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RACHEL HARRIS and/et STÉPHANIE BERNIER

Rachel Bryant, *The Homing Place: Indigenous and Settler Literary Legacies of the Atlantic* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier UP, 2017), 242 pp. \$35.00 (cloth) ISBN 9781771122863

What are the geographical, disciplinary, and epistemological borders that contribute to the on-going dismissal of Indigenous literary production on Turtle Island / North America? Rachel Bryant's *The Homing Place*, published as part of Wilfred Laurier University Press's Indigenous Studies Series, answers this vital question by examining a wide variety of texts, some of which expand conventional definitions of what qualifies as a text. Throughout the monograph, Bryant points out that Indigenous voices are often dismissed or misrepresented because of the long-standing cultural iconoclasm that characterizes "Settler" perceptions of Indigenous subjects.¹ Bryant positions herself historically and geographically as a Settler in a short preface titled "Engaging in Literary Diplomacy, or Speaking from a Clear Subject Position." As this title suggests, careful self-positioning and the idea of international diplomacy are central to Bryant's methodology. Her call to rethink academic and geopolitical colonial borders is framed as a call to nation-to-nation literary relations.

Bryant analyzes depictions of Indigenous-Settler contact zones in historical and contemporary texts, identifying literary scholarship as a contact zone where ethical readings should prevail. For instance, Bryant shows that the work of Mi'gmaq poet laureate Rita Joe both enacts and depicts nation-to-nation diplomacy, notably through recurring images of proffered hands. Bryant sees Joe's oeuvre as emblematic of Mi'gmaq resurgence and conceptions of reciprocity. In recognizing the reciprocity and diplomacy that undergird Joe's work, Bryant places her writing within a long history of "treaty literature" (a term otherwise used by Lisa Brooks). Literary scholarship that has tended to misrepresent Joe's work thus fails to uphold its

¹ The term "Settler" is capitalized throughout, as per Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker's work on settler colonialism in Canada (Bryant 188, footnote 3).

treaty responsibilities, eschewing the ethical nation-to-nation literary diplomacy initiated in Joe's prose and poetry.

A chapter on cultural storytelling in Passamaquoddy territory offers a different example of Indigenous literary brilliance and cross-cultural misreading. Through Bryant's readings of wampum belts, land-based stories, maps, correspondence, and petitions, she shows that the Passamaquoddy have extensive documentation of their relationship with their land. However, because the 1783 Treaty of Paris imposed a national border in their territory, mainstream society has continued to debate whether or not the Passamaquoddy somehow surrendered rights and "became American." Such willful misrecognition of Passamaquoddy storytelling and treaty literature is part of an on-going Settler strategy of understanding the land as fundamentally unclaimed or empty.

Bryant uses the concepts of *terra nullius* (land as ownerless) and *vacuum domicilium* (land as vacant) in her diagnoses and historicization of the fundamental Settler worldviews that impede dominant society from reading Indigenous cultural production with open eyes, even in the present day. Through analyses of texts such as seventeenth and eighteenth-century sermons and captivity narratives, and early New England meeting house architecture, Bryant identifies the epistemological stances that kept Settlers closed off to other ways of seeing and being. She points out the colonial, Eurocentric, Christian Protestant, and Lockean narrative moves in John Gyles's 1736 *Memoirs of Odd Adventures, Strange Deliverances, etc.* and in Anna Brownell Jameson's canonical 1838 travelogues. Bryant situates these texts within "Anglo-Atlantic World alphabetic literary culture" (88), a category that makes room for pre-Confederation texts typically ignored by early Canadianists who anachronistically use the Canadian border to define their corpus.

Bryant's readings of texts by Jameson, Gyles, and others move within and beyond their Settler colonial worldviews. She demonstrates that the Settler colonial agenda worked to "disconnect words and stories from Indigenous images, landscapes, and material forms—disconnections designed to silence Indigenous peoples and to render the land an inert and available commodity" (22). But then she also reads these early texts "against the grain," as she says (35), to recognize what they reveal about the Indigenous realities they so obsessively denied. For instance, in Gyles' captivity narratives, he recounts Maliseet stories as evidence of "heathenism," yet the stories subversively convey elements of Maliseet epistemology. Later

on, in her final chapter, Bryant again uses this counter strategy of reading beyond the authority of the text's central voice to notice how the titular character of Douglas Glover's 2003 novel *Elle* misreads Itslk, an Inuk hunter whom she meets in sixteenth-century Labrador. Bryant essentially charts Elle's "cartographic dissonance" (180). Largely through her interactions with Itslk, Elle's eyes are partially opened to the "failure of reciprocity and the limitations of the imperial worldview" that initially obscured her perceptions of Turtle Island (179).

Bryant's attention to non-alphabetic literary forms is one of the most fascinating threads throughout the book because she challenges literary scholars to expand their understanding of literary production as a whole. Chief William Polchies's 1939 *Thank You Address Written on Birch Bark in English and Maliseet to Lt. Governor Murray MacLaren* is beautifully reproduced in colour over four pages and on the book jacket of *The Homing Place*. Bryant's reading of the document prioritizes its non-alphabetic characteristics, which allows her to point out how its material features communicate ideas of reciprocity, sovereignty, and diplomacy. In addition to the literary tradition of awikhighanak (birchbark writings such as Polchies') Bryant also reads the wampum strings and belts featured among the book's figures. Other images, of which there are a dozen, include an eighteenth-century map of the St. John River, an 1808 map of Passamaquoddy Bay, an 1866 painting of Niagara, an 1899 railway timetable and map, a 1904 plan of a New Brunswick reserve, and a photo of a model wigwam. Attending to non-alphabetic literary production widens the corpus of literary scholarship and also helps readers to recognize the ways in which contemporary Indigenous literature can be better understood in relation to these genealogies. For example, Bryant's reading of the English translation of Joséphine Bacon's 2009 Innu-aimun/French poetry collection *Message Sticks/Tshissinuatshtakana* is oriented through her understanding of message sticks, which are communicative tools used by Innu groups moving throughout their land.

As a Settler professor of Canadian Studies and Canadian literature, I am grateful for Bryant's instructive insights. As I read, I could immediately think of classroom discussions—about locating the "beginnings" of literature in Canada or defining literary texts—that will henceforth be nuanced by what I learned from this book. In addition to Canadianists, literary scholars, and Indigenous Studies scholars, the book will also interest historians of North

America, as well those who work on print culture, book history, and interdisciplinary humanities. Its span is wide, moving, for instance, from seventeenth-century sermons on ships to 2013 land protectors in Elsipogtog; from the postcolonial theory of Frantz Fanon to the stories of Passamaquoddy tribal historian Donald Soctomah; and, from the bumbling attempts of colonial powers to locate the St. Croix river to mid twentieth century sedentarization of the Innu. As Bryant explains, the intent is not simply to incorporate supplementary texts into dominant literary paradigms but to transform the problematic standpoints from which Settlers have deafened themselves to Indigenous voices. Grounded in close readings, clear explanations of intricate historical details, and a clear sense of justice and community, *The Homing Place* is a compelling call to nation-to-nation literary relations.

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Laura Miller, *Reading Popular Newtonianism: Print, the Principia, and the Dissemination of Newtonian Science* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2018), 226 pp. US \$71.95 (cloth) ISBN 9780813941257

The first paragraph of the introductory chapter of *Reading Popular Newtonianism* provides an abstract for the book, which scrutinizes the eighteenth-century print reception of Sir Isaac Newton's works (primarily his *Principia Mathematica*, published in 1687) "in a context framed by authorship, print, editorial practices, and reading" (1). The chapter then expands this abstract to describe what author Laura Miller acknowledges is the "ambitious task" (8) of combining history of science and literary history while also employing analytical approaches of print history and critical bibliography. One anticipates a novel and thorough study from this discussion. Indeed, through its delineation of all the many themes, disciplinary approaches, theory, and scholarly traditions for this study, this introductory chapter affords a useful literature review for expert and uninformed readers alike.

Such wide-ranging scholarship, however, requires not only unusual expertise and talent on behalf of the author, but it implicitly demands full treatment in a large monograph—as is the norm especially in history of science. The brief length of *Reading Popular*