

# UC Santa Barbara

## Journal of Transnational American Studies

### Title

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### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0hx7k00t>

### Journal

Journal of Transnational American Studies, 11(2)

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### Publication Date

2020

### DOI

10.5070/T8112049585

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# Indigenous Antinuclear Literary Resistance: Jim Northrup's Satire and Anishinaabe Trans/nationalism

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KYOKO MATSUNAGA

## Nuclear Colonialism and Anishinaabe Trans/nationalism

Contesting politics and narratives of nationhood has been a key element in the history of struggle against nuclear colonialism in the United States and Canada.<sup>1</sup> Nuclear colonialism, or radioactive colonization, is a system in which the government and industry exploit Indigenous lands and people to maintain the nuclear industry and the military-industrial complex.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1983, Winona LaDuke, an Anishinaabe activist and writer from the White Earth reservation in Minnesota, pointed out that although only half of the available uranium deposits underlie Indigenous lands, all of the uranium production controlled by the governments of the United States and Canada came from reservations in 1974.<sup>3</sup> Most importantly, LaDuke endorsed the idea that nuclearism is just another episode in the uninterrupted colonization of Indigenous America. In their desire to attain resources such as uranium, to conduct nuclear testing in the name of scientific or military experiments, and to dump toxic materials including nuclear waste, the US and Canadian governments have undermined Indigenous sovereignty and exercised hegemony through federal land use policies and high-level court decisions to assimilate Indigenous nations politically and economically. This essay will look into Indigenous antinuclear literary resistance, arguing that it derives from an Indigenous trans/nationalism that is based on ideas of Indigenous nationhood that predate and challenge conventional Western notions of “national” and “transnational.”<sup>4</sup>

Nuclear colonialism involves the physical *and* epistemological spaces where narratives of nationhood intersect. In fact, the rhetoric of nationhood has repeatedly been used by the US government to legitimize nuclearism, a political ideology advocating the development and possession of nuclear technology and weapons putatively for military defense purposes.<sup>5</sup> Since the beginning of the atomic age, nuclear research and militarism have been secured and promoted in the name of “national security” and

“national interest.” In the early 1970s, the National Academy of Science suggested to the Nixon administration that land in the Four Corners (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah) and the Black Hills (South Dakota and Wyoming)—territory occupied by several Indigenous groups including the Diné (Navajo), Laguna Pueblo, and Lakota—be designated as a “national sacrifice area” considered expendable for “unrestricted energy resource development,” and difficult to be “reclaimed.”<sup>6</sup> By strategically invoking the notion of nationhood with phrases such as “national sacrifice area,” the federal government attempted to justify the nuclear exploitation of Indigenous lands and territories, while simultaneously undermining the reality and complexity of Indigenous nationhood. As Danielle Endres asserts, the rhetoric of nuclear politics “works with the strategy of colonialism that defines American Indian people as part of the nation and not sovereign entities whose national interest may not include storing nuclear waste on their land.”<sup>7</sup> Such colonial discourse echoes the oxymoronic understanding of Indigenous political sovereignty established by Chief Justice John Marshall in Supreme Court decisions during the 1830s. Marshall viewed tribal governments as “essentially autonomous, although subject to an overriding federal authority.”<sup>8</sup>

The limitations Marshall imposed on the interpretation of Indigenous sovereignty have been repudiated by citizens of Indigenous nations. Resisting externally defined notions of nationhood and sovereignty, many Indigenous writers and Indigenous Studies scholars in the United States and Canada have insisted upon the ongoing legitimacy of Indigenous nationhood as well as the inherent—and cultural—sovereignty of Indigenous people.<sup>9</sup> As Craig S. Womack argues in *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (1999), “[t]ribal sovereignty was not invented by Chief Justice John Marshall nor extended throughout Indian country via federal Indian law, though these political definitions affect tribes in very important ways. Sovereignty is inherent as an intellectual idea in Native cultures, a political practice, and a theme of oral traditions; and the concept, as well as the practice, predates European contact.”<sup>10</sup> Recognizing that nationalism comprises “some of the worst forms of political repression and xenophobia in human history,” Womack, Jace Weaver, and Robert Warrior state in the preface to their collaborative volume, *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, that nationalism “describes a phenomenon that has given rise” “to modern democracy and the thirst for liberation of oppressed people around the world.”<sup>11</sup> While Indigenous nationalism is predicated on acknowledging the political autonomy of Indigenous nations, it has also been used by Indigenous literary scholars and writers to define, reinstate, and explore the rich and unique culture, history, and experience of Indigenous nations from within. Indigenous nationalism, however, does not stem merely from assertions of cultural and political identity; it is established through collective efforts and the border-crossing interactions of Indigenous nations. As Warrior states, “In effect our nationalism is born out of native transnationalism, the flow and exchange of ideas and politics across our respective nations’ borders.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, “Indigenous transnationalism” (interaction among different Indigenous nations)

and “Indigenous nationalism” (inherent sovereignty of each Indigenous nation) go hand in hand.<sup>13</sup>

Acknowledging the rich and complex discourse of Indigenous trans/nationalism, this essay explores the way in which Jim Northrup (1943–2016), an Anishinaabe writer from the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa in northern Minnesota, engages Anishinaabe trans/nationalism as he combats nuclear colonialism with his highly satirical columns.<sup>14</sup> While also known as an activist, poet, and playwright, Northrup was an acclaimed humorist, whose popularity extended beyond the Anishinaabe communities of Minnesota and Wisconsin. From 1989 until his death in 2016, his columns appeared in newspapers such as *The Circle*, *News from Indian Country*, and *The Duluth News Tribune*.<sup>15</sup> Although Northrup’s works have not been widely studied, a few scholars have acknowledged the power of humor in his works.<sup>16</sup> In his columns, Northrup repeatedly uses humor to explore what it means to be a “Fonjalacker,” Anishinaabeg, and an Indigenous American. This includes exercising rights to fish, hunt, gather, and live on land safe from radioactive contamination. When these rights are threatened, Northrup refuses to sit in silence. He enlists humor and satire in the fight for the survival of Fonjalackers and the broader Anishinaabe community as well as Indigenous nations across Turtle Island.

Although undervalued as a literary genre, columns and editorials in newspapers have played an important role in shaping Indigenous nationhood; a good example being the Fus Fixico letters by Muskogee humorist Alexander Posey (1873–1908), who deployed political satire to combat “the theft of Indian Territory from the Indian nations, who were under extreme pressure to give up their lands” due to the Dawes Act.<sup>17</sup> Just as the Fus Fixico letters illustrate, humor imbedded in stories and satire, has often been used by contemporary Indigenous writers as “the most effective survival strategy,” as they expose and confront the “painful aspects of contemporary Native life.”<sup>18</sup> As Gerald Vizenor, an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe’s White Earth Reservation, suggests, humor is not only healing but also communal: while “enriching” and “liberating,” it requires a sense of bonding.<sup>19</sup> Northrup’s columns touch upon a wide range of topics: family relations, making maple syrup, ricing (manoominikewin), weaving baskets, spearfishing, casinos, preserving Ojibwa language and culture, and traveling within and beyond the reservation, but always with humor and satire. Even the legacy of settler colonialism, poverty on the reservation, and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) as a Vietnam veteran are addressed with satire or irony. For Northrup, “stories and humor are important weapons with which to counter threats” from “‘the manifest destiny dominant society’ and insure survival.”<sup>20</sup> He even enlists humor and satire to critique the absurdity and hypocrisy of nuclear politics and to underscore the threat posed to Indigenous nations by uranium mines, nuclear power plants, and radioactive waste.

Northrup’s resistance to nuclear colonialism transcends the borders of Indigenous nations. To help elucidate this point, I draw upon the idea of Anishinaabe trans/nationalism suggested by Joseph Bauerkemper and Heidi Stark. Based on several earlier studies of

Indigenous nationalism by scholars such as Womack, Weaver, Warrior, Philip J. Deloria, Renya Ramirez, Shari M. Huhndorf, and Daniel Heath Justice, Bauerkemper and Stark call attention to the ways in which “Anishinaabe diplomatic relations with other indigenous polities simultaneously affirms the legitimacy and integrity of Anishinaabe nationhood and promotes the establishment of alliances that transcend Anishinaabe borders.”<sup>21</sup> In this sense, the validity of Anishinaabe nationhood synchronizes with Anishinaabe transnational alliances with other Indigenous nations. The fundamental nature of Anishinaabe trans/nationalism, described by Bauerkemper and Stark, is at the basis of Northrup’s resistance to nuclear colonialism as he critiques the nuclear power plant and radioactive waste threatening the Mdewakanton Dakota residents of the Prairie Island Indian Community. He adds another layer to the politics of Indigenous trans/nationalism when he ridicules plans to send the radioactive waste from Prairie Island to be stored on the land of other Indigenous nations such as the Western Shoshone and Mescalero Apache. On another level, by emphasizing the bonds between Anishinaabe in the United States and Canada, Northrup implies that Anishinaabe nationhood precedes the borders of nation states, defying the ideology of “transnational” in a conventional sense.

With Indigenous trans/nationalism at the center of its argument, this essay considers Northrup’s satire and humor as atomic age strategy to manifest Anishinaabe nationhood as well as to establish transnational Indigenous alliances to combat nuclear colonialism. Northrup situates his antinuclear opposition as part of an enduring multilateral Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism, and, in so doing, he emphasizes the importance of exercising treaty rights and insisting on the inherent sovereignty of the Anishinaabe people.

### **Treaty Rights and Antinuclear Satire**

Demonstrating the truth of his own statement that “Anishinaabeg use humor as a survival mechanism,”<sup>22</sup> Northrup often utilizes humor as political satire to weaken the structures of settler colonialism including capitalism, racism, and environmental injustice. In one of his columns published in 1994, after mentioning how sometimes “the white man” makes him laugh, he wittily comments on a television commercial about food for cats with urinary tract issues. Thanking the “ever-vigilant manufacturers and ad agencies” that have “enlightened” him, Northrup mockingly laments that he now has to add “the cat pee problem” to the list of things he has to worry about:<sup>23</sup>

Let’s see now: Prairie Island killer waste, acid rain, the clear-cutting of Minnesota, Wisconsin mining at Crandon, unsafe drinking water, ravaged rain forests, and ozone holes.

Also war, racism, poverty, injustices, rent-a-shamans, treaty rights, crime, gambling, and a rez car that won’t start.

I’ll have to drop one worry from the list to make room for the cat pee problem. I also have another worry, I don’t

have a cat. I'll have to get one so I can buy that new cat food designed for the cat's urinary tract.<sup>24</sup>

The punchline turns into a lampooning as he asks, "What will that white man think of next?" Using humor, Northrup reveals how a seemingly innocuous TV advertisement for cat food can be perceived as another sign of capitalism, an economic system that has shaped settler colonialism and is perpetuated by it. Significantly, the first item on Northrup's list is "Prairie Island killer waste," which threatens the Prairie Island Indian Community in Goodhue County, Minnesota. By adding radioactive waste to a list of environmental and social issues confronting Indigenous nations, such as "the clear-cutting of Minnesota" impacting the White Earth nation and the "Wisconsin mining at Crandon" that would affect the lands of both the Sokaogon Chippewa Community (the Mole Lake Band of Lake Superior Chippewa) and the Forest County Potawatomi Community, Northrup suggests that nuclearism is another demonstration of how Indigenous nations have been impacted by settler colonialism. While creating a "sense of bonding" and using humor as a survival strategy against settler colonialism, Northrup shares his antinuclear politics with his readers across Indigenous nations.

Nuclearism is a transnational matter in that it has been used by settler states as a pretext to infringe on the rights of Indigenous nations. Northrup utilizes Indigenous nationhood as well as Anishinaabe trans/nationalism in the fight against nuclear colonialism, and the strategy he relies upon in his antinuclear politics reflects long-held conceptualizations of treaty rights among the Anishinaabeg. As Heidi Kiiwetinesiiik Stark states, "Anishinaabe leaders often sought recognition and protection of their nationhood, and thus their sovereignty and land tenure, by engaging with the United States and Canada in treaty making that they hoped would guarantee their status as sovereigns and as proprietors."<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Northrup views treaty rights as the product of transnational interactions between Indigenous nations and settler-nations that should ensure Anishinaabe nationhood: "Treaty rights were not granted by the United States, rather they were reserved by the Anishinaabe people. We are not a conquered people."<sup>26</sup> Northrup rejects both the limited notion of sovereignty defined in the Federal Indian law and Marshall's concept of Indigenous nations as "domestic, dependent nations."

According to Article 5 of the Treaty of 1837 and Article 11 of the 1854 Treaty (also known as the Treaty of La Pointe), the rights to fish, hunt, and gather in the ceded territory are guaranteed to several bands of Lake Superior Chippewa, including Fond du Lac. The treaties with the Anishinaabeg do much more than merely preserve access to sources of nourishment. Northrup prizes these documents as evidence of Anishinaabe sovereignty and as legal instruments protecting Anishinaabe lands and rights to land use even in the ceded territory. Any activity—including uranium mining—that jeopardizes Anishinaabe rights to fish, gather, and hunt could be interpreted as a treaty violation.

Northrup expresses concern about Department of Natural Resources interest in developing uranium mining in the ceded territory in 1993, when a treaty sale was being negotiated between the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and the State of Minnesota. He writes: "One paranoid part of me thinks that there is more at stake here than the walleye in the lake. If the treaty is sold, Anishinaabeg will be removed as an influence in the ceded territory. If that happens, can uranium mining be far behind? I saw a DNR map that showed most of the ceded territory is 'most favorable' for digging up that radioactive ore."<sup>27</sup> Although Northrup calls his anxiety about the possibilities of uranium mining in Minnesota "paranoid," his concern is realistic since several companies actually drilled exploratory holes on private lands in Minnesota during the 1970s.<sup>28</sup> According to a study by Richard Ojakangas released in October 1976, exploration in the state started in 1949 and flourished during the 1970s. In fact, several sites in Minnesota including the Northwest Angle, Big Falls to Lake Vermillion, St. Cloud, Staples, the Sartell area to east of Mille Lacs Lake to Denham, and the area from Cloquet and Carlton to Moose Lake and Willow River were designated "favorable" for uranium mining.<sup>29</sup> To prevent uranium mining in the ceded territory, Northrup proposes exercising the treaty rights since, if a uranium mine is opened, contamination of water and soil is inevitable, making it impossible for Anishinaabeg to continue to fish, hunt, and gather. Article 5 of the 1837 Treaty should prevent this from happening. Northrup's strategy is to employ treaty rights as a firewall to protect Anishinaabe nations from being exposed to contamination from uranium mining, nuclear testing, nuclear power plants, and radioactive waste.

Northrup asserts that the treaty rights are permanent: They do not expire with time. When they are in danger of being breached, Anishinaabe nationhood and the sovereign right of the Anishinaabe to make international agreements with the United States as well as to form transnational alliances with different Anishinaabe bands or nations should be invoked. For instance, in 1993, Northrup objected to the State of Minnesota's attempt to purchase the 1837 Treaty rights from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwa, pointing out that the "state of Minnesota didn't exist when the document was signed."<sup>30</sup> By rejecting Minnesota's challenge to Anishinaabe sovereignty, Northrup insists on the legitimacy of treaty rights as elements of an agreement between nations. Northrup also views different bands of Anishinaabe as independent nations that sometimes acted collectively during treaty-making. The 1837 Treaty was signed not only by the people of Mille Lacs, but also by Anishinaabeg from Minnesota and Wisconsin, including "Leech Lake, St. Croix, La Pointe, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac Du Flambeau, Sandy Lake, Snake River, Red Cedar Lake, Red Lake, Gull Lake and Swan River, and Fond du Lac."<sup>31</sup> Among Anishinaabeg each band is recognized as a separate nation with its own government and laws.<sup>32</sup> So the treaty-making involved transnational interactions and alliances of various Anishinaabe bands/nations.

When the Mille Lacs tribal council decided to sell its rights to the 1837 Treaty, Northrup protested by joining the Anishinaabe Liberation Front (ALF), a group of Anishinaabeg from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. In a column published in

*Duluth News Tribune* on May 26, 1993, Northrup writes in detail about how he and other ALF members exercised their 1837 Treaty rights by spearfishing and netting on Mille Lacs Lake, only to be charged with poaching in violation of Minnesota law.<sup>33</sup> Although labeled as “dissidents,” “malcontents,” and “troublemakers” who “opposed tribal government,”<sup>34</sup> the ALF activists were insisting on protecting rights guaranteed to the Anishinaabeg in the 1837 and 1854 treaties, and reinforcing historical Anishinaabe political alliances predating the establishment of elected/appointed tribal councils and Federal Indian law. As Stark explains, “Anishinaabe nations often entered into treaty negotiations together and chose to express their sovereignty and land tenure through a unified voice. At the same time, Anishinaabe leaders and their treaties with the United States and Canada expressly recognized the separate, distinct interests each nation maintained to the territory under negotiation.”<sup>35</sup> Northrup identifies as a Fonjalacker, but because the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe’s negotiation with Minnesota had the potential to affect the treaty rights of Fond du Lac and other Anishinaabe nations, he joined ALF to exercise the inherent sovereignty of the Anishinaabe collective.

Northrup reaffirms this in 1997, after learning that three federal judges issued a ruling acknowledging Anishinaabe claims to treaty rights territory ceded in 1837:

Once again, I hate to say it, but I told you so. Nah, not really—I just like saying I told you so to the state of Minnesota. We members of the Anishinaabe Liberation Front were ahead of our time when we were spearing and netting in Mille Lacs a couple years ago. It was nice being right even at the wrong time.

My grampa was correct when he said we had treaty rights; so was my dad. Now I can tell my children and grandchildren they have treaty rights. Before we start celebrating too hard, we have to remember this is just another battle in an ongoing war that has lasted 160 years. We must teach our young ones that the time will come when they will have to use, preserve, and defend treaty rights.<sup>36</sup>

The federal court rulings verify what Northrup believes: rights preserved by the Anishinaabe in the 1837 Treaty abide; states cannot impose authority over Anishinaabeg bands/nations; and even tribal councils should not interfere with the inherent sovereignty of Anishinaabeg. When a nation state or a tribal council fails to “use, preserve, and defend treaty rights” or infringes on the sovereignty of Anishinaabeg, Northrup recognizes the need to establish transnational alliances among Anishinaabeg bands/nations.

## Nuclear Power, Capitalism, and Christmas Lights

The nuclear power plant and radioactive waste stored next door to the Prairie Island Indian community is another case that highlights how economic and environmental injustice affects Indigenous land rights and sovereignty. Currently, there are two nuclear power plants in Minnesota: the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant and the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant. Both were designed by General Electric (the same company that designed the first and second units of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station in Japan) and are owned by Xcel Energy, formerly known as Northern States Power or NSP.<sup>37</sup> On May 5, 2006, about one hundred workers at the Prairie Island plant were exposed to radioactive iodine due to a gas leak in a steam generator. The power plant is located on a sandbar in the middle of the Mississippi River, just upriver from Red Wing, Minnesota. Even closer to the nuclear reactors is the Prairie Island Indian Community—home to approximately two hundred residents of the Mdewakanton Band of Eastern Dakota, the site of a historic village and burial mound that date back at least two thousand years.<sup>38</sup> The reservation is only six hundred yards (approximately five hundred and fifty meters) from the facility, rendering it one of “the closest communities in the nation to a nuclear power plant.” Treasure Island Resort and Casino, owned and operated by the Prairie Island Indian Community, for example, is located just minutes away from the plant by car. Despite their proximity to the plant, Mdewakanton Dakota residents were not informed of the incident until a week later.<sup>39</sup>

For the Mdewakanton, whose ancestors were subjected in 1862 to the largest mass execution in American history when thirty-eight Dakota were hanged in Mankato, the history of the nuclear power plant is another episode of settler colonial imposition on the Dakota nation.<sup>40</sup> From the beginning, the negotiation of a series of treaties between the Dakota and the United States was “not a clear-cut process.”<sup>41</sup> The agreements include three major Dakota land “cessions,” contained in the treaties of 1825, 1837, and 1851, but as Gwen Westerman and Bruce White point out, “[f]or the Dakota the word *cessions* might be replaced with *seizures*, because of the stark contrast between the Dakota views of land and that of government negotiators, not to mention the dubious process through which these treaties were written, negotiated, and carried out.”<sup>42</sup> To say the least, the United States failed to honor several of its promises to the Dakota: pledged payments were delayed; white settlers encroached upon Dakota lands protected by the treaty; and provisions in the treaties were designed to pressure the Dakota people to change their way of life.<sup>43</sup> The deceptive nature of negotiations between US institutions and the Dakota nation is repeated when the Prairie Island Indian Community became one of the target locations for a nuclear power plant in the early 1970s. According to *Indian Country Today*, “[a]t the time the Prairie Island tribe lacked resources and funding to fight against construction of the plant. The tribe was initially told that it was going to be a steam plant.”<sup>44</sup> Not so long after its operation started, the nuclear power plant, not exactly a steam plant, proved far from being safe. In October 1979, a steam generator tube at the Prairie

Island plant ruptured, causing the release of radiation. According to Faye Brown in her interview with LaDuke, when the rupture occurred, radioactivity leaked into the environment for thirty minutes, but the members of Prairie Island Indian Community were not informed immediately and in fact first heard about it on the radio.

In May 1994, the same year the Minnesota Department of Health would determine that Prairie Island residents had six times more risk of cancer than average,<sup>45</sup> the Minnesota Legislature approved the use of seventeen casks to “temporarily” store the spent fuel from the plant. Subsequently, the Prairie Island Indian Community was forced to confront another phase of nuclear colonialism: radioactive waste leaking from the storage casks. NSP was obligated to meet the condition to “search for a new storage site” “away from Prairie Island” and “make commitments to develop renewable energy sources”;<sup>46</sup> however, on June 28, 2011, shortly after the Fukushima nuclear accident, the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (US NRC) approved a twenty-year license renewal for the Prairie Island nuclear power plant.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, nuclear waste continues to be stored outside the plant. As of December 2019, “twenty-nine dry casks filled with 1.5 million pounds of nuclear waste sit outside the Prairie Island plant with no permanent storage solution.”<sup>48</sup>

Championing the Mdewakanton Dakota’s official position that the “United States government has failed to develop an honest and adequate nuclear energy policy,”<sup>49</sup> Northrup reveals the way in which the government encroaches upon the land and threatens the health and livelihoods of the Dakota nation by ignoring the ecosystem of the area. In a column published in *Duluth News Tribune* on March 23rd, 1994, Northrup explains why it is “dumb” and “dangerous” to store nuclear waste on Prairie Island, reminding readers of 1993 Mississippi River flood that affected approximately 6.7 million acres of agricultural land.<sup>50</sup> “The idea of storing killer waste in a flood plain flies in the face of logic. We still have not recovered from that once-in-one-hundred-years flood of last year. We don’t know where we are in the cycle of floods. We could be just a few years away from a once-in-one-thousand-years flood.”<sup>51</sup> To the idea of storing radioactive fuel rods in northern Minnesota, Northrup warns the decision makers, “don’t even think about it. We are upstream from everyone. A nuclear accident here would poison everybody’s water.”<sup>52</sup> While the settler colonial state’s and industry’s decisions about where to locate nuclear waste reflects what Traci Brynne Voyles calls “wastelanding”—“the assumption that nonwhite lands are valueless, or valuable only for what can be mined from beneath them, and the subsequent devastation of those very environs by polluting industries”—Northrup’s logic is based on his understanding of the geological features of Indigenous lands as well as the importance of natural resources for Indigenous survival.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the imposition of settler colonial nuclear politics, the Prairie Island Indian community has fought against the nuclear industry for more than two decades, even attempting to exercise their inherent sovereignty to protect their land by taking advantage of a “study grant” from the federal government.<sup>54</sup> In the early 1990s, David Leroy, US Department of Energy Nuclear Waste Negotiator, sent letters to all fifty state

governments and the leaders of Indigenous nations to attract interest “to study the possibilities of becoming a volunteer host for a Monitored Retrievable Storage (MRS) facility” by offering grants of one hundred thousand dollars.<sup>55</sup> Joseph Campbell, a Dakota farmer and activist, and the Prairie Island Mdewankanton Dakota community accepted the money so that they could use it “to oppose the creation of a ‘dry-cask storage facility’ for irradiated fuel at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant.”<sup>56</sup>

To combat the Dakota community's resistance, NSP spent approximately 1.3 million dollars “to influence legislative action” and more than one million dollars on advertising campaigns in newspapers and on television to emphasize the safety of storing nuclear waste at Prairie Island.<sup>57</sup> The deceptiveness of these ads does not escape Northrup, however. He writes, “I saw expensive full-page ads in the newspapers, NSP people talking in soundbites for TV. They need this new plan because their storage pools are full and the plant will have to shut down. The only way to keep the nuclear power plant operating is by creating new storage sites for killer waste.”<sup>58</sup> Here Northrup critiques the settler colonial economic premise that the profit gained by nuclear power plant operation is more important than the lives of Indigenous people.

By supporting the antinuclear resistance of the Mdewankanton Dakota people, Northrup exercises Anishinaabe transnational agency which calls for alliances for Indigenous survivance crossing the borders of Indigenous nations. This is especially evident when Northrup embeds antinuclear satire and criticism of settler colonialism in holiday columns. On November 23, 1994, for his Thanksgiving Day column in *Duluth News Tribune*, Northrup mockingly offers thanks to the deceptive way NSP conceals safety concerns relating to nuclear waste: “I am thankful the nuclear wastes at Prairie Island haven't started leaking yet. Oh, sure, there was that little bitty leak of radioactivity last month, but that was nothing. It was so small Northern States Power didn't even notify the Dakota people nearby. I am thankful that I live upstream from their steel cask storage experiment. I am thankful for the good water I drink.”<sup>59</sup>

Thanksgiving is not the only event that Northrup enlists to highlight the irony of celebrating a *national* holiday when Indigenous people confront the threat of radioactive contamination. In the same year, Northrup juxtaposes Christmas light displays and the lights at the nuclear power plant: “We went to Prairie Island for a bingo game. On the way down there, we saw many, many Christmas lights. When we got there we could see the red lights at the nuclear power plant. It looked like they were all decorated up for Christmas, too. Maybe if we didn't use as many lights, we wouldn't have to worry about above-ground storage for nuclear waste, especially in a flood plain.”<sup>60</sup> Northrup makes an astute observation exposing how the energy industry has coopted religious holidays to improve their profit margins: “I could never make the connection between lights and the birth of the Christ child. The only real connection I can figure out is that the power companies sponsor lighting contests every year.”<sup>61</sup> Offering a drastically different view of Christmas and Thanksgiving from those embraced by most other residents in the Midwest, Northrup's columns enable these readers to realize how capitalism permeates the daily lives of Indigenous people and how the environ-

mental and economic injustices of the settler-colonial state are concealed by the superficial celebration of national holidays.

### **Transnational Nuclear Waste**

The nuclear waste at the Prairie Island site is not a problem facing only the Mdewakanton Dakota. While the nuclear waste will remain in Prairie Island if no off-site storage is found, removal of the nuclear waste from the Prairie Island site likely will result in it being stored in territory belonging to another Indigenous nation. Northrup states: “The storage is supposed to be temporary until a permanent repository is built by the federal government. Earthquake-prone Yucca Mountain in Nevada has been suggested as one such place. The Mescalero Apache of New Mexico are saying they will build a private storage site for nuclear waste on their reservation. It is private because the affected state [New Mexico] is against the idea. Ruffina Laws, a Mescalero Apache, is speaking out against the idea.”<sup>62</sup> Under nuclear colonialism, one nation’s solution becomes another nation’s problem.

The difficulties and the potential for transnational Indigenous alliances are evident in the federal government’s plans to establish a high-level nuclear waste repository on Indigenous lands in the Southwest. According to Valerie L. Kuletz, Nevada’s Yucca Mountain was traditionally occupied and used by several Indigenous groups including the Western Shoshone, the Southern Paiute, and the Owens Valley Paiute.<sup>63</sup> The Treaty of Ruby Valley in 1863 recognizes Yucca Mountain in the Great Basin as Shoshone Nation land, but the treaty has been repeatedly breached by the federal government.<sup>64</sup> During the 1940s, the Department of Energy designated Yucca Mountain as part of the Nevada Test Site (currently known as the Nevada National Security Site), and the Department of Defense used it as part of the Nellis Air Force Range. At the Nevada Test Site, more than nine hundred nuclear tests (both above-ground and underground) were conducted between 1951 and 1992.<sup>65</sup> In 1987, following amendments to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982, the Department of Energy started to consider the area exclusively as a permanent nuclear storage site. In 2003, President George W. Bush approved Yucca Mountain as the site for a national repository for spent nuclear fuel, but the plan was suspended in 2009, when President Obama cut the budget for the Yucca Mountain repository. When the Trump administration came to power, Yucca Mountain again became a proposed target for the nation’s nuclear waste.<sup>66</sup> To resist this, the Western Shoshone have insisted on their land rights by appealing to the 1863 Ruby Valley Treaty and their Indigenous sovereignty, at times making alliances with other Indigenous nations and non-Indigenous groups. Using the Ruby Valley Treaty to define a formal border has potential risks. As Kuletz suggests, recognizing the Western Shoshone’s treaty rights could mean silencing the Southern Paiute, the other coinhabitants of the region, undermining Indigenous transnational alliances: “In the end, the DOE benefits from this weakening of intertribal alliances that might—in another configuration—have been a more potent political and cultural force of resistance.”<sup>67</sup>

The Mescalero Apache's proposal to host a private nuclear waste storage site is another controversial case involving Indigenous land rights and nationhood. According to Mark Poole, when the Office of the Nuclear Waste Negotiator approached states and Indigenous nations, the Mescalero Apache became the first recipient of a Phase One study grant of one hundred thousand dollars. But before the Mescalero Apache entered the final phase to formally volunteer to host the nuclear waste storage site, the grants program was eliminated by New Mexico state officials and its congressional delegation. This led to a decision by Mescalero Apache officials to privately negotiate with nuclear power utilities, including NSP of Minnesota.<sup>68</sup> As Noriko Ishiyama and Jun Kamata point out, New Mexico state's intervention can be interpreted as a breach of Indigenous sovereignty. Ishiyama and Kamata also point out the contradictory attitude of state officials, referring to the fact that New Mexico did not pay attention to Indigenous existence, let alone sovereignty, during the 1940s Manhattan project.<sup>69</sup> While the state's double standards are obvious, the US government's expedient attitude cannot be ignored either. Chuck Johnson suggests how, from the beginning, the federal government was taking advantage of the sovereignty of Indigenous nations by contacting leaders of Indigenous nations along with state governments. This move was based on the assumption that "[t]ribal councils, if recognized as representing sovereign nations, could provide an end run around state and local laws."<sup>70</sup> It was the Mescalero Apache tribal council under Wendel Chino, who served as council president for more than thirty years and helped the Mescalero seek economic opportunities to address poverty, who also promoted the idea of building a private nuclear waste storage site, emphasizing Indigenous rights and the self-governance of the Mescalero Apache.

The voices of the Mescalero Apache were not unanimous, however. For instance, Rufina Marie Laws was against the idea, criticizing the Chino council government as "autocratic," and the tribal council system as an "unjust legal system that was conceived by the US government and implemented by the BIA."<sup>71</sup> While questioning the legitimacy of the tribal council and asserting inherent sovereignty instead of the "limited" sovereignty recognized by the federal government, Laws supported the idea of establishing alliances across Indigenous nations to resist the decision of placing nuclear waste on Indigenous lands. Similar to Northrup who joined ALF to oppose the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe's unilateral negotiation with the State of Minnesota, Laws fought against the Mescalero Apache tribal government and the federal government as a board member of the National Environmental Coalition of Native Americans (NECONA), when the Mescalero Apache's inherent land rights were being breached.

As a solution for the storage of nuclear waste, Northrup sarcastically presents a radical but logical proposal in his column in the *Duluth News Tribune* on March 23, 1994: "I have a plan for the storage of the killer waste we have now. Store the waste in the backyards of those who were responsible for making it. Make storage a family legacy. When the original responsible person dies, the waste could stay in the family, year after year, until it is safe. The experts say it would only take ten thousand years."<sup>72</sup>

NIMBY, or “not in my back yard,” is a phrase often used to describe the opposition of people to bear the burden of troublesome facilities or toxic waste in their neighborhood. The phrase connotes racism, classism, and segregationist tendencies when articulated by those who are privileged to live in a safe and non-toxic environment. Northrup turns the tables by taking advantage of the double-edged nature of NIMBY. To counter the nuclear injustice forced upon the Prairie Island Indian Community and many other Indigenous nations and to sustain trans/national Indigenous nationhood and survival, Northrup suggests that those who created the nuclear power plant—“Northern States Power executives, state Legislators, and federal agency heads”—take responsibility for their actions.<sup>73</sup>

By highlighting the idea of “cultural legacy” and privileging the health and survival of Indigenous nations, Northrup flips the settler-Indigenous relationship, if only rhetorically. Northrup’s satire might not offer a practical solution to the problem of nuclear waste, but the power of his rhetoric is not negligible, especially when we consider how Indigenous lands have been “sacrificed” by both the nuclear industry and the federal government under the name of “national interest.” As he reveals the hypocrisy of those who impose a nuclear legacy on Indigenous communities, Northrup illustrates how nuclear colonialism fits into the longer history of settler colonialism. In so doing, Northrup demands Indigenous transnational solidarities for the sake of “national interest” and “national security” of each Indigenous nation.

### **Crossing “Imaginary Lines” against Nuclear Colonialism**

Northrup employs satire to assert the potential of Indigenous antinuclear alliances across Indigenous nations as a strategy to subvert settler colonial nuclear politics. Similarly, Northrup uses humor and irony in his columns to question the historical legitimacy of the border between the United States and Canada as well as the canonical use of “nationhood.” After a “frightening experience” with US Customs, Northrup concludes, “We should have had such a system in place when the white guys first got here. Chris Columbus would have had to declare that he was not carrying any drugs, weapons, or weird diseases. Every other white man would have had to do the same thing. It sure would be a different country if we had invented customs.”<sup>74</sup> Like a Blackfoot character in Thomas King’s short story, “Borders” (1993), who refuses to declare herself as either a Canadian or US citizen when crossing the border, Northrup is aware of the irony of the border control system established by the nation states: Indigenous people, whose ancestors moved freely between what is now the United States and Canada long before either of these countries even existed, are being harassed by officials of these federal governments.<sup>75</sup>

To nullify the political borders established by settler colonial states in the Americas, Northrup recognizes the nationhood shared by Anishinaabe people on both sides of the border between the United States and Canada. In a column published in *Duluth News Tribune* on July 28, 1993, Northrup calls for participation in that year’s Jay Treaty Rally, “a border crossing rally” held “by the Minnesota Chippewa and Canadian

Chippewa tribes.”<sup>76</sup> Northrup reminds his readers that the Jay Treaty of 1794 recognizes the freedom Indigenous people have to move between Canada and United States.<sup>77</sup> This cross-border event, where “one thousand Chippewa from the United States and one thousand Chippewa from Canada”<sup>78</sup> were expected to meet, is one of the examples of how Anishinaabe leaders have exercised their collective rights. As Stark notes, “Anishinaabe leaders utilized their alliances to resist the imposition of ‘fixed’ boundaries that tied their nationhood to territorial containment.”<sup>79</sup> The scale of the event also reveals how the US–Canadian border has worked to divide the influence Anishinaabe people have on the settler-state governments that claim them. While participating in this event treating the US–Canada border as an “imaginary line,” Northrup acknowledges his membership in a larger Anishinaabe collective artificially separated by the US–Canada border.<sup>80</sup>

Northrup’s emphasis on a greater Anishinaabe collective is another way to bring together Anishinaabe nations across nation-state borders in the resistance to nuclear colonialism. Along with the United States and Great Britain, Canada played a major role producing nuclear weapons and energy during World War II and the Cold War, and, just as the United States has done, Canada located most of its nuclear facilities on or near Indigenous nations.<sup>81</sup> For example, as Lianne C. Leddy illustrates, the Serpent River First Nation, an Anishinaabe community in Ontario, has suffered from and fought against the radioactive waste from the uranium mine at Eliot Lake.<sup>82</sup> After the Robinson-Huron Treaty was signed by Chief Windawtegawinini, the Serpent River Indian Reserve (now First Nation) was established and the “land was ceded to the Crown with the promise that hunting and fishing rights would be protected.”<sup>83</sup> The rights to use the land for hunting and fishing are guaranteed by the treaty; however, contamination of the Serpent River, which is “a source of water for the community as well as for the animals and fish on which they relied,” made it difficult for the Serpent River First Nation to use the land, breaching the treaty and threatening the survival of the people.<sup>84</sup> Although Northrup does not mention the case of the Serpent River First Nation, nor does he mention nuclearism in Canada, his writings advocate strategic alliances among Anishinaabe nations. Indeed, it does not seem so far-fetched that Anishinaabe trans/nationalism could serve as a strategy to resist nuclear colonization when we consider the current movement against small modular reactors (SMRs) among the Anishinaabeg in Canada. In June 2019, chiefs of the Anishinabek Nation, representing forty Indigenous communities in Ontario, Canada, unanimously endorsed a resolution opposing SMRs on First Nations territories.<sup>85</sup>

Northrup’s trans/national antinuclear vision could be understood in three ways. Facing the threat of uranium mining in “what is now called Minnesota,” Northrup emphasizes the legitimacy of the treaty rights for the Anishinaabe nations and calls for alliances between different Anishinaabe nations such as Fond du Lac and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Northrup also condemns nuclear colonialism in the United States by supporting the Mdewakantan Band of Eastern Dakota in its antinuclear stance or by imagining the impacts of the nuclear legacy on the lands of the Mescalero Apache of

New Mexico. Furthermore, his vision illustrates the potential to unify the ancestral ties between the Anishinaabeg in Canada and the United States, which preexist the settler colonization and nuclear colonization of Indigenous America. Humor and satire are the weapons that Northrup wields in the fight for Indigenous survivance and against nuclear colonialism, and in the process, he reclaims Indigenous nationhood as well as Anishinaabe trans/nationalism. Northrup passed away on August 1, 2016, but the battle will continue as long as Indigenous rights and sovereignty are endangered and their lands are threatened by nuclear colonialism.

## Notes

This essay is the result of research supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science's Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI Grant Number 16K02499 and 20K01245). I am grateful to Rebecca Hogue and Anaïs Maurer, the anonymous *JTAS* reviewers, the editorial board, and Sabine Kim for their insightful and constructive comments on a previous draft of this article. My gratitude also goes to Michael Gorman who always supports me with his generous feedback and encouragement.

- <sup>1</sup> I view the “nuclear colonialism” of North America as a facet of European imperialism, but rather than referring to “nuclear imperialism” I follow in the footsteps of Winona LaDuke, an Anishinaabe scholar/writer/activist, and use the phrase “nuclear colonialism.” Whereas imperialism includes indirect methods of control, colonialism emphasizes physical occupation of a territory. The United States and Canada continue to occupy, subjugate, and economically exploit the territories of numerous Indigenous nations in North America. And the nuclear occupation of Indigenous lands will continue long after the mines and test sites are abandoned, in the form of scarred landscapes and deadly radiological contamination.
- <sup>2</sup> Winona LaDuke introduces the phrase “radioactive colonization” in her 1983 essay (written under the name Winona La Duque), “Native America: The Economics of Radioactive Colonization,” *The Review of Radical Political Economics* 15, no. 3 (1983): 9–19. According to Danielle Endres, the term “nuclear colonialism” was coined by Ward Churchill and Winona LaDuke, and has been used by various scholars since then (Danielle Endres, “The Rhetoric of Nuclear Colonialism: Rhetorical Exclusion of American Indian Arguments in the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Siting Decision,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6, no. 1 [2009]: 39–60). See also Ward Churchill and Winona LaDuke, “Native North America: The Political Economy of Radioactive Colonialism,” in *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, ed. M. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992): 241–66; and Valerie L. Kuletz, *The Tainted Desert: Environmental and Social Ruin in the American West* (New York: Routledge, 1998).
- <sup>3</sup> La Duque [LaDuke], “Native America: The Economics of Radioactive Colonization,” 9–10.
- <sup>4</sup> As I discuss later in this article, following the argument by Joseph Bauerkemper and Heidi Stark, I use the term “trans/nationalism” intentionally to draw attention to the fact that

the “nation” of *Indigenous* sovereignty is based on a concept of nationhood that is at odds with the European definitions of the nation-state and its association with conquest and exploitation and extractive capitalism. At the same time, “trans/nationalism” highlights the complex political identities and structures of Anishinaabe nations, bands, and people.

- <sup>5</sup> Endres, “The Rhetoric of Nuclear Colonialism,” 45.
- <sup>6</sup> Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1988), 133; Ward Churchill, *Struggle for the Land* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Press, 1999), 283 n68, 349–50.
- <sup>7</sup> Endres, “The Rhetoric of Nuclear Colonialism,” 45.
- <sup>8</sup> Wallace Coffey and Rebecca Tsosie, “Rethinking the Tribal Sovereignty Doctrine: Cultural Sovereignty and the Collective Future of Indian Nations,” *Stanford Law and Policy Review* 12, no. 2 (2001): 192.
- <sup>9</sup> Recognizing that “[t]he idea of sovereignty is one that has historically been defined by Western political thought,” Coffey and Tsosie explain that “inherent sovereignty is not dependent upon any grant, gift or acknowledgement by the federal government. It preexists the arrival of the European people and the formation of the United States” (Coffey and Tsosie, “Rethinking the Tribal Sovereignty Doctrine,” 196). They also define cultural sovereignty as “the effort of Indian nations and Indian people to exercise their own norms and values in structuring their collective futures” and “it is up to Indian people to define, assert, protect, and insist upon respect for that right” (Coffey and Tsosie, “Rethinking the Tribal Sovereignty Doctrine,” 196). In this article, I borrow the ideas of inherent and cultural sovereignty as represented in the work by Coffey and Tsosie.
- <sup>10</sup> Craig S. Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 51.
- <sup>11</sup> Jace Weaver, Craig S. Womack, and Robert Warrior, *American Indian Literary Nationalism*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), xv.
- <sup>12</sup> Robert Warrior, “Native American Scholarship and the Transnational Turn,” *Cultural Studies Review* 15, no. 2 (2009): 119–30.
- <sup>13</sup> While critiquing the binary and hierarchical conception of “transnational,” Chadwick Allen introduces the idea of “*trans-Indigenous*” which “acknowledge[s] the mobility and multiple interactions of Indigenous peoples, cultures, histories, and texts” (Chadwick Allen, *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012], xiv).
- <sup>14</sup> Northrup often invokes the phrase “what is now called Minnesota,” emphasizing the existence of Anishinaabe nations before the establishment of the state of Minnesota. Anishinaabe territories stretch from the Great Lakes in the United States (Michigan,

Wisconsin, Minnesota) and Canada (Ontario) all the way to Montana and Alberta in the western United States and Canada. I use the terms band(s)/nation(s) following the definition suggested by Heidi Kiiwetinepinesik Stark: “I utilize the term band to refer to the divisions between the Anishinaabe collective. Bands were originally constituted by a number of families that lived together and often became known by their locations, their villages. Today, the Anishinaabe continue to divide along band lines yet maintain a shared identity through common ancestry as Anishinaabe people. These separate bands are primarily recognized as separate nations that maintain their own governments and laws” (Heidi Kiiwetinepinesik Stark, “Marked by Fire: Anishinaabe Articulations of Nationhood in Treaty Making with the United States and Canada,” *American Indian Quarterly* 63, no. 2 [2012]: 146n25).

- <sup>15</sup> *The Circle* is a monthly newspaper published in Minneapolis and written from Indigenous perspectives. *News from Indian Country* is a monthly newspaper founded by Ojibwe/Oneida journalist Paul DeMain. In this article, I use Northrup’s columns published in these newspapers and later collected in book form: *Walking the Rez Road* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 1993/2013); *Rez Road Follies: Canoes, Casinos, Computers, and Birch Bark Baskets* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); and *Anishinaabe Syndicated: A View from the Rez*. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011).
- <sup>16</sup> See Lawrence W. Gross, “Humor and Healing in the Nonfiction Works of Jim Northrup,” in *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no.1 (2009): 65–87; Roseanne Hoefel, “Walking with Jim Northrup and Sharing His ‘Rez’ervations,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 9, no. 2 (1997): 11–21; and Chris LaLonde, “Stories, Humor, and Survival in Jim Northrup’s *Walking the Rez Road*,” in *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 9, no. 2, series 2 (1997): 23–40.
- <sup>17</sup> Craig S. Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 135.
- <sup>18</sup> LaLonde, “Stories, Humor, and Survival,” 32–33.
- <sup>19</sup> Dallas Miller and Gerald Vizenor, “Mythic Rage and Laughter: An Interview with Gerald Vizenor,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 7, no. 1 (1995): 79–80.
- <sup>20</sup> LaLonde, “Stories, Humor, and Survival,” 28.
- <sup>21</sup> Joseph Bauerkemper and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesik Stark, “Trans/National Terrain of Anishinaabe Law and Diplomacy,” *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 4, no.1 (2012), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7m97691w>.
- <sup>22</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2013), 159.
- <sup>23</sup> Jim Northrup, *Rez Road Follies: Canoes, Casinos, Computers, and Birch Bark Baskets* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 229.
- <sup>24</sup> Northrup, *Rez Road Follies*, 229–30.
- <sup>25</sup> Stark, “Marked by Fire,” 122.

- <sup>26</sup> Jim Northrup, *Anishinaabe Syndicated: A View from the Rez* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011), 79–80.
- <sup>27</sup> Northrup, *Anishinaabe Syndicated*, 71.
- <sup>28</sup> Dean Abrahamson and Edward Zabinski, *Uranium in Minnesota: An Introduction to Exploration Mining and Milling* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, 1980): 30–31.
- <sup>29</sup> Abrahamson and Zabinski, *Uranium in Minnesota*, 29–30.
- <sup>30</sup> Northrup, *Anishinaabe Syndicated*, 70–71
- <sup>31</sup> Northrup, *Anishinaabe Syndicated*, 70.
- <sup>32</sup> Stark, “Marked by Fire,” 146n25.
- <sup>33</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 159.
- <sup>34</sup> Northrup, *Anishinaabe Syndicated*, 136.
- <sup>35</sup> Stark, “Marked by Fire,” 124.
- <sup>36</sup> Northrup, *Anishinaabe Syndicated*, 158.
- <sup>37</sup> “Nuclear Positions,” Prairie Island Indian Community, <http://prairieisland.org/policy-positions/nuclear-positions/>.
- <sup>38</sup> Winona LaDuke, *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (Boston: South End Press, 1999), 106.
- <sup>39</sup> “Nuclear Positions.”
- <sup>40</sup> For more information about the Dakota Conflict of 1862, see Kenneth Carley, *The Dakota War of 1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1976) and Scott W. Berg’s *38 Nooses: Lincoln, Little Crow, and the Beginning of the Frontier’s End* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012).
- <sup>41</sup> Gwen Westerman and Bruce White, *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012), 134.
- <sup>42</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 134.
- <sup>43</sup> Carley, *The Dakota War of 1862*, 4–5.
- <sup>44</sup> Abbey Thompson, “Prairie Island Tribe Passes Referendum, Xcel Energy Waste Bill Becomes Law,” *Indian Country Today*, June 10, 2003, <http://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/prairie-island-tribe-passes-referendum-xcel-energy-waste-bill-becomes-law/>.
- <sup>45</sup> Winona LaDuke, *All Our Relations*, 107.

- <sup>46</sup> “Nuclear Positions.”
- <sup>47</sup> “Nuclear Waste Storage in Minnesota,” Minnesota Legislature, last reviewed August 2017, <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/guides/guides?issue=nuclearwaste>.
- <sup>48</sup> “Nuclear Positions.”
- <sup>49</sup> “Nuclear Positions.”
- <sup>50</sup> State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources, “Water, Water, Everywhere: Minnesota Flooding 1993,” (1994): 1. <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl>.
- <sup>51</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 180.
- <sup>52</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 180.
- <sup>53</sup> Traci Brynne Voyles, *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
- <sup>54</sup> Noriko Ishiyama, *Beikoku senjuuminzoku to kaku haikibutsu: kankyou seigi o meguru tousou* [Native Americans and nuclear waste: conflicts surrounding environmental justice] (Tokyo, Akashi Shoten, 2004): 75.
- <sup>55</sup> Chuck Johnson, “Indian Nations Go Nuclear Free,” *Race, Poverty and Environment* 5, no. 3/4, (1995): 32.
- <sup>56</sup> Johnson, “Indian Nations Go Nuclear Free,” 33.
- <sup>57</sup> LaDuke, *All Our Relations*, 108.
- <sup>58</sup> Northrup, *Rez Road Follies*, 231.
- <sup>59</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 195–96.
- <sup>60</sup> Northrup, *Anishinaabe Syndicated*, 87.
- <sup>61</sup> Northrup, *Anishinaabe Syndicated*, 87.
- <sup>62</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road* 179–80. Ruffina Laws refers to Rufina Marie Laws.
- <sup>63</sup> Kuletz, 134–35.
- <sup>64</sup> Kuletz, 148–49.
- <sup>65</sup> US Department of Energy Nevada Operations Office, “United States Nuclear Test: July 1945 through September 1992,” December 2000, [http://www.nv.doe.gov/library/publications/historical/DOENV\\_209\\_REV15.pdf](http://www.nv.doe.gov/library/publications/historical/DOENV_209_REV15.pdf).
- <sup>66</sup> On February 6, 2020, President Trump posted on Twitter that he opposes the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. This casual statement contradicts his last three annual budgets which included funding to restart the licensing for the Yucca Mountain storage site. Timothy Gardner, “Trump Halts Support for Yucca Mountain, Nevada Nuclear Waste

Dump,” *Reuters*, February 7, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-nuclearpower-yucca/trump-halts-support-for-yucca-mountain-nevada-nuclear-waste-dump-idUSKBN20101J?feedType=RSS&feedName=domesticNews>.

- <sup>67</sup> Kuletz, 151–52. For more information on Yucca Mountain, see Jon D. Erickson, Duane Chapman, and Ronald E. Johnny, “Monitored Retrievable Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel in Indian Country: Liability, Sovereignty, and Socioeconomics,” *American Indian Law Review* 19, no.1 (1994): 73–103; Kuletz, *The Tainted Desert*, 121–265; and Ishiyama, *Beikoku senjuuminzoku*, 45–75.
- <sup>68</sup> Mark Poole, “Nuclear Sovereignty: Reservation Waste Disposal for the Twenty-First Century and Beyond?” *Hastings Environmental Law Journal* 4, no. 3 (1998): 167, [http://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings\\_environmental\\_law\\_journal/vol4/iss2/6](http://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings_environmental_law_journal/vol4/iss2/6).
- <sup>69</sup> Ishiyama, *Beikoku senjuuminzoku*, 64. Jun Kamata, *Henkyou no teikou: kakuhaikibutsu to amerika senjuumin no shakai undou* [Radioactive Waste and American Social Movement] (Tokyo: Ochanomizu Shobou, 2006): 95, 104.
- <sup>70</sup> Johnson, “Indian Nations Go Nuclear Free,” 32.
- <sup>71</sup> Rufina Marie Laws, “A Premonition Fuels Mescalero Apache Struggle,” *Race, Poverty and Environment* 5, no. 3/4, (1995): 34–35. LaDuke also notes how “the tribal council system circumvented much of the political power of the traditional governments of Indian nations” (La Duque [LaDuke] 10).
- <sup>72</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 180–81.
- <sup>73</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 181.
- <sup>74</sup> Northrup, *Anishinaabe Syndicated*, 38.
- <sup>75</sup> Thomas King, “Borders,” in *One Good Story, That One* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993), 129–46.
- <sup>76</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 164.
- <sup>77</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 165.
- <sup>78</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 163.
- <sup>79</sup> Stark, “Marked by Fire,” 123.
- <sup>80</sup> Northrup, *Walking the Rez Road*, 205.
- <sup>81</sup> La Duque [LaDuke], “Native America: The Economics of Radioactive Colonization,” 9–10. See also Churchill and LaDuke, “Native North America,” 241–66. As Magnus Isacson’s documentary film *Uranium* (1990) and Peter Blow’s *Village of Widows* (1999) chronicle, the Sahtu Dene people, who were involved in the transportation of radioactive ore from Port Radium, have experienced the loss of family due to radiation contamination. For more information about the impact of uranium mining on the land of the Sahtu Dene people,

see Peter C. Van Wyck, *The Highway of the Atom* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

<sup>82</sup> Lianne C. Leddy, "Poisoning the Serpent: The Effects of the Uranium Industry on the Serpent River First Nation, 1953–1988," in *The Nature of Empires and the Empires of Nature: Indigenous Peoples and the Great Lakes Environment*, ed. Karl S. Hele (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016): 125–47.

<sup>83</sup> Leddy, "Poisoning the Serpent," 126.

<sup>84</sup> Leddy, "Poisoning the Serpent," 125–26.

<sup>85</sup> "Chiefs Oppose Small Reactors on First Nations Territory," *The Sudbury Star*, June 16, 2019. <https://www.thesudburystar.com/news/local-news/chiefs-oppose-small-reactors-on-first-nations-territory>.

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