeline's home, with projections of photos and video used to represent exterior places. At first the "natural" or outside world figures in the play only occasionally, specifically as dreams, fantasies and flashbacks. In particular, a reverie of being in a canoe in the water passes from the words of Clara to Angeline to Angeline's boyfriend, Yiska, who speaks in the Native language Kutenai, and then to Edward Curtis. Amidst other dialogue, the projection of a Curtis photograph of an indigenous person canoeing, and actions with a water basin, each of these characters continue or repeat a collective story of longing for physical contact with natural elements:

I wish to lower my hands off the sides of the canoe and let my fingers touch the bulrushes that reach up to me, touching my hands so lightly, so right... if only to interrupt my sad story for a moment... I wish to rise from the roots of the bulrushes, I wish to rise from the roots of the bulrushes... I wish to feel the water... I wish to rise from the roots of bulrushes... take my clothes off, every stitch... feel the water like ice on my skin and rise to the shock of being touched by a god that has many names... I wish to be free of all things I am not and will never be...<sup>46</sup>

In these passages, the natural world of water and plants is an object of intense longing, though it does not literally figure in their world; the closest stand-in for the wildness of the river is a domestic tool, the water basin. The river water channels a spiritual presence that offers to subsume the false identities of all the speakers: Indigenous characters caught in conflicted poses between tradition and modernity, as well as a white man enamored with Native life. Notably, Curtis repeats the last lines of this "wish" while watching Yiska and Angeline "make love," so his concordant feelings and longings are doubled with his status as a voyeur, as if his wish for contact with the natural can only be achieved through transmission by the indigenous people he persistently surveys. Perhaps Curtis's fault is in seeking this purifying communion with nature through American Indian people instead of independently, or perhaps it is not otherwise available to him—the play makes no certain claim. Despite this incriminating context, there

---

<sup>46</sup> Marie Clements and Rita Leistner, *The Edward Curtis Project*, 30-33.

does seem to be an emphatic structure of feeling uniting these very different characters, a passionate longing for the undeveloped land and its elements, and a belief in its divine power to simplify them to their truest selves. In other words, perhaps, these very different and internally conflicted characters seek to find solace in the embrace of the wild landscape, a shared profound relief of diverse lacking and longing in the context of (an imagined) communion with nature.

Angeline and Curtis are also connected by the psychic and emotional state of depression, and they tell one another about this. Her desire for the river water is interrupted by a revelation that she's (dangerously) fallen asleep in the tub, and she makes overt references to suicide. This makes Angeline's contemporary story of indigenous being, while largely bound by a modern home and profession, a tale of survival as well, that reaches a dramatic resolution in the final scene. The presence of the natural world simultaneously crescendos at the end of the play, in a manner asserting the absolute power of wilderness and the elements regardless of the human individuals entailed. The play's content, in which nature ultimately over-takes all other events and redirects the characters; thinking, also emphatically contradicts the notion that the natural world is an entity lost to modernity and capitalism, only generating melancholy, or temporary and theoretical reprieve from it. Nature becomes an over-powering actor. In the final pages of the script, a group of "Indians" submerge Edward Curtis in the lake, drowning him in punishment for being a "thief," but Clara (now his historical wife) comes to save him and they "freeze" in a kiss. The wind of a sandstorm is heard, then suddenly transforms into a blizzard— a slide informs us the place/time is now the recent past with the title "Arctic, 2008." This final scene revisits Angeline's discovery of three indigenous children frozen dead in an ice-storm after their father, young and inebriated, noticed them missing. She'd since reported the story as a journalist.

Given the dream-like aesthetic of the play, this final tragic episode of an internally “real” occurrence operates as a literal and powerful acknowledgement of the material difficulties impacting contemporary indigenous communities (including alcoholism and negligence.) Simultaneously, it provides a stunning counter-portrait to the photographs of Edward Curtis, rendering “freezing” of indigenous humans as at once tragic, lovely and deadly. Angeline re-enacts finding one of the young people:

“I stumbled back...when my hand landed...landed on something solid but soft... Jesus, no...no...I looked back and her hand was reaching out as if she had seen something... a possibility, age 8. She reached out and froze in that possibility... I knew it was too late because they were so beautiful. Perfect. Frozen in time. Dead... I begin to write... ‘Three children were found in the snow...’ And that’s as far as I got.... Three children were found sleeping...”<sup>47</sup>

Overwhelmed, she begins to take off her clothes and fall asleep in the snow, saying to Curtis, “Aren’t you going to take the picture? ... take the picture ... if vanishing is so beautiful ... take the picture...” Curtis answers, “I can’t take the picture, Angeline... because I am not alive. You are.”<sup>48</sup> At this, Curtis “freezes,” his name and the dates of his birth and death flash on the projector, he “fades and vanishes,” and Angeline is rescued by Yiska. Her despair over the frozen “possibility” of this young girl is at once direct grief and echoes her admonition of Curtis and his determination to document the sadness and nobility of indigenous endings. His rejoinder, that she alone is alive now, becomes an insistence that despite her hesitance to record the events of indigenous life and death (in written form,) she has taken on the role of witness, archivist, and also of survivor. She has replaced both Curtis’s subjects and his role, just as the playwright, perhaps, has been cast to continue stories and portraits of indigenous-being and knowing in her chosen medium. Interestingly and importantly, the natural world or wilderness is ultimately an instrument of death, specifically for young indigenous people. This suggests a conflict with the romantic longing for communion with the

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 66.

natural world, asserting the very real dangers it poses to vulnerable human beings. Perhaps, symbolically, it also demonstrates that the youngest generations are particularly unequipped to managing life beyond “modern” dwellings like that of the play’s dominant set. Though the frozen children are “beautiful” and “perfect” and perhaps, by extension, at peace, the real-life challenges or even impossibility of *living* within the natural world are fore-fronted in this episode.

Angeline proclaims in the final line, “We have survived across time, across place, to love each other towards a new day.” Though Curtis is dead, his kiss with Clara, shared longing for nature and death with Angeline, and many other instances of physical and dialogical affinity (alongside acrimony) between Native and Non-Native characters suggest that the “we” implicated in survival and love is not necessarily exclusively indigenous. While *The Edward Curtis Project* asserts the importance of indigenous voices to tell and document indigenous stories in their full complexity and especially endurance, Edward Curtis’s position is complicated and not categorically vilified. While conflict, coercion and criticism abound, Curtis’s needs and wishes, the world he longs for, especially in terms of the natural, are in many instances shared with the First Nations characters. In complex ways, he is both an interloper and an ally.

What is most remarkable in this play might be the disruption of canonical Western history and historiography of American Indians broadly in its confrontation of a major historian of indigenous life. It might also be its comprehensive enactment and embodiment of what was in reality always at play from Curtis’s time to now, beneath the hard-lines of passing taxonomic assumptions: an utter, essential impurity, a constant mutual influence of the past on the present, the present on the past, the Native on the Non-Native American, no matter who surrendered or what came first. In Schneider’s *Performing Remains*, she records a thought about reenactment nicely resonant to Clement and Leistner’s project to revise but also resuscitate a time and its mediation, a repertoire and an archive:

amidst the myriad strangeness of anachronism at play, it can occasionally feel “as if” the halfway dead came halfway to meet the halfway living, halfway. That is, despite or perhaps because of the error-ridden mayhem of trying to touch the past, something other than the discrete “now” of everyday life can be said to occasionally occur – or recur.<sup>49</sup>

In terms of recurrence, it seems fruitful to connect the figure of Curtis and his project to my own— a non-Native person who feels an interest and affinity for what he perceives to be Native ways, and for Native people. The play’s water passages speak directly to the intimate and defining land-epistemology I’ve suggested may often characterize indigenous cultures, and Curtis’s place in this chorus suggests this is a structure of feeling shared across cultures and ethnic categories. It also suggests that speaking for indigenous people is dangerous and misguided, a presumptuous act of theft that threatens to ignorantly dismiss the many other dimensions of Native experience, especially in the current age, including social issues, education, occupations, and immersion in the amenities and goals of the US at large. Yet the chronology of the play also poetically enforces the idea that contemporary Native thinking and identity are not divorced from the past, even if for individuals (Dr. Clara for instance) who construct their self-notions in distinction to the traditional. It is with these lessons in mind— to seek to allow Native representations to come from Native individuals, to recognize the possibility of complex interconnections and sometimes commonalities between Native and non-Native structures of feeling and goals, to respect and consider the ferocious elements of “nature,” and to be mindful the persistence of colonialism into the complexities of Native life in contemporary times, that I return to the discussion of those particular landscapes that defined my growing up in Arizona, and the people displaced from them.

---

<sup>49</sup> Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains*, KL 452-457.

## KNOWING NOW: CONTEMPORARY APACHE PLACES AND VOICES

Having examined an artistic indigenous historiographic intervention into broad Non-Native conceptions of indigenous peoples, I look to understand specifics of contemporary Southwestern Native American groups and the Chiricahua Apache specifically. Yet as discussion of Apache history may already suggest, the heritage, lineage and history of these groups is complicated by the violent interventions of US government into family life and locality, as well as internal complexities of affiliation. “Apache,” while a tribal autonym in circulation today, is most likely derived from a Spanish word and draws from an outsider’s perspective on internally diverse cultures. The Apache people can be broadly divided along linguistic lines between Western and Eastern groups.<sup>50</sup> In the Western Apache languages, the tribe refers internally to itself as Ndeh, “The People” or simply “people.”<sup>51 52</sup> In accordance with contemporary self-naming practices, the use of the name Apache seems appropriate, but with an understanding that this signals an external perspective on a diversity of cultures, complexly crossed by both kinship and competition. These sub-group relations were fluidly collaborative, combative, and cultures varied widely, and nuanced relationships amongst Apache communities continue to the present day.

As previously noted, the US voided a treaty by which the Chiricahua leader Cochise had secured a reservation for his tribe immediately following Cochise’s death. Roughly 500 surviving Chiricahua Apache people were then immediately taken as Prisoners of War and shipped by railroad

---

<sup>50</sup> Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996, Kindle Edition).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., KL 272.

<sup>52</sup> “Ndeh- San Carlos Apache,” *Apache Nation Chamber of Commerce*, accessed March 2017. <http://www.sancarlosapache.com/home.htm>



to Oklahoma (and later Florida and New Mexico in some cases), and they remained prisoners at military forts for 27 years. Children were required to attend boarding schools where they were taught English. Some adults were allowed to farm, but diets were largely dictated and in opposition to dietary inclusions and restrictions developed through hundreds of years of history with the Chiricahua Mountains and its native flora and fauna. Beyond leading to malnutrition which contributed to susceptibility to diseases to which the Chiricahua were not immune, their sustenance-based repertoire was completely and forcefully eradicated throughout this period.

As Griffin-Pierce points out, this situation of imprisonment was unique to the Chiricahua experience as compared to better-known sagas of tragic relocation, like the Trail of Tears.<sup>53</sup> The total lack of freedom to choose where and how to sustain themselves affected health and largely eliminated the behaviors, traditions, and rituals of their repertoire, as well as their capacity to communicate it to younger generations. Griffin-Pierce points out that the people were not consummate victims, however, and that even as POWs the Chiricahua Apache chose to garner and integrate knowledge and skills they were taught and/or exposed to by white people and culture. Furthermore, in keeping with Taylor, the body is a media and the repertoire is a means of knowledge and knowing that is stored and can be reinvigorated—by these means, even a 27-year suspension of practicing much cultural repertoire first-hand could not prevent Chiricahua people from retaining this history and finding means of passing it on. When the US government finally lifted their POW status was after 27 years, some remained in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and others returned to the Southwest. In addition to physical displacement, young people were subjected to boarding school enrollment that sought to corrode tribal affiliations and Native American languages, epistemologies and culture.

---

<sup>53</sup> Griffin-Pierce, *Chiricahua Apache Enduring Power*, 16.

Apache history around these tumultuous periods of displacement was maintained by internal tribal knowledge and ethnographic scholarship, especially the focused fieldwork work of Grenville Goodwin and Morris Opler, performed throughout the 1930's.<sup>54</sup> Cultural Geographer Daniel Arreola summarizes that, prior to displacement, "Opler recognized three Chiricahua Apache bands," including one who dominantly occupied the geography from which this paper finds it genesis:

The second Chiricahua band called themselves cokanen (Chokonen). No translation of this name exists, but some historical sources refer to it as the "Cochise Apache," after the name of their great leader. In historic times the band occupied southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico west of the continental divide. It is to this band that the name "Chiricahua" is attached, after the Opata word chiguicagui, or "Mountain of Wild Turkeys," in reference to the Chiricahua Mountains in southeastern Arizona as they were known to that historic Sonora, Mexico, native people (Sweeney 1991, 3-4; Bright 2004, 104).<sup>55</sup>

However, Arreola also notes because of the nomadic and raiding cultures of all Chiricahua bands, as well as various intertribal exchanges, strict territorial maps do not apply and knowledge of broad and overlapping regions was common to many Chiricahua and Apache sub-groups. Collectively, the Chiricahua Apache bands ranged north into Arizona, east into New Mexico, and south into Mexico before displacement. Regardless of sub-groupings, the total population occupying the greater Chiricahua region before imprisonment is believed to have been notably small:

"Little solid evidence exists for a determination of Chiricahua Apache, or even Apache, historical demography in the Southwest border region. Analysis of one subregion during the Spanish and Mexican periods suggested a maximum population of 850 Apache in northern Chihuahua alone (Griffen [1988] 1998, 81-89). Others hypothesized that, between 1790 and 1863, the population of all Chiricahua bands combined did not exceed 3,000 (Opler 1983, 411; Sweeney 1998, 7). Whatever the estimates, it seems possible that the total population of Chiricahua Apache in Arizona alone was never more numerous than the population of an American small town, yet they came to dominate an area the size of France for nearly three centuries (Perry 1991, xi)."<sup>56</sup>

In sum, this history of US interference in a small Native population severely complicates attempts to connect with contemporary experiences, testimonials and ultimately land-epistemologies

---

<sup>54</sup> Arreola, Daniel D. 2012. Chiricahua Apache Homeland in the Borderland Southwest. *Geographical Review* 102 (1): 114

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 114.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 114-117.

of the Chiricahua Apache. Importantly, as Arreola summarizes, “To this day the Chiricahua have no official homeland, reservation, or nation territory of their own.”<sup>57</sup> Currently, the Fort Sill Apache reservation in Oklahoma is the only officially designated home of contemporary Chiricahua Apache,<sup>58</sup> however members of the Mescalero reservation in New Mexico and the San Carlos Apache reservation in Arizona do identify as Chiricahua. Arreola writes that the lowland of San Carlos, despite its geographic closeness to the Chiricahuas, was “despised” by the Chiricahua Apache because it was not a mountain habitat like their homeland.<sup>59</sup> However, given the complications of violent, repeated Apache displacement, continued political complications influencing decisions by the US to grant tribal status, and historic linguistic and geographic overlap of Chiricahua groups with San Carlos Apache, I feel it is respectful and appropriate to defer to the inner-tribal knowledge and take these individuals at their word by including the San Carlos Apache in discussions of contemporary Chiricahua culture.

It also happens that there is more existing archival information concerning the Western Apache broadly than the Chiricahua Apache specifically. Non-Native ethnographer Keith Basso’s book, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*, details his collaborative work with White Mountain Apache people to map the Apache place-names of the region surrounding Cibecue, Arizona. The area of his study is part of the Fort Apache Reservation, immediately north of San Carlos, and while it does not displace a need for Chiricahua Apache land-perspectives, this close and careful look at place and linguistics in a shared Apache language suggests a framework for Apache land-epistemology (or point of comparison between Apache sub-cultures.)

Basso is interested in the process of “retrospective world-building” that he calls “place-making,” and explains this universal but particularizing process of assigning meaning to locations:

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 123.

It is a common response to common curiosities—what happened here? who was involved? what was it like? why should it matter?—and anyone can be a place-maker who has the inclination. And every so often, more or less spontaneously, alone or with others, with varying degrees of interest and enthusiasm, almost everyone does make places. As roundly ubiquitous as it is seemingly unremarkable, place-making is a universal tool of the historical imagination. And in some societies at least, if not in the great majority, it is surely among the most basic tools of all. Prevalent though it is, this type of world-building is never entirely simple. On the contrary, a modest body of evidence suggests that place-making involves multiple acts of remembering and imagining which inform each other in complex ways (Casey 1976, 1987).<sup>60</sup>

He argues that the process of place-making is unique to individuals but that collectively, common stories become key to coherent cultural understandings, even, we might note, in dominant US cultures where place-making often entails presumptions of objectivity rather than “story-telling.” His summary conclusion is that within and beyond Apache cultures, “If place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of doing human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities. *We are, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine.*”<sup>61</sup> Basso’s conclusions enrich the supposition that place-making is a defining and potentially deeply connecting aspect of identity throughout human experience.

While Basso asserts that place-making is a universal actor within cultural and social-becoming, his study finds that Apache place-making in particular constitutes a highly active and powerful non-archival historiography. Indeed, his Apache collaborators asked that the specific physical map resulting from his travels with them not be published (or, in other terms, maintained in the archive.) Rather, the result of his work is a wealth of place-based stories shared with him, and a rich insight into a lived culture of learning through the landscape. Apache place-names create a dialogue with landscape, where highly descriptive names and attendant stories are an ever-present reminder of historical and moral tales that continues to define Apache culture and society. Basso writes, “Apaches view the landscape as a repository of distilled wisdom, a stern but benevolent

---

<sup>60</sup> Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, KL 222-228)

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, KL 262-263, emphasis added.

keeper of tradition, an ever-vigilant ally in the efforts of individuals and whole communities to maintain a set of standards for social living that is uniquely and distinctly their own.”<sup>62</sup> Basso emphasizes in his study a particular interest in the chronological valence that place-making entails in Apache culture, where the past is consciously and continuously re-activated through descriptive names of places upon encounter. The past as orally linked to the landscape, as well as the landscape itself, actively inform Apache identity in the present (or, more precisely, the identities of those family-groups with whom Basso worked in 1996.)

His work illustrates an emphatically embodied and essentially repertoire-based mode of knowing land (including travel and physical engagement with places and oral place-naming,) and further, self and cultural knowledge through embodied knowledge of the land. Without using Taylor’s terminology of repertoire, Basso notes that, “interpreting the past can be readily accomplished—and is every day—without recourse to documentary archives, photographic files, and early sound recordings. It cannot be accomplished, readily or otherwise, without recourse to places and the place-worlds they engender.”<sup>63</sup> .

The irreplaceability of physical places essential to history and identity have become a focal point of Native American political activity in recent years, including the cross-tribal Water Protector movement to defend Sioux territory from the construction of Dakota Access Pipeline. Another ongoing protest to defend a specific place has been the occupation to save Oak Flat, an effort by members of the San Carlos Apache reservation, including Chiricahua Apache people, to protect this sacred site from a mining company.

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., KL 1184-1186.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., KL 255-257.

## SACRED LAND, NATIVE LEADERS: THE SAN CARLOS APACHE'S OAK FLAT

At last we look to Chiricahua Apache speaking directly of their relationship to and knowing of land. The geography in question is not within the Chiricahua Mountains, from which the Apache were forced out and where no contemporary reservation exists- but further north in the Tonto Forest of modern-day Arizona.<sup>64</sup> The area is known in English as Oak Flat, and it is a portion of national forest (public land) and a site of spiritual significance to the Apache, about 11 miles from the current San Carlos reservation. I have not been to Oak Flat, but in pictures and descriptions it sounds similar to the Chiricahua region in-so-far as it is Southwestern US forest, public land that is undeveloped but for roads, trails and campgrounds.

In 2015, following a sustained effort by Senator John McCain and others, the US nation-state again reimagined the permissions of its internal borders, this time through the Southeastern Arizona Land Exchange (passing it as a rider on a large defense bill after repeated rejection by congress.) This exchange granted a mining permit of the land to a private company (Rio Tinto) seeking to pulverize and destroy the site for copper. An Apache group from San Carlos calling themselves “the Apache Stronghold” has organized to resist the destruction of this area by occupying it periodically and calling for attention and support over the past few years.

A primary spokesperson for Apache Stronghold has been Naelyn Pike, who identifies as Chiricahua Apache and was 16 at the time when Oak Flat was first threatened. She has appeared (alone or alongside relatives) to speak at conferences and to journalists about the significance of

---

<sup>64</sup> Arreola's article mentions a project whereby some Chiricahua Apache from New Mexico's Mescalero reservation revisited historic Apache homeland areas in Mexico and the Chiricahua Mountains. He describes the experience of revisiting the places from which they'd been removed as painful or difficult for some participants, but I have attained no detailed sources on contemporary Apache relationships to the Chiricahuas themselves and none specific to Paradise.

Oak Flat and the threats to destroy it. Her assertion is that this site is crucial to Apache identity. As Basso contended of human identity but Apache identity particularly, Naelyn describes that there is no substitute for being in this place in defining her and her self-knowledge. In an interview at the 2015 Bioneers Indigenous Forum, Naelyn describes growing up in the city of Mesa, Arizona where conceptions of her Native identity referred always to “stereotypes” and qualities of appearance, her long hair and “traditional” clothing like moccasins.<sup>65</sup> By contrast, going to Oak Flat from childhood created an internal feeling of belonging (“home”) and inextricably substantiated her being: “feeling that sacredness, the life that it gives, for me that was home - it is now, still is, and always will be, home... knowing that someone or something wants to destroy who I am as Apache, as Ndeh, who I am as a girl, my identity, it hurt. To me, it was like someone making me as nothing, making my people as nothing.”<sup>66</sup> In Naelyn’s description, she seems almost to share a single body with the natural land, where threat to destroy the place is painful and potentially detrimental to her own continuance. Elsewhere in the same interview, she expands on the notion of “the life that [Oak Flat] gives,” as co-embodied, an exchange of physical being and needs with the physical land that is whole and sustainable. There is no need, in other words, to leave Oak Flat to consume (or be consumed) by the commodities and formations of late capitalism. In a quiet tones that suggest reverence and excitement in turns, she describes Oak Flat as self-complete: “It’s a place of blessing, a place of sacredness, a place of life. You could be born there and be growing and...grow up to an elder and you can die, because of the water it has there, the food that it has there, the medicinal plants it has there. I love staying there, because every morning I can wake up to the sun and feel the wind.”<sup>67</sup> The possibility Naelyn imagines of and from Oak Flat is one where you “could” be beyond need and

---

<sup>65</sup> Bioneers, “The Apache Stronghold - Saving Oak Flats | Bioneers,” Youtube video, 40:42, posted February 1, 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az4\\_NZ4d9BM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az4_NZ4d9BM).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

totally provided for directly from the land, from birth to death. In its particular connotations of liberation from need and absence of missing it describes an experience of solace, an acceptance of completion.

Oak Flat has spiritual and ceremonial significance for the Apache, qualities that in some ways extends beyond or perhaps supersedes any discussion of epistemology or affect, and the parameters of this discussion- though in Naelyn's description knowing, feeling, and spirituality seem to be intertwined. After an extended discussion, she ceases attempts to categorize Oak Flat and essentially avows that the repertoire is necessary to her meaning and her value of the place that has given her meaning and value. "I can't explain," she says, "It's a place where you have to go, a place where you have to feel that spirit, and then you'll know. If you can keep talking about it and keep talking about it and don't go, then how are you gonna know? ... You have to connect putting your feet on mother earth- and feel that direct connection... Oak Flat was a place where I can be who I am."

## **CONCLUSIONS: AMERICA'S WOUNDS- ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES, (IN)JUSTICE AND POSSIBLE FUTURES**

Throughout this thesis, I have sought to understand the historical context of the present-day Chiricahuas, and to learn from the voices of contemporary indigenous artists and Apache activists about their understanding of land and the affective structures. I argue that in the play of Marie Clements and the speeches of Naelyn Pike, natural habitats are associated with profound relief, solace, from the complications and uncertainties of mediated life in late capitalist structures, particularly the healing resolution of uncertainty about identity and an affirmation of self. Simultaneously, the characters and real-life speakers discussed here have lives meaningfully and



intentionally shaped in modern terms. Oak Flat is essential to Naelyn Pike as a place to return to, but the proposition of her activism is that it remain public space, not that it be her permanent home. The identity that Clements's character Angeline discovers through confrontation with natural elements is a fuller identification with her role as a journalist. I certainly would not argue that Clements and Pike represent all indigenous perspectives on nature or wilderness. Some may wish for complete repatriation of relevant lands, others may not prioritize issues of natural and native land-use, or may not experience the spiritual and/or emotional connection captured by these voices. The proposition of this study has been that a repertoire-based learning from and about the land, in my own history, might inform an affective structure shared by groups who knew the Chiricahuas earlier and better. Given the generations of on-going displacement from the Chiricahua Mountains, the specific significance of living and behaving in that terrain remains only a suggestion. In any case, the archived experience of nature of most contemporary people (Clements's characters, Pike, indigenous advocates for diverse land-protection issues, their allies, myself) is achieved in relation to late capitalism, modernity, and substructures of uneven wealth, privilege, mobility and access.

Given the common denominator of hyper-paced, cyber-centric, mediated and commerce-fueled reality within much of the Americas, it is my belief that the natural world has emerged as a source of solace for an affective community, and that indigenous communities have been leaders in solidifying and advocating this connection between nature and healing. Non-human ecosystems and natural cycles provide basic necessities including clean water and oxygen, and they can be the source for industrial resources as well, including minerals or timber. Yet for those for whom nature provides solace, the affective experience of comfort, relief and self-realization is also a necessity.

Native American communities have reminded the US at large in recent years that the commodification and destruction of natural lands destroys the essential resource of presence with these spaces and the solace it provides, even when those alterations are intended to provide

secondary resources. Basso's insights on Apache culture attest to a rich oral culture of stories about land and its natural features as active components of modern-day social creation, such that the land itself is an active player in the becoming of Cibecue Apache. The landscapes of the Chiricahuas were "discovered" by colonizers like the Eriksons of Faraway Ranch, but the lack of permanent land-alteration they enjoyed was enabled by the Apache people who lived in close, ranging and highly-aware contact with the land for centuries. The land that we may learn about and grow to love within the public lands of the US exist as intimately painful losses for Native American communities and individuals (not all perhaps, but certainly some) through generations confined by reservation borders and pushed toward westernized life-styles and repertoires through systems like mandatory schooling. One small indication of this continuation of relationship through loss is the choice of Naelyn and other San Carlos Apache to name their activist group Apache Stronghold, a reference to a land-formation and to the famous site of resistance in the Chiricahuas, Cochise Stronghold. Yet while Freud and a tradition of Western thinkers have characterized humanity after industrialization and the loss of nature as melancholic, another affective structure defines the stories indigenous voices have been telling about natural environments. That is, after so much loss, they are invested in affirming the presence of nature now (the Missouri River, Oak Flat) and the mutually-defining belonging of indigenous people to this land and this land to indigenous people—a belonging defined by knowledge, respect and friendship for the non-human and not by monetary exchange between humans, corporations or governments.

While certain indigenous experiences may be most powerfully attuned to the significance of land as a total entity deserving of integrity, I argue that the superstructure of capitalism is an inequitable but omnipotent sort of colonizing force of all contemporary Americans. The supreme value of land for some indigenous and non-indigenous people exists in affective and repertoire-based experiences not translatable to currency in part because of the solace these spaces can confer

from the rules and strictures of capitalist systems. If, in practice, we as citizens of the US live on a scale of modernity, even where permanent release into nature is not desired or is dangerous (as in Clements's final scene in the snow,) immersing ourselves into unmediated and non-modernized environments creates an affective experience of faith in the basic sustenance that the elements and non-human ecosystems have and can and will provide. As projections of the potential consequences of climate change and erratic weather events compound, this affective experience has mobilized indigenous groups and others to a new kind of exchange— an effort to protect from total devastation the non-human world and entities we *feel* can provide for us, even in our daily lives of architecture, work and commerce.

At the Bioneers conference, Naelyn's mother, Vanessa Nosie, spoke of the greater affective community they have lead to visibility and action, saying, "With Oak Flat, the one thing that has really inspired me is the unification. You always hear when you hear Naelyn speaks- it's not just an Apache fight or an indigenous fight- it's everybody, we're fighting for everyone, it's an American fight. We're fighting for all life, and all creation."<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Bioneers, "The Apache Stronghold - Saving Oak Flats | Bioneers," Youtube video, 40:42, posted February 1, 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az4\\_NZ4d9BM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az4_NZ4d9BM).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arreola, Daniel D. 2012. "Chiricahua Apache Homeland in the Borderland Southwest." *Geographical Review* 102 (1): 111-131.
- Basso, Keith H. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. University of New Mexico. 1996.
- Bay-Cheng, Sarah, Jennifer Parker-Starbuck, and David Z. Saltz. *Performance and Media: Taxonomies for a Changing Field*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015.
- Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Bioneers. "The Apache Stronghold - Saving Oak Flats | Bioneers." Youtube video, 40:42. Posted February 1, 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az4\\_NZ4d9BM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az4_NZ4d9BM).
- Clements, Marie and Rita Leistner. *The Edward Curtis Project: A Modern Picture Story*. Talon Books: Vancouver, 2010.
- Delgadillo, Alicia. *From Fort Marion to Fort Sill: A Documentary History of the Chiricahua Apache Prisoners of War, 1886-1913*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 2013.
- Erikson, Matthew. "'Beyond Geronimo: The Apache Experience' At Heard Museum." *The Arizona Republic*. Last modified June 12, 2012. <http://archive.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/ae/articles/2012/05/22/20120522beyond-geronimo-apache-exhibit-heard-museum-phoenix.html>
- Flatley, Jonathan. *Affective mapping: Melancholia and the politics of modernism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Goeman, Mishuana. "From Place to Territory and Back Again: Centering Storied Land in the discussion of Indigenous Nation-Building" *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies* 1, no 1. (2008): 23-34.
- Goeman, Mishuana. *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping our Nations*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. 2013.
- Griffin-Pierce, Trudy. *Chiricahua Apache Enduring Power: Naiche's Puberty Ceremony*

- Paintings*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006.
- Horse Capture, George. "Edward Curtis, Shadow Catcher- American Masters" *PBS and American Masters*. Last modified April 23, 2001. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/edward-curtis-shadow-catcher/568/>
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press. 1991.
- King, Gilbert. "Edward Curtis' Epic Project to Photograph Native Americans." *SmithsonianMag.com*. Last modified March 21, 2012. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/edward-curtis-epic-project-to-photograph-native-americans-162523282/>
- "Ndeh, San Carlos Apache," *Apache Nation Chamber of Commerce*, published 2016, accessed March 2017. <http://www.sancarlosapache.com/home.htm>
- Rivera-Servera, Ramón, and Harvey Young. *Performance in the Borderlands*. New York City: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Schechner, Richard. *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1985.
- Schneider, Rebecca. *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*. Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.
- Taylor, Diana. *Performance*. Durham: Duke Press, 2016.
- US Forest Service. "Mining in National Forests: Protection of Surface Resources." 2016. [http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/1975\\_mining%20in%20national%20forests.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/1975_mining%20in%20national%20forests.pdf).
- "Water Protectors Call for Global Mass Mobilizations as Army Plans to Approve Dakota Access Pipeline." *DemocracyNow.org*, last modified February 8, 2017. [https://www.democracynow.org/2017/2/8/water\\_protectors\\_call\\_for\\_global\\_mass](https://www.democracynow.org/2017/2/8/water_protectors_call_for_global_mass)
- Wegman-French, Elizabeth. "Faraway Ranch Special History Study, Chiricahua National Monument." *Intermountain Cultural Resource Management Paper*, no. 72 (2006): i-217.
- Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.