REVIEW ESSAYS

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The Power of the Gaze and of the Lens: Britta Muszeika's Look at Sarah Winnemucca, Zitkala Ša, and Charles Eastman through the Critical Race Theory Magnifying Glass

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Britta Muszeika. *Approaching Whiteness: Acknowledging Native Americans as Scholars of Reversal in 19th-Century Autobiographical Writings*. Universitätsverlag Winter, 2020, 305 pages.

John Sloan's famous American painting *Sunday Afternoon in Union Square* focuses on the human gaze as its central theme. Rendered in 1912, it portrays women and men in a park gazing at each other, some openly, others more surreptitiously or coquettishly. Everyone appears to be looking at somebody else, and everyone is being simultaneously looked at. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, people, particularly artists such as painters, marveled at the changing social, political and economic fabric of America (Pohl 323), and directed their gaze at scenes that captured those changes. In a similar fashion, Britta Muszeika made a gaze the central element of her new book titled *Approaching Whiteness: Acknowledging Native Americans as Scholars of Reversal in 19th Century Autobiographical Writings.* In this book, the primary gaze under examination is that of nineteenth-century Native American non-fiction writers, and this gaze is directed, as the title suggests, at white people. Why, then, do they look at white people?

The aim of such a close-up view is to assess the approach of white people towards the indigenous population, an approach imbued by a feeling of civilizational superiority. The grounds for such an assessment is an analysis of important nineteenth-century non-fictional texts. The texts include *Life among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1882) by Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, an indigenous Paiute; *American Indian Stories* (1916) by Zitkala Ša, a Yankton Sioux; *Indian Boyhood* (1902) and *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916) by Alexander Charles Eastman, a Santee Sioux. Muszeika rereads these books, focusing her analytical gaze on the description of the white people the authors encounter and deal with, or whose attitudes they are subjected to. It should be stressed that the nineteenth-century indigenous gaze, in all texts, was at times extremely critical, or at times explanatory of the behavior of white settlers. Sometimes, it praised white men, their culture and achievements. The differences in the gazes stem from a different appraisal of the authors' attitudes towards the Native Americans and the Native Americans' approach to the white man. Irrespective of their overall attitude towards white men, all the indigenous authors discussed showed a genuine interest in

the culture of the white people and wished to juxtapose their own cultures with the culture of white men; however, many a time, they were not able to comprehend the reason why the white people as a group, and their actions, failed to reciprocate genuine interest in their cultures. The Native tribal cultures were ancient, varied and complex, frequently intriguing in their ontologies and epistemologies, but white people's views seemed to overlook these aspects, obstructed in their vision by a feeling of superiority towards the barbarian "other." In order to counteract these tendencies, the three indigenous writers tell their stories with the intention of attracting the gaze of white people. The writers' objective was therefore a 'telling' of indigenous cultures directed at white people, of explaining the attitudes of the indigenous population concerning their (mis) treatment, or sometimes challenging the basis of this (mis)treatment. The point is that they, the Native tribal cultures, did not feel inferior.

Muszeika, in turn, looks at the aforementioned texts from a specific point of view. Her gaze is dictated by the perspectives of Critical Race Theory (further CRT), Critical Whiteness Studies (further CWS), and Critical Tribal Studies (further TribalCrit). This approach allows her to take a magnifying glass and, looking closely at the texts under examination, to focus on the aspects dictated by her theoretical framework in order to propose a solution, also dictated by the theoretical framework. The long-term goal, which makes the enterprise literary, anthropological and political in nature, is to thus propose a way to rectify relations between modern Native Americans on the one hand, and American society and American institutions at federal or state levels on the other.

Britta Muszeika's book, published in 2020 by Universitätsverlag Winter in their American Studies Monograph Series, consists of four chapters and an impressive list of references. The core of the book is an analysis of the non-fiction work of the three aforementioned authors in the last and the longest chapter, at about 150 pages. This chapter is preceded by three chapters, each discussing a crucial lens Muszeika affixes to her gaze to explain her rereading of the nineteenth-century indigenous texts and at the same time framing the main goals and intentions that inspired her to write this book.

The first chapter, an introduction to the book, lays out both Muszeika's personal path, which led her to take an interest in the field, and the goal her book may help to fulfill. In the field of Native American Studies, there are many German scholars whose fascination with Native Americans has followed a similar trajectory, from the novels of James Fenimore Cooper, the literary imagery of the ever-popular Karl May, the cycle of films featuring Winnetou and Old Shatterhand inspired by May's novels, Michael Mann's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992), and even nineteen pictorial representations of Indians by Karl Bodmer and Paul Klee, to today's German Indian hobbyists. Britta Muszeika, additionally inspired by a number of her teachers, relatives and friends, is apparently in a good company (for more see Hartmunt Lutz's essays and books).

Later in the chapter, she traces the origin of the stereotype of the Indian, from the seemingly immortal barbarian, the noble and ignoble savage, to the romanticized types, as a scholar both intellectually intrigued and simultaneously disconcerted by the endurance of all the stereotypes. It is indeed disconcerting when assessing the perpetuation of such detrimental stereotypes in spite of a multitude of developments

that suggest otherwise; the countless examples of Native Americans that explode these stereotypes, whose works, presence, accomplishments and daily transcultural encounters with non-Indigenous people reveal their enormous wisdom, perseverance and openness, including a readiness to embrace changes initiated by settlers' cultures. Perhaps the underlying desire of Muszeika, like many scholars in the field of Native American studies, is to challenge the portrayal of these encounters, which, as she says, "is virtually left untouched" (3).

Her gaze has been further influenced by CRT, CWS, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (further TRC). In line with the first two lenses, Muszeika asserts that the great success and perpetuation of the stereotype of Native Americans as savages was possible due to its establishment by white colonizers who were in a position of political and cultural power, which awarded specific functions to different racial and ethnic groups and ranked them from the point of view of the nature of their contribution to the construction of the country being built throughout the nineteenth century. At the bottom of the political and social ladder were Native Americans or Black Americans, or, as some would argue, Asian or Latin Americans. Here the battle ranges as to which group was most abused. There is no consensus. Muszeika claims throughout the book that whiteness—skin color—was the true basis underlying the supremacy of white colonizers. This, in turn, extended into an ideology that rendered whiteness the racial and cultural ideal. To a great extent, this conclusion is valid and the end effect of Critical Witness Studies should be unquestionably shared. The result of this was white people's privileged position and the emergence of racism, but it should have been remarked in the book that the white people of Europe who masterminded the colonization of the world, including the western hemisphere, at that time based their feelings of supremacy on the outward achievements of their cultures and their economic power. By no means did they see all the cultures of the then white European domain as equal: in the North American colonies and the subsequently independent American Republic, the Anglo-Saxons positioned their culture at the top, while Spanish and French cultures found themselves near the bottom, just above the Blacks and the Indians, and the lowly Irish (see Hunt). Each of those European countries saw the Native cultures of America as lacking in literacy, architecture, technological developments, and complex religious systems. This was the result of the then-dominant *Zeitgeist* dictated by the thinking of the Enlightenment. In no way does this acknowledgment excuse the Europeans from the crimes they committed against the Native Americans, but it should be remembered that at that time a person's whiteness also functioned as a geographical indicator, not only as a sign of a uniformed thinking. Moreover, it must be remembered that European countries waged war against each other, and held each other in contempt. The English, for example, ruthlessly killed the Irish during the English Civil War of 1642-1651, whom they beheld as ethically and culturally inferior (Smedley 52-64).

Critical Witness Studies, launched in the 1960s, also motivated Muszeika to follow in the footsteps of Robert Berkhofer's famous book *The White Man's Indian,* in which Berkhofer recreates the formation of the white gaze and its role in the development of the enduring stereotypes of Indians. Muszeika, in contrast, focuses on the gaze of the Indigenous writers and traces their perception of the white people. The

list of people that would qualify as the subject of Muszeika's research has been growing since the 1970s as a result of a wide-ranging search carried out by Native American and non-native scholars in archives all over the United States. She intentionally excludes documents written before the 1830s, as their authorship through ghost writing or an assumed white way of thinking might have been objectionable, consequently focusing on works of non-fiction where elements of imagination do not overpower ethnographic accounts. This explains the omission of such names as William Apess or Samson Occom, an omission that Muszeika acknowledges.

Muszeika has chosen the three authors because they fulfilled two roles at the same time: they were scholars of whiteness and ethnographers of their own tribes. As regards the former role, Muszeika labeled Sarah Winnemucca, Zitkala Ša and Charles Alexander Eastman scholars of reversal. Though none of them was a scholar by today's definition, they all acquired the tools necessary to understand the people that invaded their lands, i.e. their language and the benefits of an education in the settlers' school system. Armed with that knowledge and blinded neither by resistance to nor hatred of the settlers, they genuinely attempted to understand the conduct of the white people, at some point fascinated by their culture and the reasoning behind that conduct, including the bases of the feeling of superiority and resultant racism that white people displayed. Then the highlighted authors reversed the mirror; where once Whites revealed their images of Native Americans, now Whites were asked to see their images as portrayed by indigenous writers. When publishing their literary works, also much encouraged and assisted by some white people, Sarah Winnemucca, Zitkala Ša and Charles Alexander Eastman wished to make the white people aware of their hypocrisy and unfounded prejudice, possibly to evoke more understanding, if not appreciation, for the indigenous cultures. As ethnographers, the authors desired to explain what it was the white people declined to turn their gaze upon, i.e. indigenous traditions, epistemologies and ontologies, together with the fact that they were born equal, as stipulated by Enlightenment ideals. In their books, they therefore provided an acute analysis of the political, cultural and economic situation of their tribes in order to shed more light on them. Each of the authors realized, however, and Muszeika underscores this fact, that the main culprit of that behavior was white people's feelings of cultural superiority. In this light, the application of Whiteness Studies and the attendant tenets in analyzing the chosen texts is justifiable. To do justice to the authors under examination and even to establish the superiority of their reversed position, Muszeika from the beginning foreshadows the fact that the authors held no uniform attitude towards white people: while Sarah Winnemucca wavers in her approach towards the colonizer, trying to balance the losses and gains of their presence, Zitkala Ša adamantly resists the settlers' encroachment into native education, while Eastman opts for the assimilation and acculturation of his peoples in the face of the power of white cultures and their achievements; he often mentions literacy, Christianity, and technological achievements. Of the three authors mentioned, only Sarah Winnemucca eventually stayed with her people.

The last frame is the above-mentioned Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that both highlights the purpose of Muszeika's book and establishes the premise necessary to achieve that purpose. The traditions of setting up the TRC around the

world emanated from the 1970s in South Africa and then proceeded to North America. Everywhere, the overarching objective of establishing such commissions was to return the history of mistreated indigenous populations suffering under colonizers and to provide public attention to it, thus giving voice to the victims of colonization and restoring their human dignity. The ultimate aims should be to redress the wrongs and to acknowledge the guilt of the colonizer, compensate the victim, and open up venues of accepting accountability. The TRC Muszeika makes repeated reference to is the TRC active in Canada between 2008 and 2015, which indeed provided a platform for the healing of the First Nations by giving them a voice to share their experiences, mostly associated with the boarding schools, and by extension including the whole Canadian nation, who would finally learn about the history of colonial mistreatment of the indigenous. The first and most memorable moment marking the beginning of the works of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a public apology by Stephen Harper in 2008, on behalf of the previous generations that perpetrated the harm, along with a promise to improve the relations and accord the First Nations their rightful place in the history of the Canadian nation. This public apology was hailed as a major breakthrough in the Canadian-First Nations relations, and it was followed by apologies addressed to First Nations, the Metis and the Inuit, and by an expressions of guilt by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2015 when the TRC released the complete report. 2021 marked the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to be observed in September each year. In spite of all the initiatives, voices persist that undermine the importance of TRC and the possibility of fulfillment of its long-term goals. Yet Muszeika takes this TRC as a model the United States should follow, though she asks whether this is feasible, listing the obstacles that stand in the way. She further contends that the still uninformed attitude towards the indigenous population in the United States and the many prejudices still rooted in the stereotypes fashioned almost 300 to 400 years ago stand as major hurdles to reconciliation and solving numerous problems on many levels (social, political, education, health). Many Americans, like Canadians, despite the TRC results, know little about Native Americans, their culture and history, past and present, or even whether they still exist today. Muszeika tries to explain this by outlining the curricula in all stages of education in the USA, and showing just how little attention is placed on Native Americans. This predicament, however, has been improving, especially at the university level, but ever so slowly, and the curricula still largely ignore the role Native Americans played in the history of the United States. A great example in the domain of history revision is the long-overdue true account of the Thanksgiving holiday, as found in the book by David Silverman *This Land Is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony, and the Troubled History of Thanksgiving* (2019). In this accounting, Silverman (372) reveals scant knowledge of the holiday, even among history teachers from all over the USA, who arrive at specially designed summer courses for new instructions on the way they should teach about this holiday and what they should include. This serves as a confirmation of Muszeika's claim to restore the forgotten or silenced history of Native Americans in the United States and justifies her call for action.

Furthermore, she asserts that it is impossible to reverse American history (22-23) and the course of events that laid its foundations: conquest, colonization, the Revolutionary War, expansion, slavery, and the abuse and exploitation of minorities

(harnessing them in the process of the actual construction of the country and the state). That being stressed on many occasions, she thinks it is possible to acknowledge the abuses involved in building the foundations of the American state and identity, which incurred so many losses for the Native Americans in terms of life, land, culture, language and tradition. She also postulates that a rightful place should be made in the national narrative for those who were erased from it. This calls for mentioning the way Native Americans helped white people to survive in colonial America (i.e., the real story of the Thanksgiving), the way they helped defeat and then stave off the British in two wars for independence and sovereignty, or that they were involved in slavery and the Civil War. To this effect, she wants to contribute by presenting in *Approaching Whiteness* some indigenous individuals that showed agency and tried to navigate between the two groups, i.e. the western settlers and the indigenous people, and thus attempted to mitigate the effects of distrust and wrongful policies undertaken by the former. Thanks to their fluency in English, Sarah Winnemucca, Zitkala Ša and Charles Alexander expressed what native people thought about white people and their consistent attitudes, in the context of "savagism" that white people displayed when dislocating, assimilating and waging war against their supposed "red" brethren.

Critical to a full understanding of Muszeika's analysis and the power of the gazes is Chapter 3, in which she provides a detailed delineation of the theoretical framework of her scholarly endeavor, the Critical Race Theory and its offshoots, Critical Whiteness Studies and Tribal Critical Race Theory. Here she is meticulous and knowledgeable, logically describing the origin and objectives of those fields of studies, albeit addressing those already familiar with the field and supporters of the theoretical framework in mind rather than newcomers. CRT was launched as a result of a struggle during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, which foremost fought for the equal treatment of and the improvement of life conditions for black people, and then other minorities in the USA. As a result of the formation of post-colonial studies, colonialism was blamed for the inequality experienced by indigenous peoples in many countries. CRT, and by extension CWS, both postulate that white people and the colonial system are rooted in white supremacy and are thus viewed as the main culprit of the long-term subjugation of people of color and are hence responsible for the resulting legacy of inequality, past and present. While CRT has concentrated on studying the development of racism and racial stereotypes in order to sustain the rule of white people, CWS has made whiteness the object of study and reflection. CWS therefore sees white people not so much through racial categories, but rather through the set of advantages they enjoy in political, social, educational and even religious spheres of life. CRW therefore aims to make white people aware of these benefits and, by extension, aware of the history of the rejection of these benefits—land, property, enfranchisement, certain professions—to people of color, which CWS treats today as the reason for enduring inequalities.

A subgroup of CWS is Tribal Critical Race Theory, which developed in the 1970s (see Brayboy). Its main goal was to give a voice to indigenous people from divergent tribes, as they differed in their approach to white people who colonized them at different times and in different ways. A consequence of the differences in experience may have been a different gaze. Muszeika points out that what sets TribalCrit apart from CRT was treating colonialism rather than race as the source of all other problems

that have plagued Native Americans to this day. She supports claims that in the case of Native Americans we should not even be talking about post-colonialism because Native Americans are still colonized. She agrees that among the manifestations of enduring colonization we may mention the perpetuation of the stereotypes of Native Americans, the lack of acknowledgment of white people's guilt in the mistreatment of Native Americans, and the lack of acknowledgment of a vital role Native Americans played in the history of the United States. It is precisely these three manifestations that Muszeika claims to be prerequisites for reconciliation, which she purports are necessary steps in (1) the improvement of relations between Native Americans and white people and (2) a pronouncement of the onset of post-colonialism.

There have been a number of landmark events that indicate at the very least an "erosion" of colonialism. Among them is the decision to dispense with offensive Indian mascots, widespread recognition of many instances of appropriation of Indian cultural elements (in the fashion industry, in Hollywood's rendering of *Pocahontas*), most notably a sincere, yet understated, 2009 apology by President Obama for "many instances of violence, maltreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Peoples by citizens of the United States"; in this statement, there was no mention of liability or compensation. Another landmark event is the exceptional first Maine Wabanaki State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which settled the issue of the forced foster care of the disproportionately high number of Native children from tribes from the state of Maine. These small steps deserve mention if only to establish their inadequacy. They indicate the reluctance of the federal and state governments to undertake any substantial action toward the improvement of their relationship with the tribes, but also the complex nature of the problems to be resolved, which resist the white-black paradigm that CRT imposes on all cases involving encounters between white and non-white people. An ideological approach has the great advantage of simplifying any issue for the sake of clarity and possibility of a solution, but it almost always fails to acknowledge the complex nature of problems involving white and non-white people, frequently alienating the other side either by dint of the rhetoric of oppression and a demand for an expression of the guilt of their forefathers for previous policies towards the Native Americans.

As was mentioned above, CRT, CWS, TribalCrit, and the reports of TRCs constitute the new matrix in which the selected authors have been re-read by Britta Muszeika with the aim of demonstrating that they were "scholars of reversal," ethnographers, and inquisitive readers of their own and white cultures, who, in fact, applied the tenets of CRT and CWS long before the theories were developed and their tenets were defined. What the authors wrote constitutes an important source of knowledge about their tribes, incisive observations and insights about white people and their encounters with the indigenous population, and, perhaps foremost, a clear refutation of the enduring stereotypes of Native America both in the US and in Canada.

Chapter 4 is dedicated in its entirety to an analysis of the three authors. The subject of the first part of Chapter 4 is the non-narrative by Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins (1844-1894) *Life among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* published in 1883 as the first autobiographical and ethnohistorical work written by a woman. Born into a family of tribal leaders of the Paiutes, which was nomadic and not of the warrior type, she

proved to be extremely effective in managing the affairs of the tribe in the capacity of a translator, negotiator, messenger, guide, lecturer, teacher and writer. Continuing the legacy of her grandfather Truckee, who decreed a peaceful and cooperative attitude towards the white people embodied in the sentiment that has it that "their lives are as dear to them as ours to us," she strained every sinew to protect her people from the unjust policies and to advocate for their rights, humanity and needs in the face of their multiple dispossessions, mistreatment and neglect. Though at one point she remarks that "if the white people treat us like human beings, we will behave like a people; but, if we are treated by white savages as if we are savages, we will be relentless and desperate" (Winnemucca), she is able to assess members of the white race depending on the way they behave, for example, "privileging soldiers," "loathing reservation agents." In short, she possessed no one-size-fits-all assessment of white people, but took them as individuals and hoped for the same from white people, as posited by the main tenet of CRT. Readers can thus be encouraged to go back to the original work of Winnemucca and compare it with the textual analysis of Muszeika to truly appreciate Sarah Winnemucca's wit, intelligence, and vivid descriptions of a wide array of situations, including her successful attempt to meet President Hayes in order to ask him to reverse the policy of dislocation of her Paiutes. Indeed Muszeika informs us—through her insightful account of Winnemucca's experience—about Sarah Winnemucca's contribution to settling the relations between Native Americans and white people of different ranks, in the sensitive time of forced assimilation, forced education and forced civilization of Native American tribes. This narrative, therefore, offers a counter-narrative to the dominant mainstream myth of colonization and expansion, providing an account of the painful and unhappy experiences of people who had to disappear physically or culturally for the policy to be instituted. Sarah Winnemucca has already been acknowledged; she has schools named after her and books written about her (see Zanjani). What is more, further elevating her cultural status, she has been inducted into the Nevada Writers' Hall of Fame and the National Women's Hall of Fame and is a part of the National Statuary Hall Collection in the U.S. Capitol (2005). Her story and gaze have received attention and acknowledgment and are incorporated into the American identity, but still only to a modest extent.

The second part of Chapter 4 is devoted to Zitkala Ša (1876-1938), which means "Red Bird" in the Siouan language, and is the pen name of Gertrude Bonnin, nee Simmons. She adopted it for her literary, social and political career, to better reflect her Siouan heritage. All her names capture her position in-between: white and native cultures, resistance and compliance, alienation and assimilation. The core experience that plays a pivotal role in re-reading Zitkala Ša's *American Indian Stories* is the boarding school system and its consequences for her personally and for other Native American children subjected to an assimilationist policy. In her analysis of the stories, Muszeika concentrates on three main aspects: a biography of the author, who seems to have embodied the experience of thousands of other Native American children who went through the boarding school system; a retelling of the history of the boarding school systems in the United States and Canada; and a profuse description of the TRC in Canada and the extent to which it benefited Canadian society and the extent to which it might benefit the USA if it follows in Canada's footsteps. The frame through

which she looks at the texts involves the tenets of CRT and TribalCrit. The hoped-for end effect she sees in the long-term is a reconciliation process, as reached in Canada. It is worthy of note that the mistrust towards white people was inculcated in Zitkala Ša by her mother who, already exposed to white people who moved her tribe to a reservation, always saw them as duplicitous, or, more literarily, as a "sickly sham" (Muszeika 7).

This mistrust would be first upended by the lure of the America Dream in the autobiography of Zitkala Ša, beautifully illustrated by the metaphor of the biblical red apple. She too would fail to resist the temptation of western civilization and the fruits it promised, and attend the boarding school in the East, and, like Adam and Eve, would be forever expelled from the life she knew up to the age of 8. To stretch the metaphor further, she frequently felt like the apple: red outside and white inside, partially demonstrating the success of the assimilationist policy through the boarding school system. She expressed this powerfully in a 1916 poem of hers: "I've lost my long hair; my eagle plums too. / From you my own people, I've gone astray. / A wanderer now; with nowhere to stay" (Lewandowski 105). Indeed, she assumed a life between her own people and mainstream society, enlightening the latter about the true image of the Native Americans and the disastrous consequences of the policies they implemented towards the former. In this part, we also learn how the boarding school experience proved to be a double-edged sword for her. On the one hand, it separated her from her own people culturally and physically; on the other, it bestowed on her the education and skills she was able to use both to record her own experiences as a Native American and as a student in her three autobiographies. It also equipped her to challenge the school system she found detrimental to the cultural survival of her people and to the well-being of indigenous children. Muszeika mentions Gertrude Bonnin as an activist, who founded or co-founded important organizations such as the Indian Rights Associations (1882) and the National Council of American Indians (1926), who was also a lecturer, teacher and a musician.

In *Approaching Whiteness* the story of Bonnin's life intertwines with the history of the boarding school system, especially in Canada. The fragments in which Muszeika parallels the experiences and observations made by Zitkala Ša in her stories, dating from the late 19th century, and the testimonies given a century later by former students of the boarding schools in Canada, as gathered in the final 2015 TRC report, are compelling. Muszeika, therefore, stresses that it is paramount to listen to the testimonies of children who went through the system, to apologize for the harm done to them and their children, and to make amends. In line with this, Muszeika suggests Zitkala Ša's stories be treated as such testimonies, which CRT would refer to as counter-stories. The "concrete" Native American that is Gertrude Bonnin, like Sarah Winnemucca, may both inspire others and teach a great deal about the lives of Native Americans that were hidden behind the stereotype of the savage Indian. In the context of CRT, Zitkala Ša is presented as a "scholar of reversal" since, having experienced the system as a student and then as a teacher, and having written negatively about the education process in the school system, she nonetheless graduated from this system and deconstructed it as an oppressive institution for Native Americans, often comparing it to a prison, eventually suggesting the need for such a system to change. We have to remember that, in spite of the second meaning of the apple metaphor, Zitkala Ša also serves as an example of the

futility of the system: not only did the boarding school fail to kill the Indian in her, but it almost rekindled her Indianness, albeit at the cost of her alienation from her people, kindling her fierce conviction that the Native American education system and tribal cultures were neither inferior nor less civilized than the culture of the so-called "pale faces." She condemned white people for their 'iron routines' and the epistemologies they applied in schools "to denationalize" (as we say today) Native Americans for not perceiving in Indians human beings born equal to white people in terms of their capabilities, ambitions, and loyalty to their own traditions and cultures.

Muszeika is consequently harsh in her criticism of the boarding school system and the white people dedicated to implementing its practices irrespective of the cost borne by Native Americans or its mixed results (*vide* the cost and economic conditions of Native Americans in reservations then and now), but it should be pointed out that both Bonnin and Muszeika acknowledge the presence of good white people who disagreed with the assimilationist ideas and policies. Many of them are mentioned in *Red Bird Red Power: The Life and Legacy of Zitkala Ša* by Tadeusz Lewandowski, in which we gaze at Gertrude Bonnin through a magnifying glass, to see the complex nature of her life and the difficult choices she made. In Muszeika's book we gaze at her through the TRC tinted lens and her challenge to the school system, which narrows the vision of her. Though Muszeika should thus be praised for bringing Zitkala Ša again into the spotlight, Lewandowski's book offers a fuller picture of this extraordinary Native American woman. Those interested in art may refer to the article 'A View into Two Worlds' by Michelle Delaney and dedicated to Gertrude Bonnin, in the spring 2022 online magazine issued through the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. This site can appeal to and inform more people from a wider audience about Zitkala Ša.

Muszeika lastly analyzes the gaze cast at white people through CRT and CWS by Charles Alexander Eastman (1858-1939), a Santee Dakota, also referred to as Ohíye S'a, 'the one who wins'. One of the most renowned Native Americans of his time, Ohíye S'a was a doctor, prolific writer, lecturer, and activist with a considerable influence in the instruction of white people about Native Americans, especially the Dakota Sioux. Muszeika mentions all these roles, but concentrates on him as a writer. Out of the ten books he wrote, she chooses two that best fit her purpose: *Indian Boyhood* (1902), which depicts his childhood spent with his Dakota people until the age of 15, and *From Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916), which concentrates on his transition from the Indian ways into the mainstream Euro-American life, when he became a bridge figure (Deloria 122) between the two traditions.

At the outset of the analysis Muszeika sets the stage for understanding his oeuvre and stresses three points. In spite of his painful experiences, all endured prior to his career as a writer (the Dakota War of 1862, his flight to Canada, his life on a destitute reservation, and his work as a doctor assisting victims and survivors of the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890), Eastman adopted a benevolent attitude towards white people and was determined to assume their way of life, albeit as an Indian. He urged Indians, in accordance with the teachings of his father, to accept the situation of Native Americans as it was at the turn of the centuries and to make the best of it by availing themselves to all "its supernatural gifts (knowledge about time, space, mathematics, and belief)" (Muszeika 230).

The second underlying point of his writings, dictated by his assumed position as a cultural mediator, was that these accounts should be informative. Encouraged by friends and his wife Elaine Goodale, he set out to inform white readers about the Native cultures, specifically their constructive sides and values that could be borrowed by white people. In his first book he, therefore, writes about his childhood on the prairies and in the woods, and the sense of freedom and responsibility inculcated in Indian children through their upbringing, in harmony with nature and under the guidance of elders. One of the methods of description is a comparison of the native and western ways of life in order to make the Native significantly more accessible to white readers. In that comparison, when he sets the country and town boys against the prairie or woodland boys, or compares the "luxuries" of nature with the benefits of civilization, he is not acknowledging the superiority of either way of life. "Each civilization has rules and regulations that are good for their own way of living" (Muszeika 242), he asserts at one point. So each civilization developed customs and institutions that served it best and each should be assessed on the basis of this effectiveness in serving its own people. This is almost a paraphrase of today's multicultural approach, far ahead of the then dominant Darwinian approach. Muszeika, therefore, sees in it an embodiment of the tenets of CWS. Eastman did not see the American civilization as superior and often pointed out its shortcomings in its constant striving for progress—the accumulation of possessions and power, and in its attempt to preach Christianity to the world by dint of savage methods. It might be surprising for the modern reader that Eastman was among the few people who shared and propagated such an approach during a meeting at the Universal Races Congress in London in 1911 (Muszeika 253).

In spite of this enlightened conclusion that cultures are equal, Eastman opted for the replacement of the emblematic bow and arrow with the book, for pursuing education and finding one's place in the mainstream world, as he did in graduating from American schools (Beloit, Knox) and colleges (Dartmouth, Boston University Medical School). In his description of the western education system, fully cognizant that he was a teacher in the infamous Pratt Institute where he met Zitkala Ša and from which he quit in disapproval of the methods employed there, we will nevertheless find few derogatory or condemning statements, as in Zitkala Ša's stories.

The third point that Muszeika underscores in his writing is his attempt to merge the two cultures, or more specifically, to incorporate those ideals, values and practices of Native cultures that may mitigate the vices of western cultures. First, she does this extensively by presenting examples of captivity narratives, which often display the infatuation of the captured white individuals with native cultures and the decision to go "native." These narratives might also be a further source of testimony for today's readership, as, at the time of publishing, they never reached a wide readership. Eastman also participated in establishing youth development programs within the framework of the YMCA and the Boy Scouts of Ernest Thompson Seton and Robert Baden-Powell. Drawing from the experience of his childhood when he was supervised by his grandmother and uncle and had the Dakota ways inculcated in him, he promoted the Indian way of life in harmony with nature as the best example of youthful virtue that might be followed by white girls and boys at summer camps. Eastman was thus proposing to merge the modern and anti-modern primitive ways of the Indians and

thereby "defend native cultures against the negative stereotypes left over from the colonial period" (Deloria 123).

Eastman's writings seem an ideal embodiment of the precepts of CWS because Eastman aka Ohíye S'a was actually a cultural hybrid, a person who was born and identified as an Indian, but who chose to be an American and live among white Americans with a white wife who showed tremendous concern for Native Americans and their predicament. His contact with white culture and his ability to use concepts and the language of that culture to create an image of white people that would be comprehensible and digestible for them were therefore enormous. In his professional life as a doctor, writer and activist, he was extremely concerned with the plight of the Indians and was involved in many causes. In all spheres of his life, he collaborated with many white people to undermine policies made by other white people. In his books, his tone can be ambivalent, ranging from sincere praise for the western civilization and its architects to outright condemnation of the savage ways it spread that civilization. In this context, the call for white people to apologize and admit a sense of guilt is extremely complicated, as observed in this discussion in the USA regarding the introduction of CRT into American schools.

Muszeika tells us that these stories (like many others) were written "with white ink on a white paper in a white world" (62) that did not want to notice them. Indeed, irrespective of the size of the readership these books enjoyed, they received less attention than they merited and failed to break the stereotype of Native Americans that was formed then and which has endured to the present day. The image of Native Americans was dominated by stories written by white writers, among them James Fenimore Cooper, Catherine Sedgwick and Margaret Fuller. These profoundly influential authors did not allow their imagination to break free from the intellectual frames of the day to place Native Americans in mainstream society and allow them to live their lives among other white and non-white Americans. These authors described encounters between different ethnic or racial groups, e.g. Native Americans and white people (generally through a love story), and these encounters often ended in the disappearance of the Indian, either by death or the incorporation of the non-indigenous partner into the Indian community, or by passing for white in mainstream society. No literary picture of a lasting relationship that would constitute a cultural paradigm for others to follow was created. No wonder the Indian "vanished" from the intellectual landscape, which was symbolically sealed by George Catlin and Edward S. Curtis and their series of paintings devoted to the "vanishing" Native Americans (Lipiński 337-393).

Many readers who might know some of the above authors would rarely, if ever, have heard of some of the authors Muszeika mentions, perhaps surprisingly once we learn about the books and the influence their authors had at the time they were written. It was clearly a matter of publishing policy when a certain middle ground had to be struck between profits (i.e., a larger readership) and the mission publishers wanted to pursue when issuing, for example, Apess in the 1830s, Zitkala Ša in the latter part of the 1890s, and Eastman in the early 20th century. The mere numbers can suggest the choice made by the publishers.

Muszeika closes by wrapping up her scholarly endeavor by once again referring to the possibility of achieving the goal she set within the framework of Critical Whiteness

Studies. If the goal is reconciliation between white people and Native populations, while the prerequisite necessary to fulfill the goal is the critical reconsideration of white people as a race and their role in designing the racial hierarchy that marginalized Native Americans and other racial groups, then there is a long way to go in the United States. This view is certainly shared by many if we think about reconciliation modeled on the Canadian TRC, as no steps have been taken on a federal and institutional level apart from those already mentioned above, i.e., the 2009 Obama apology or Maine TRC. Neither is reconciliation in sight if we share Muszeika's view that reconciliation should be built on mutual interest, as the interest of the general public in Native American lives, problems and literature, music, art and their historical counter-story is apparently limited. It is still doubtful whether a modern "Sloan" would include a Native American as the object of a gaze, though many Native artists place themselves in contexts from which they were erased, for example, Rosalie Favell in her remake of Charles Willson Peale's "The Artist in His Museum" of 1822 or many nineteenth-century ledger artists.

If we take into consideration the breadth and volume of scholarly research, however, such as the new museums and galleries set up in the last decade (e.g. the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian), the soaring number of Native American historians using indigenous methodologies, and the plethora of indigenous artists, writers and musicians, we simply cannot say that there is hardly any change in the perception and place of Native Americans in today's United States. The change is slow, but the number of gazes cast by Native people and at Native people has never been higher. Included in such a list is the gaze of Britta Muszeika, a white German scholar, who substantially widens the view on Native people and by Native people. *Approaching Whiteness* is a great contribution to the body of work on Native Americans. It asks pertinent questions and tackles burning issues. It is not necessary to accept all of Muszeika's claims or conclusions, propounded by the so-called *Just America* (Packer 121), but a desire to take issue with them will broaden the scope of the debate, show a greater diversity of gazes, and eventually lead to a reinterpretation of Native Americans' role in history and research.

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