



THE
DECOLONIZING
POETICS
OF INDIGENOUS
LITERATURES



MAREIKE NEUHAUS

Advance praise for

**THE DECOLONIZING POETICS
OF INDIGENOUS LITERATURES**

A major contribution to research. The focus on craft, text, voice, and language is refreshing, important, and timely. Reading this book reminds me what the best of literary and cultural criticism can do: surprise and delight a reader with insightful commentary and convincing arguments whose implications are far-reaching and, potentially, paradigm-shifting.—SOPHIE M^cCALL, *First Person Plural: Aboriginal Storytelling and the Ethics of Collaborative Authorship*

Neuhaus is an astute theorist, a committed teacher, and a generous critic, and her provocative newest book offers much for readers and students of Indigenous literatures to ponder, debate, and embrace. You will find no simplistic boosterism or essentialized generalizations here: this is careful, challenging work that takes seriously the embraided strands of language, poetics, politics, and aesthetics in Indigenous writing. Of her many strengths as a scholar, Neuhaus is a brilliant close reader, with perceptive insight into the interpretive depths of these writers and their word-worlds. I always learn so much from her work.—DANIEL HEATH JUSTICE (CHEROKEE), CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR IN INDIGENOUS LITERATURE AND EXPRESSIVE CULTURE

Holophrasticism may be the way Indigenous mentality, intellect, and creativity survived residential and Indian boarding schools and lived to deal today with colonialism. Many, many thanks for *The Decolonizing Poetics of Indigenous Literatures*.—SIMON J. ORTIZ (ACOMA PUEBLO), REGENTS PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES AND ENGLISH, ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY AND AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF *Woven Stone; Out There Somewhere; From Sand Creek; and Beyond the Reach of Time and Change*

Previous acclaim for

**'THAT'S RAVEN TALK':
HOLOPHRASTIC READINGS OF CONTEMPORARY
INDIGENOUS LITERATURES**

[A] fascinating study [that] illuminates literary strategies that make English texts Indigenous, even though they are primarily written in English. ... [Neuhaus's] theoretical framework gives important insights into complex Indigenous texts as she highlights that the authors are *writers* and not only transmitters of culture or political processes or healers. Rhetorical sovereignty grounded in Indigenous languages is part of and contributes to decolonization.—RENATE EIGENBROD, AUTHOR OF *Aboriginal Oral Traditions AND Travelling Knowledges: Positioning the Im/Migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada*

In Indigenous literary studies, there are many scholars who offer keen insights about English-language texts, but few who attend to the important links between those texts and Indigenous languages. In *'That's Raven Talk,'* Neuhaus treats Indigenous languages and writings in English by Aboriginal writers with the same serious critical attention and profound ethical regard. The result is a provocative, engaging, and impressively researched discussion of the ways in which English and traditional languages, as well as the oral and the written, are far more meaningfully entangled in these works than is often acknowledged.—DANIEL HEATH JUSTICE (CHEROKEE NATION), CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR IN INDIGENOUS LITERATURE AND EXPRESSIVE CULTURE

Neuhaus follows the push for holistic methodologies in her groundbreaking *'That's Raven Talk'* ... "the first comprehensive study of North American Indigenous languages as the basis of textualized orality in Indigenous literature in English." ... This book is impressively detailed, from a linguistic glossary to an appendix discussing a personal translation from Cree. ... I look forward to reading more by her and by researchers taking up her concepts, especially in Native women's writings.—SYLVIE VRANCKX, *Canadian Literature*



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Shaunavon, March 2015

INTRODUCTION

INDIGENOUS POETICS AND HOLOPHRASTIC READING



Contemporary Indigenous literatures continue literary traditions whose origins are in oral performances, composed in ancestral languages. This may seem like a straightforward observation. However, once one considers that these ancestral languages are actually very different from the English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese in which many Indigenous storytellers and writers now work, things start to look a bit more complicated. Many languages indigenous to North America have a tendency to use holophrases. This may be an intimidating word, but holophrases are actually quite beautiful creatures; as their etymology suggests—*holos* derives from the Greek word for “whole”—holophrases are holistic expressions. More specially, a holophrase is a one-word sentence or clause, such as the Plains Cree word *ki-nohte-h-âcimo-stâ-tinâwâw*, which translates as “I want to tell you folks a story.” A single word stands for a whole sentence; that is, it is a holophrase. If there is one thing that Indo-European languages agree on, despite all their differences, it is their dislike of such one-word sentences. Now why, you may wonder, would this stark difference between English and Indigenous languages matter to the study of Indigenous literatures? Anyone who has ever learned a language other than their mother tongue will know that grammar—the very structures of language—affects the ways in which speakers of that language produce discourse, how they build stories or even just everyday

talk. Anyone who speaks two languages will also know that translation is fraught with loss—that some things just don't translate well. And yet, it would be presumptuous to assume that, moving from ancestral languages to English, Spanish, French, or Portuguese, Indigenous people have blindly adopted the languages of their colonizers. Indeed, residues of ancestral languages can be found in Indigenous uses of these languages, and these residues have profound consequences for Indigenous poetics. For if the English used by Indigenous poets, storytellers, biographers, novelists, and essayists is substantially influenced by ancestral language structures, then reading Indigenous literatures in English amounts to nothing less than an exercise in reading the English language by thinking outside that very language.

This book's main subject is Indigenous poetics. Poetics can mean different things in different contexts. For the purposes of this book, I use the term "Indigenous poetics" simply to mean the art of reading Indigenous discourse, or rather, I should say, the *arts* of reading Indigenous discourse; because just as there are as many Indigenous literatures as there are Indigenous nations, there are also as many Indigenous poetics as there are Indigenous literatures. I think of Indigenous poetics primarily as a way of making sense of Indigenous expressions, as a set of tools that readers may use when they read Indigenous texts—as a map, if you will, that can help guide their readings. Much important work has been done in the past two decades to emphasize the "Indigenous" in Indigenous literatures, by reading these literatures as extensions of political, historical, social, intellectual, and other realities. Indigenous literatures grow out of different realities than do Anglo-American literatures, and these other realities should be reflected in our readings of Indigenous texts. What about Indigenous *texts* as such, however? The *words* on the *page*? The *ways* in which stories are *built*? The *genres*? The *structures*? The *figures*? It is easy to assume that all those features that turn literature into literature are just the same whether used in Euro-Western or Indigenous writing. Well, are they really? Contemporary Indigenous literatures continue traditions that are rhetorically very different from Euro-Western traditions, yet most readers of Indigenous literatures are trained in reading Euro-Western literatures, so they aren't likely to be able to tell the difference. What is needed, then, is a reading strategy that allows us to ground our readings of Indigenous texts in Indigenous discourse traditions but without compromising the important political, historical, social, intellectual, and other contexts from which these texts emerge. In fact, it is the refocusing on some of the more technical features of Indigenous literatures that emphasizes the need for

readers to consider these very contexts. This book aims to develop an Indigenous poetics that enables readers to approach Indigenous literatures for what they truly are: *Indigenous* and *literatures*.

HOLOPHRASTIC READING AS INDIGENOUS POETICS

How do you read Indigenous literatures as both Indigenous and literatures? The method I propose here is one that I call “holophrastic reading,” a reading strategy that I first presented in *“That’s Raven Talk”: Holophrastic Readings of Contemporary Indigenous Literatures*.¹ As the name suggests, holophrastic reading has its basis in the single most dominant language structure of Indigenous languages in North America: the holophrase. While working on *“That’s Raven Talk”* I thought of holophrastic reading primarily as a way of reading textualized orality from within Indigenous language and discourse traditions. However, as so often occurs in life, distance allows one to look at the same thing through entirely different eyes. Thus, over the years, what I had originally conceived as a very specific and narrow reading strategy for oral strategies in Indigenous writing morphed into a more general methodology that could be applied in very different interpretative scenarios.

This being said, I still think of holophrastic reading as an effective and ethical way of studying textualized orality in Indigenous writing. Holophrastic reading is invested in studying, from the perspective of Indigenous languages, the particular uses of language in Indigenous discourse, of which oral strategies are but one aspect. Oral strategies can be found in both speech and writing because they result from conceptual orality, a kind of orality that is associated not with the medium of a text (oral/written/visual) but with its use of a language of immediacy.² Literature and storytelling are prime examples of conceptual orality. Both strive for a high degree of contextualization and immediacy between storyteller/author and listener/reader, although the means by which this context and immediacy are achieved vary depending on the medium. Writing a novel, short story, play, poem, or essay usually involves more planning and results in a denser language than performing a story in front of an audience. And yet, literary critics have long pointed out that literature belongs to a

1 Mareike Neuhaus, *“That’s Raven Talk”: Holophrastic Readings of Contemporary Indigenous Literatures* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center Press, 2011).

2 The notion of conceptual orality was introduced by Peter Koch and Wulf Oesterreicher in “Sprache der Nahe — Sprache der Distanz: Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im Spannungsfeld von Sprachtheorie und Sprachgeschichte,” *Romanistisches Jahrbuch* 36 (1985): 15–43.

body of writing deeply invested in an “oral sensibility.”³ Strategies such as author involvement, audience participation, and contextualization are not only oral strategies, then; they are also central components of literature. To put it differently, the discourse features I discuss as oral strategies in “*That’s Raven Talk*” are, in fact, something more: They are figures of speech, intertextual references, formulae, instances of flashback and foreshadowing, variations in syntax and morphology, and so on—they are, in short, elements of language that readers invest with meaning. At its very core, holophrastic reading therefore contributes to Indigenous poetics because it pays attention to the specific tools and techniques of Indigenous literatures: “[their] kinds and forms, [their] particular resources of device and structure, the principles that govern [them], the functions that distinguish them from other [literatures], the conditions under which [they] can exist, and [their] effects on readers.”⁴ As such, holophrastic reading has a fairly broad spectrum of use in Indigenous literary studies. It is these broader contributions to Indigenous poetics that are the subject of this book, which is designed to serve as a comprehensive introduction to holophrastic reading and its application in reading Indigenous literary texts.

THE RELEVANCE OF ANCESTRAL LANGUAGES

Indigenous peoples have repeatedly stressed the importance of ancestral languages for their continuance as peoples (rather than cultures). Alongside land/territory, sacred history, and the ceremonial cycle, language is a key element whose interdependence with the others defines Indigenous notions of peoplehood.⁵ If any one of these elements is destroyed or otherwise diminished, peoplehood is at stake. The interarticulation of language, history, ceremony, and land is complex but fragile; maintaining the balance

3 John Willinsky, “The Paradox of Text in the Culture of Literacy,” in *After Literacy: Essays* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 61. See also Boris M. Ejchenbaum, “The Illusion of *Skaz*,” *Russian Literature Triquarterly* 12 (1975): 233–36; Robert Kellogg, “Oral Narrative, Written Books,” *Genre* 10 (1977): 655–65; Paul Goetsch, “Fingierte Mündlichkeit in der Erzählkunst entwickelter Schriftkulturen,” *Poetica* 17.3–4 (1985): 202–18.

4 T. V. F. Brogan, “Poetics,” in *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 930b.

5 Tom Holm (Cherokee), Ben Chavis (Lumbee), and J. Diane Pearson propose the model of peoplehood as constituting four interrelated social concepts: land/territory, sacred history, language, and ceremonial cycle (“Peoplehood: A Model for the Extension of Sovereignty in American Indian Studies,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 18.1 [2003]: 7–24).

requires constant care and nurturing. The colonization of North America entailed not only the theft of land and resources from Indigenous peoples, but also, as Andrea Bear Nicholas (Maliseet) observes, the destruction of their relations to the land. Since these relations were expressed in the oral traditions, Indigenous languages, too, had to be eradicated, through residential and boarding schools, through forced adoptions of Native children into non-Native families, and through further government policies designed to assimilate Indigenous people into mainstream society. The destruction and loss of land, Bear Nicholas argues, therefore correlates directly with the destruction of Indigenous languages.⁶

Indigenous mother tongues in North America have suffered immensely from colonialism; many of these languages have become extinct over the past five hundred years, while many others are in danger of becoming extinct in the very near future.⁷ Thus, English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese have become the first languages of most Indigenous people living in North America today. The majority of contemporary North American Indigenous literatures are written in English—one of the “enemy’s languages” that has to be *reinvented* to serve the purposes of healing and empowerment, as Gloria Bird (Spokane) and Joy Harjo (Muskogee Creek) famously argued in their 1997 anthology of Indigenous women’s writing, *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language*.⁸ Almost twenty years prior to Bird and Harjo, Simon Ortiz (Acoma Pueblo) had posited in his seminal essay “Towards a National Indian Literature” that a people can survive and thrive using any given language—in other words, that English was an Indigenous language.⁹ As a fluent speaker of Keres, Ortiz did not make this argument to undermine the significance of ancestral languages, but rather to claim English as a means for Indigenous people to heal from the wounds inflicted on them by hundreds of years of colonialism. Given the overwhelming presence of English in North America and the fact that it is

6 Andrea Bear Nicholas, “The Assault on Aboriginal Oral Traditions: Past and Present,” in *Aboriginal Oral Traditions: Theory, Practice, Ethics*, ed. Renée Hulan and Renate Eigenbrod (Halifax: Fernwood, 2008), 19.

7 According to Frederick H. White, of the about two hundred Indigenous languages spoken in North America today, only 10 per cent will likely survive past the year 2020 (“Language Reflection and Lamentation in Native American Literature,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 18.1 [2006]: 95).

8 Gloria Bird and Joy Harjo, “Introduction,” in *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women’s Writings of North America*, ed. Gloria Bird and Joy Harjo (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 23–25.

9 Simon J. Ortiz, “Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism,” *MELUS* 8.2 (1981): 10.

often the only language spoken by Indigenous people, the importance of the notion of English as suitable for Indigenous purposes cannot be over-emphasized. Indeed, for Jace Weaver (Cherokee), Craig S. Womack (Muskogee Creek), and Robert Warrior (Osage), celebrating “the profound Indianness of English” is one of the prerequisites for ensuring the survival and continuance of Indigenous peoples in North America.¹⁰

But what exactly does the “Indianness of English” mean? How could English possibly be an Indigenous language? Obviously, Cree is not English and neither is Anishnaabemowin. At the same time, however, despite its overwhelming presence in today’s globalized world, English is neither *lingua franca* nor *lingua nullius*, belonging to everyone and no one; it is a highly varied language whose national and regional nuances carry a large bundle of meaning.¹¹ Rather than becoming willing subjects of (neo)colonial linguistic practices, Indigenous peoples have claimed English in order to exercise rhetorical sovereignty, which Scott Richard Lyons (Anishnaabe/Mdewakanton Dakota) defines as “the inherent right and ability of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in [their] pursuit [of sovereignty], to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse.”¹² Rhetorical sovereignty, Lyons argues, “requires above all the presence of an Indian voice,” a voice that ideally uses an ancestral language.¹³ Wherever ancestral linguistic traditions have been destroyed or interrupted, Indigenous voices are often expressed in English; thus, English becomes a means of pursuing Indigenous purposes by mere habit of use. Equally, if not more important, in their use of this language, Indigenous people have reinvented English by indigenizing it. Most Indigenous languages are grammatically incompatible with the English language; yet, some discourse features and practices that have their origins in Indigenous languages are also present in Indigenous

10 Jace Weaver, Craig S. Womack, and Robert Warrior, *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), xviii.

11 For a critique of the notion of English as a global language see Martin Kayman, who argues that “successive models of language underwriting the teaching of English have displaced and thereby masked the issue of culture that . . . necessarily persists under globalization” (“The State of English as a Global Language: Communicating Culture,” *Textual Practice* 18.1 [2004]: 2).

12 Scott Richard Lyons, “Rhetorical Sovereignty: What Do American Indians Want from Writing?” *College Composition and Communication* 51.3 (2000): 449–50; emphasis in original.

13 *Ibid.*, 462.

uses of English.¹⁴ Reading English-language discourse from the point of view of Indigenous languages is a very valuable project, then, because it proves untenable a notion that is still quite pervasive in mainstream society, namely, that writing in the colonizer's language, using the colonizer's genres, implies hybridity by definition and thus a "giving in" to Euro-Western hegemony.¹⁵ Once we shift how we read Indigenous literatures in English—namely by thinking outside the very language in which they are composed—we are able to realize how much the colonizer's language has become an essential factor in the project of *decolonization*, which permeates so much of contemporary Indigenous discourses.

PLACING READING AND TEXTS AT CENTRE STAGE

Over the past twenty years, the field of Indigenous literary studies has become increasingly polarized over the question of what constitutes an adequate approach to Indigenous literatures. On the one hand, there are critics who favour cosmopolitan approaches focused on hybridity and pan-Indigenous readings; on the other hand, there are critics who argue for nation-specific approaches that ground Indigenous literatures in their respective national histories, politics, and intellectual traditions. As some critics have observed, however, this cosmopolitan-nationalist binary is itself flawed and problematic. For one, the dichotomy between these two strands of criticism is too simplistic to adequately describe the field of Indigenous literary studies, because it covers up the nuances involved in individual approaches. Christopher Taylor, for example, points to the work of nationalist critic Robert Warrior as "provid[ing] a more complicated model than either [Arnold] Krupat's cosmopolitanism or [Craig] Womack's nationalism."¹⁶ Similarly, while it is true that Indigenous literary nationalism emphasizes Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, and traditions through attention to nationhood, this focus "actually necessitates engagement with broader influences, as one cannot know the intimate without understanding the ways in which that intimacy has been shaped by exterior social and environmental forces," as Daniel Heath

14 For discussions of Indigenous English codes, see also William L. Leap, *American Indian English* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993) and Guillermo Bartelt, *Socio- and Stylolinguistic Perspectives on American Indian English Texts* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2001).

15 Weaver, Womack, and Warrior, *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, xviii.

16 Christopher Taylor, "North America as Contact Zone: Native American Literary Nationalism and the Cross-Cultural Dilemma," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 22.3 (2010): 29–30.

Justice (Cherokee) notes. “A literary nationalist is thus very well placed to study cosmopolitan concerns.”¹⁷ In fact, there exists more dialogue between cosmopolitan and nationalist strands of criticism than suggested by the binary that supposedly defines Indigenous literary studies today, one recent example being “Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in Native American Literature,” a 2011 panel discussion at Emory University that featured a conversation between both nationalist critics—Craig Womack and Lisa Brooks (Abenaki)—and cosmopolitan critics—Arnold Krupat and Elvira Pulitano.

The controversy over ethically sound approaches to Indigenous literatures has also done much good to the field of Indigenous studies, however, because it has brought more focused attention to Indigenous intellectual traditions and their value both to Indigenous peoples and, by implication, to Indigenous (literary) studies. What this book offers to this ongoing dialogue is the argument that Indigenous literatures can be read as grounded in Indigenous linguistic and discursive traditions regardless of the particular perspective from which readers may decide to approach the texts—a circumstance that should resonate particularly well for Indigenous works that do not fit into nationalist paradigms, such as the writing of pan-Native, multinational, and urban authors. If rhetorical sovereignty contributes to the decolonization of Indigenous peoples, so do Indigenous poetics that are grounded in Indigenous literary, critical, and intellectual traditions. Holophrastic reading contributes to such poetics.

In its attention to Indigenous languages as the basis of Indigenous writing in English, holophrastic reading provides a formal foundation to the study of Indigenous literatures. Holophrastic reading makes language use the focus of studying Indigenous literatures; it does so, however, not for the sake of form and structure per se but for the sake of gaining a deeper understanding of Indigenous texts and the issues they raise, the abuses they expose, the grievances they express, the oppression they critique, the survival and continuity they celebrate. Like reading itself, then, holophrastic reading is concerned with both questions of form and issues of content, with the texts *and* their larger contexts. What, then, makes reading Indigenous literatures *holophrastic*? It is the attempt to read the English written by Indigenous storytellers and writers so as to expose its Indigenousness. To read holophrastically means to let one’s readings of

17 Daniel Heath Justice, “The Necessity of Nationhood: Affirming the Sovereignty of Indigenous National Literatures,” in *Moveable Margins: The Shifting Spaces of Canadian Literature*, ed. Chelva Kanaganayakam (Toronto: TSAR, 2005), 153.

Indigenous literatures be informed by the uses of language and the construction of stories in Indigenous-language discourse, and to be guided by that knowledge in making sense of Indigenous texts. In other words, holophrastic reading attempts to empower Indigenous peoples within their own language and discourse traditions by helping us ground our readings of Indigenous writing within those very traditions, as they characterize and define the writing.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Decolonizing Poetics of Indigenous Literatures is, first and foremost, a handbook or manual designed to teach holophrastic reading so that readers may apply this method in their own approaches to Indigenous writing. The book is divided into two parts: one introduces the method of holophrastic reading, and one demonstrates how this method may be used to read and interpret contemporary Indigenous storytelling and writing.

Part 1, “A Primer on Holophrastic Reading,” gives a theoretical survey of the method of holophrastic reading. Any kind of holophrastic heuristic is useful only for readers with some basic knowledge of Indigenous grammars. Before looking at any of the other chapters in the handbook, readers without any knowledge of Indigenous languages will therefore want to consult chapter 1, which gives a brief but succinct summary of Indigenous language and discourse traditions, paying close attention to the holophrase as the dominant structure of many of these languages. Based on this linguistic discussion, chapter 2 offers a comprehensive holophrastic heuristic. Holophrastic reading essentially means to read Indigenous texts for *holophrastic traces* and *relational word bundles*, the two main manifestations of the holophrase in Indigenous discourse in English. The heuristic provided in chapter 2 discusses the various technical aspects of holophrastic readings; readers may use the heuristic to follow the readings presented in the remainder of the book or as a reference for conducting their own holophrastic readings of Indigenous texts. Part 1 closes with an alphabetical list of critical terms relevant to holophrastic reading, including their definitions and, where applicable, examples.

Part 2, “Holophrastic Readings of Indigenous Writing,” illustrates how the holophrastic heuristic introduced in part 1 may be applied in studying Indigenous texts. The chapters demonstrate the broad range of interpretative contexts in which holophrastic reading may serve as an ethical method for reading Indigenous literatures. The purpose of this part of the book, then, is not so much to teach readers how to discover holophrastic manifestations in the English used by Indigenous writers and storytellers;

rather, part 2 is meant to illustrate how diverse Indigenous texts may be invested with meaning using the method of holophrastic reading. Each of the analytical chapters in part 2 is centred on a particular question that readers may bring to the study of Indigenous writing. The interpretative contexts therein are not exhaustive but serve as representative examples of contemporary Indigenous writing as well as of the issues currently discussed in Indigenous literary studies.

Aside from their relevance, my choice of texts is rather idiosyncratic. I have selected works that I have enjoyed reading and teaching. Moreover, I have included four of the five texts that I originally discussed in *“That’s Raven Talk,”* for two reasons: one, to give readers a reference point from which to consult more comprehensive holophrastic readings for at least some of the texts analyzed here; and two, to demonstrate that holophrastic reading may be applied to one and the same text for very different purposes. This book’s preference for narrative genres is entirely the result of its central theme. Holophrastic reading concerns primarily narratology, the study of narrative structures and how they affect the production of meaning in texts; the method is therefore best illustrated by discussing literary works with some narrative quality. This is not to say that holophrastic reading applies only to narrative or literary texts. Since the holophrase is a key component of Indigenous expressions in English, holophrastic reading may be applied to non-narrative and non-literary texts as well, such as drama, speeches, and even political discourse. In short, just as my understanding of Indigenous poetics as referring to the study of Indigenous discourse more generally is quite broad, holophrastic reading as a reading method may be applied in far more discursive contexts than the ones I present in this book.

All chapters in this book are designed to stand as independent units, with the exception of chapters 1 to 3, which build on each other and form the theoretical basis of the readings that follow in the remainder of the book. The analysis chapters in part 2, on the other hand, may be read either independently or in chronological order. Holophrastic traces and relational word bundles concern different aspects of Indigenous poetics, namely language and style (holophrastic traces) and narrative structures (relational word bundles). The first two analysis chapters reflect these different focuses. In chapter 4, I examine ancestral language influences on Indigenous discourse in English, as evident in the use of holophrastic traces, whereas in chapter 5, I address narrative structures and the ways these structures affect our readings of Indigenous writing, by discussing the central role of relational word bundles in Indigenous discourse in English.