

ers, with the plane just coming into view. Represented as a wampum design, this image indigenizes a still-unfolding story of grievous loss and its repercussions. The creation and use of wampum belts has long accompanied changing worlds and new contexts. In a world unstrung once again, *Half-Life* shows the continued power and vitality of wampum aesthetics in healing grief of both recent and longstanding origin, not only in Haudenosaunee worlds but also in the worlds linked to them.

NOTE

1. Angela M. Haas, "Wampum as Hypertext: An American Indian Intellectual Tradition of Multimedia Theory and Practice," *SAIL* 19, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 80–81.

Luci Tapahonso. *A Radiant Curve: Poems and Stories*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2008. ISBN: 0-8165-2709-1. 128 pp.

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A general inquiry about Navajo poetry often lists Luci Tapahonso's name near the top. Tapahonso is one of the earliest-documented Navajo poets in publication. Her newest poetry collection, *A Radiant Curve*, confirms her place near the top of any list in American literature. Whether there exists an audience to receive her information into the American literature canon is arguable. A similar argument exists when determining whether any traditional Native Americans still exist. The semantic relationship tribes have with the English language is mostly one of invisibility, but when it does transpire there are often layers and layers of investigation and interpretation that need to occur before the manifestation. Indeed, the context to any tribal writing using the English language is calculated and complicated at best.

A Navajo-language speaker would readily disclose that the English word *poetry* does not exist in the Navajo worldview. As a fellow Navajo poet, I would simply induce that the word is nonexistent

because it is exclusive of audience. The Navajo worldview is centered on audience; many taboos exist for this purpose. Similar to how anthropologists have observed the central role of shamans in so-called primitive societies, shamans keep the tribe together with ceremonial lore to maintain a societal worldview. Shamans are the orators, the healers, the chanters. Again, a Navajo-language speaker would readily disclose that an equivalent word for *shaman* exists in the Navajo worldview. The English translation of *hataalii* is often written as “medicine man.” However, it is just a personified version of *hataal*, to sing, chant, or speak with an audience in mind.

And as most tribes, the Navajo people are especially good at adapting. The original role of *hataalii* is losing audience; the political strategy to eliminate tribes within the United States has made it essential for tribes to integrate and hybridize their worldviews to maintain a solidified tribal identity. As more Navajo writers continue to publish in the English language, the more they are confirming that English has become a tribal language. Using that tribal English, Tapahonso presents her audience with intricate and varied methods to reimagine and resume a tribal existence in midst of the persistent industrial and capitalist ideology surrounding tribal borders. Her gingerly textured tribal phrases could easily be dismissed when analyzed via Western origins of literary criticism. Although Tapahonso writes utilizing the English language as a vehicle, her writing is meant to be heard. As a tribe with an imposed orthography, the Navajo people often stress the importance of their oral transmission of data, song, and worldview. Thus, Tapahonso affirms her position as storyteller (chanter/singer) and includes an audio disc of her reading selected poems and singing her songs. The inclusion of this recording is a welcome supplement. Her selected poems include longtime audience favorites “Hills Brothers Coffee” and “Raisin Eyes.”

Tapahonso eloquently maneuvers her audience with such ease: at times, she is a dictionary, historian, theologian, shopping mall. She masters rhetorical distance and space with the use of her local and global tactics. Tapahonso opens *A Radiant Curve* with “The Beginning was Mist,” a poem many could argue is simply creating con-

text or prologue. Rather, Tapahonso has it listed equally in the table of contents with other similar poems throughout the book. Those localized poems are meticulously placed throughout the text to serve the social function of poetry. Tapahonso's oral tradition ideology requires a subordination of style (what many would identify as the literary art via Western standards) to the subject (audience memory and engagement) because it is so readily connected to tribal well-being. Thus, tribal writers hold an even greater burden when offering their texts as contributing social elements to collective survival.

On a global level, Tapahonso's volume is vital as a noninvasive academic text. As a scholar, Tapahonso contributes to numerous fields of study: linguistics, history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and so forth. The real functioning art of this volume stems from the sestina "The Canyon was Serene." Tapahonso weaves her audience into the query around the Navajo philosophy of *hozho*, beauty, balance. She uses the ancient sestina form to ponder integral Navajo practices.

For me, the Beauty
Way is abstract most of the time. At dawn, I rush out and
drive
to work instead of praying outside. (51)

By utilizing this troubadour form of verse, Tapahonso presents her audience with her translation of the Beauty Way. This poem singly functions as an oratory to re-imagine *hozho* in thirty-nine lines. It takes on the chant structure of repetition in form and word placement. Tribes only exist if tribal members create and live by manifestations of existence. Her radiant audience is given the permission to embrace their own methodologies from collective memory to learn

that beauty
can't be forced. It comes on its own. It's like the silky sheen of
horses
on cool summer mornings. It's like the small breezes, the
sway and rise
of an Appaloosa's back. (52)

In the end, Tapahonso fulfills the requirements of great literature. She takes her audience on a quest involving monster slaying, tragedy, and comedy. But most of all, she models for young Indigenous writers opportunities to grasp the English language as a tribal language capable of illuminating and eliminating vast distances: “We / must remember the worlds / our ancestors / traveled. / Always wear the songs they gave us” (89).

Jacqueline Shea Murphy. *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8166-4776-7. 296 pp.

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Jacqueline Shea Murphy takes the title of her examination of Native American modern dance histories from Leslie Marmon Silko’s novel *Almanac of the Dead* and quotes Silko in the epigraph to the introduction, “Dance as Document”: “Throughout the Americas, from Chile to Canada, the people have never stopped dancing; as the living dance, they are joined again with all our ancestors before them, who cry out, who demand justice, and who call the people to take back the Americas!” (1). Murphy chooses an apt quotation to describe the political implications of dance for Indigenous peoples in her quest to explore the relationships “between Native American dance and the history and development of modern dance in America” (4). In a well-researched and documented investigation, the author engages with Native dance, always placing her analysis in the contexts of Native sovereignty, land, community, culture, history, politics, economics, spirituality, colonization, and Christianity. Her approach avoids the objectification of Natives and instead focuses on a “dance studies model, with its attention to corporeality and the energies and agencies engaged by bodies moving, within particular frames and contexts, in time and space” (8), allowing her to see Native American dance as a “form of knowledge and history” (9), a document of sorts. Murphy acknowledges her position as a non-Native scholar who presents herself as an expert on Native