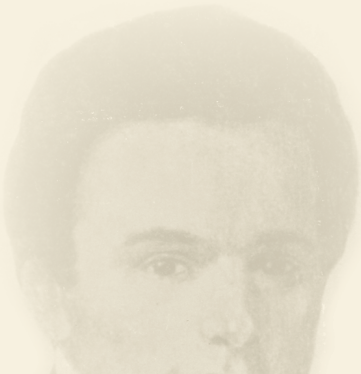
SPEAKING FOR THE PEOPLE

Native Writing and the Question of Political Form

MARK RIFKIN



SPEAKING FOR THE PEOPLE

Duke University Press Durham and London 2021

SPEAKING FOR THE PEOPLE

Native Writing and the Question of Political Form

MARK RIFKIN

DUKE
UNIVERSITY
PRESS

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Designed by Courtney Leigh Baker and typeset in Garamond Premier Pro by Westchester Publishing Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Rifkin, Mark, [date] author.
Title: Speaking for the people : Native writing and the question of political form / Mark Rifkin.
Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2021.
Identifiers: LCCN 2020049187 (print)
LCCN 2020049188 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478013419 (hardcover)
ISBN 9781478014331 (paperback)
ISBN 9781478021636 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: American literature—Indian authors—History and criticism. | American literature—19th century—History and criticism. | Politics and literature—United States—History—19th century. | Indians, Treatment of—United States—History. | Indians of North America—Government relations. | Indians of North America—Colonization.
Classification: LCC PS153.I52 R56 2021 (print) | LCC PS153.I52 (ebook) | DDC 810.9/897—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020049187
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020049188

COVER ART: (*Top to bottom*) William Apess, courtesy Wikimedia Commons; Zitkala-Ša, courtesy the Library of Congress; Sarah Winnemucca, courtesy the Nevada Historical Society; Elias Boudinot, courtesy the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Contents

Acknowledgments

I've been thinking for a long time that I wanted to write about representativity in nineteenth-century Native writing. However, the impetus for this project most directly comes from Dr. Jason Cooke's wonderful dissertation, "Indian Fields: Historicizing Native Space and Sovereignty in the Era of Removal." I served as his advisor, and working with him led me back to this project idea. While my focus on questions of surrogation and the shape of governance differs from his attention to discourses of history and the work of notions of Indianness, his excellent work played a large role in inspiring this study.

Thanks so much to Courtney Berger, Sandra Korn, and everyone at Duke University Press for another wonderful experience. I'd also like to thank the anonymous readers for their incredibly helpful feedback. The research for this project was funded partially by a Faculty Research Grant from UNC Greensboro and completion of the project was made possible by a year of research assignment. Portions of the book were presented at Tufts University, Deakin University, Penn State University, UNC Chapel Hill, Wellesley College, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, the Modern Language Association, and C19, and I would like to thank all those who invited me and the organizers of the conferences as well as all those who attended my presentations and provided feedback. Parts of chapter 2 previously were published as "Shadows of Mashantucket: William Apess and the Representation of Pequot Place," *American Literature* 84, no. 4 (2012): 691–714, and parts of chapter 3 previously were published as "Among Ghost Dances: Sarah Winnemucca and the Production of Tribal Identity," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 31, no. 1–2 (2019): 170–207.

There are numerous folks whose continuing presence in my scholarly world makes this work possible. Among them are Chad Allen, Joanne Barker, Nancy Bentley, Lisa Brooks, David Chang, Eric Cheyfitz, Pete Coviello, Jean Dennison, Rod Ferguson, Beth Freeman, Ashley Glassburn, Mishuana Goeman, Alyosha Goldstein, Lisa Hall, Grace Hong, Shona Jackson, Daniel Heath Justice, Dana Luciano, Scott Morgensen, Dana Nelson, Rob Nichols, Beth Piatote, Joseph Pierce, Audra Simpson, Kara Thompson, Kiara Vigil, and Priscilla Wald. I would also like to thank those folks at UNC Greensboro who for the past thirteen years

have made my everyday life in the academy so much richer. Thanks to Heather Adams, Risa Applegarth, Danielle Bouchard, Sarah Cervenak, Daniel Coleman, Asa Eger, Jen Feather, Tara Green, Gwen Hunnicutt, Janine Jones, Elizabeth Keathley, Karen Kilcup, Derek Krueger, Cybelle McFadden, Christian Moraru, Noelle Morrissette, Jenn Park, Gene Rogers, Scott Romine, María Sánchez, Amy Vines, and Karen Weyler.

In addition to the folks above, there are also those beyond the university who keep reminding me of the inestimable importance of family and friendship. Thanks to Tiffany and Will Allen, Sheila and Alex Avelin, Zivia Avelin, Laura and Jim Baxley, Keith Brand, Craig Bruns, Ali and Adam Cohen, Kevin and Justin Dichter, Lori and Steve Fineman, David Horowitz and Courtney Allison, Steve and Dianne Horowitz, Mike and Rebecca Hardin, Debbie and Andy Johnson, Drew and Elizabeth Johnson, Steven and Erica Johnson, J. J. McArdle, Alicia and Bobby Murray, David Peck and Abby Kornfeld, Stefanie Peck, Toby and Brian Pecker, Sarah Johnson Saunders, Lisa Smith, and Jon Van Gieson.

Erika Lin, you already know. I'm deeply grateful to Neal and Sharon Rifkin and Gail Dichter for being there for whatever shape things take.

To Rich Murray, my love for you is never in question, and the form you give to my life makes everything possible.

INTRODUCTION

In 1978, the Bureau of Indian Affairs developed official criteria and an evaluative process for recognizing Native peoples who currently were not officially acknowledged as such for federal purposes.[1] The guidelines have changed over the years, having been updated most recently in 2015, but a number of elements of the process persist across these alterations, including the need to prove descent from a "historical Indian tribe" (or from "historical tribes that combined"), existence as an "Indian entity," the possession of a "distinct community," and the presence of consistent "political influence or authority" over members.[2] Despite changes in the kinds of evidence used to meet these qualifications, they continue to point toward the need to signify *Indianness* as a discrete kind of bounded difference in order to become legible as an Indigenous people within the legal and administrative networks of settler governance.[3] The presumptive form of such Indigenous collectivity entails having a group of persons who belong exclusively to it (rather than having multiple relations with various "Indian entities"), a clearly delimited landbase to which they have more or less exclusive claim, and a system of governance that has jurisdiction-like extension over this outlined group and place. We might describe this model as the *political form* of the Indian tribe. As Joanne Barker notes, in federal Indian law and policy, "the recognition of Native status and rights is really about the coercion of Native peoples to *recognize themselves* to be under federal power within federal terms," further indicating that the determination of whether an entity fits the model of "Indian tribe" is "most certainly not about who is and is not recognized so much as it is about the ongoing processes of social formation that work to keep Native peoples subjugated to U.S. power."[4] Presenting one's people as organized in ways consistent with the political form

of the *Indian tribe*, though, provides the condition of possibility not only for accessing particular legal and material resources (such as having territory put in "trust" and officially made governable under tribal law) but also for being able to speak and advocate for that collectivity in relation to institutional networks for whom that form provides the organizing template for entrée.[5] In this way, the recognition process highlights the intimate imbrication of political form, collective voice/speech, and institutional intelligibility. Moreover, the figure of the "Indian tribe" points to the ways that the effort to represent Indigenous peoples to (settler) political institutions and for political purposes may rely on a depoliticization of peoplehood in two senses: casting the "tribe" as itself a kind of cultural and/or racial entity whose character and boundaries are not the stuff of politics; and treating the dynamics of peoplehood as themselves expressive of a de facto collective unanimity, rather than as subject to politics—in the sense of ongoing negotiation, disagreement, and debate among the people who comprise *the people* (including, possibly, as to where to draw the borders of peoplehood, geographically and demographically).

To seek recognition by settler institutions and publics entails offering a portrait of peoplehood that licenses representative speech in the name of that collectivity.[6] Serving as a political spokesperson requires that one speak in ways that can be heard as *representative*, as indexing a coherent collective entity and doing so in ways that appear to be expressive of that public's sentiments, wants, and needs. Nineteenth-century Native writing by intellectuals from peoples on lands claimed by the United States offers numerous examples of just such a claim, to be speaking in the name of a particular (set of) people(s) in order to pursue recognition of one kind or another.[7] Unlike in the case of the pursuit of federal acknowledgment, though, such texts are neither acts of governance per se (undertaken by constituted authorities operating in their publicly authorized capacities) nor direct engagements with U.S. officials. Rather, these authors present themselves and their accounts as representative in order to engage with settler publics, often seeking to mobilize them to call for changes in existing (Indian) policy. In doing so, though, such texts need to negotiate non-native expectations about what can count as Indigenous peoplehood, including by what process the authors can appear as proper spokespersons who can convey collective dispositions, grievances, and desires.

In characterizing these texts in this way, I mean to invoke existing scholarly and activist conversations about the meaning of the pursuit of settler recognition by Indigenous peoples, and I mean to raise questions about the processes, aims, and struggles collated (and critiqued) as "recognition." The authors considered here—Elias Boudinot, William Apess, Sarah Winnemucca, and Zitkala-Ša—

are writing across a range of circumstances and policy formations (Indian removal in the Southeast, the guardian system in southern New England, the invasive implementation of the reservation system in the West, and the imposition of allotment and boarding school education), and they do so under conditions of extraordinary duress, in the context of active and explicit settler projects of expropriation, intervention, and detribalization that both pressurize their speech and animate it. We can see similar kinds of pressures at work in the present in both the United States and Canada, in the form of increased efforts to repudiate prior official acknowledgments of sovereignty, gain access to Native territories (those recognized as such by the state and not), expand extractive industries on and near Native lands, extend forms of economic extraction, and force Native peoples to organize their governments in ways conducive to such settler initiatives.[8] Turning back to nineteenth-century writings in the current moment, then, serves as a way of lifting off of the particular embroilments of the present (and the specific terms in which they are staged—in law, by activists, and by scholars) in order to explore the intertwined processes of engaging the state's colonial imperatives and of negotiating how to define and organize the form of peoplehood as lived "on the ground."

Looking back to these earlier authors, the contexts out of which their writings emerged, and the aims and implications of the strategies they employed opens possibilities for developing more textured ways of talking about the politics of peoplehood—both toward non-natives and within/among peoples—and the complex and shifting relations between these dynamics. In their efforts to mediate settler frameworks, writings by nineteenth-century Native authors draw attention to the intellectual labor entailed in navigating, inhabiting, and seeking to reorganize non-native networks. Attending to that work of negotiating with settler forms draws attention to the broader question of how Indigenous modes of peoplehood are (re)shaped in their interface with settler ideological and institutional formations. This set of issues lies at the heart of existing discussions around "recognition." *Speaking for the People* argues that these texts' efforts to secure non-native recognition of Indigenous modes of peoplehood, governance, and territoriality illustrate the force and contingency of settler frameworks as well as the struggles involved in narrating Indigenous collectivity under ongoing colonial occupation. In claiming an ability to represent Native peoplehood (to speak *about* by speaking *for*), the writers I discuss all offer portraits of what peoplehood *is*. In doing so, they make choices among a range of potentially disparate, even incommensurate, ways of envisioning indigeneity and Indigenous governance. The choices about how to do so are affected by available non-native ways of understanding Indianness, tribal identity, and

what constitutes a "political" claim—particularly one emerging from a group not deemed civilized or fully capable of "political" action. Authors mobilize such templates in order to gain access to and participate as intelligible speakers/claimants within what can be characterized as *settler networks*—media circuits, institutional structures (governmental and not), and discursive formations. The ways they stage the legitimacy of their own entry into and speech within such networks affect how indigeneity will appear within such texts, even as the texts themselves seek to redirect the frameworks they employ to Indigenous ends. Such texts demonstrate the negotiatedness of Native political form as it circulates in settler networks, official and popular. These writings, then, also draw attention to broader questions with regard to how to understand choices of political form and the orientating contexts in which such choices occur, a set of practical, philosophical, and ethical concerns that arise not solely in direct print engagements with non-native publics but also within the extratextual dynamics of Indigenous governance. The matter of how to understand, organize, and experience peoplehood separate from imposed settler forms and interests lies at the heart of contemporary critiques of recognition. While in many ways taking such critiques as my organizing frame of reference, my analysis of how nineteenth-century Native texts sought to stage their own representativity aims to open additional avenues for thinking about how conceptions and experiences of collective identity, voice, and self-determination continually emerge through ongoing processes, in which the form of peoplehood remains an open-ended question.

The approach to nineteenth-century writing that I'm suggesting foregrounds the problems and elisions involved in taking a conception of sovereignty or peoplehood as a given against which to assess Native efforts to grapple with political form. The de facto legal referent for sovereignty lies in a conception of Indigenous governance as centralized and operative over a clearly bounded territory with an easily defined, determinate population. While this paradigm might capture the institutional matrix of constitutional Cherokee nationalism (chapter 1), for instance, it does not well suit relations on and between reservations in southern New England (chapter 2), the geopolitics of prophet movements in the Great Basin (chapter 3), or the workings of and among tiospayes on the Plains (chapter 4). Looking at the varied historical and geopolitical dynamics across the nineteenth century that shape these authors' work underlines that Indigenous political form does not have an archetypical outline, instead taking shape with regard to the particularities of disparate Native peoples' geographies, philosophies, relations with other peoples, and dense entanglements within the colonial frameworks of those who seek to occupy Indigenous lands

and to extend authority over Native peoples and territories. What's at stake, though, when a particular model of peoplehood analytically functions as *the Indigenous real*? Such de facto assessment can be seen when Native texts' requests and demands for recognition (and their mobilization of particular kinds of political form in doing so) are viewed as wanting due to either of the following: their difference from what is taken to be the basis for the governance of the people in question at the time the text was written and published ("here's what the *actual* political structure of the Cherokees [or Pequots or Northern Paiutes or Yankton Sioux] was during that period"); or the ways another account of sovereignty is taken to be unimplicated in colonial relations, envisioned as less compromised than the version of political form offered by a given writer ("here's how Native people(s) *actually* are when they're not trying to accommodate non-natives"). In that interpretive mode, a text's particular account of peoplehood—a particular employment of political form—is understood to succeed or fail to the extent that it can be seen as consonant with a given extratextual political formation, itself taken as expressive of real (colonially uncontaminated) Native self-understanding of a people's collective identity, their connections with their lands and waters, and their kinships and diplomacies.

This way of reading—or, more broadly, this way of approaching what constitutes indigeneity—can end up measuring representations of peoplehood in relation to a presumptive Indigenous real that lies elsewhere, such that Native writings (or other articulations of sovereignty and peoplehood) are positioned as properly bearing that real: being seen as either sovereignty-enacting acts of affirmation or expressions of a kind of false consciousness. Put another way, a claim to represent the people gets assessed against another portrayal of peoplehood that conceptually and rhetorically is positioned as representative in ways often not acknowledged as such. Attending to texts that themselves assert their representativity—a common feature of nineteenth-century nongovernmental Native writing—helps highlight the question of how a particular vision/version of indigeneity comes to stand for peoplehood and the intellectual and political import and implications of that metonymic process. In examining the dynamics and struggles around such metonymy within nineteenth-century writing, I hope to generate additional tools for thinking about how such substitutions can be at play in both enacting and refusing recognition, in efforts to address non-native publics and to offer what is envisioned as a more authentic vision of indigeneity that can serve as a model for collective governance beyond the state. What I'm pointing to is the potential for the de facto mobilization of a notion of authenticity against which other formulations of indigeneity come to be delegitimized as *less truly Indigenous*. Such a framing can posit a somewhat

idealized, normative model of indigeneity as *the* standard, elevating one version of a people's or set of peoples' governance in a given period in ways that erase extant alternatives as well as the tensions among them and the processes and philosophies at play in navigating those tensions. By contrast, through a turn to the modes and circumstances of articulation for nineteenth-century writing, I seek to highlight the texture, difficulties, and labor of negotiations over political form within situated circumstances of ongoing colonialism.

The Work of Native Writing

When thinking about where to turn for visions of indigeneity and self-determination not constrained by colonial terms and aims, scholars often look to Native literary texts as sites to locate alternatives to dominant non-native form(ul)ations. If settler discourses offer skewed, stereotypical, and just plain vicious accounts of Indigenous people(s), the argument goes, Indigenous literatures can function as a corrective, providing an archive of representations that convey Native realities and philosophies that have been targeted for erasure and destruction within colonial political economy. The precise contours of "the literary" may remain somewhat elliptical, understood as written "stories," acts of imagination, or as operating in a variety of media (many of which historically have not been understood by Euro-Americans as "writing"); but this category provides a way of locating kinds of signification and transmission that operate outside the institutionalized circuits of colonial governance.[9] Even if texts interface with such networks, as in various sorts of petitions and memorials, they are cast as remaining external to the organizing logics of the state with which they engage. This desire for the literary to serve as something of an outside—as an index to a real that is effaced or defaced in non-native narratives (official and otherwise)—positions it as serving a de facto representative function. This representative relation casts the textual as expressive of extratextual dynamics, as providing an emblematizing connection to configurations of actual, genuine Indigenous collective life. Native writings are presented as serving as a conduit to Indigenous modes of worlding that materially exist beyond the text, encapsulating them and providing a textual outline or index of them. Moreover, those worldings enact sovereignty and self-determination otherwise, beyond settler impositions and deformations, or at least beyond the accounts of the real at play in settler narratives. In implicitly positing that Indigenous texts offer a representative account of lived matrices of Native sociality and governance, though, such scholarship tends not to engage the dynamics of that relation. What is the form in which such typicality or exemplarity is staged? How

is such a form chosen, what conditions influence that form, and what's at stake in the difference among possible forms? How do the terms of engagement with non-natives, including the pursuit of recognition by them, affect how form is chosen and employed? Moreover, how does the writer manifest that they legitimately can offer such an account, including through the use of a particular form or forms that signifies their ability to speak for a given (set of) people(s)? These questions suggest approaching representativity less as an intrinsic quality (a presumptive relation to the real) than as a set of mediations constantly being renegotiated in the context of varied expectations about and frameworks for conceptualizing what constitutes Indigenous collectivity.

In order to avoid subsuming Indigenous writings within the canons of settler nation-states, Native literary studies has emphasized the connections between such writings and colonially obscured Native social formations as well as the ways such texts articulate Indigenous political distinctiveness as autonomous polities, which cannot be understood as ethnic/racial minorities *within* the settler-state. As Lisa Brooks notes, in Abenaki the "root word *awigha-* denotes 'to draw,' 'to write,' 'to map,'" and "it is no coincidence that the word *awikhigan* came to encompass letters and books or that wampum and writing were used concurrently to bind words to deeds. Transformations occurred when the European system entered Native space." She later adds, "The word *awikhigan* has come to encompass a wide array of texts, and its scope is still expanding. It has proved to be an adaptable instrument."[10] The technologies of what gets referred to as "writing" came to function in ways that played roles similar to those of previous technologies and modes of communication, and this continuity means that there was no fundamental rupture when Native people(s) started employing English and previously alien forms of textual production. The fact that prior to the seventeenth century alphabetic writing and the Euro-American version of the codex were not part of Indigenous systems of knowledge production and record keeping in what is now the United States does not mean that the use of such forms either fundamentally disoriented previous Native self-understandings or marked some sort of drift from a more truly autochthonous, and thus more legitimate, expression of indigeneity. Brooks observes that the "focus on questions of authenticity, and the maintenance of binaries that assume that the adoption of Christianity or literacy is concomitant with a complete loss of Native identity, has obscured the complex ways in which Native communities have adopted and adapted foreign ideas and instruments," adding, "Culture, like anything that is alive and 'engaged,' must grow and change."[11] Part of such change involves the incorporation of once-foreign technologies and practices, and to interpret that process of alteration as inherently

declension from a purer, prior state is to cast Indigenous peoples as fundamentally static and unhistorical, in ways that can only envision them vanishing.[12]

Framed in this way, rather than viewing Native-authored texts originally written and published in English as somehow innately compromised or as bearing the marks of translation into an inherently non-native medium, we can read such texts as expressive of collective Indigenous principles, sentiments, and knowledges that defy the givenness of settler mappings, categories, and conceptual paradigms. Such writings may be read as actively seeking to challenge non-native frameworks, especially extant ways of perceiving and engaging *Indianness*. As Daniel Heath Justice insists, "Our literatures are just one more vital way that we have countered those forces of erasure and given shape to our own ways of being in the world," and such forms of Indigenous self-articulation "are in no way determined *by* colonialism. Indigenous texts are by and large responsive, not reactive." He further states, "To argue for and produce Indigenous writing *as such* is necessarily to engage in political struggle and to challenge centuries of representational oppression."[13] The modes of collective expression given voice in and by Native texts contest colonial misconceptions, interested misrepresentations, and erasures. Yet, instead of being simply reactive, they aim to convey versions of Indigenous being and becoming not present in settler-generated texts and archives. Such portrayal of Indigenous realities is, in and of itself, an act of "political struggle": "Given that so much of what people think they know about Indigeneity is self-serving colonial fantasy that justifies and rationalizes the continuing theft of Indigenous lands, violence against Indigenous bodies and relations, marginalization of Indigenous lives, and displacement of Indigenous being, there is a deep and urgent need for more accurate representations."[14] What constitutes this struggle over representation as specifically *political* is the ways settler portrayals play prominent roles in exerting and normalizing colonial authority over Native peoples and lands. Dominant depictions take part in various ways in the foreclosure, (mis)translation, management, and decimation of Native polities. Literature emerges in such arguments as a site for manifesting the existence and vitality of Indigenous lifeworlds. More than making such dynamics visible, though, Native literary texts transmit the idea that those extratextual matrices are political orders, that they were, are, and will continue to be incommensurate with narratives of the settler-state's rightful and commonsensical jurisdiction over spaces and subjects putatively within its borders.[15] As Beth Piatote argues, "Literature illuminates the web of social relations that law seeks to dismantle. . . . Literature challenges law by imagining other plots and other resolutions."[16] As against what she describes as a valuing of Native writing for "its expression of

cultural difference," Maureen Konkle insists on the importance of attending to how literary texts illustrate "Native struggles for political autonomy," an emphasis that precludes "the incorporation of the literature into the canon that represents the United States."[17] *Accurate representation*, then, entails addressing webs of social relations that exist outside the terms of settler law, and such webs themselves are expressive of political autonomy.

However, if dominant non-native ideological frameworks and modes of perception contribute to the denial, misconstruction, regulation, and diminution of Indigenous political separateness, engaging across that gulf would involve a negotiation with the settler forms through which indigeneity is (mis)apprehended. The way of approaching Native writing that I've been discussing tends to envision texts as expressive of extratextual formations, as somewhat mimetically bearing the latter in ways that can replace "colonial fantasy" and, instead, convey Indigenous realities that lie beyond state-sanctioned frames of references. The author's choice of political form—how to portray Indigenous collectivities as polities and how to depict the contours and character of that status—appears as more or less given, even automatic, and the extratextual formation to be referenced by a given text often seems singular (implicitly presuming the existence of shared or stable political paradigms among a given people, as well as agreement on the boundaries of peoplehood, both geographic and demographic). From this perspective, Native literature encapsulates lived forms of Native peoplehood, standing in for them in ways that provide a reliable index, that faithfully represent such forms—serving as representative of them. Speaking of contemporary Indigenous struggles with the terms and assumptions at play in settler law, Dale Turner observes that "indigenous peoples must use the normative language of the dominant culture to ultimately defend world views that are embedded in completely different normative frameworks."[18] If Native authors seek to intervene in the normative paradigms guiding non-native opinion, collective action, and government policy so as to make possible acknowledgment of Indigenous political orders in ways other than the normal operation of existing framings of Indianness, wouldn't that effort affect how such authors portray Indigenous political form?

The attempt to persuade non-natives entails textually staging Native political orders in ways that would be intelligible to those publics, even while reorienting and refunctioning settler representations to get them to operate otherwise—to produce changes in extant colonial administration. Brooks asks, "What happens when we put Native space at the center of America rather than merely striving for inclusion of minority viewpoints or viewing Native Americans as a *part* of or on the *periphery* of America? What does the historical landscape look like when

viewed through the networks of waterways and kinship in the northeast?"[19] Adopting an analytic framework centered on Native space and Indigenous sociopolitical formations, though, is not the same as reading Native writings as themselves immanently expressive of such networks. If a commitment to engaging and making visible extratextual Native modes of relation, governance, and mapping shapes scholarly efforts, that enframing goal does not necessarily mean that the texts in question will directly reflect such perspectives and practices, even if tracing the texts' varied, complex, and even vexed relation to such networks provides a guiding principle of interpretation.

To the extent that nineteenth-century Native writing aims to address and circulate among non-native publics, to take part in settler networks, the conditions of such participation affect how the texts configure and perform peoplehood. Drawing on the work of Bruno Latour, one might describe the understanding of Native textuality I've been discussing as one in which texts function as *intermediaries* rather than as *mediators*. Latour suggests that an intermediary "is what transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs"; whereas for mediators, "their input is never a good predictor of their output; their specificity has to be taken into account every time. Mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning of the elements they are supposed to carry."[20] Viewing Native writings as vehicles for the conveyance of extratextual truths/realities suggests that what they do as texts is bear a set of meanings or relations; they transport that content from one site to another. By contrast, treating texts as mediators suggests that they perform important intellectual and perceptual labor, drawing attention to the ways they alter the meaning and shape of Indigenous peoplehood in the process of portraying it.[21] Representation involves transformation, translation, and modification. Latour presents mediators as connecting to each other through "*traceable associations*," links that form a network, but that network is less a noun, a stable configuration or consistent entity, than an ongoing (set of) process(es) of relation, "a string of actions where each participant is treated as a full-blown mediator."[22] In analyzing networks as emerging through processes of linked mediations, Latour aims to move away from accounts of "social" phenomena that posit a "structure" as lying behind them and explaining them. As he suggests, "The presence of the social has to be demonstrated each time anew; it can never be simply postulated. If it has no vehicle to travel, it won't move an inch," and in this way, one needs to illustrate the relations among mediators "through which inertia, durability, asymmetry, extension, domination is produced."[23] If each mediator does not simply bear meanings, frameworks, and forms of force but potentially shifts them, then each mediator does work

in *producing* the kinds of regularity often shorthanded through concepts like *system*, *structure*, *logic*, and *grammar*. Moreover, that process of production/performance cannot be explained by reference to a "social" formation that simply lies behind it; instead, whatever networks to which "the social" might refer in a given instance need to be constructed and reconstructed mediator by mediator, in ways that might have a certain consistency but whose consistency needs to be explained and accounted for in terms of the work of mediators, rather than merely assumed as an immanent whole.

Form provides much of the continuity in the ongoing (re)construction of networks, and when attending to nineteenth-century Native writings, we can trace the itinerary of the forms they employ as a way of understanding the network(s) in which they participate and circulate. Latour observes, "As soon as we concentrate on what circulates from site to site, the first type of entities to snap into focus are *forms*," and he defines this term as follows, "a form is simply something which allows something else to be transported from one site to another. Form then becomes one of the most important types of translations," adding, "To provide a piece of information is the action of putting something into a form."[24] Even as mediators potentially alter what they transport, they come into relation through shared form—ways of organizing, shaping, and orienting "information" such that it can be transmitted. Latour suggests that while "there is not 'underlying hidden structure,' this is not to say that there doesn't exist *structuring templates* circulating through channels most easily materialized by techniques—paper techniques and, more generally, intellectual technologies being as important as gears, levers, and chemical bonds."[25] In this vein, one might understand non-native ways of depicting Indigenous peoples as "templates" that help provide structure-effects as they move across multiple sites—legislative statutes, administrative policy and action, judicial decisions, belletristic non-native writings, newspaper accounts, and so on.

The movement of such templates, though, less creates unanimity or homogeneity than opens the potential for various templates—kinds of forms—to proliferate and amplify each other or create feedback. As Caroline Levine argues in her discussion of the relation between aesthetic and social forms, "Occasionally an institution's repetitive patterns align, but more often they work across and athwart one another, generating a landscape of power that is nothing if not messy and uncoordinated." She later notes, "As many different hierarchies simultaneously seek to impose their orders on us, they do not always align, and when they do collide, they are capable of generating more disorder than order," as one often "ends up reversing or subverting the logic of another, generating a political landscape of radical instability and unpredictability."[26]

Considering the dynamics of settler colonialism, therefore, involves attending to interactions among numerous institutions, governmental and otherwise, and those networks as they are constructed and reconstructed through a wide range of mediators circulate a range of forms/templates that may be at odds with each other.[27] The treaty form is the most familiar such template in the nineteenth century, including in its centrality to projects of legally legitimizing removal (as discussed in chapter 1).[28] However, if treaties presume a certain model of Native nationhood (with qualities similar to the conception of the "Indian tribe," discussed earlier with respect to federal acknowledgment), that model was not the only one available in the nineteenth-century United States, or even the only one at play in federal relations with peoples with whom the government had treaties. Other models, within and apart from federal governance, included portraying Native peoples as childish remnant populations in need of superintending care, as in the guardian system in southern New England (chapter 2); dangerous mobile masses prone to violent outbreaks and sway by charismatic leaders, who need to be contained on reservations (chapter 3); and prospective citizens in need of training in civilized modes of home, family, and property, which they will receive through allotment and federally provided schooling (chapter 4). These settler templates for figuring indigeneity sometimes overlap, and even when they do not, other extant models can be cited as a way of seeking to shift the dominant parameters of policy in play in a given time and place. The template of the "Indian tribe" as a coherently bounded and centrally governed entity often serves as the go-to for Native writers across the nineteenth century, since of the legal and political forms circulating in non-native networks (official and popular), this model/form seems most conducive to assertions of collective autonomy in decision-making as well as the preservation of access to and control over the use of lands and waters to which a given (set of) people(s) have longstanding connection. In claiming to speak for a (group of) Native nation(s), an author draws on such available forms, mediating them in ways that enable the text both to plug into existing settler networks (existing processes for generating and circulating information and materializing possibilities among non-natives) and potentially to "transform, translate, distort, and modify" such templates in order to put them to work in moving settler audiences toward altered action.[29]

Scholarly work in Native literary studies has developed rich ways of addressing how Native authors occupy non-native forms so as to move them beyond their initial aims or trajectories, but those accounts tend to focus on what happens in the absence of what might be understood as a specifically *political* idiom or in the context of individualizing accounts of Indianness (versus affirmations

of Indigenous collectivity). Discussing Native authors writing in the early twentieth century, Kiara Vigil indicates the importance of considering "how Native speakers, writers, actors, and activists were able to strategically harness the expectations of largely non-Native audiences on behalf of themselves and Indian Country" through a "representational politics [that] revolved around how to retain their own definitions of indigenous sovereignty while fighting for political citizenship that was not about integration but rather a means for tipping the balance of power in their favor." She emphasizes how, in pursuing what sometimes looked like an assimilationist agenda, these intellectuals developed "more tools in their arsenal" to "critique and reshape the nation that continued to threaten indigenous sovereignty." In a related vein, Christopher Pexa explores what he terms "unheroic decolonization," which involves "creating accounts of [Indigenous] life that played up its innocuousness, transparency, and availability to the settler society": "to seem utterly harmless to settler audiences while actually working to decolonize and rebuild Indigenous communities."[30] Such modes of reading underline how Native writers strategically play on non-native genres and expectations in ways that enable their texts both to move public conversations and to preserve Indigenous principles in situations of extreme pressure, surveillance, and intervention. However, if these analyses tend to focus on how Native intellectuals continue to hold onto Indigenous peoplehood amid public discourses that do not acknowledge peoples as polities, similar questions arise about what is entailed in taking up given ways of signifying Indigenous political identity(/ies).

If we don't presume that textual mobilizations of political form simply derive from (function as intermediaries for) extratextual modes of Indigenous governance, we need to develop more tools for talking about the politics of representation through which Native writings depict the shape, substance, and scope of Native politics. How do Native writers make choices about the forms they use to convey peoplehood, how do historically and geographically specific circumstances affect such choices, and what are the situated implications of framing peoplehood in these ways? Mishuana Goeman argues that "Native women's literature presents ways of thinking through the contradictions that arise from the paradoxes and contradictions that colonialism presents and that Native people experience on a daily basis," further indicating that such texts "are not testaments to geographies that are apart from the dominant constructions of space and time, but instead they are explorations of geographies that sit alongside them and engage with them at every scale."[31] In illustrating and navigating such contradictions, offering portrayals of Indigenous geopolitical formations whose terms do not exist apart from the colonial categories and

mappings with which such portrayals are engaged, nineteenth-century Native writings might be read less as expressing or enacting an extracolonial sovereignty than as negotiating the possibilities for signifying sovereignty in relation to non-native networks.[32]

In this way, the depiction of political representativity in a text, or a text's explicit claim to be representative, itself enacts a mediation.[33] When speaking of the role of Native literature in challenging settler law, Piatote notes "its power as critique extends from its ability to draw upon the same metaphors, plots, and language that construct the law's rationale and expression."[34] This way of conceptualizing the political work of Native writing differs from an understanding of it as expressive of social forms that lie beyond the scope of non-native law and policy; here the emphasis is on how such writings engage settler templates, "draw[ing] upon" the modes of figuration—the kinds of form—available in extant non-native discourses on Indianness and playing certain familiar ways of portraying Native people(s) against others. We might understand this gambit as a bid for recognition, as an effort to characterize Native social relations in ways conducive to non-native perception and engagement with Native peoples as landed, self-governing polities. Such a translation/transposition of Indigenous being and becoming into non-native templates, though, does involve an effacement or disowning of that which does not fit the form in question—a process that often involves the gendered erasure of women's roles as decision makers and agents for generating political bonds and that tends to substitute more bounded and hierarchical conceptions of political structure for more rhizomatic modes of association.[35] In thinking about how oppressed peoples engage with dominant discourses and institutions, Gayatri Spivak cautions about the consequences of running together two different senses of *representation*—as "proxy" and as "portrait"—in order to suggest that "beyond both is where oppressed subjects speak, act, and know *for themselves*."[36] Such intellectual practice, she suggests, tends to efface analysis of the "ideological subject-constitution within state formations and systems of political economy" as well as "a critique of the subjectivity of a *collective* agency," the terms by which such subjectivity institutionally is constituted and normalized.[37] The conflation of the two senses of *representation* produces this effect, Spivak argues, because what gets effaced in that fusion is the ways that the potential for someone to serve as the representative for a group depends on an existing portrayal of who/what that group is, a portrayal that is normalized in the attribution of representativity to the spokesperson (in the sense of someone bearing delegated political authority or of an intellectual whose depiction is offered as exemplifying the group). To the extent that the United States determines that the political form/template of the "Indian tribe"

(or Native nation) will serve as the one through which Native peoples can be recognized as representing themselves, the kinds of subjectivity expressed by Native participants in U.S. print public spheres will have to reckon with that form.[38] However, while adopting certain limited/limiting ways of portraying peoplehood may be necessary to gain entry to settler networks and as part of addressing settler publics, the use of such formulations does not inherently involve an ideological investment in those forms, especially in contrast to an investment in a vision of peoplehood that is treated as the baseline against which to measure other representations/formulations.

With regard to Native-authored texts, if one focuses on the intellectual labor at play in writing, the *work* of giving rhetorical and narrative shape to Indigenous political form in the context of settler occupation (and in the act of seeking to speak to and move settler publics), the text becomes something other than a conduit—more or less successful, more or less accurate, in conveying a vision of peoplehood that is seen as providing the proper and coherent referent for the text's account. As Chris Andersen has argued, the idea of Indian/Indigenous *difference* tends to posit a determinate set of distinctions between Natives and non-natives, in which the former are measured against a de facto baseline defined in terms of the latter and in which such distinctions provide the basis for determining what constitutes Native authenticity. He suggests, instead, "beginning with the assumption that Indigenous communities are epistemologically *dense* (rather than just *different*)."[39] Indigenous networks are dense, in their multiplicity, internal heterogeneity, historical dynamism, and complex and multivectored engagements with non-natives and other Indigenous people(s). The forms, shape, and pathways of such networks are affected by but not equivalent to those organizing settler networks. Nineteenth-century Native writings that claim a representative voice in speaking to non-natives are affected and marked by Indigenous networks even as they are oriented toward settler ones. I am arguing that these writings should not be read as merely intermediaries for either kind of network. Engaging with the political work these texts do and the stakes of their uses of form involves setting aside a view of them as simply transmitting meanings and relations from elsewhere, or as failing to do so, in favor of attending to the templates they employ and the aims and effects of staging peoplehood in the way each does, at that time, in that conjuncture, for that (set of) people(s).

In this way, drawing attention to these texts' ways of negotiating colonial pressures and expectations reflects back on how we approach the forms of governance "on the ground." If the work these writings perform cannot be understood either as simply an endorsement of the forms they circulate or as

a relative deviation from an Indigenous political real, the work of Indigenous governance itself can be rethought as an ongoing set of mediations/negotiations in the context of continuing colonial occupation. How can attending to such texts foreground the complex and contingent character of political form as it circulates within a range of disparate networks and across multiple sites? How can the scene of recognition provide insight about the compromises, torsions, strategies, and difficulties with respect to Indigenous sovereignties as lived—in all their multivalent complexities? What are the affordances and consequences of adopting particular kinds of political form, what possibilities are opened and what effaced, and what principles guide such negotiations, in located circumstances?[40] Rather than seeing Native writings as conveying a vision of nationhood that has been materialized in actual Indigenous governance (whether fully recognized or not by the settler-state), scholars can attend to how Native texts operate as mediators in using settler templates to navigate settler networks, and doing so opens possibilities for foregrounding how the process of choosing a political form through which to give material shape to peoplehood in the world (not simply in writing, but in governance as well) involves complex negotiations and struggles—especially in the context of continuing settler assertions of jurisdiction and underlying sovereignty. Put another way, I seek to explore what happens if we do not read Native texts in English in the nineteenth century as bearing—serving as *intermediaries* for—extratextual political formations, whether those formations are (in Brooks's terms, quoted earlier) "networks of waterways and kinship" that defy state mappings or are state-like apparatuses.[41] Foregrounding such processes of negotiation, conflict, and adjustment with settlers and among Indigenous people(s) draws attention to the kinds of difficult and fraught intellectual and political labor involved in envisioning, protecting, (re)defining, and sustaining Indigenous peoplehood in the midst of occupation—not just in the nineteenth century, but up through the present.

Recognition, Redux

I've been arguing that nineteenth-century Native texts, especially in portraying themselves as offering representative accounts of their people(s), adopt particular kinds of political form in order to frame their concerns in ways legible to non-native audiences. We might characterize such efforts as bids for recognition. I've also suggested that such tensions and negotiations around political form are at play not just in *the depiction* of Indigenous governance but in *the practices* of such governance as well. Turning to current discussions and debates

focused on pursuing settler recognition and employing settler forms links the study of these older texts to the exigencies of the present moment (asking what light they can shed on contemporary struggles) while foregrounding the political and intellectual stakes of negotiating with and seeking to disorient settler templates. Recent critiques of recognition as a political goal have illustrated numerous ways that the effort to engage with state-sanctioned paradigms and policies results in not just the deformation of Indigenous goals (their rerouting into projects and formulations counter to what had been sought) but the reinforcement of modes of settler governance, which gain additional legitimacy through apparently consensual Indigenous participation.[42] However, thinking about the ways and ends to which nineteenth-century texts mediate political form in their staging of the terms, content, and contours of Indigenous collectivity and governance opens up questions about what "recognition" entails. To what extent is the mobilization of what might be understood as settler forms equivalent to an identification with them, to an affective investment that normalizes or naturalizes them? Moreover, do all such forms work in concert, as intermediaries in the ongoing production of an organizing settler structure or logic? Might some forms be mobilized against others, or might they be set to work in order to try to shift extant settler networks? In this way, engagement with nineteenth-century writings might offer additional possibilities for conceptualizing how Indigenous peoples negotiate the forms of their self-governance amid ongoing occupation—under conditions of what Jean Dennison has characterized as "colonial entanglement."

The critique of recognition might be understood as having three main lines of analysis: the settler-state extends acknowledgment in ways that confirm its underlying jurisdiction and right to manage Indigenous peoples and territories; the state seeks to interpellate Indigenous people(s) into subjectivities that normalize such jurisdiction, especially through gestures of official acknowledgment; and, as against these gestures, Indigenous peoples need to turn to their own sources of normative authority and social forms instead of accepting those proffered by the state. For example, Glen Coulthard argues that the current "politics of recognition" "seek[s] to 'reconcile' Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship" with the state (in this case, Canada), but such an apparent embrace of indigeneity "promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend." The problem with seeking state acknowledgment comes with the ways it tends to present recognition as a kind of beneficent gift

from settlers bestowed upon Native people(s), as well as to require accepting as a given "the background legal, political, and economic framework of the colonial relationship itself."[43] Even as state engagement with Indigenous peoplehood seems as if it will provide access to legally sanctioned kinds of claiming, authority, and autonomy (such as governance over lands the U.S. federal government acknowledges as part of Indian Country), that process also entails forms of categorization that, to use the language of the U.S. acknowledgment guidelines (discussed earlier), make an *Indian entity* legible as such. Speaking of contemporary political struggles for Indigenous self-determination, Leanne Simpson suggests, "The first tenet then of radical resurgent organizing is a refusal of state recognition as an organizing platform and mechanism for dismantling the systems of colonial domination," and similarly, Audra Simpson (no relation) argues, "There is a political alternative to 'recognition,' the much sought-after and presumed 'good' of multicultural politics. This alternative is 'refusal,'" which "raises the question of legitimacy for those who are usually in the position of recognizing: What is their authority to do so? Where does it come from?" Moreover, such a turning away from recognition enacts a "refusal to be enfolded into state logics."[44]

To be recognized by the state, then, is to fit extant state parameters of identification, which themselves take for granted the existence, legitimacy, and jurisdictional dynamics of the state itself. As Joanne Barker observes, "Troubled notions of Native culture and identity attach to Native legal status and rights in ways that force Native peoples to claim the authenticity of a culture and identity that has been defined *for* them." Conversely, Barker adds, "the deployment of recognition" serves as "evidence that the United States has realized itself as a fully democratic, humanist, and civil society, rendering historical violence and fraud against native peoples an unfortunate aberration."[45] Recalling Spivak's formulation discussed in the last section, the ability to be represented *to* the state (to have what are understood on state terms to be political relations with it) hinges on ways of being represented *by* the state (portrayals of what constitutes a political collectivity). In exerting the "subjectivity of a collective agency" within state processes, Native peoples need to inhabit a mode of subjectivity that makes sense within and is generated out of the discursive and institutional dynamics of settler governance, even as that participation can be circulated as evidence of Indigenous assent to such governance.[46]

Foregrounding how processes of institutional interpellation can derail Indigenous political projects and aims, critiques of recognition often go further in suggesting the ways modes of state acknowledgment can engender self-defeating forms of everyday subjectivity. Coulthard argues that "settler-

colonial rule is a form of *governmentality*: a relatively diffuse set of governing relations that operate through a circumscribed mode of recognition that structurally ensures continued access to Indigenous peoples' lands and resources by producing neocolonial subjectivities that coopt Indigenous peoples into becoming instruments of their own dispossession." He links the production of forms of legal subjectivity for Indigenous peoples (which confirm the jurisdictional framework that enables settler access to Indigenous "lands and resources") and the internalization of such subjectivities as experiential frames of reference for Native people. Coulthard observes that "the maintenance of settler-state hegemony requires the production of what [Franz Fanon] liked to call 'colonized subjects': namely, the production of the specific modes of colonial thought, desire, and behavior that implicitly or explicitly commit the colonized to the types of practices and subject positions that are required for their continued domination."[47] In this way, while critiques of recognition tend not to use this formulation per se, they can be understood as presenting the attempt to achieve settler acknowledgment as what might be described as "cruel optimism." Lauren Berlant argues, "A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing," adding, "Optimism is cruel when the object/scene that ignites a sense of possibility actually makes it impossible to attain the expansive transformation for which a person or a people risks striving": "In scenarios of cruel optimism we are forced to suspend ordinary notions of repair and flourishing to ask whether the survival scenarios we attach to those affects weren't the problem in the first place."[48] Pursuing recognition by settlers, such accounts suggest, engenders an attachment to political forms and processes that actively thwart Indigenous flourishing by providing a sense of possibility—for autonomous governance, for defining the polity on (the) people's own terms, for an ability to set independent policy, for extended or renewed connection to and stewardship over particular lands and waters—that is deferred or undone by the very settler forms and processes that Indigenous peoples have taken up to sustain themselves.

More than addressing how Indigenous persons and peoples are called on to occupy particular kinds of legal and administrative identity in order to engage with settler governance, Coulthard suggests that the dynamics of such official networks become part of quotidian Native perceptions and orientations, as the stuff of commonsense self-understanding. He argues that "these images, along with the structural relations with which they are entwined, come to be recognized (or at least endured) as more or less natural" and that "these values eventually 'seep' into the colonized and subtly structure and limit the possibility of their freedom."[49] Beyond setting the terms for public enactments of indigeneity

aimed at non-natives or influencing the contours of state-acknowledged Native administrative structures, the forms and frames utilized within settler governance come to shape Indigenous phenomenologies, affecting the character of ordinary "thought, desire, and behavior." They come to function, Coulthard argues, as the naturalized parameters for Indigenous persons in their negotiation of everyday circumstances as well as in the projection of future horizons. The kinds of subjectivity generated in and by settler institutions, then, are envisioned as influencing the lived subjectivity of Indigenous people. Seen in this way, the pursuit of recognition, in the sense of inhabiting and mobilizing settler political templates, is continuous with—and perhaps follows directly from—everyday modes of identification that normalize Natives persons' and peoples' status as "colonized subjects."

However, does drawing on settler forms, such as in nineteenth-century Native writings, necessarily entail this kind of affective attachment? How might attending to the mediations enacted by such texts open room for considering the ways that the taking up of particular political templates for certain purposes is not equivalent to those forms contouring Indigenous psychic life and consciousness more broadly? How might these texts illustrate the ways the taking up of settler forms might function as part of strategies for disjointing networks of colonial governmentality, specifically by playing certain dominant forms against others? Speaking of the workings of U.S. Indian policy, Barker indicates that "Native peoples were coerced to *recognize themselves* to be under federal plenary power and then to mediate their relations with one another through the terms of that subjugation."[50] This redeployment of non-native modes of recognition as the basis for intratribal and intertribal relations involves the kind of internalization Coulthard notes. Such an account, though, can imply that change is unilateral, as if once-alien forms can only have one set of meanings that they inevitably reproduce. At one point, Barker suggests that non-native notions of Indian purity, the need for Native people(s) in seeking modes of state recognition to prove their "aboriginality," "makes it impossible for Native peoples to narrate the historical and social complexities of cultural exchange, change, and transformation—to claim cultures and identities that are conflicted, messy, uneven, modern, technological, mixed."[51] The presence of messy, conflicted, uneven kinds of Native identity (whatever that might mean), though, presumes that change and transformation are not solely assimilatory, that extant Native social processes may be altered without them becoming less Indigenous or simply expressing degrees of colonial subjugation/subjectification along a singular continuum. Recalling Andersen's formulation discussed previously, such changes are part of Indigenous *density*, rather than

expressing relative *difference* from a settler norm—or one that marks Indigenous authenticity.

In this vein, the kinds of political forms cited and circulated in what appear as calls for recognition might be functioning as part of Indigenous dynamics of change and transformation (including strategies that seek to produce change and transformation among settler publics). The citation of King Philip as a Native analog for George Washington (chapter 2) or the portrayal of Yankton tiospayes as a site of semianthropological study (chapter 4) may draw on extant settler frames of reference, but that fact does not mean that such frames are inherently continuous with the author's felt sense of being, never mind that of the peoples(s) they depict. In both of these cases, for example, Native writers are seeking to use settler forms as a way of naming kinds of collective relations such that Indigenous peoplehood might be registered by non-native readers (instead of it being seen as either vestigial and in need of ostensibly beneficent white care or as backward and in need of civilized adjustment through forms of domestic engineering).[52] In these instances, the issue is less that Native people feel bound to kinds of identifications that are disabling of their own self-determination than that Native political processes are not intelligible as such due to the imposition of settler legal and administrative frameworks. This point returns to Spivak's discussion of representation in its two senses: "representation as 'speaking for,' as in politics, and representation as 're-presentation,' as in art or philosophy," or proxy versus portrait.[53] She argues that "the staging of the world in representation—its scene of writing" or the dominant, institutionalized mode of portrayal—is not equivalent to the "ground level of consciousness," or everyday kinds of perception and self-understanding.[54] Instead, the need to be intelligible as a political collective to colonial institutions (a need arising both from processes of colonial management and from the colonized's efforts to affect colonial policy and governance) involves a second-order process of translation in which colonized peoples' accounts of themselves (including their governance and territorialities) need to pass through, and be transformed by, the matrix of colonial re-presentation. That translation/deformation may or may not be occurring in the sites of everyday life for the majority of the colonized population and that proxy/portrait nexus that conditions colonial intelligibility may or may not affect the continued existence of subaltern networks.

In many ways, critiques of recognition seek to highlight the power and vitality of Indigenous political formations, principles, practices, and philosophies that cannot be translated into settler terms—to trace the presence of subaltern Indigenous formations and to argue for their significance in projects of resurgence

and decolonization. For example, Leanne Simpson emphasizes the importance of turning away "from trying to transform the colonial outside" and, instead, focusing on the "flourishment of the *Indigenous* inside," and that (re)orientation involves "significantly re-investing in our own ways of being: regenerating our political and intellectual traditions; articulating and living our legal systems; language learning; ceremonial and spiritual pursuits; creating and using our artistic and performance-based traditions."[55] Discussing India under colonial rule, Ranajit Guha argues that in accounts of the "politics" of Indian people, "the parameters of Indian politics are assumed to be or enunciated as exclusively or primarily those of the institutions introduced by the British for the government of the country and the corresponding sets of laws, policies, attitudes and other elements," but he insists that "parallel to the domain of elite politics there existed throughout the colonial period another domain of Indian politics in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups of the indigenous society or the colonial authorities but the subaltern classes and groups constituting the mass of the laboring population."[56] We might understand settler colonialism as producing such a dislocation in which only certain modes of governance count as "politics" (i.e., "the Indian tribe") and in which a wide range of extant and ongoing practices, processes, and principles of collective belonging, placemaking, decision-making, and resource distribution do not register as political. Simpson's reference to "the *Indigenous* inside," then, functions as a refusal of the colonial dynamics of intelligibility, instead pointing to subaltern formations that remain as sources for understanding and enacting politics, peoplehood, sovereignty, and self-determination.

However, to the extent that the employment of settler forms is cast as continuous with and expressive of identification with such forms (the pursuit of recognition as indicative of the presence of colonized subjectivities), such analysis brackets the potential for there to be any mediation of settler templates that arises out of connection to Indigenous networks. Looking at nineteenth-century Native writings and their claims to representativity, attending to how they negotiate with political form in light of settler assumptions and expectations, though, highlights the variable ways form can be employed. These texts show the (relative) potential to dislocate form from its dominant trajectories in reproducing, or continually reconstructing, settler aims and geographies—the ways such forms can serve as mediators rather than intermediaries. These writings also further underline that the political form of Indigenous peoplehood itself is variable, shifting, and often contested (a subject of ongoing, complex tensions and negotiations within and among peoples), rather than singular and given. As noted earlier, the treaty serves as the paradigmatic model of

Indigenous political form for much of the nineteenth century, both in terms of federal Indian policy at the time and in scholarship about the period, but there are a wide range of peoples with whom the United States did not negotiate treaties (including across southern New England and through much of the Great Basin), the policy of treaty making officially was brought to an end in 1871, and the modes of policy at play in much of the latter half of the century (especially through and in the wake of allotment) did not conform to the diplomatic principles of sovereign-to-sovereign relation implied by treatying. However, even when actual treaty relations are not present, Native writers mobilize it as a template through which to characterize a (set of) people(s) as having a coherent political character, a determinate landbase, and processes of governance with which the United States must reckon. As Chadwick Allen suggests, Indigenous writers "might *re-recognize,* rather than deconstruct, the authority of particular colonial discourses, such as treaties, for their own gain."[57] At other points, nineteenth-century Native writers cite monarchy, the American Revolution, constitutional structure, and ethnographic conceptions of tribal wholeness as ways of giving form to Indigenous collectivity in ways that aim to refigure extant official and popular portrayals of Indianness so as to engage with settler publics. These varied rhetorical strategies for portraying peoplehood are keyed to extant non-native discourses in order to gain traction within settler networks while also working to "transform, translate, distort, and modify" such networks' habituated modes of operation—the regularities of how they (re)construct Indians as a kind of population as well as the spaces and subjectivities of settlement.[58] In doing so, texts seek to play on contradictions and unevenness within and among settler institutional structures and discursive frames, aiming to emphasize and maneuver the inherent legitimacy crisis that attends settler claims to exert authority over Indigenous peoples and territories.[59] The approaches and forms writers employ do not simply follow from extant practices and principles of governance at play among the people(s) they discuss, and the use of such forms does not inherently bespeak something like an ideological commitment to the terms of their depiction. Writers can employ a range of forms that are in tension with each other (chapter 2) or can subtly illustrate the limits of the templates they employ even as they are mobilizing them (chapter 4).

These writers' efforts, though, put pressure on the distinction between the "colonial outside" and "*Indigenous* inside." If, as Leanne Simpson notes, the aim of turning to the latter is to engender the "flourishment" of Native peoples, the direct assault of settler legal and military force puts the potential for an inside in jeopardy, through removals and other modes of land seizure, programs

of extermination for those persons/peoples found outside reservation borders, and projects of detribalization whose horizon is the disintegration of all Indigenous collectivities. While aiming to prevent such colonial violences or trying to respond to them cannot and does not provide the primary horizon for Indigenous being and becoming, attempts to engage with and mobilize settler political forms in order to shift popular sentiments so as to alter the political calculus and trajectory of Indian administration operate as a defense of the *inside* through tactical employment of what might be taken to be outside forms.[60] For example, as I argue in chapter 3, Sarah Winnemucca's portrayal of her family as providing the leadership for an integrated Paiute nation enables her to assert rights to control over their reservation(s), as opposed to being subjected to the virtually limitless discretion of appointed Indian agents, or, as discussed in chapter 4, Zitkala-Ša's assertion of her own representativity as an autoethnographic witness allows her to draw on incipient anthropological notions of "culture" to argue against the supposedly civilizing benefits of allotment and boarding school education. While Native writers might identify with the kinds of political form they circulate (such as in Elias Boudinot's defense of the vision of Cherokee nationality propounded by those, including himself, who signed the treaty that led to the Trail of Tears or, to a lesser extent, Winnemucca's emphasis on the descent of chiefly authority through her family), extant critiques of recognition can presume such attachments in ways that may flatten out the contexts, aims, and labor of engagements with settler networks.

The kinds of questions raised with regard to political representation (in both its senses) by Native writings also come to bear on scenes and dynamics of Indigenous governance, opening onto analyses of the ways political form gets cited, mobilized, and mediated in Indigenous networks. What kinds of proxying are at play in various formations of governance, and what political templates are circulating in the ongoing (re)construction of those modes of governance? Further, how have these networks of Native governance been affected by settler presence, pressures, and interventions? How has the context of ongoing colonialism influenced the ways once-alien kinds of political form have become part of such governance? Particularly, inasmuch as Native peoples sought to find ways to address settler institutionalities, they developed their own structures and processes that could articulate with non-native frameworks, processes that may or may not have been integrated into everyday understandings and enactments of peoplehood (as in Guha's distinction, noted earlier, between "elite politics" and those of subaltern populations). The distinction between inside and outside becomes somewhat murky: the two enter into shifting topological relations whose dynamics (or density) cannot easily be

mapped, especially if posed in those terms—inside versus outside or, perhaps, recognition versus refusal.[61]

While critiques of recognition powerfully articulate philosophical principles for good governance and offer vital accounts of relational ethics that are envisioned as creating conditions for Indigenous peoples' flourishing, such analyses sometimes can efface the distinction between normative political theory and a description of political process. What processes are there for negotiating over the political forms and principles that peoples will use in defining themselves and enacting sovereignty and self-determination? What are the situated ethics and difficulties of such ongoing negotiations? In her analysis of contemporary Osage constitutional reform, Dennison argues that attending to colonial entanglement "calls attention to the inherent power dynamics within the ongoing colonial context without erasing the agency" that Native people(s) exert in negotiating that context. She observes that "this approach allows for understanding settler colonial forces as having a varied, dynamic, and uneven impact across space and time" in ways that also "negate the easy divide of colonized and colonizer," adding, "The key is making something out of this structure that does not mirror the oppression of the colonizer."[62] Similarly, addressing efforts to modify current environmental policy within the Cherokee Nation, Clint Carroll explores "indigenous appropriations of state forms in order to counteract ongoing injustices," thereby "illuminat[ing] how indigenous nations have been able to envision the state form for themselves and which attributes of this form have been addressed to account for various indigenous situations and values" in ways that suggest "indigenous state *transformation*." The "state form," as an example of a (once-)settler template, becomes part of Indigenous governance in ways related to ongoing colonial pressures while not entirely reducible to them as an "outside" force. The modifications and mediations of that form arise out of ongoing negotiations, disagreements, debates, and deliberations over the entailments and affordances of particular kinds of political form in their ability to materialize principles, philosophies, ideals, and ethics that are of import to the people(s) in question.[63] Thus, while taking on board the critique of the uncritical adoption of and investments in state forms and institutions, this scholarship also explores the mediations enacted in framing Indigenous governance amid both ongoing colonial superintendence and the presence of varied—sometimes mutually antagonistic—conceptions of collective identity, decision-making, and desirable futures among a given people. In this vein, attending to nineteenth-century Native writers' pursuit of what might be called recognition—or, at least, the mobilization of forms intelligible to non-native publics in the effort to secure greater possibilities for exercising sovereignty and

self-determination—opens onto broader consideration of the work performed by citations and circulations of kinds of political form (such as a constitution, chiefdom, or legislative council) within situated contexts of entanglement and continuing settler occupation.

The connection between the choice of political form (whether in published texts or in actual governance) and lived subjectivity, though, remains open, vexed, shifting, and riven with potential discontinuities. For instance, in noting Native people's and peoples' "refusal to be enfolded into state logics," Audra Simpson develops the notion of "feeling citizenships," which "are structured in the present space of intracommunity recognition, affection, and care, outside the logics of colonial and imperial rule"; yet, she also observes that such "intracommunity" modes of relation themselves are crosscut by the legacies of colonial categorizations that have become part of governance structures ("the math [of legal genealogies], the clans, the mess, the misrecognitions, the confusion, and the clarity," or "the calculus of predicaments").[64] Such felt connections, then, are not so much "outside" of colonial rule—in the sense of being beyond it, unaffected by it, or free of its component parts—as operating in ways that do not take the processes for forging networks and modes of regularity at play in settler governance as a (necessary) template. From this perspective, *recognition* and *refusal* might be rethought less in terms of the employment of particular kinds of (political) form—with attendant assumptions about the affective attachments, ideological commitments, and kinds of subjectivity thought necessarily to follow from such usage—than in terms of the orientation or trajectory of such forms' use.[65] Citation of that form allows entry into and/or sustains what sort of networks? What mediations are enacted in the mobilization of that form? Who participates in the process of deciding to employ that form (and the mode of its mediation) in *representing* the people (in both senses—as proxy and portrait)? What relations does the employment of that particular form (seek to) create between networks of governance and everyday modes of interpersonal connection, principles of collectivity, ethics, and aspirations for Indigenous flourishing? When reading nineteenth-century Native texts, then, one might consider the extent to which texts seek to create a sense of accountability to Native people (including how texts relate to available intra-Indigenous networks for producing a sense of political legitimacy), even amid authors' employment of tropes, forms, templates that aim toward modifying and transforming the perceptions of settler publics.

From the perspective of extant ways of critiquing recognition, though, not only can support for certain kinds of political form appear as a mode of cruel optimism, or an expression of colonized subjectivity, but the work of

nineteenth-century Indigenous intellectuals in mediating settler templates potentially can be denigrated or dismissed as an expression of some version of false consciousness. While none of the scholars whose work I've addressed make such a move, it might seem to follow from some of their ways of theorizing indigeneity. In highlighting the complexities of how these earlier authors frame peoplehood, I hope both to further texture available ways of talking about the politics of pursuing "recognition" and to expand the resources for addressing the variety of ways Indigenous intellectuals approach and figure the politics of peoplehood. At the same time, I want to hold onto the pressing questions and concerns raised by critiques of recognition in their consideration of the circumstances that will facilitate Indigenous flourishing and resurgence, adding to rather than bracketing their insights. As Goeman argues, "Rather than construct a healthy relationship to land and place, colonial spatial structures inhibit it by constricting Native mobilities and pathologizing mobile Native bodies," and the adoption of such frames for Native governance can enact forms of "self-disciplining" that also "abstract space—decorporealize, commodify, or bureaucratize—when the legal ramifications of land or the political landscape are addressed," a process that helps engender and sustain "asymmetrical relationships" with regard to gender, race, sexuality, and other vectors of identity, status, and individual and collective self-expression.[66] These forms of abstraction tend away from, and often actively disavow, what Coulthard has characterized as "grounded normativity," "the modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure ethical engagements with the world and our relationships with human and nonhuman others over time."[67] This "web of connections," in Leanne Simpson's terms, is "generated in relationship to place" as part of Indigenous *worlds* that themselves rely on everyday modes of relation: "Nishnaabeg life didn't rely on institutionality to hold the structure of life. We relied upon process that created networked relationship."[68] Employing the forms of abstraction Goeman addresses may foreclose engagement with the "modalities" of other place-based knowledges and processes of relation, which become subaltern in the process.[69] Mobilizing such forms with respect to governance also may involve drawing on associated templates with regard to what counts as a political issue and who counts as a political subject, including the installation of heteropatriarchal principles that devalue and deny access to women and that position concerns "regarding children, families, sexual and gender violence, and bodies . . . as less important."[70] Conversely, we also need to address how particular forms and frames that are intelligible to the settler-state may enable the ongoing construction of, in Carroll's terms, "*sovereign landscapes*" that "reconfigure"

such forms in the interest of opening them toward other Indigenous principles, philosophies, and ethics—a process that Dennison has characterized as aiming to increase the "future capacities" of Indigenous governance and sociality.[71]

I want to suggest, though, that we understand and trace the implications of mobilizations of political form in ways that are about the situated affordances of a given form (what kinds of linkages among sites and modes of framing does that form put into play in given instances?), rather than treating particular forms as necessarily metonymically signifying colonized (versus self-determined/resurgent) kinds of consciousness and/or as indicating a fully integrated settler "logic" or "system." What I'm asking is, can refusal—the repudiation of settler frameworks operating on their own terms and toward their intended ends—dwell within what may look like the pursuit of recognition? How might the employment of particular forms in what, from one angle, appears to be a bid for legibility also, from another angle, function as a means of capacitating resurgence—such as in the struggle for the acknowledgment of Native sovereignty in New England amid guardianship (chapter 2), the insistence on Paiute rights to reservation lands amid relocation and agents' punishing discretion (chapter 3), and the insistence on the value of Dakota socialities amid allotment and projects of civilization (chapter 4)? How can distinctions be discerned between cruel optimism and tactical or strategic acts of mediation in the service of Indigenous survivance? What practices of reading and interpretation might surface such potentials? Presuming that peoplehood has a clear normative shape and principles that can be contrasted to those at play in settler administration can end up reinstalling a backdoor version of authenticity in ways that deemphasize the difficulties, challenges, and possibilities at play in the active and ongoing negotiation of what form(s) peoplehood will, can, and should take, matters of collective process that lie at the heart of self-determination. My readings of nineteenth-century Native texts, then, work in the interest of opening up a more expansive set of conceptual tools and strategies for addressing the contingencies, tensions, and antagonisms—the political and intellectual labor—at play in negotiations over how to represent peoplehood in the midst of ongoing colonialism.

Organization and Chapters

In turning to nineteenth-century (con)texts, my aim is less to provide lessons that can directly be implemented in contemporary struggles than to draw on historical distance in order to stage what might be described as a politics of reading. If we do not view such writings as simply expressive of an extratextual

real but as illustrating complex negotiations over the articulation and form(s) of peoplehood, the process of trying to understand those mediations and their relation to various networks and publics provides something of an intellectual model for approaching the density of shifting Indigenous matrices of governance. The readings seek to illustrate the varied rhetorical negotiations taking place within a set of historical and political contingencies amid a range of possible ways of understanding peoplehood that may not be consistent with each other and that may fit only unevenly within settler frames. The somewhat fine-grained discussion of how writers seek to navigate and negotiate those complexities, multiplicities, and varied sets of demands and needs *is* the point, in that doing so draws attention to the intellectual and political work of self-determination—its messiness and continual unfinishedness. Such dynamics at play in the process of close reading also further suggest the usefulness of literary studies within Indigenous political theory, since careful attention to the multidimensional and situated ways texts make meaning can help amplify the importance of contingency and form to discussions of (contemporary) Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

The chapters each address a particular intellectual's engagement with a specific configuration of law and policy that informs how they approach the project of portraying peoplehood and constituting a representative public voice through which to advocate. If we do not take the accounts of Native political form offered in their writings as directly expressive of Indigenous sociopolitical dynamics on the ground, as it were, we can approach these texts as staging versions of collective identity meant to speak to settler publics. This approach seeks neither to endorse their formulations nor to overemphasize their efficacy in altering popular opinion or shifting the terms of settler administration. Rather, in each case, the chapter aims to track the mediations involved in the kinds of political form the authors employ—how they do so and toward what apparent end(s). Such analysis seeks to draw attention to (1) the affordances and constraints at play in the use of given forms within situated and entangled circumstances and (2) the relations envisioned between the authors and the people(s) for whom they position themselves as spokespersons. In all of the chapters, I address the ways these authors' representations of political identity lead to the effacement of other, extant formations of peoplehood. In doing so, though, my aim is to illustrate the variety of ways of envisioning and enacting peoplehood in the context of continuing (and intensifying) settler occupation, the pressures shaping such articulations in specific times and places, and the difficulties and intellectual labor that attend choices around how to conceptualize, characterize, and organize Indigenous governance. I'm particularly concerned

with the role of gender in these dynamics, with respect to who constitutes a political subject, what kinds of formations get to count as "politics," and how certain formulations come to be understood as representative. The chapters return to questions about not only how texts address the role of women within their stagings of political identity and leadership but also how these authors' portrayals of the contours and character of peoplehood address issues and relations that might broadly be characterized (within settler discourses) as "domestic" matters.

The first half of the book focuses on Indian relations in the East during the height of the treaty period and the push for removal as a federal policy. I begin with Elias Boudinot and the Cherokee Nation because of their paradigmatic status in talking about nineteenth-century Indian affairs, in the period and largely still in contemporary scholarship. Chapter 1 addresses the struggles around defining Cherokee nationality in the 1830s, illustrating how intellectual citations of political form in relation to settler networks can be disjunct from political processes of decision-making within Indigenous ones. Despite numerous treaties with Native peoples, the federal government in 1830 adopted a policy of seeking to remove all Indian tribes from east of the Mississippi, particularly in the Southeast. In *Letters and Other Papers Relating to Cherokee Affairs* (1837), Boudinot aims to justify the choices made by him and the other members of the Treaty Party, who signed the removal treaty Cherokee officials had rejected. He argues that Cherokee leaders had deceived the Cherokee people about the possibilities for remaining in their traditional homeland, and he offers a vision of Cherokee political identity as based on sustaining the health and welfare of the Cherokee population rather than retaining a specific landbase. He argues for the need to speak to non-native policy aims and frameworks in what he portrays as more realistic terms than elected Cherokee leaders had been offering. In doing so, though, he not only sets aside the processes of governance under the Cherokee Constitution, adopted in 1827, but displaces the ways that government structure itself balanced tensions between a centralized bureaucratic apparatus (largely initiated by and oriented around the interests of an elite) and continuing popular Cherokee commitment to decentralized, older modes of matrilineal-clan and town-based governance. Boudinot offers a heteropatriarchal and elitist account of Cherokee peoplehood that edits out the ongoing role of such tensions and attachments in Cherokee constitutional governance. In the place of an engagement with these dynamics and negotiations, Boudinot substitutes a generic, serialized conception of what it means to be Cherokee—one more consistent with non-native notions of Indianness and Native governance. *Letters* defines Cherokee peoplehood in ways modeled on

norms circulating within settler networks and casts endorsement of that conception of nationhood as a sufficient justification for serving as a spokesperson for the Cherokees in interactions with the United States. In Boudinot's text, and the arguments of the Treaty Party, there is no way for nonelite perspectives to matter, and the text turns on substituting a particular kind of intellectual mediation for answerability to the very people in whose name Boudinot speaks. In this way, the text enacts what might be termed a recognition imaginary, in which settler templates provide the normalized background principles through which to define and defend Indigenous peoplehood, as against popular principles ordered around kinship and place—with which Cherokee leaders continued to grapple in ways that Boudinot dismisses as deceit and contradiction.

Chapter 2 turns from the treaty-recognized Cherokees to the peoples in southern New England, who at that point lay outside the reach of federal Indian policy and the treaty system. Despite the federal government's assertion of authority over Indian affairs in the 1780s and early 1790s, states in New England refused to cede such jurisdiction, continuing pre-independence patterns of Indian policy. Prior to the American Revolution, colonial governments in Massachusetts and Connecticut had legally acknowledged Indian reservations, appointing non-native guardians to oversee them. Part of the work facing Native intellectuals in New England was forging ways of portraying Indigenous collectivity that could enable non-natives to see tribes as political entities with the ability and right to govern themselves. In his writings in the late 1820s and 1830s, William Apess (Pequot) seeks to challenge the dominant portrayal of Native peoples in New England as a dependent and disappearing population in need of governmental care. He does not cast himself as having been tasked to speak for a particular political community. Instead, he invokes figures of exemplarity that can stand for Indigenous peoplehood. Those figures do not serve as evidence of Native governance per se: they do not so much *prove* Native sovereignty as *presume* it, rhetorically producing sovereignty as a background against which the foregrounded figure comes into view. In his writings Apess experiments with how to generate a portrait of peoplehood for which political proxying would be appropriate, as opposed to racializing, paternalizing, and corrupt *care* by non-native guardians. Apess draws on various kinds of figuration in an effort to produce metonymic ways of signifying the presence and scope of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. In *A Son of the Forest* (1829/1831), he draws on his own life to highlight vicariously the existence of the Pequots as a nation; in *Eulogy on King Philip* (1836), the Wampanoag sachem Metacom serves as a means of registering Native peoples as self-governing political entities on a par with the United States; and in *Indian Nullification* (1835), Apess employs a

range of frames (including references to the Cherokee Nation, the Revolutionary War, and chattel slavery) to indicate the violence of the guardian system and to illustrate that the Mashpee (and by extension, other Indigenous groups in New England) need to be engaged as fully self-governing polities. Through these figurations, Apess seeks to generate the potential for political recognition by non-natives, even as the means of doing so tend to reinforce heteropatriarchal conceptions of political order and rule—through axiomatically presuming masculine rule and effacing the labor of women in sustaining both the reservations themselves and kinship relations among them.

The second half of the book examines the work of representation amid the ruins of diplomatic relation (the implementation of the reservation system, the end of treaty making, and the imposition of allotment). Chapter 3 reads Sarah Winnemucca's *Life among the Piutes* (1883) in light of the politics of mobility and prophecy in the Great Basin. In the late 1860s and the late 1880s, prophet-led movements emerged out of visions of Native regeneration dreamed by Northern Paiute men, and these movements can be understood as part and parcel of a broader set of sociospiritual dynamics that were prevalent throughout the Great Basin region during the entire period. Yet, in Winnemucca's narrative, she does not discuss these movements at all. Attending to the historical presence of the Ghost Dances highlights the ways the account of Paiute peoplehood developed within the text relies on effacing and disowning the dispersed networks of sociality, placemaking, and leadership coalesced by these prophetic movements. In contrast, Winnemucca consistently depicts herself as part of an unbroken chiefly line that leads the entire "Paiute nation," in particular offering that political genealogy as validation for her ability as a woman to represent the people in public fora. Positioning herself as an extension of her father, himself cast as the head chief of an integrated tribal entity, she seeks to produce a cohesive sense of Northern Paiute identity that is more consistent with the terms of Indian policy in order to challenge the discretionary powers exerted by agents and to advocate for the preservation of state-recognized Paiute landbases, despite the end of formal treaty making in 1871 and the adoption of increasingly autocratic administrative principles in the federal management of reservations. As against Winnemucca's claims to speak for a unified Paiute polity/public, though, Ghost Dance movements highlight the ways forms of Indigenous peoplehood in the Great Basin in the late nineteenth century did not fit the terms of Indian policy, organized as it was around notions of clearly delineated tribes with discretely demarcated landbases, and tracing Winnemucca's evasion of the Ghost Dance underlines the intellectual labor at play in seeking to engage with non-native popular and political discourses.

In the process of doing so, though, she also must displace prominent regional principles, practices, and geographies that run counter to the administrative and ideological frameworks at play in Indian policy, since such regional formations undermine both her claim to stand for the Paiute people and the presence of a clearly delineated *Paiute people* for whom she could speak.

Chapter 4 takes up the movement in the late nineteenth century away from a diplomatic/military idiom to a proto-anthropological one as the predominant non-native way of portraying Native peoples, addressing the change in kinds of representativity asserted by Indigenous authors. Increasingly, Native peoples were portrayed not as geopolitical entities but as collections of racialized persons who engaged in barbaric "tribal relations" that needed to be eliminated. In response, Native writers begin to work within emergent ethnographic modes of description, casting themselves as informants who can testify to everyday forms of collective practice. In 1900, Zitkala-Ša published a series of three stories in the *Atlantic Monthly* based on her life experience growing up on the Yankton reservation, attending boarding school, and working for Carlisle Industrial School, the most famous of the off-reservation educational institutions. If ethnographies of Native peoples usually involved white narrators' reconstruction, reordering, and elucidation of accounts offered by Indians, whose own testimonies were taken as indicative of prevalent patterns of behavior and belief, Zitkala-Ša occupies that position of representative Native speaker in order to provide her own account. This mode of self-stylization, or positioning herself as representative, enables her lived experience to stand for the existence of a (political) collective. Zitkala-Ša's implicit presentation of herself as spokesperson for the Yankton, and the portrait of their peoplehood that she offers, is not readily marked as a *political* form. Fusing the roles of ethnographic subject and object, she partakes in one of the few possibilities in the period for Native self-representation to non-native publics. She reorients the conceptual resources of ethnography toward highlighting the value of what at the time were termed tribal relations, while analyzing settler policy as itself producing forms of incapacity, rather than remedying those which supposedly arise in the generational transmission of Indianness. She draws on extant popular interest in Indians (such as in Wild West shows) while casting her experience as evidence of the potential value of ordinary Indigenous social formations—what might be described as the site of Indian domesticity, which is cast as in need of reformation in official rhetorics. Yet, even as she draws on extant ethnographic strategies, she subtly illustrates how they recycle stereotypical understandings of Indianness and, thereby, limit possibilities for registering historical and ongoing forms of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

Speaking for the People illustrates how the conditions of settler colonial rule affect how Native intellectuals articulate and employ political form in their writings. Such entanglements mean that nineteenth-century portrayals of indigeneity by Native authors should be treated less as simply or directly expressive of extratextual modes of peoplehood than as negotiating the terms through which indigeneity gains meaning within settler frameworks. In doing so, their writings inhabit, challenge, and refunction non-native discourses in ways that facilitate engagement and advocacy with settler publics, but, reciprocally, such templates also, then, orient the accounts of Indigenous peoplehood offered in their texts. Foregrounding the ways these authors and texts position themselves as representative draws attention to the background assumptions about Native identity and governance that provide the condition of intelligibility for their modes of public speech and engagement. Exploring the potential distinctions/disjunctions between their accounts and extant Indigenous geopolitical formations, though, is less in the interest of underlining the authenticity of the latter against the former than of highlighting the dynamics and politics of mediation. What does inhabiting settler-sanctioned or settler-intelligible political forms *do* in particular historical and political conjunctures? How can we understand that effort as different from identification with settler frames (even if, at times, such identification also is present)? Conversely, how might we understand the possibilities offered by the use of such forms as also having costs? Such costs and erasures, which often are deeply gendered, point back toward the dynamics of force that permeate colonial entanglements, the intellectual labor of figuring out how productively to engage such force, and the ethical complexities and densities of that engagement. While my analysis is focused on nineteenth-century Native authors, I want to suggest that such scenes of writing and representation provide ways of approaching the broader questions of how to conceptualize engagement with settler forms and frames of reference at all levels and how to understand decisions about the shape of Indigenous governance and the flourishing of Native peoples as matters of ongoing deliberation, discussion, and debate—as open-ended processes rather than ready solutions derivable from a set of foundational first principles on which all the people who comprise *the people* might not agree.

Notes

Introduction

1 On the process of federal acknowledgment for "Indian tribes," see Barker, *Native Acts*; Cramer, *Cash, Color, Colonialism*; Den Ouden and O'Brien, *Recognition*; Field, "Unacknowledged Tribes"; Klopotek, *Recognition Odysseys*; Miller, *Invisible Indigenes*; Miller, *Forgotten Tribes*. Congress also maintains the authority to extend acknowledgment to Native peoples on whatever basis it deems fit.

2 See 25 CFR 83 (consulted May 20, 2019).

3 States often can have their own criteria and processes for formally recognizing Native peoples as such, but such recognition does not translate into federal acknowledgment, whereas federal acknowledgment automatically includes acknowledgment by the states as well.

4 Barker, *Native Acts*, 22, 27.

5 When speaking of "networks," as well as a "template" that allows access to them, I am drawing on the work of Bruno Latour, whom I will engage more explicitly later in the introduction. See Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.

6 In the following, I am playing off of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's famous discussion of the relation between representation in its two senses, as proxy and portrait, first offered in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" See Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 198–311. I will address this allusion more explicitly in the next section.

7 I am using the term "intellectuals" as something of a loose catchall to refer to people who were engaged in public activities that involved seeking to conceptualize the situations faced by Native peoples. Such work certainly did not happen only through writing in English or publication, even though such modes and activities are the ones I principally will be addressing. See Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations*; Martínez, *Dakota Philosopher*; Pexa, *Translated Nation*; Vigil, *Indigenous Intellectuals*; Warrior, *Tribal Secrets*.

8 See Barker, "Territory"; Estes, *Our History*; McCarthy, *Divided Unity*; Pasternak, *Grounded Authority*; Powell, *Landscapes of Power*; Simpson, "State Is a Man."

9 On ways of defining Indigenous literature and the issues at play in doing so, see Brooks, *Common Pot*; Calcaterra, *Literary Indians*; Cohen, *Networked Wilderness*; Goeman, *Mark My Words*; Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*; Mignolo, *Darker Side*; Rasmussen, *Queequeg's Coffin*; Round, *Removable Type*; and Wyss, *English Letters*.

10 Brooks, *Common Pot*, xxi, 13, 219.

11 Brooks, *Common Pot*, xxxi. For another strong statement of such principles within Native literary studies, see also Womack, "Integrity."

12 See Cooke, "Indian Fields"; Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*; Lyons, *X-marks*; O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*; Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time*.

13 Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*, xix, xx.

14 Justice, *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*, 141.

15 On Indigenous "political orders," see Simpson, "State Is a Man."

16 Piatote, *Domestic Subjects*, 10. Similarly, Cheryl Suzack suggests, "Scholars have turned their attention to demonstrating how literary texts foreground Indigenous communities' social justice goals" (8), later arguing, "Literary texts enact justice-seeking objectives by telling stories to make explicit the limits of legal reasoning and to demonstrate the impact of settler-colonial dispossession on Indigenous communities by depicting accounts that open up a horizon for understanding injustice in other ways" (*Indigenous Women's Writing*, 87).

17 Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations*, 27, 29.

18 Turner, *Peace Pipe*, 81.

19 Brooks, *Common Pot*, xxxv.

20 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 39. My approach here, then, differs from Turner's way of discussing mediation, in which he suggests that "mediators" "engage the legal and political discourses of the state, guided by richer and more inclusive sets of assumptions about Aboriginal peoples, political sovereignty, and especially political recognition," and such "word warriors" draw on "the language of rights, sovereignty, and nationhood" in order to "explain our differences and in the process empower ourselves to actually change the state's legal and political practices." See Turner, *Peace Pipe*, 86, 92, 99, 101. What I'm describing here is not so much texts' effort to explain Indigenous social forms (modes of networking and mediation at play among Indigenous persons and in the operation of Native polities) as their effort to cast Indigenous peoplehood in frames and formats in use among non-natives, a portrayal that has consequences for what can signify as peoplehood.

21 While figured in quite different terms, my approach here is indebted to Craig Womack's description of art as about deviation and deviance, rather than a bearing forward of cultural norms, traditions, or singular visions of the nation/people. See Womack, *Art as Performance*.

22 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 108, 128.

23 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 53, 85.

24 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 222–223.

25 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 196.

26 Levine, *Forms*, 65, 85.

27 On the ways Black and Native formulations and assertions of "rights" sought to disorient white settler frames, and the ways articulations of "native"-ness took shape in the context of Anglo conceptions of positive and negative birthright, see Ben-zvi, *Native Land Talk*.

28 See Bowes, *Land Too Good*; Calloway, *Pen and Ink Witchcraft*; Cheyfitz, "Navajo-Hopi"; Jones, *License for Empire*; Prucha, *American Indian Treaties*; Rifkin, *Manifesting America*; Rockwell, *Indian Affairs*. For an alternative reading of the work of treaties, see Allen, "Postcolonial Theory"; Estes, *Our History*; Lyons, *X-marks*; and Williams, *Linking Arms*.

29 When addressing Native authors' mediations of what I am characterizing as settler templates, I do not mean to suggest that change operated in one direction, that non-natives were unaffected by ongoing engagements with Native peoples. For examples

of work within nineteenth-century literary studies that foregrounds the effects of Native presence, politics, and cultural production on non-native social forms and modes of self-understanding, see Bellin, *Demon of the Continent*; Bergland, *National Uncanny*; Calcaterra, *Literary Indians*; Cooke, "Indian Fields"; Maddox, *Removals*; Mielke, *Moving Encounters*; Scheckel, *Insistence*. My focus, though, lies on the contours, character, and labor of representing Indigenous collectivity and sovereignty to non-native publics and the complex relations between such textual accounts and extant geopolitical formations.

30 Vigil, *Indigenous Intellectuals*, 3–4, 6; Pexa, *Translated Nation*, 1, 148. See also Carpenter, *Seeing Red*; Greyser, *On Sympathetic Grounds*; Piatote, "Indian/Agent Aporia"; Powell, "Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins"; Wyss, *English Letters*.

31 Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 4, 15.

32 In *Tribal Secrets*, Robert Warrior develops the concept of Native intellectual sovereignty, in which he refuses an easy distinction between what can count as Native and what cannot. He argues, "If our struggle is anything, it is the struggle for sovereignty, and if sovereignty is anything, it is a way of life," adding, "It is a decision—a decision we make in our minds, in our hearts, and in our bodies—to be sovereign and to find out what that means in the process" (123). That "struggle for sovereignty," though, "is not a struggle to be free from the influence of anything outside ourselves, but a process of asserting the power we possess as communities and individuals to make decisions that affect our lives" (124). What I am suggesting, however, is that nineteenth-century Native writers' portrayals of peoplehood also navigate the context of non-native framings of indigeneity. While we might understand these writers as enacting intellectual sovereignty in that process, such sovereignty should be distinguished from (or, at least not treated as equivalent to or inherently continuous with) exertions and formations of political sovereignty in the sense of the dynamics of Indigenous governance.

In this way, I'm also departing from what has been termed Native literary nationalism. Within such approaches, texts are read as indicative of philosophies, principles, histories, and experiences that emanate from the author's people. Scholars working in this mode offer capacious understandings of what constitutes Native national identity, refusing reifying notions of what can count as such expression. For examples, see Justice, *Our Fire*; Kelsey, *Tribal Theory*; and Womack, *Red on Red*. While holding onto the importance of situating given texts in relation to their authors' peoples, I aim to explore how nineteenth-century writers, in particular, seek to engage with non-native publics in ways that affect how they stage depictions of political identity, sovereignty, and governance. Reciprocally, as I will suggest further in the next section, attending to that negotiation of settler templates draws attention back to the negotiation over political form happening within understandings of what constitutes peoplehood, governance, and placemaking "on the ground."

33 Latour observes that "framing things into some context is what actors constantly do. I am simply arguing that it is this very framing activity, this very activity of contextualizing, that should be brought into the foreground" (*Reassembling the Social*, 186). By "actors" Latour means mediators, rather than persons per se, and I am suggesting

that attending to the "framing activity" employed by Native texts (including their claims to representativity) speaks to the ways the process of addressing settler publics involves mediations with regard to political form, rather than simply expressing kinds of political form that are borne unmediated from elsewhere.

34 Piatote, *Domestic Subjects*, 173.

35 On the role of heteropatriarchal ideologies in formulations of Indigenous governance, see Barker, *Native Acts*; Denetdale, "Chairmen"; Goeman, *Mark My Words*; Kauanui, *Paradoxes*; Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*.

36 Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 258, 259.

37 Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 257, 260.

38 For an extended version of this argument, see Rifkin, *Manifesting America*. On the translation of Native collective placemaking into the terms of "property," see Barker, "Territory"; Cheyfitz, *Poetics*; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*; Goeman, *Mark My Words*; Nichols, *Theft Is Property!*; Pasternak, *Grounded Authority*.

39 Andersen, "From Difference to Density," 97.

40 On addressing forms in terms of their *affordances*, see Levine, *Forms*.

41 For discussion of the "Indian nation" as the way of figuring Indigenous modernity in the nineteenth century, refusing culturalizing and racializing narratives of Indian anachronism/incapacity, see Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations*; Lyons, *X-marks*; Womack, *Red on Red*. As I have argued elsewhere, though, presenting treaty-recognized Indigenous state forms in the nineteenth century as somewhat transparently expressive of Native popular will can efface the complexities of matters of class, consent, and colonial force. See Rifkin, *Manifesting America*.

42 For examples, see Barker, *Native Acts*; Denetdale, "Chairmen"; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*; Goeman, *Mark My Words*; Kauanui, *Paradoxes*; Klopotek, *Recognition Odysseys*; Million, *Therapeutic Nations*; Pasternak, *Grounded Authority*; Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*.

43 Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 3, 30–31, 41.

44 Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, 176; Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 11, 185. It should be noted that one of the most prominent state logics at play in matters of acknowledgment for Indian tribes in the United States is antiblackness. As Brian Klopotek observes, "Federal recognition, while in many ways a project intended to be supportive of indigeneity, carries white supremacist racial projects within it. First, it induces Indians to distance themselves from blacks by rewarding tribes that have maintained strict racial boundaries with peoples of African descent and punishing those that have not" (*Recognition Odysseys*, 267). See also Adams, *Who Belongs?*; Cramer, *Cash, Color, Colonialism*; Lowery, *Lumbee Indians*; Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History*.

45 Barker, *Native Acts*, 17, 28.

46 Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 260. On the ways U.S. settler colonialism works through the production of such forms of legal subjectivity that confirm U.S. legal mappings and Native consent, see Rifkin, *Manifesting America.*

47 Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 156, 16.

48 Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 1, 2, 49.

49 Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 32, 39.

50 Barker, *Native Acts*, 217.

51 Barker, *Native Acts*, 223.

52 In this way, I'm distinguishing between identification (an affective investment in a particular form as expressive of ground-level self-understanding) and *mediation*, in Latour's sense discussed earlier. The relation I'm sketching also productively might be thought of through José Muñoz's articulation of "disidentification": a mode "that neither opts to assimilate within [dominant ideology] nor strictly opposes it; rather, disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology"; disidentification is about "recycling and rethinking encoded meaning" in ways that "retain the problematic object [or term/concept] and tap into the energies that are produced by contradictions and ambivalences" (*Disidentifications*, 11, 31, 71). For discussion of contemporary modes of Indigenous–non-Indigenous alliance, although not necessarily conceptualized through figures of "recognition," see Grossman, *Unlikely Alliances*; Larsen and Johnson, *Being Together*; Mackey, *Unsettled Expectations*.

53 Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 256.

54 Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 261.

55 Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 16, 17–18.

56 Guha, "On Some Aspects," 39, 40. See also Beverley, *Subalternity and Representation*; Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments*; Rodríguez, *Latin American Subaltern Studies*; Varadharajan, *Exotic Parodies*.

57 Allen, *Blood Narrative*, 18.

58 Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 39.

59 On the ways settler sovereignty always remains within and beholden to Indigenous sovereignty, even if in often disavowed ways, see Cattelino, *High Stakes*; Cooke, "Indian Fields"; Karuka, "Prose of Counter-Sovereignty"; Nicoll, "Reconciliation"; Mackey, *Unsettled Expectations*; Pasternak, *Grounded Authority*; Stark, "Criminal Empire."

60 As Gerald Vizenor observes, "The tribal real is not an enterprise of resistance," but he also argues that efforts by Native intellectuals to enter into the "simulations" created by non-native discourses of Indianness, or potentially of Native collective identity, carry with them "shadows" that "tease and loosen the bonds of representation in stories" (*Manifest Manners*, 54, 72). As Amy Den Ouden and Jean O'Brien argue, "Recognition struggles raise questions about the efficacy of a purportedly inexorable logic of elimination, and bring attention to the instabilities of settler colonialism and its claims of mastery" (*Recognition*, 8), adding, "Indigenous struggles for recognition mark significant moments of refusal of the logic of elimination and potential disruption of the governmental discourses and strategies deployed to legitimize the nation-state's claim to power over indigenous peoples" (9).

61 Here I'm thinking of Kara Thompson's theorization of "the fold" and *convolution*. See Thompson, *Blanket*.

62 Dennison, *Colonial Entanglement*, 6, 8. This perspective resonates with John Borrows's argument that what is needed is "*akinoomaagewin*" or "physical philosophy," which is "derived from observation and practice" rather than "from identifying first principles and deducing conclusions from abstract propositions" (*Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism*, 10). He adds, "We must 'bob and weave' between what

would appear to be inconsistent alternatives, if we measured life by essentialized 'truths'"; "When we are free to act in complex, multifaceted, and variable ways, we more fully enrich our own and others' lives" (*Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism*, 18).

63 Carroll, *Roots of Our Renewal*, 17. As Carroll observes, though, the effort to indigenize the state form with respect to environmental policy also runs into existing processes "in which 'nation-building' strategies must be funneled through models designed for generating profits, increasing worker efficiency, and ensuring loyal customers, which, although they are potentially positive goals for some areas of tribal management, are incongruous with the goals of strengthening communities, enriching cultural identity, and maintaining sovereignty" (154).

64 Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 185, 109, 111.

65 On "orientation," see Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*. On the use of this concept to think about modes of settlement and indigeneity, see Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time*; Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense*.

66 Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 12, 28–29.

67 Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 13.

68 Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, 8, 16, 23.

69 As Joanne Barker argues, when "tribal membership" comes to function as a kind of "property right," it can enact "exclusionary ideologies of race, gender, and sexuality," which stand in contrast to "Native customs and epistemologies" that involve "a generosity regarding intermarriage, adoption, and naturalization as well as alternative understandings of belonging and kinship that . . . [tie] members back to their lands and governments as citizens with multiple kinds of responsibilities" (*Native Acts*, 83, 94). In discussing the rearrangements of Hawaiian governance in the face of increased Euro-American presence, prior to annexation, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui observes, "We must note the intentional restructuring of Indigenous kinship in the quest to solidify Hawaiian sovereignty. Combating polygamy and polyandry, same-sex sexuality, and close consanguineous mating formed an overarching framework for restructuring the Indigenous polity in order to fend off encroachment. Hence the paradox: to fight that imperialism, Hawaiian chiefs enacted forms of colonial biopolitics in order to secure sovereign recognition" (*Paradoxes*, 159).

70 Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, 53.

71 Carroll, *Roots of Our Renewal*, 173; Dennison, *Colonial Entanglement*, 10. See also Borrows, *Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism*; Pasternak, *Grounded Authority*; Richland, *Arguing with Tradition*; Turner, *Peace Pipe*.

Chapter 1. What's in a Nation?

1 On the history of the Treaty of New Echota, see Moulton, *John Ross*; McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence*; Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*.

2 As Imani Perry argues, (hetero)patriarchy can be understood as collapsing "the wife and children of the patriarch . . . into his legal being" while producing racialized zones of "nonpersonhood," which involved "not simply exclusion from the rights and recognitions of legal personhood" but the systemic development of "particular