"Remember Wounded Knee": AlM's Use of Metonymy in 21st Century Protest

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merican Indian issues came to the forefront of national politics in 1973, according to a brief account by Robert Warrior, which is consistent with those of many others, like activists Mary Ellen Crow Dog and Leonard Crow Dog. In 1973 the Lakota people, along with members and supporters of the American Indian Movement (AIM), took over Wounded Knee, South Dakota "in a desperate, last-ditch effort to draw attention to dire conditions on the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation" (Warrior 1999, 47). The 1990s noticed a spike in popular interest in this event, which Warrior says acts as a "starting point for so many people" (47). The notion of learning from this event is key to the project of providing a more historical perspective than that provided in mainstream or Government accounts. Warrior states, "One of the first lessons journalists learned at Wounded Knee, and they came in droves from around the world, was that they were arriving *very late* to a story that had deserved their attention much earlier" (47; my emphasis). The staging of the event itself was based on a rhetorical trope in which the place Wounded Knee came to stand for simply the site of the 1890 Big Foot massacre in which many of Big Foot's people died, running from the advancing U. S. cavalry. The invention of *Wounded Knee* marks a new effort to organize discursively as well as politically. An analysis of *Wounded Knee* as a site, an event, and a trope, reveals an agonistic approach to organizing that has become increasingly linguistic and symbolic since 1973.

The American Indian Movement was first called the Concerned Indian American, its acronym, ironically, CIA. The original AIM documents or partial documents are at the library at Michigan State University, scanned and posted on the worldwide web by Mike Wicks (1999). Much of what was published in these documents centers on the preservation of traditional practices and initiation of sovereign institutions, such as survival schools. Part of the strength of the American Indian Movement has been its ability to produce strong metonymic statements that take the furtive nighttime 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee as a central event for the Movement's view of history, hence AIM's call to "Remember Wounded Knee." As well as functioning as a name for the land, the words Wounded Knee come to stand for the many underhanded, crippling, and unjust actions and policies, practiced by the United States government for over two hundred years, since the signing of the first treaty in 1774 with the Delawares, which was broken along with many other treaties. A pan-tribal articulation strategically locates common concerns among various and different American Indian groups. While there may be, for good reason, some reluctance to think about American Indian people in terms of a single group, the texts produced by the American Indian Movement state that its purpose is to unite people in order to have an organized way of addressing recurrent and chronic problems that affect many different American Indian people and groups, rather than to blur their differences and to universalize indigenous experience. Before examining the texts that illustrate AIM's use of Wounded Knee2 and considering the implications for social protest in the information age, it will be useful to consider some recent theories of metaphor, so as to sketch out the subtle and sophisticated ways in which form and content articulate a historical view that challenges official history.

Metonymy

Studies, such as Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990) and Robert Shulman's *The Power of Political Art* (2000), show that recent scholar-

ly interest in exploring intersections of aesthetics and politics finds this terrain a useful space for inquiry. Contemporary theories help to illuminate the ways in which the land is contingent to the historical event, which, in turn, is symbolic of the pattern of U. S. government Indian policy and action. Although Roman Jakobson's dichotomy separates metaphor and metonymy based on how they structure relationships between ideas, these categories have been "reconsidered" by Leon Surette and others. Jakobson's attention to the relationship between the terms, ultimately, has helped to break down the separation between poetics and rhetoric.³ The notion that metaphor draws similar qualities from two different things and that metonymy shows contingency, according to Leon Surette, is problematic in its binary and hierarchical formulation. To illustrate this dichotomy, Surette summarizes Jakobson's theory that when children respond to the prompt hut with words, like cabin, hovel, or even palace, they are finding a "'semantic similarity" that "amounts to shared membership in a category or class," in this case "a dwelling" (1987, 563). Similarly, according to Surette's account of Jakobson, the metonymic reply to hut would include words, like, "thatch, litter, and poverty." Clearly, there are problems that arise with this conclusion, not the least of which are the classist undertones of the metonymic "responses." However, the cultural context in which metonymic formulation occurs is clear, and, as Surette says, the tropes in question are "culture bound" (561). That is to say, that the terms refer to a codified system of language that establishes, reproduces, and has the potential to destabilize hierarchies that are built into language.

Applying the Theory

Key to the project of the American Indian Movement is to improve balance in the representation of events in American history. Insofar as Wounded Knee is metonymical, one event/place, historically and geographically, respectively, standing for the pattern to abuses by the U.S. government of American Indian groups, it identifies a common ground, historically and materially centered, that powerfully calls into question assumptions about the interests guiding U.S. colonial expansion. In the series of newsletters, beginning with the Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP) and The Indigenous Voice of Resistance Newsletter, published between 1969 and 1973, a strong pan-tribal vision emerges that sees as its foundation parallels between American colonial history and contemporary problems facing First Nations people of the United States. The acknowledgement of diversity within AIM's texts, especially in terms of the practices, beliefs, and special situations of various tribal groups, however, always tempers the pan-tribal political effort. Indeed, AIM asserts that it refuses to intervene in local problems if it is not invited to do so. Although AIM makes local differences a priority to direct its political

voice, it also understands the way in which U.S. history has uniformly denied substantial autonomy to various First Nations groups in order to organize itself as a political movement.

The challenge of causing a radical shift in thinking with regard to historical record is massive in the case of First Nations groups, because the Eurocentric authority acknowledges written records over oral accounts and because most documentation and testimony come from the point of view of the colonizers. The project of rethinking the act of colonization means building a new narrative out of an old one. In Brown's Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee (1970), Dee Brown claims that the late 19th century must be considered crucial to learning American Indian history, not because much change occurred during that time but rather because most recorded evidence is available from between the years of 1860 to 1890.5 As if to show the transformation that the historical record undergoes as Brown retells the past, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee begins with an image of a map, entitled "The American West, 1865-1890" and concludes with a chapter on Wounded Knee. The last words in the chapter are those of Black Elk and a song: "The old men / say / the Earth / only / endures. / You spoke truly. / You are right" (1970, 420). Framing the text with these two views of the land, the map with authority over the land, and the words with an authority that grows out of the land, demonstrate the progress of the book toward rethinking what the land means and are consistent with what Chadwick Allen explains as being an important distinction between indigenous revisions of icons, which he patterns after Homi Bhabha's example of "colonial mimicry as 'almost the same but not quite" (2002, 19). Allen's compelling idea that while some of the practices of displacing colonial discourse by colonized peoples are applicable to U.S. indigenous groups and the Maori of New Zealand, an interesting investment in the veracity of that very discourse is evident. He says that "this disavowed discourse is reified—reclaimed from impotent abstraction and once again rendered concrete" (19). The real difference, according to Allen, is the willingness to accept the discourse, because it acknowledges the indigenous groups as being their own nations.

Reifying the historical record itself is strategic, as such a move acknowledges the power of the written record within a European-American tradition and uses it to transform *Wounded Knee* into a new concept that conflates land, identity, and history. Moreover, since it is difficult to recover oral accounts, the act of deconstructing official records has proven to be a more fertile ground for critiquing the events that led up to and followed the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890. What Dee Brown's record offers is a new story that asserts authority by using Western assumptions that depend on empirical evidence in order to create a space for a new narrative. His effort

is part activism and part scholarship, and, while this paper is not centered on Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, Brown's text offers a sample of the kind of work that AIM and scholars alike have done to rebuild a lopsided version of history. Ironically, then, the structure of an American Indian history must find a compatible place with many various American Indian ideological systems in order to enter a Western system of meaning.

Although documents from the late 19th century provide access to the ways in which an emerging American identity depended on a particular history and a specific perception of American Indian people, AIM's focus on Wounded Knee also provides access to documented American Indian resistance to colonization. In this example, an American Indian past is contingent to the colonial record, although it challenges it. Charles Eastman Ohiyesa explains that a "religious craze such as that of 1890-91 was a thing foreign to the Indian philosophy," and, yet, it provided a much-needed, cohesive structure to align diverse American Indian groups (Purdy and Ruppert 2002, 54).6 Richard Joseph Morris explains in a paper, presented at the Conference on Native American Press in Wisconsin and the Nation, that a solid place to begin to map out contemporary discourse on American Indian issues is the Ghost Dance Movement of the late nineteenth century. Morris points out that the Movement was intended to be a statement of hope, as he quotes from The Messiah Letters: "Grandfather. . . says, when your friends die you must not cry. You must not fight. Do always right. It will give you satisfaction in life. Do not tell lies" (1982, 16). Thus, the ceremony is invented in response to the political climate in this 19th century movement. It functions discursively to enable the young men to go into battles in which they are largely outnumbered and insufficiently armed. The Ghost Dance shirt represents a point of intersection among linguistic, religious, and military factors. However, as Morris notes, this sentiment is joined with an urge to resist the colonists, and Morris continues with excerpts from the letters: "Thus the doctrine instructs believers not to 'tell the white people about' the return of the messiah, not to 'refuse to work for [the] white man or do not make any trouble with them until you leave them. This last statement in particular was interpreted by some tribes (e.g., the Lakota) to mean that the white people would be destroyed" (17). The belief in the protection of the Ghost Dance shirt for the warriors is described in detail in Black Elk Speaks (1988). As Black Elk prepares to move toward the fighting that he has heard about from "[a] man," he says that he "put on [his] sacred shirt":

It was one I had made to be worn by no one but myself. It had a spotted eagle outstretched on the back of it, and the daybreak star was on the left shoulder, because when facing south that shoulder is toward the east. Across the breast, from the left shoulder to the right hip, was the flaming rainbow,

and there was another rainbow around the neck, like a necklace, with a star at the bottom. At each shoulder, elbow, and wrist was an eagle feather; and over the whole shirt were red streaks of lightning. You will see that this was from my great vision, and you will know how it protected me that day. (Neihardt 1988, 255-6)⁷

The 19th century belief in the Ghost Dance pulled together several strands to create a cohesive, though hybrid, movement. It combined a Christian-style belief in a "messiah," American Indian beliefs and practices, such as weaving images from a dream vision into clothing that plays a part in a ceremony, and resistance to the colonizing forces in the forms of settlers, miners, and the military. This spiritual mission, as Charles Eastman Ohiyesa notes, was also political, and it responded directly to the lived experience of Lakota people. Indeed, these very conditions are what allow the differences among the various American Indian groups to be put aside. Echoed later in the late 1960s and early 1970s by AIM, the conditions in which American Indian people live are the central concern: "... in five speeches the new traditionals [AIM] disclose not only an awareness of having experienced widespread deprivation, but also a willingness to express their discontent" (Morris 1982, 167). In both instances, the need to address contemporary problems stems from similar experiences that followed major national efforts on the part of the U. S. government to "assimilate" American Indian people.

The policies responsible for the cultural genocide, such as the establishment of various institutions on reservations, the Indian boarding schools, and missionary establishments of the 19th century left many American Indian people out of touch with traditional ways, language, and knowledge, while no solid efforts helped to secure political or economic power within the U. S. system. The same paternalistic attitudes that inspired the boarding schools of the 19th century were fueled by misconceptions of American Indian culture and inaccurate characterizations of American Indian people. Almost a century after the Big Foot massacre, AIM was confronted with embracing an identity that the colonial imagination could easily twist into its own, namely, the stereotypes that include tags, such as, "child-like," "simple," and "ignorant" at best and "uncivilized," "savage," and "hostile" at worst. Digging out of the rubble of these images by using, as tools the language and logic of the colonizers meant having to re-think, re-name, and re-write identity and history in a way that would problematize colonial codification. As Homi Bhabha points out in his reading of Fanon, Fanon must come to terms with "the displacement of the colonial relation [between Western "Self" and non-Western "Other"]" in order to see how much the Western self-image hinges on its concept of the "Native" (1994, 42). Fanon's words are telling:

I had to meet the white man's eyes.... In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema.... I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects.... What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a heamorrage that spattered my whole body with black blood? (Bhabha 1994, 42)

Considering the image of physical violence to the body in this confrontation with what Fanon calls "the white man's artefact" adds another dimension to AIM's call to "Remember Wounded Knee." From its original designation, which is not necessarily related to the 1890 massacre, the physical and historical space also refers to an injured body part, thus reflecting the abuse and violence that American Indian people have endured since colonial contact began. This is not to say that this meaning was intentional in AIM's rhetoric, but the nature of the metonymy, when viewed as process, can be unpredictable and richer than it may appear initially with "accidental connections" (Fludernik, et. al. 1999, 391).8

An important part of *Wounded Knee* is the Ghost Dance Movement of the late 19th century, which has become mythological in its proportions. The Movement marks an initial moment of collective interest as well as the recognition that American Indian identity since colonial expansion hinged more on the interaction with colonists than it did on tribal groups, as Richard Joseph Morris explains:

Of course, by itself an effort to mobilize support is insufficient to account for the rapid spread of the movement—particularly if there were nothing from which to be delivered. In this respect, the experience of "widespread deprivation"—which was common to virtually all of the tribes that participated in the movement, and which in turn fostered expression of that experience in the form of vehement protests—provided a substantive point of identification among tribes that otherwise might have remained quite disparate. (Morris 1982, 15)

The call to reclaim tribal life during the Ghost Dance movement was strong, and it did not need to specify which tribal practices should be re-instituted. However, the point was to resist assimilation to European-American culture. The provisional, historical, and politically grounded formation of this movement speaks to its ability to bring together a large number of people from various groups, an effort which is echoed by the contemporary American Indian Movement. The Lakota resistance is the result of cultural and historical factors. At least two important things worked together to contribute to resistance efforts of the Lakota: The association of spirituality and the warrior identity, along with being situated on land that was expansive and experienced extreme weather conditions, which made the cavalries and gold rush-

ers vulnerable and advanced warning of their approach possible. As these factors culminated and other American Indian groups acknowledged them, the Lakota people were able to wage successful battles during a moment when significant numbers of American Indian people had been lost. While AIM looked back to American Indian history, its members, whose tribes included Micmac, Lakota, Anishinabe, and Ojibway, looked to Lakota resistance to shape the organization's direction. Like the Ghost Dance Movement, the evocation of the Wounded Knee massacre became a point at which a collective of people from various tribal groups located a collective identity. Thus, Wounded Knee, a complex signifier, came to replace the Ghost Dance Movement, which was rooted in spiritual, social, and military customs that were unique to the Lakota people. The trope itself is an outgrowth from the Ghost Dance Movement, however, as is clear in many articulations of AIM's objectives. In Peter Matthiessen's In the Spirit of Crazy Horse (1983), the use of Crazy Horse is no accident. Crazy Horse's battle in which he strategically planned to divide his warriors to surround Custer's advancing troops and used other innovative tactics, like sitting on his horse backwards so that the enemy could not tell at first glance which direction he was riding, is tied closely to the mythology of Wounded Knee. Wounded Knee brings to AIM's project people and events that are tied to one of the last, strongest moments of resistance that the U.S. faced from American Indian people.

The metonymy is by no means simple or easy to stabilize, due to the layers of meaning that come into the linguistic fold of *Wounded Knee*. A palimpsest is formed with the following layers: 1) The Lakota sound Chankpe Opi Wakpala, 2) The sound / image once transcribed into English letters, 3) The Lakota translation of Wounded Knee Creek, 4) And, what the place/event Wounded Knee comes to symbolize for AIM in its call to "Remember [the 1890 massacre at] Wounded Knee." Additionally, due to the problems that arose during the AIM occupation and standoff at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, with the FBI in 1973, one can then add a fifth layer of meaning. This last layer includes the arrest of Leonard Peltier, the disappearances and deaths of activists, national attention on American Indian concerns, the COINTEL PRO (COounterINTELligence PROgrams) operation, and other related events and effects of 1973.

As the trope layers and combines meaning, it becomes even more complex as it is read through multiple cultures, ideologies, experiences, and languages. The benefit of paying attention to the changes in meaning in a given trope for the cultural critic is to understand how cultural difference as well as cultural hegemony come into play. In its 19th century version, *Wounded Knee* is less historicized and functions within the linguistic system of the Lakota, which, like many American Indian groups, grounds meaning in the

relationship between human beings and the land. For example, when Gloria Bird recounts her aunt's reaction to the destruction caused by the eruption of Mount St. Helen's, she points out that her aunt's response of "Poor thing" "reinvents" the meaning through the poetic usage (1997, 22). More broadly speaking, as Carter Revard indicates in his essay "History, Myth, and Identity among Osages and Other Peoples," the sense of individual identity is different from that of people of European descent in that it connects to a long history, collective experience, and the land (2001, 126-40). Thus, it is important to understand that the idea of Wounded Knee as place, event, and image of a wounded person is a product of a reaction to historical circumstances that is a hybrid of American Indian cultures with Anglo-American culture. It makes a space to articulate a different vision and story in order to establish a ground from which to make political, ethical, and spiritual judgments. This configuration of a mythic past suggests a flexibility and adaptability in Lakota tradition that lavs the foundation for both the Ghost Dance Movement and the American Indian Movement.

The historical factors that lead to the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee, which, in turn, AIM sees as continuing through to the event in 1973 play a role in determining the use of Wounded Knee in AIM's rhetoric. Wounded Knee, then, is a metonymy in which the massacre of 1890 stands for more than one event, the basis for a host of stories, values, and historical characters. It links the gold rush in the Black Hills of South Dakota, which gave rise to the conflict that prompted both the signing and later abrogation of the Black Hills treaty of 1868, and the effort by the U.S. government to allow corporations to mine for uranium in the Black Hills in the early 1970s. Claiming to be responding to a call from tribal elders, as AIM asserts, who needed aid to address the corruption of the Lakota council, AIM dispatched activists to Pine Ridge. AIM's metonymic narrative not only allowed the 1970s activists to shed light on past injustices but also to direct contemporary acts of resistance, which is evident in AIM's action at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Reservation. As many know, the stand-off resulted in the deaths of two FBI agents, the arrest of Leonard Peltier, and the deaths of several AIM members and residents of Pine Ridge, a number that ranges from the FBI's account of one man's death to AIM's approximation of 67-71 deaths, which were carried out over several years following the event at "Wounded Knee II."

Following AIM's effort to hold the Government accountable to its words in the 1868 treaty, the similarities between the nighttime raid of the Ghost Dance ceremony and the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973 played a crucial role in AIM's documents. Not only does AIM connect taking land without an agreement in 1891 and again, in 1973, but it also uses this con-

nection to assert the Government's oppressive attitude toward Indian sovereignty and demand the recognition of rights that are outlined in the treaties. The very desire of the activists is shaped to an extent by their understanding of this complex signifier Wounded Knee, because it permits a trans-historical and trans-tribal conceptual framework from which to critique pressing contemporary concerns that, nonetheless, are derived from historical experience. In this sense, the idea Wounded Knee resembles the invention of the Ghost Dance ceremony, but it obscures the historicity of the events of 1973. Indeed, even AIM's most recent version of its website still makes strong claims that identify the organization as having a spiritual mission. The following comes from "AIM Grand Governing Council," which issued a statement that answers the question, "What Is the American Indian Movement," and two points speak directly to the issue of combining a spiritual and historical sensibility in the construction of its political mission: "AIM is first, a spiritual movement, a religious re-birth, and then the re-birth of dignity and pride in a people. . . . AIM succeeds because they have beliefs to act upon. . . . The American Indian Movement is attempting to connect the realities of the past with the promise of tomorrow ..." (2000, 25). While the tactics that AIM used in the past to gain attention have changed, the bones of the concept and ties to the language and rhetoric used during the Ghost Dance Movement persists.

AIM expresses the connection between both moments of violence at Wounded Knee clearly in a document, posted on the web and entitled "Wounded Knee: The Longest War 1890-1973":

The war has never ceased. In 1890 federal troops massacred 300 unarmed Indians at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. In 1973 the government again mustered its forces against the people of the Pine Ridge Reservation who had gathered at Wounded Knee to protest the continuing injustices to their people and the government's violation of their treaty rights under the 1868 Treaty. (Wicks 1999, 30)⁹

The phrasing "The Longest War" conflates the 1890 massacre with the 1973 protest, creating a transcendent event. On the one hand, it is historically grounded in its recognition of a pattern of abuses by the U.S. government, but, on the other hand, it suggests a repetition of the 1890 massacre when historical conditions and methods of protest had changed. The differences between 1890 and 1973 are important, because the protest of 1973 began to assume the informational efforts and publicity antics of the New Left along with the legal contests and organizational strategies of the Black Panthers, all of which place the 1973 protest squarely in the information age and as a part of a matrix of social movements. Thus, while the *Wounded Knee* metonymy recovers the 1890 events and important Lakota values, it also obscures an important Lakota value that was evident in the Ghost Dance Movement.

which was adaptability. The Lakota adapted spiritual beliefs to suit a political aim. How the fact that AIM conforms in some ways with other 1960s social movements, using advancements in technology, is elided in the metonymic construction of *Wounded Knee*, and, yet, that very product, the metonymy, is a result of the same kind of invention that was put in place during the Ghost Dance Movement. Fashioning its rhetorical web message much as Crazy Horse's men would adorn their rifles, taken from U.S. cavalry soldiers, with leather and studs to make the weapons less likely to slip from their hands, AIM has put to use the organizational structures, protest tactics, and technologies that the European–American world has made available and modified them for their own use. Insofar as this is the case, it becomes clear that insight into AIM's efforts to resist contemporary laws, policies, and practices that threaten the survival of American Indian cultures can be just as telling about information–age conditions as they are about the resistance itself.

The media attention brought about by AIM activists in 1973 impacted the way that AIM viewed protest as it reinforced centrality of the myth that is grounded in Wounded Knee. Today, the flyers and newsletters from AIM's past are available on the World Wide Web as links from Michigan State University's library and from the American Indian Cultural Support Main Page. Thus, these documents are in not only paper form and a part of AIM's past, but they are also a part of AIM's contemporary project in their digital form. Therefore, they have transitioned into the information age via digital scanning. These documents are important, because they signal the continuity of the message that AIM has made since the late 1960s and early 1970s, and their persistence also marks a break in continuity. While "the spirit of Crazy Horse" moved AIM members and supporters to put their bodies on the line to resist threats to American Indian sovereignty, the current manifestation of the message is far less volatile and dangerous. By tracing the rhetoric in documents and other texts that are manifestations of Lakota acts of resistance in the years between 1870 and 1974, a break emerges in the actions and attitudes of the people involved in the resistance. They change from a group of fully and immediately assaulted traditional, indigenous people, bound by a particular set of cultural practices, to a hybrid group that is ideologically bound by their desire to reassert an indigenous identity that has long been waning. This is not to suggest that all Lakota people of the late 19th century were untouched by the European-American presence or even that they universally resisted it; however, it is to notice a difference in a group that had closer ties to traditional ways of life and who were better able to live according to those ways than people were after the strong effort to "assimilate" and "civilize" the "Indians." One example that illustrates this difference and this shift comes from the conflict in how AIM protesters and FBI documents rep-

resent the protesters' actions and intentions. While the FBI reports in a full section of "Revolutionary Activities" that addresses "The Turn toward Major Violence" the "violent" nature of AIM by citing such instances as re-enacting the Crucifixion at Easter and individuals making threats at meetings, the autobiographies of AIM protesters paint an entirely different picture. Mary Ellen Crow Dog's autobiography, for instance, suggests that AIM consisted of a rag-tag group who had arms but were not trained in how to use them and who were afraid of the amount of force with which the U.S. military entered Pine Ridge. Mary Ellen Crow Dog's example signifies a departure from the Ghost Dance Movement in that the participants are loosely affiliated with a common articulated agenda but are not culturally similar and are unprepared for combat. Unlike the Lakota resistance in 1890, these young people were seeking the "spirit of Crazy Horse" but less prepared to fight like him in a practical sense. Advancements in print technology and Internet communication have become the favored form of articulating AIM's concerns post "Wounded Knee II." Contesting laws via the courts on the topics of land rights, gaming, and mascots, for example are information-driven efforts that take the most powerful portion of the 1973 event at Wounded Knee, the rhetorical configuration of Wounded Knee, and put it to use safely and within the discourse of the law, history, and current events.

The language in the documents, housed in the Michigan State University Library and on the American Indian Cultural Support Main Page, shows that public opinion and a careful articulation of a distinctly American Indian historical perspective are powerful tools of protest. Earlier than "Wounded Knee II," AIM stressed the role of the treaty, sovereign rights, and the role of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) prior to the protest that gained national interest with documents, like the "Three Point Program." This program called for the establishment of a "Treaty Commission" that would review the original promises between American Indian and U.S. government representatives, the repeal of the Indian Reorganization act of 1934, and the removal of the BIA from the Department of the Interior. However, these points are contextualized for a mainstream audience in the documents that follow "Wounded Knee II." In a document, entitled "Wounded Knee[:] More Important than Watergate: A letter of the traditional Teton Sioux people to Mr. Nixon," the letter approaches Richard Nixon as the leader of another nation, stating the fact that "the Teton Sioux Nation signed a [T]reaty with your nation in 1868" (Wicks 1999, 1). 10 The protest itself hinged on the 1890 massacre and the abrogated 1868 Black Hills treaty: "We [AIM members and supporters, along with residents of the Pine Ridge Reservation] risked our lives at Wounded Knee because we believed this was the only way to focus world attention on the genocide practiced daily on our

people" (Wicks 1999e, 1). Unlike the efforts of Crazy Horse to remove the European-American presence from their land, the articulation even in this early document is informative and linguistic rather than physical or militaristic. Thus, the language of resistance and rearticulation of history drives the act of protest in this case.

This trend continues in an AIM document, entitled "On the Art of Stealing Human Rights," which lists 21 items that describe past and current practices that contribute to the U.S. Government's refusal to engage with American Indian groups as autonomous political entities. This document attempts to raise consciousness at two levels. First, it addresses the issue of identity and how individual and group identity are constructed within a colonial context. For example, the first item says that the initial step in "stealing human rights" away from an American Indian person is to "[m]ake him a non-person . . . convince Indians their ancestors were savages, that they were pagan, that Indians are drunkards. Make them wards of the government" (Wicks 1999b, 1). This very point also includes the second level, which is the historical record that the document addresses. Identity and history are bound up together: "Make a legal distinction, as in the Indian Act, between Indians and persons. Write history books that tell half the story" (1). Again, in this example, the version of American Indian history, and, thus, American history, that AIM uses to challenge dominant versions of history is bivalent in its treatment of the revision of documents, as in a European tradition, but also in which identity, history, and the land are intimately connected, as they are in most American Indian traditions. In a sense AIM is going back into the treaty and historical accounts, accepting that a truth can be determined. This truth, however, is tied to historical events. It is neither ahistorical nor universal. Rather, it is deeply interested in the historical process, one in which historical precedents are reset and reestablished to produce the American Indian population as a permanent underclass.

AIM not only recalls with the treaty, but it also calls into question the integrity of the Constitution, which specifically addresses American Indian sovereignty in its statement about treaties. The engagement with the official documents, here, demonstrates as Chadwick Allen notes in other contexts, a willingness to imbue the treaty with "Truth" and to accept the written document. The top of a flyer with a drawing of an American Indian man, wearing traditional clothing quotes from a federal court case, American Baptist Missionary Union vs. Turner (1852): "Indian Treaties are the supreme law of the land and stand on an equal footing legally with those treaties made by the U.S. with foreign nations" (Wicks 1999d, 1). This statement can be seen in the language of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution: "This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance there-

of; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding" (U.S. Const. Art. 6, Clause 2). Moreover, this article is cited in a speech by Russell Means at Navajo Community College in 1995, entitled "Free to be Responsible" (1995, 1).¹¹ The goal in many of these documents is not to undermine the truth claims of written history or legal documents but to change those claims.

Since the arrest of Leonard Peltier and disappearances of AIM members, activists have taken the metonymical power of *Wounded Knee* to the world in forms that create mainstream awareness while also offering a less physically dangerous method of resistance than those methods of the 1970s. Yet, these tactics are powerful in new ways. With the rise of information technology, so rises the ability of marginalized groups to tell stories that challenge dominant history. Even though storytelling is a key aspect of Lakota life as well as the lives of many other indigenous groups with deep roots in an oral tradition, telling stories in writing is a relatively new cultural acquisition that was brought about by deculturalization efforts in boarding schools and by missionaries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the use of writing to tell the stories and histories comes at a cost. This practice of forbidding indigenous languages is at the root of distrust for many American Indian people, as Joy Harjo explains:

To write is often still suspect in our tribal communities, and understandably so. It is through writing in the colonizers' languages that our lands have been stolen, children taken away. We have often been betrayed by those who first learned to write and to speak the language of the occupier of our lands. Yet to speak well in our communities in whatever form is still respected. (Harjo and Bird 1997, 20)

Unlike many in the boarding schools who used English to assimilate, AIM uses it to resist the colonial narrative, upsetting the truth claims of the Government by revisiting the documents themselves. Rather than assert a completely different and opposing view, the effort of AIM to understand and accept the contingency of itself with the U.S. government enables a revision that is transformative rather than distinct. On the one hand, there are still traces of indigenous cultural practices that inform AIM, but there is also the recognition that a pre-European contact existence is impossible. The construction of the metonymy that is *Wounded Knee* balances difference and contact, conceptualizing difference as being grounded in as well as resistance to the historical events of colonial expansion.

The treaties are central to the project of undermining the seemingly stable narrative of colonial expansion, but AIM also looks to more contempo-

rary evidence and uses documents, such as the report filed by the United States' Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws in 1976. This report, entitled "Revolutionary Activities within the United States, the American Indian Movement," contends that AIM

is a frankly revolutionary organization which is committed to violence, calls for the arming of American Indians, has cached explosives and illegally purchased arms, planned kidnappings, and whose opponents have been eliminated in the manner of the mafia. Some of AIM's leaders and associates have visited Castro Cuba and / or openly consider themselves Marxist-Leninist. (U.S. Cong. Senate 1976, 2)

This document, with a Cold War focus, goes on to contradict AIM's accounts and claims, vying for a neocolonial narrative that attempts to account for "Wounded Knee II." For instance, AIM states that it is not the voice of American Indian people and intervenes only upon invitation. On the contrary, this report asserts that AIM has done little to "improve the lot of the American Indians" (U.S. Cong. Senate 1976, 2). A statement by AIM, which appears on its current web site, chronicles the local changes that AIM made in its early years, such as intervening between civilian police and First Nations men and women to reduce the Minneapolis prison population. From its inception, AIM asserts that it has taken its directives from the material circumstances of American Indian people and First Nations groups as well as from history, while the Government report depends primarily on the testimony of an FBI informant, named Douglas Durham, who was a member of AIM for two years and worked closely in various positions with AIM leaders, especially noting Dennis Banks and Russell Means. The stories that come from AIM documents and autobiographies differ significantly from the Government's; thus, the conflict between the Government and AIM in the last decades of the twentieth century and first years of the twenty-first is predominantly informational. While the artists, writers, and documentary filmmakers seem to be attracted to Leonard Peltier's story, the FBI has waged its own information campaign of sorts. In 1994, the FBI took out an advertisement in the Washington Post to tell its version of the events that led to the arrest of Leonard Peltier in the deaths of two FBI agents" (Advertisement Washington Post 1994). In 2000, the FBI demonstrated in front of the White House to discourage then-President Clinton from pardoning Peltier. In the case of representing Wounded Knee II, the act of protest in its current popular, cinematic, and digitized forms cannot be separated from an effort to assert a viable historical alternative to that which exists in Government documents. Even Government agencies see value in the power of the story.

Many activists and artists worked to advance accounts of both incidents at Wounded Knee that are sympathetic either to the Lakota or AIM. These accounts include James Welch's Fool's Crow, Mary Ellen Crow Dog's Lakota Woman, Leonard Crow Dog's autobiography, The Life and Death of Anna Mae Aguash by Johanna Brand, Who Would Unbraid Her Hair?: The Legend of Annie Mae by Antoinette Claypoole, and Leonard Peltier's narrative, told by Peltier in the song "Sacrifice" on Robbie Robertson's Contact from the Underworld of Redboy (1998). All of these texts, plus several films, including Incident at Oglala and Thunderheart, have been produced in the last ten years as an aesthetic response that continues a version of history that is consistent with AIM's. However, there is more going on with these various representations of AIM's history than repeating sympathetic versions. The legal documents produced by the courts and federal government are reread with an eye to their gaps, and this lesson in reading documents is a large part of AIM's web site and sites that share AIM's views. Much of what AIM had done in the past is reread history, through the treaties and other colonial documents. AIM has circulated quotes from Custer, the 1868 Black Hills Treaty, and others to establish the tenor of the dialogue between American Indian people and the U.S. government. Often, AIM points out, that no dialogue really occurs, simply a paternalistic, dismissive, or hostile monologue on the part of the BIA and other government agencies.

Today, AIM still posts its existing statements, some of which are identical to those from 1973, such as descriptions of efforts to build educational centers and its ongoing information and letter-writing campaigns. These documents have always reached back into history to reread official versions from a U.S. government that contradicts the one that AIM says has "stolen" water, minerals, and land (Wounded Knee Legal). The AIM site contains streaming video and audio of recent protests that tell new stories within the rhetorical structure, established by the Wounded Knee metonymy. In addition, it goes beyond these activities by posting 441 Government documents, inviting volunteers to transcribe the scanned texts that were released to AIM by request under the Freedom of Information Act of 1966, which has been amended to update it in terms of digitized files. Most of these documents on AIM's site concern Government efforts to track, stop, or challenge AIM. The most egregious examples can be found in the relatively recent release of documents that implicate the Counter Intelligence Program of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which, as many know is examined in Ward Churchill's COINTEL PRO Papers (1990). Not all people agree on AIM's efficacy or honesty, however. This recent publication by Ward Churchill, though on its surface it seems to be in concert with AIM's position, has been undercut in a press conference, held in 1999 by Clyde Bellecourt and Dennis Banks, who say,

"We condemn the actions of Robert Branscombe, and academic literary and Indian fraud, Ward Churchill (who is to Russell Means what Edgar Bergan is to Charlie McCarthy), in the attack on us at the press conferences . . . in Ottawa . . ." (1999). The internal conflicts that tear at the fabric of the American Indian Movement have been present since the early 1970s, and they still trouble AIM today, as is made clear by the above quotation. It is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt to sort out these conflicts, so the remainder of the paper will focus on the rhetorical nature of AIM's public persona and international efforts. The role of narrative has been useful for indigenous groups, who are trying to retain their lands, as they have gotten support from human rights groups and the international press.

"Social Netwar"

The power, rooted in AIM's story, lies just as much in its connection to traditional practices as in electronic advances in conveying information. The nonhierarchical employment of many of AIM's activities, which are determined by local groups who call on AIM for help, echoes what David Ronfeldt calls "social netwar," which he explains in terms of the Zapatistas but also sees occurring in other organizations in the U.S. as well. The term netwar is deceiving, however, because it has much more to do with the network of people from various groups, local people, political organizations, and non-government organizations, like Amnesty International, than it has to do with the internet. According to Ronfeldt, netwar "refers to an emerging mode of conflict (and crime) at societal levels, involving measures short of traditional war, in which the protagonists use network forms of organization and related doctrines, strategies, and technologies attuned to the information age" (1998, 9). Ronfeldt's language is interesting here, because he notices the narrative power of having a "protagonist." Because the effort to win belief in the story, attracting an audience that is socially, economically, politically, and otherwise diverse with poetic and narrative devices is central. This is not to say that communication via the Internet is not a useful addition to social netwar activities, but it is only one part of it. Ronfeldt, whose publisher is RAND Corporation, a U.S. government research group, points out that this particular organizational method is not exclusive to progressive groups but can also be found in white supremacist groups and other factions of the fundamentalist Right. While in some broad structural ways, he can make these connections, I must assert here that the resemblance between AIM's organizational processes and those of the Zapatistas owes much more to traditional indigenous organizational patterns than to the grassroots efforts of the Right; however, both groups organize from the level of the individual rather than top-down. Both the Zapatistas and AIM work primarily to pressure the

governments of Mexico and the U.S., respectively, to give greater freedom to Indigenous people. Thus, their motive is to some extent ideological commonality, and it is modified by adopting the rules of the local people for whom they act. For example, according to Ronfeldt, "Marcos, often a spokesman for the Zapatista group, would learn that [one who does not know how to serve cannot know how to govern] and later point out that he could not give an order— his order would simply not exist—if it had not been authorized by an assembly or a committee representing the indigenas" (33). Similarly, AIM states,

Unlike other organizations and agencies dealing with Indian affairs, AIM uniquely begins with the people and pyramids to a national organization. It is the chapters which direct and dictate priorities to the national officers, who in turn create and guide AIM in the long-range strategy to meet those priorities. Each chapter is independent and autonomous. (Wicks 1999, 29)

Moreover, these texts have given a great deal of background and understanding to those interested in moving the rights of indigenous peoples to the political fore, internationally. Armed now with a multitude of narratives that use Wounded Knee as a central text, rich with symbolic and mythological meaning, AIM has gone on-line to participate in a larger, international effort to make known the interests of people with indigenous roots. The power of these narratives appears in the example of the Zapatistas, which Ronfeldt says "is inspiring radical activists around the world to begin thinking that old models of struggle—ones that call for building 'parties' and 'fronts' and 'focos' to 'crush the state' and 'seize power'—are not the way to go in the information age" (1998, 5). Instead, the Zapatistas, whose agenda is articulated by Marcos, have made appeals to the world, and, thus, have applied a good deal of pressure to the Mexican government.¹³ Whereas the Zapatistas have a very visible spokesman, the American Indian Movement has a strong narrative and uses its revised notion of American history to organize boycotts, join in solidarity with other disenfranchised groups, wage letter and e-mail campaigns to public figures, corporations, and Government officials, share information, and create communities, virtual and otherwise. Daily, the influx of information and action generated in physical and virtual spaces, such as in film, Jordan S. Dill's FirstNations listserv with a companion web site, alt.native, and the American Indian Movement web site, show the long, slow but stable process that "netwars" promise. The dynamic notion of a swift and radical change accompanied the often-totalitarian revolutions of the twentieth century. However, twenty-first century radicalism is grounded in narratives that appear in indigenous movements in general and AIM's rhetoric in particular and compete with those of global capitalism and its glossy detachment of "First World" wealth from "Third" or "Fourth World" life. 14

AIM's documents, as well as many of the source Government documents to which they refer or are informed by, provide access to a long story that too many Americans come to "very late," to echo Warrior's words about the journalists arriving at Wounded Knee in 1973. Analyzing these documents, AIM's and the Government's, by using recent theories about metaphor and metonymy, not only helps students, scholars, and teachers to learn recent and not-so-recent history but also gives them access to analytical tools and interdisciplinary knowledge. The idea of social protest is so distant to students today that their concept of the 1960s has more to do with fashion than with social and political change. Thus, exploring the history of the American Indian Movement via its documents reveals just how linked the contemporary moment is to the larger history of the United States.

Notes

- ¹ Throughout this article, *Wounded Knee*, discussed as a trope, will appear in italics, and, discussed as a place, will appear in plain text.
- ² The term *Wounded Knee* will be italicized and used throughout this paper as a text itself that is multiple and layered. It should not be read as shorthand for the title of Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970) but rather as a textual object that functions in various ways for the American Indian Movement.
- ³ A special 1999 issue of *Poetics Today* (20.3) considers the development of ideas that theorize the use of metaphor. Contributors include Monika Fludernik, Donald C. Freeman, Margaret H. Freeman, Philip Eubanks, Mark Turner, Masako Hiraga, Ingrid Piller, Gerard Steen, and Vimala Herman.
- ⁴ Surette points to the fact that the "responses" elicited by Jakobson are not necessarily from a psychological test but are most likely what Jakobson thought to be typical for the prompts mentioned.
- ⁵ This idea is discussed in the introduction of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (Brown 1970). R. David Edmunds claims that "while not very good history, [*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*] struck a responsive chord with the American public during [the 1960s]" (1995, 724). Although Edmunds is skeptical of Brown's accounts of events, he, nonetheless, acknowledges the power of using Wounded Knee as a central event for retelling American Indian history from an American Indian perspective.
- ⁶The excerpt from this anthology comes from Ohiyesa's From the Deep Woods to Civilization, (1916).
- ⁷ The words of Black Elk, translated by Flying Hawk and transcribed by John G. Neihardt, in *Black Elk Speaks*. Niehardt published the original version of this text under William Morrow and Company in 1932.
- ⁸ As Fludernik, et. al. indicate, referring to Fauconnier and Turner's phrase, "accidental connections" can occur as well as conditional "local, ad hoc constructions."
- ⁹ All of the AIM newsletters and flyers that are analyzed in this paper come from the archives at the Michigan State University Library, which were scanned by Mike Wicks and linked from the American Indian Cultural Support Web Site.

¹⁰ It should be noted that it is impossible to determine the authors of each of the flyers or newsletters cited in this paper, but they are to be found on the *American Indian Cultural Support Main Page* and come from the American Indian Movement or the National Alliance for Red Power.

11 Means's website lists this text version of his speech as having been given at Navajo Community College in Tsaile, AZ. This institution is now called Dine

College.

¹² It should be noted that this paper analyzes AIM's documents and public claims. While I acknowledge that many people who were present at Wounded Knee in 1973 have different and often unflattering accounts of AIM's leadership and that these perspectives are important, this paper will focus only on AIM's public, written statements that use the English language in the service of securing indigenous rights.

¹³ A helpful resource for looking further into how the Zapatistas have succeeded in getting international support can be found at a resource established in 2000 by University of Texas, Austin economics professor Harry M. Cleaver, Jr.

http://www.eco.utexas.edu/faculty/Cleaver/zapsincyber.htm.

¹⁴ For an excellent explanation and analysis of the meaning of the term "Fourth World," along with several resources regarding its use and history, see the Conclusion of Chadwick Allen's *Blood Narrative*, "Declaring a Fourth World" (2002, 195–277).

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