

grouping of five must-read authors, rather than choosing only one example from this emergent strand of Native American Indian literature. Readers of this journal know these writers well, but in all honesty, they too infrequently make their way onto course reading lists.

That contribution notwithstanding, in looking only at the pieces selected for inclusion, I found myself wondering if readers' puzzlement about gaps, elisions, ellipses introduced by segmentation, and so forth would disrupt the sincere attempt to look at aesthetic aspects of the work as well as the means by which each becomes part of the creative motion of action, ceremony, and liberty. The original works—save for Graham's collection of short fiction—do make use of fragments and narrative jump cuts, but this is hard to identify and make sense of in quite the same way when the original design has been effaced. My concern is not an original one, nor is my personal observation germane only to this collection; I feel this way about almost any excerpted selection in any anthology I've ever used in my classrooms. This is a greater concern, though, when looking at writers whose works have been labeled "avant-garde" and "experimental," writers whose works make use of indirection, juxtaposition, parody, and so forth. While I've long recognized it's acceptable to be confused and lost when reading—this is, after all, part of the experience—the segmentation of the full-length novels created a distorted, unnecessary experience of confusion.

Read Washburn, Graham, Gansworth, Glancy, and, of course, Vizenor in their entirety. *Native Storiers* will give you a taste of their visionary talent, but if you're like me, you'll be left feeling uncomfortably hungry for more.

Gerald Vizenor. *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2009.

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Matthew L. M. Fletcher, *Michigan State University*

With *Native Liberty*, acclaimed White Earth Ojibwe novelist and literary critic Gerald Vizenor ventures deeper into American Indian

law and policy than before. As the head of a recent commission tasked with drafting a new tribal constitution with the White Earth Band of Chippewa Indians, Vizenor's views on law and policy have become that much more relevant. *Native Liberty* is a collection of essays and speeches, many of which touch upon Vizenor's personal history and views as the leading theorist on American Indian literature. But it is law and policy that frequently detains Vizenor here—and his warnings, couched in the terms of a Native literary and cultural critic, are worth a great deal more than yet another gaming compact extension.

Vizenor's most direct involvement with the law, ironically, was as a defendant in a contract claim related to fundraising for the establishment of a courtyard dedicated to Ishi located at the University of California, Berkeley. Ishi, as is well known, was the Indian (supposedly "the last of his tribe") who had lived for years at the university's Museum of Anthropology under Alfred Kroeber. Vizenor recounts that he had originally proposed to rename a building on campus after Ishi in 1985, but the Berkeley administration had rebuffed his efforts until Congress enacted the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in the early 1990s. Only after being embarrassed by this federal statute and its requirement that the university repatriate much of its holdings, including thousands of American Indian remains and funerary objects, did the administration agree to dedicate Ishi Court. The ceremony in which Ishi's remains (most particularly, his brain, removed for baffling pseudo-scientific reasons and held by the university) were repatriated and then reburied involved a character Vizenor describes as a kitschy fraud who claimed to be able to feel Ishi's spirit move through him as he touched the urn housing Ishi's remains. It is this man, Harkin Lucero, who unsuccessfully sued Vizenor for money damages.

One can't help but think Vizenor's experience as a defendant in a suit decided in a state court before a non-Indian jury affects his views on law and policy. He reserves special contempt for American Indian tribal gaming, referring to "the rise of casinos" as a "crafty union of avarice and mercenary sovereignty" (22). Vizenor juxtaposes Indian gaming with traditional potlatches, where tribal lead-

ers gained authority and influence through the act of *giving away* their personal possessions, not in the act of *acquiring* the possessions of outsiders, and then sharing those resources with states and local governments. This juxtaposition implies that Indian leaders of gaming tribes are more influential among outsiders than they are among their own people. The experiences of tribal leaders at election time often demonstrate this irony.

Vizenor's views would irritate sovereignty warriors all over the nation, even many of those fighting for the tribes without lucrative gaming operations. Indian nations share at least one thing in common—the quest for tribal governmental revenues for purposes of funding critical public services from health care to public safety to education, services all too frequently denied Indian people from early times. This “mercenary sovereignty” is encapsulated in the regulatory and taxation exemptions from state and federal law; or, in other words, what Indian nations utilize to generate economic activity in Indian Country absent a tax base. In fact, Vizenor's critique is exactly what the US Supreme Court has been telling Indian nations for decades: that federal Indian law and policy has created enough space for tribal sovereignty to exist, and that space does not include economic advantages over non-Indians. While the Supreme Court can speak only in the archaic language of federal Indian law and in Nero-like “thumbs up” or “thumbs-down” orders, Vizenor recommends that Indian nations get down to the business of governing.

But Vizenor has bigger fish to fry. He raises the first reservation newspaper, the *Progress*, and his ancestors' involvement in its publication over a century ago. The editors hailed to a “moral law” of Indian advocacy opposing the federal government and others, an advocacy that Vizenor seems to liken to a union of Indian *nation* and Indian *people*. Then Vizenor iterates and reiterates an anecdote about the testimony of Charles Aubid in a federal court about how the Anishinaabe treaty negotiator (John Squirrel) would have understood treaty language. The judge, surprised by Aubid's caustic reaction to being told that his recounting of oral tradition was inadmissible hearsay, allowed him to testify after Aubid pointed to the law books strewn around the courtroom and demanded to

know why he should believe the “stories of dead white men” (87, 133). Now, treaty rights (somehow) belong to the tribe, and Indians have to petition their own government for the right to exercise them. It is the law of a treaty between sovereigns that it should be so, and the good public policy of tribal governance that Indian people consent to the regulation of their government to utilize these limited resources. But Vizenor, I think, would point out that *Tribe* and *Anishinaabe* (Indian person, for this purpose) are separated by these legal and policy considerations in a way that Charles Aubid and John Squirrel would never have contemplated.

*Native Liberty* is well worth the read, but is not flawless. Vizenor’s survivance celebrates how Indian nations made “treaties with enemies” (162), but it somehow refuses to celebrate the deals made by Indian nations in gaming that have traded sovereignty for the pumping of billions of dollars of revenue into tribal communities. And Vizenor’s comment on David Treuer’s cultural sovereignty argument regarding “Native American literature” rings hollow because it misses the bigger problem that Treuer’s individualistic supremacy of the Indian person over the Indian nation is functionally the same as the tribe undercutting the Anishinaabeg.

Vizenor is at his finest in *Native Liberty* where he highlights how Indian nations, in all their brilliance and craft (survivance?), suppress Indian stories—the lifeblood of the culture—by playing by the legal and political rules of outsiders. This is the take-away of *Native Liberty*.

Deborah L. Madsen and A. Robert Lee, eds. *Gerald Vizenor: Texts and Contexts*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-8263-4915-6. 448 pp.

David Stirrup, *University of Kent*

In *Understanding Gerald Vizenor* (2009), Deborah Madsen crafts a truism of utmost economy: “Reading his work is difficult.” Although the present volume does not purport to elucidate like Madsen’s earlier text, neither does it dwell, in the main, on what is difficult about