

JACE WEAVER, *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 2014), XIV + 340 pp.

The dust jacket of this handsomely designed hardcover shows (parts of) Cherokee artist America Meredith's 'naïve' painting "St. Brendan: He Came, He Saw, He went Back Home." This tongue-in-cheek title is a very fitting and witty comment on Weaver's study because it ironically echoes Julius Caesar's famous imperialist statement *veni, vidi, vici*, but unlike the Roman emperor, the Irish saint made no attempt at conquest. The painting shows St. Brendan and seven monks leaving North America. Near the shore there are three Indigenous individuals who resemble the Eastern Algonquins sketched by John White on Roanoke Island more than four hundred years ago, and even the coastline recalls the mappings of the times. The Natives on the green continent are watching the departure, two of them waving goodbye, another just pondering. One of the monks in Brendan's vessel is waving a white handkerchief at the Indigenes, while the others are facing east, praying, reading, watching a seagull, or scanning the horizon. The saint in the bow with his bishop's biretta and crosier is also facing east towards Europe, while behind him there's another monk leaning over the ship's side looking at a smiling green whale on whose back the entire vessel appears to be resting. Absorbing the curious monk's attention is a tiny pink turtle on this side of the ship, riding on the whale's back. Well-known from Haudenosaunee and other First Nations' creation stories, the turtle seems to indicate that there is an American presence on its way to Europe, just as the memories of Brendan's presence might linger with the Indigenes who are waving him goodbye: traces of a polite visit, long before the Columbian Exchange began. In recorded history, however, there were no such peaceful encounters that left the Indigenes unscathed and resulted in the Europeans going "back home" peacefully and empty-handed. Quite to the contrary, as Weaver's study shows.

In his preface, Jace Weaver positions himself biographically and in relation to the research of earlier studies, and he gives as his objective "to restore Indians and Inuit to the Atlantic world and demonstrate their centrality to that world, a position equally important to, if not more important than, the Africans of Gilroy's black Atlantic" (xi). So it is against Gilroy's foundational work¹ that Weaver's book needs to be read as well as against a host of earlier studies dealing with history and literature related to American Indigenous people, who

¹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1993).

were involved in that Atlantic world and/or visited Europe.² After so many previous investigations, it would seem to be nearly impossible to surprise scholars in Indigenous studies with anything substantially new about the transatlantic exchange. But Weaver's *Red Atlantic* re-approaches this fecund field with a new perspective. He focuses on the Indigenous experiences with the Atlantic World as a *mare internum*, encompassed geographically and culturally by the Americas, Greenland and Europe, and spanning historically the time from the Norse settlements in Newfoundland (around 1,000 AD) to Knud Rasmussen's Fifth Thule Expedition and Deskaheh's abortive attempt to address the League of Nations in Geneva (both 1924). In this historically expansive survey, Weaver manages to bring together players and stories in ways that make reading his book an engaging and most(ly) gratifying experience.

In his "Introduction" (1-34), Weaver reviews pertinent terminologies and several previous studies (especially Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*) that came before he developed his own coinage "The Red Atlantic." He draws attention to the fact that creation myths even of such (now) inland peoples as the Choctaw and Cherokee record maritime (Atlantic) origins, he reiterates the foundational and fundamental Indigenous technological and horticultural contributions to the development of the Western hemisphere (cf. 14-15), and he draws attention to the "tantalizing speculations" (16) about pre-Columbian contacts. According to Weaver, the Indigenous impact on Europe was carried by people (slaves, diplomats, performers, etc.), by material goods (lumber, silver and gold, furs and hides, etc.), by technological inventions (e.g. terrace farming, rubber balls, kayak) and expressed in literature (from captivities and slave narratives to contemporary Native fiction). For his own study, Weaver chose to focus on people who crossed the Atlantic involuntarily as (1) slaves, captives or exiles; on people who crossed as (2) soldiers and sailors; on those who went as (3) diplomats; or went over and became (4) celebrities; and he finally discusses (5) the literature of the Red Atlantic.

In his first chapter, subtitled "Captives, Slaves, and Prisoners of the Red Atlantic," Weaver first dismisses Jack D. Forbes's speculative reference to Pliny's "Indos" in Germany

² Just a few examples: Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood P, 1972); Warren Lowes, *Indian Giver: A Legacy of North American Native Peoples* (Penticton, B.C.: Theytus Books, 1986); Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1988); Ronald Wright, *Stolen Continents: The Americas Through Indian Eyes Since 1492* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992); Gesa Mackenthun, *Fictions of the Black Atlantic in American Foundational Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); and particularly Jack D. Forbes, *The American Discovery of Europe* (Urbana and Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2007).

as “wish fulfillment or fanciful” (35) and then moves on to discuss the fate of the first protagonists of the Red Atlantic, i.e. the two young boys whom, according to the *Greenlander Saga*, the Norse captured around 1,000: “They took the boys with them and taught them their language and had them baptized.”³ Relying not on the saga texts themselves but quoting them via secondary sources, Weaver then falls for Vine Deloria’s and Jennings Wise’s likewise speculative claim that the two boys were christened Valthof and Vimar and were Beothuk (36; 54). Supported by two helpful maps, Weaver charts the “Atlantic Ocean Currents” (11) and traces “The Voyages of Columbus” (40) to discuss the beginnings of the (Red) slave trade, well before Las Casas’s intervened to argue for African as victims to be sent on the Middle Passage. Weaver shows that Indigenous slavery and indentured servitude prevailed also in the northern colonies, and he retells the foundational stories of Samoset (Abenaki) and Tisquantum (Patuxet) in New England and Ourehouaré (Cayuga) in New France (the latter both crossed the Red Atlantic more than once) and how they and others became embroiled in French and English rivalry on both sides of the *mare internum*. Less well-known to North Americanists will be Weaver’s accounts of FitzRoy’s paradigmatic and abortive attempts in the 1830s at “civilizing” the “Fuegians” (66-74), or how the prisoners from the Plains Wars incarcerated in Fort Marion in Florida not only engaged in their famous Ledger Art but also adapted to life on the Atlantic littoral as hunters of alligators and sharks (81), while several individuals like David Pendleton Oakerhater (Cheyenne) readily embraced Christianity, just as Juan Diego (Nahua) and Kateri Tekakwitha (Mohawk) had done so much earlier.

In chapter two (86-135), Weaver looks at Aboriginal individuals who actually lived on the Red Atlantic as sailors or crossed it voluntarily as soldiers and who amongst other things also spread Native ideas, technologies, and words around the Atlantic basin and vice versa imported European ideas and technologies to Native America. Again, Weaver employs the histories of exemplary Indigenous individuals to demonstrate the various cultural and economic cross-pollinations facilitated by the travellers across the Red Atlantic, some of whom had long been categorized as ‘blacks’ but were in fact part-Aboriginal and had been socialized by their Indigenous families and cultures, such as Paul Cuffe Sr. (Pequot). Among Indian soldiers, Weaver lists the northeastern peoples embroiled in the French and Indian Wars, the Miskitos policing the Atlantic coast, graduates of Carlisle Indian Industrial School in the Spanish American War, and the Kahnawake Mohawks serving the British in Egypt (Weaver’s excursion into Canada and the Métis is weak, and the Métis Resistance of 1885 in

³ “Eirik the Red’s Saga,” translated by Keneva Kunz, *The Sagas of the Icelanders*, preface Jane Smiley, Introduction Robert Kellogg (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 2001), 654-674; 672.

Saskatchewan—unlike the Manitoba Resistance fifteen years earlier—had nothing to do with the HBC). Weaver then turns to the Apache’s heroic resistance in the 1880s, which led to Geronimo’s and others’ enforced exile and the years they served at Fort Marion, to include even them in the Red Atlantic. Fittingly, Weaver ends his chapter with the famous feats of the Anishinaabe sharpshooter in the Great War, “Peggy” (Francis Pegahmagabow), who served so gallantly in Europe and was recently immortalized in Joseph Boyden’s astounding first novel *Three Day Road*.⁴

“Red Diplomats,” Weaver’s third and longest chapter (136-188), starts with Taino *cacique* Enrique’s dealings with Las Casas and the Spanish crown, and then traces the transatlantic diplomatic voyages of many Eastern Native American delegates to England, including such famous personalities as Lady Rebecca/Pocahontas—regrettably, here as often elsewhere, Weaver does not quote Smith or other historical figures in the original but relies on quotations and conclusions taken from secondary sources—the “Four Indian Kings” (Mohawk and Mahican), several Cherokee delegations (e.g., Ostenaco, Oconostota), the Mohawk politician Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant), whom Weaver rightfully calls probably “the best-known red diplomat of this period” (166), the famous Anishinaabe diplomat and missionary Peter Jones, who, according to Weaver “is still overlooked⁵ in Native American studies” (172), the tragic Mohegan missionary Samson Occom, who raised in Britain much of the money that enabled his mentor, the non-Native Methodist clergyman Eliza Wheelock, who found the school for Indians that became today’s Dartmouth College, and George Copway, the Anishinaabe Ka-ge-ga-gah-bow, who as a Methodist minister was an official delegate to the International Peace Congress held at Frankfurt am Main in 1850 and whom Peyer aptly labeled a “Romantic Cosmopolite.”⁶ The final section of this substantial chapter, “The Spirit of Geneva,” deals with the Haudenosaunee Tadadaho (or Atatarhoe, i.e.

⁴ Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road* (Toronto: Viking Canada/Penguin, 2005).

⁵ Given Weaver’s own research, the excellent biography by Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1987), Bernd C. Peyer’s study *The Tutor’d Mind: Indian Missionary-Writers in Antebellum America* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1997), and other research, I find this assessment surprising, especially since Weaver himself mentions Smith’s book as “excellent” in an endnote (302, fn132), and he also uses it as source for a quotation (178, fn156). While Weaver seems unfamiliar with Peyer’s *The Tutor’d Mind*, he does, however, in a later footnote (305, fn 18) refer to Peyer’s much earlier critical collection, Bernd C. Peyer (ed.), *The Elder’s Wrote: An Anthology of Early American Prose by North American Indians, 1768-1931* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1982). Unfortunately, Peyer’s name is not listed in Weaver’s index, and since there is no bibliography, the reference to his important scholarship is obscured in one of the 797 endnotes.

⁶ Peyer, *Tutor’d* 224-277; 224.

speaker/keeper of the laegue’s council fire) Deskaheh’s (Levi General) untiring efforts to bring the Six Nations’ claims against Canada and the British Crown in front of the League of Nations in Geneva in 1924, the first of several attempts by the Haudenosaunee and other First Nations delegations to address the United Nations, many of them travelling with their own passports.

The borderline between Indigenous delegates crossing the Red Atlantic as diplomats or as “showpieces” to be gawked at, cannot be easily drawn because they “bleed into one another,” as Weaver beautifully phrases it in the first sentence of chapter four (189-215). Following and elaborating on the studies of Vaughan,⁷ Flint,⁸ and others, Weaver sketches a wide historical development and then follows in greater detail exemplary experiences of several of those who came to Europe and either became “Gazing Stocke, Yea Even a Laughing Stocke” (189) involuntarily, i.e. those who crossed the Red Atlantic deliberately to utilize their “exotic appeal” and draw attention to the causes they wanted to promote, or who came in the hope of filling their own pockets as show business artists: from Sitting Bull and other Lakota and Cheyenne in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show and Samson Occom, via “White Shamans and Plastic Medicine Men” (characters we still experience in Europe peddling their commercialized versions of Indian spirituality), via George Henry’s (Anishinaabe) and George Catlin’s travelling dance troupes to probably the most famous and often most misunderstood campaigner, cum entertainer, cum literary voice for the recognition of Native humanity and human rights, Tekahionwake, better known as Emily Pauline Johnson, the Mohawk “princess.” While Weaver is absolutely right in arguing for a recognition of Johnson’s cultural nationalist engagement for a pan-Indian allegiance tied to the land—after all, she was a contemporary of Zitkala-Sa and Carlos Montezuma and the SAI—it is also true that she composed some of the most nationalist Canadian lyrics, bordering on jingoism: “And we, the men [sic!] of Canada, can face the world and brag/ That we were born in Canada beneath the British flag.”⁹ It is Johnson’s apparent oscillation between Mohawk nationalism, pan-Indianism, and British-Canadian patriotism, between political commitment and commercial necessity, which make her work so intriguing and paradigmatic for many who crossed the Red Atlantic—and Weaver points this out very

⁷ Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006).

⁸ Kate Flint, *The Transatlantic Indian, 1776-1930* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009).

⁹ E. Pauline Johnson, “Canadian Born,” *Canadian Born* (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1903) 1-2, also republished in *Flint and Feather: The Complete Poems of E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)* (London and Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912; 1931), 83-4; 83.

clearly. He also points out that her political commitment was far more palatable to the British far away than to the Canadians of her times.

In chapter five, “Fireside Travelers, Armchair Adventurers, and Apocryphal Voyages” (216-258), Weaver finally turns to the field that Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic* had focused on so prominently: literature. Starting with Spain and Michael de Carvajal’s ‘indigenist’ drama *Complaint of the Indians in the Court of Death* (1557) and moving to France via Voltaire’s *L’Ingenu* and *Candide*, to Britain via *The Female American*, and to the United States via Rowson’s *Reuben and Rachel* and Poe’s *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, Weaver ends this chapter with Germany’s Karl May and his *Winnetou* novels. Based on translations of the primary texts, Weaver gives a highly informative and nuanced discussion of Las Casas’s attitude in the context of Carvajal’s and later *indigenistas’* works as well as of Voltaire’s aforementioned texts. With *The Female American* he introduces to the corpus of Red Atlantic literature a little known 1767 female Robinsonade of uncertain authorship with a biracial heroine, Unca Eliza Winkfield, presenting “the Indian as constitutive of American identity” (235), whereas Susanna Haswell Rowson’s *Reuben and Rachel* (1798) suggests that the Columbian Exchange in itself, just like the Red Atlantic, is quintessentially American (cf. 240). In his discussion of *Arthur Gordon Pym* Weaver refuses the exonerating readings of the novel as a satire but rather sees it as “the most racist novel ever produced by a major American author” (240), and he in turn refers his readers to its parody *Pym*, a “wildly comic novel” published in 2011 by Mat Johnson, “a writer of black, Muscogee, and white ancestry”(249). Weaver’s reading of Karl May’s *Winnetou* came as a pleasant surprise to me. While I suspected from the title of this subchapter (249-258), “An Übermensch among the Apache,” that Weaver was about to rehash the well-worn (and unfortunately not always unfounded) stereotype German=Nazi, and while the author unfortunately did not consult Colin Calloway’s and others’ foundational collection *Germans and Indians*,¹⁰ his assessments of the *Winnetou* novels, including *Winnetou IV*, is exceptionally well-informed and complex, especially when considering that he worked with translations (by Marlies Bugman, privately published in Tasmania by the Australian Friends of Karl May)—fortunately, he did not use the ‘partially cleansed’ abridged U.S.-American translation.¹¹ Quite often, Weaver’s conclusions, based on his readings of sources in English, corroborate or unknowingly echo

¹⁰ Colin G. Calloway, Gerd Gemünden, and Susanne Zantop, eds., *Germans and Indians: Fantasies, Encounters, Projections* (Lincoln and London: U of Nebraska P, 2002).

¹¹ Karl May, *Winnetou*, translated and abridged by David Koblick, foreword by Richard H. Cracroft (Pullman, Washington: Washington State UP, 1999).

what has been written and published in scholarship before in German or English about May and German ‘Indianthusiasm.’

Weaver concludes his study with “The Closing of the Red Atlantic” (259-278), where in the subchapter “A White Man Who Was Also an Inuit” he discusses and identifies the well-known Danish arctic explorer and ethnologist Knud Rasmussen as an Inuk among Inuit, thus re-appropriating Rasmussen’s achievements for Native Studies and the Red Atlantic. In “Closure,” he summarizes his findings and opens the discussion of another dimension of the Red Atlantic, i.e. the impact of Native philosophies and political science on Europe and European America such as the influence of the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace on the constitution of the United States and the political theories of Marx and Engels. While these observations are not new in scholarship, they are necessary parts of the ongoing international dialogue in Native Studies about Indigenous Knowledges and Western Academic Scholarship.

And this brings me to a shortcoming of this book for which not Jace Weaver, the author, is responsible but the publishing policy of University of North Carolina Press (and many other North American presses as well). Weaver is careful in unobtrusively following Indigenous protocol by positioning and contextualizing himself as an individual within a web of lineage and geographical, academic, and other multiple relations. An acknowledgment of relationality vaguely corresponds with the traditional European academic protocol of providing detailed bibliographies to document and acknowledge the more abstract scholarly lineage and context of an individual author’s achievements. But the economic (?) policy of academic presses, to do away with bibliographies altogether and limit all references to endnotes, obscures this form of contextualization, and it makes checking on an author’s sources extremely awkward. Weaver’s book has almost three hundred pages of text, complemented by thirty-six pages containing about eight hundred endnotes, numbered chronologically by chapters. There is no way to quickly find out in one glance which sources the author used or which he left out, and Weaver’s carefully compiled index cannot be helpful in all cases either. So I found myself using several bookmarks and thumbing back and forth between the text and his supporting notes to find “Ibid., page no so-and-so” and then trying to identify to which source the particular “ibid.” referred. Supposed to make scholarly books more readable, this policy in effect obscures and thereby diminishes demonstrable scholarly acumen. Weaver’s very learned study would have deserved a better publishing policy, despite its beautiful cover.

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