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D'Arcy McNickle's *The Hungry Generations: The Evolution of a Novel*. Edited by Birgit Hans. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007. 341 pages. \$34.95 cloth.

At a critical moment in D'Arcy McNickle's novel *The Surrounded* (1936), the old Jesuit priest recommends that Max send his son Archilde to Europe to study violin. He shows great promise as a musician, asserts Father Grepilloux. Max is less unwilling than the author to see the talented young man in Paris; thus in this novel Archilde remains in Montana. McNickle's readers know the rest of the story. With the publication of *The Hungry Generations*, a handwritten draft manuscript of that novel from the McNickle Collection of the Newberry Library in Chicago, editor Birgit Hans has made available a version of the story that reveals what might have been, and in so doing she does a great service to scholars of American Indian literatures. More than a draft version of *The Surrounded*, *The Hungry Generations* can be seen to constitute a novel in its own right.

Métis Cree writer and historian (William) D'Arcy McNickle (1904–77) writes from experience: he grew up on the Flathead Reservation in Montana, attended boarding school in Oregon, traveled to Europe, and resided several years in New York City before taking a job with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1936. In his introduction to *The Hungry Generations*, Brigit Hans argues that the novel has “strong autobiographical traits” (2). By presenting contemporary local newspaper accounts, Hans also offers a glimpse “of how Native peoples and the mixed-bloods were regarded by their Euro-American neighbors” (22). According to Hans, that regard—in addition to the autobiographical elements—is an important dimension of McNickle's manuscript.

Despite the solid job Hans does in seeing this manuscript into print, some textual problems do remain. In relatively few instances a manuscript word is indecipherable and thus left out of the published version. In one instance, the handwritten manuscript from which Hans works misses an entire page at precisely the point in the story when Archilde is deciding to leave Paris and return to Montana, a crucial moment in the narrative (253). Another interesting problem is that the manuscript lacks a title page. As Hans acknowledges, she must therefore infer by a process of elimination that the manuscript she resurrects is what McNickle had referred to as “The Hungry Generations.” Such textual concerns are perhaps minor, but they remind the reader that we are dealing with an unfinished and posthumously published work. Certain questions will remain unanswerable.

The plots of both *The Surrounded* and *The Hungry Generations* take their inspiration from the same occurrence: on a hunting trip, Archilde's mother kills a game warden immediately after he has shot her son Louis. Catherine (unnamed in the manuscript version) puts an axe through the back of the game warden's skull. Both killings take place within seconds as Archilde stands by helplessly. After he is arrested and then released, Archilde tells his father the entire story of the hunt, and they enjoy reconciliation.

To this point the two versions are very similar. From this point, however, they diverge radically, offering two very different possible outcomes to the

same events, introducing different characters, and developing very different themes. As readers familiar with McNickle's work know, in *The Surrounded*, after his father's death, which follows the reconciliation scene, Archilde is exposed to Salish culture. McNickle shares the stories that Archilde's mother tells, and he introduces the Indian characters of Modeste and Elise, neither of whom appears in the manuscript version. Nor does the all-important and exquisitely drawn Sheriff Quigley make an appearance in *The Hungry Generations*. Also missing from the manuscript version is the chapter-long account of Archilde's attempt to save the mare. Although critics have suggested that the published novel offers some hope for the survival of Salish culture in that it does not seem to argue for assimilation, *The Surrounded* certainly captures a sense of hopelessness and helplessness in its depictions of the near-total failure of communication between cultures and of a mixed-blood American Indian, caught between those two cultures, unable to integrate fully into either.

As thus suggested by examples of characters and the differences in the plots, *Darcy McNickle's The Hungry Generations* is significantly different from *The Surrounded*. It is because of such differences, that the former must be recognized not as a mere draft but as a novel in its own right. Hans suggests with the subtitle *The Evolution of a Novel* that this publication serves as a glimpse into the writing history of McNickle's first and best-known work. And this version does allow readers to see where the author makes telling additions and changes in revising the manuscript that became his first published novel. But *The Hungry Generations* has its own unique merits, the literary (if not commercial) success of *The Surrounded* notwithstanding. This newly published version stands on its own as an assimilationist novel in which the author demonstrates through fiction that by hard work (and an inheritance) an Indian man can succeed, at least economically, and perhaps socially, in white America.

In the context of thematic differences between the two novels, it becomes clear that the draft version is a significant addition to McNickle's published oeuvre. One difference concerns the middle section, which is set in Paris. In *The Hungry Generations*, Archilde seeks out the city he thinks of as the cultural center of Western civilization. Ironically, however, despite his being there, his promise as a violinist, and his taking lessons from a known Parisian master, he imbibes little of the spirit of Western culture and art in his years in the city. Instead, he spends his energy establishing a relationship with Claudia Burness, a non-Indian American woman with whom he falls in love. In depicting an American Indian in France, McNickle in a sense also anticipates much later novels such as James Welch's *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* (2000) and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes* (1999), but with this important distinction: McNickle's novel has a contemporary setting; he does not turn to the nineteenth century as do Silko and Welch. He can also be seen to take a place in the tradition of the great American expatriate (marked by modernist novelists such as Hemingway and Fitzgerald) by setting an American Indian among the numbers of that so-called lost generation.

Another important point suggested by *The Hungry Generations* concerns the novel's assimilationist theme, a philosophical position that McNickle makes clear in the book's final section. Archilde (definitely his father's son)

prospers on his farm yet at the same time moves ideologically further and further from his nephews and his Salish heritage. One motivating factor for his return from Paris to Montana is his sense of obligation toward his fatherless nephews. He believes someone, an adult male, needs to be there to welcome them home from boarding school, yet he is unable to communicate with or understand them any more than was his own father able to understand or communicate values to his sons. The failed relationship is made absolutely manifest when the reader discovers that a nephew sells out his Uncle Archilde for a saddle and a pair of chaps. As Archilde becomes more successful and respected, he is less able to appreciate, understand, or communicate with his nephews, his brother, or his sister. Assimilation might make possible material prosperity and even a degree of acceptance in the white community, suggests McNickle, but it inevitably results in the alienation of family members and the disintegration of any spiritual or tribal heritage.

The publication of *The Hungry Generations* is a welcome addition to the McNickle canon and to the body of early- to mid-twentieth-century American Indian literature as a whole. The novel will help readers more fully appreciate McNickle's contribution to and place in American Indian literary history, and Hans's introduction to and editing of the text will help those readers address important issues in McNickle scholarship specifically and American Indian literary scholarship in general.

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Drinking and Sobriety among the Lakota Sioux. By Beatrice Medicine. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006. 193 pages. \$69.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Although we all mourn the passing of Bea Medicine and the silencing of her positive yet critical voice of reason and grounded wisdom, we can revel in the fact that she has left behind this rich and insightful volume. It is a wonderfully readable and unique contribution to the literature on Indian alcohol use and abstinence.

This book provides an extremely valuable description of the drinking process among the Lakota Sioux of the Standing Rock Reservation in North and South Dakota. The Lakota were Dr. Medicine's own people, and Standing Rock was her home. Unlike most works on drinking among various tribes and communities of American Indians, Bea Medicine does not attempt to explain the consumption of alcohol among the Lakota in terms of a particular disease process (for example, alcoholism or mental distress), as a substitute for lost power and self-esteem, as a response to historical trauma, or any of a number of other common themes so prevalent in the academic literature. She reviews these themes using the works of others, but her inquiry is guided by a grounded approach. She instead delves deeply into the descriptions and meanings of drinking behavior among representative local Lakota who have reflected on the totality of their lives and the place that "a lot of drinking" plays or played in