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CLOSING THOUGHTS

The news that the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in History would go to Elizabeth Fenn's *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People* came as no surprise to scholars in Native American and Indigenous Studies.[1] We have become proudly accustomed to the fact that books focused on early North American aboriginal history win some of the major prizes in the profession. As important as prize recognitions, however, those books—along with a host of equally excellent work (much of it cited in this Forum's introductory essay)—have changed the very nature of our understanding of the early American past. They have pried open old colonial histories, insisted on a *longue durée* of Indigenous power that stretched well into the nineteenth century, and complicated dualistic black-white understandings of race and slavery. We can now recognize, for example, that North America was a veritable continent of slavery, a global meeting place of slave systems that featured scores of Indigenous forms of slavery, all placed in dynamic motion in relation to the complex power dynamics attached to various colonial and imperial encounters. We now debate the terms and chronologies used to describe Indigenous political formations—empire, nation, confederacy, social formation—and we understand these to be co-constitutive with an uneven movement from contesting empires to an imperial nation-state in North America.[2] Less visible, perhaps, but equally important has been a body of work concerned with American Indians in the twentieth century, a historiography somewhat difficult to date, but marked in my mind by Hazel Hertzberg's 1971 *Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements*. Hertzberg introduced to the scholarly world a critical body of Native intellectuals and activists, Indian progressives who, in Frederick Hoxie's words, "talked back to civilization."[3] Subsequent scholarship has revealed rich historical complication: Indigenous political organizing in tribal, national, and international contexts, military service in multiple wars, major shifts in federal policy and legal decision making, social and cultural challenges and innovations, and the ongoing dynamics of settler colonialism.[4] But if the early American historiography emphasizes Indigenous power—formulated, in the classic sense, by Richard White, who argued that equivalence of power was the defining aspect of the "middle ground"—the twentieth century offers a story of highly differentiated power, the uneven relationships visible in the aftermath of American military conquest and ongoing efforts to implement social, economic, political, and cultural subjugation of Indigenous people.

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In that context, it has made sense to situate recent Indian histories at smaller scales—the community, the organization, the family, the reservation, the individual life. In these settings, both structural domination and complex forms of engagement and resistance become visible and compelling sites for analysis. Connecting nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for example, Frederick Hoxie's *Parading Through History* reveals complicated social, political, and economic dynamics among Crow people. Melissa Meyer's emblematic community study focuses on the White Earth Ojibwe reservation. Nicolas Rosenthal and James LaGrand have explored urban Indian communities in Los Angeles and Chicago, while Brenda Child's *My Grandfather's Knocking Sticks* begins with an exploration of her grandparents' Bureau of Indian Affairs files.[5]

One might argue that scholarship on the twentieth century reflects significant shifts in the narrative strategies of American Indian history. In earlier writings, federal policy created a narrative center, a point of commonality around which individual tribes might be arrayed. The more tightly focused studies of the twentieth century invited scholars to unravel the complexities of uneven power at a scale that allowed one to find agency and negotiation less visible as part of a national story of American conquest and Indian defeat. What was lost, however, was the opportunity to synthesize across Indigenous histories in order to build new and powerful master narratives.[6]

This question—of the power of a master narrative that centers Indian experiences—matters, for there are centrifugal forces pushing Indigenous histories outward, toward the margins. Powerful ideological structures surrounding the West, Indian "vanishing," and American self-recognition continue to whisper quietly but persistently that Indian people are somehow outside of history. The relatively small demographic presence of Indian people in the United States maps on to an assumption that Indian histories—while of course tragic—are essentially finished. They easily slide into occasions for emotional catharsis rather than accountability and serious engagement. The ways that we have centered critical inquiries into race on a black-white paradigm have continued to leave Indigenous histories at the edges of important social and theoretical concerns.

In the nineteenth century, slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction trump conquest, the Indian Wars, and the reservation era. In the twentieth, African Americans organizing around civil rights trumps Indians organizing around citizenship, treaty rights, and sovereignty. Analyses of the rise of the New Deal state gesture to the Indian New Deal, but fail to see the global significance of its formations of indirect governance. Indians may have been part of the urban histories of the post-World War II period, but the policies of Termination and Relocation seem a footnote to the larger demography of human movement. Indeed, the reduction of twentieth-century Indian populations to something on the order of 1 percent of the U.S. population testifies both to the logic of settler colonialism ("the elimination of the Native," as Patrick Wolfe has phrased it) and to the difficulties for historians of seeing Indigenous pasts in a situation of unevenness and domination.[7] The affective feeling of Gerald Vizenor's coined word *survivance*—survival and resistance in a complex world of both material and ideological power—aptly captures a twentieth-century dynamic, in which the defiant—but relatively weak—claim "we are still here!" replaces, say, the Comanche claim to an empire that stretched into Northern Mexico.[8]

I have tried in the preceding paragraphs to bracket the period between the Civil War and the New Deal. If what came before was in many cases contests of unevenly but

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often closely matched power, and what came after was characterized by extreme imbalances in power, then one might point to the Gilded Age and Progressive Era as containing a set of critical moments during which those changes took place. In a broad sense, the period offers historians the chance to do what historians do: explain change over time that moves human conditions from one state of possibility to another. How did the American state constitute itself anew through forms of military power, territorial control, population surveillance, social relations, and cultural production that were both residual and emergent? How did Indian peoples perpetuate political structures and cultural coherence in the face of military domination, land loss, and extraordinary cultural repression? What did it mean to Indian people to suddenly become a small minority within an imperial nation-state? How did new American economies centered on industrial production, continental and global transportation, highly abstracted value, and accompanying forms of speculation sit in relation to the resources and labor relations made possible by the acquisition of Indian land and the domination of Indian people? How would Indians adjust to the imposition of capitalist markets and social relations?

As the contributors to this Forum demonstrate so well, there are significant and telling insights to be gained from placing an American history defined by periodization in dialogue with an Indigenous history defined by Indian social and political formations. This dialogue will likely be characterized by the complication of what has been a classic analytical pairing in American history: on the one hand, the black movement from slavery to freedom to civil rights; on the other, the paradoxical rise of the United States as an empire of liberty. Together, these have offered a powerful narrative firmly and beautifully anchored by the trauma of the Civil War, a centering event that generates cause-and-effect genealogies stretching across the entire fabric of U.S. history. Indigenous histories offer analytical and narrative possibilities that unsettle this pairing, visible, for example, in works by Tiya Miles, Barbara Krauthammer, David Chang, and Claudio Saunt (among others), who have complicated black-white binaries and familiar histories in powerful ways.[9] Or consider recent work by historians who have viewed the Civil War as a *Western* struggle, or—alternatively—see the wars of Western dispossession as reverberations of the Civil War.[10]

The Forum contributors imagine similar linkages, overlaps, and dialogues: the relation of military, police, and civilian authority in Reconstruction and on the Reservation; the nature of citizenship and the still-forming state; the place of subaltern people in the booming culture industries; and the specificities of local, contextual, and complex racial *projects* even in the midst of what Michael Omi and Howard Winant have usefully described as broad racial *formations*—such things as the rise of Jim Crow, the legitimating discourses of scientific racism, various forms of immigrant exclusion, the contradictory desires associated with primitivism, and imperialist nostalgia.[11] As important, however, Indigenous histories should push all historians of the United States to take seriously the nature of colonialism and imperialism during a period of transition and continuity. Indeed, on this topic the conversation has visibly changed over the last decades. At one time, scholars rarely made the connection between continental and overseas empire. Then it appeared as a kind of obligatory gesture, a wave at North America even as the focus turned offshore, and 1898 became a ritual marker that kept imperialism and colonialism offshore as surely as 1890 kept Indian people locked in the nineteenth-century past.[12] Contemporary scholarship is marked by increasingly textured

understandings of the coexistent and co-constituent relation between ongoing settler colonial (also imperial) practices in North America with the practices of empire overseas.

The pieces in this Forum demonstrate that there are many other opportunities for similar reevaluation and reexamination. They suggest that, in a number of contexts, the overriding questions of historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era and of Native North America overlap to the point that they are often indistinguishable. In their introduction, Boyd Cothran and Joseph Genetin-Pilawa ask for the conversation to begin. As you come to the end of this Forum, I think you will agree with me that it has indeed begun—and done so in an extraordinary and promising way.

NOTES

[1]Elizabeth Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2014).

[2]Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Daniel Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2006); Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009); Anny Hyde, *Empires, Nations, Families: A New History of the North American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Claudio Saunt, *West of the Revolution: An Uncommon History of 1776* (New York: Norton, 2014); Joshua Reid, *The Sea is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

[3]Hazel W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971). Frederick Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era* (New York: Bedford, 2001).

[4]While there is no way to offer a comprehensive list, early touchstones might include James Olson and Raymond Wilson, eds., *Native Americans in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); and Peter Iverson, ed. *The Plains Indians of the Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985); Kenneth Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920–1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977); and Don Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945–1960* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980). A list of more recent works across a number of thematic areas might include Thomas Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); Susan Applegate Krouse, *North American Indians in the Great War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Alison Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Kenneth Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000); Tom Holm, *Strong Hearts, Wounded Souls: Native American Veterans of the Vietnam War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); Paul Rosier, *Serving Their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Daniel Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008); and Cobb, ed., *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism Since 1900* (School for Advanced Research Press, 2007); Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform* (Ithaca:

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Cornell University Press, 2005); Beth Piatote, *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); Kiara Vigil, *Indigenous Intellectuals: Sovereignty, Citizenship, and the American Imagination, 1880–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Charles Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* (New York: Norton, 2006); John Troutman, *Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879–1934* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012); Frederick Hoxie, *This Indian Country: American Indian Activists and the Place They Made* (New York: Penguin, 2013); Robert Warrior and Paul Chaat Smith, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: New Press, 1997).

[5]Frederick Hoxie, *Parading Through History: The Making of the Crow Nation in America 1805–1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Melissa Meyer, *The White Earth Tragedy: Ethnicity and Dispossession at a Minnesota Anishinaabe Reservation, 1889–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press); Nicolas Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); James LaGrand, *Indian Metropolis: Native American in Chicago, 1945–1975* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002). For organizational histories, see, for example, Thomas Cowger, *The National Congress of American Indians: The Founding Years* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); Cathleen Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869–1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); "The Society of American Indians and Its Legacies: A Special Combined Issue of SAIL and AIQ," eds. Chadwick Allen and Beth Piatote. *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* 25: 2, and *American Indian Quarterly* 37:3 (Summer 2013). For family histories and biographies, see, for example, Brenda Child, *My Grandfather's Knocking Sticks: Ojibwe Family Life and Labor on the Reservation* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2014); Andrew Graybill, *The Red and the White: A Family Saga of the American West* (New York: Liveright, 2014); Joy Porter, *To Be Indian: The Life of Iroquois-Seneca Arthur Caswell Parker* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001); David Martinez, *Dakota Philosopher: Charles Eastman and American Indian Thought* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009); Joel Pfister, *The Yale Indian: The Education of Henry Roe Cloud* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Linda Waggoner, *Firelight: The Life of Angel De Cora, Winnebago Artist* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008);

[6]One might see these different registers, in theoretical terms, in relation to three important books by James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987); *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); and *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999). One might also suggest that the concept of settler colonialism has emerged as the most important synthetic organizing principle of the last decade, with a substantial historiography too large to consider here.

[7]Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8:4 (Dec. 2006): 387–409. See also Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Walter Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[8]Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

[9]Tiya Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Tiya Miles and Sharon Holland, eds., *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Barbara Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters: Slavery, Emancipation, and Citizenship in the Native American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); David Chang, *The Color of the Land: Race, Nation, and the Politics of Landownership in Oklahoma, 1832–1929* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[10]See, for example, Adam Arenson and Andrew Graybill, eds., *Civil War Wests: Testing the Limits of the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); Virginia Scharff, ed., *Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); Ari Kelman and Jonathan Fetter-Vorm, *Battle Lines: A Graphic History of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2015).

[11]Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014); Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 107–22.

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[12]I'm thinking, for example, of the essays collected in the landmark collection edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), in which Richard Slotkin—almost singly—takes on the burden of connecting the continental and the offshore. In historiographic terms, it is worth noting the earlier connections made by Walter L. Williams, "United States Indian Policy and the Debate over Philippine Annexation: Implications for the Origins of American Imperialism," *Journal of American History* 66:4 (Mar. 1980): 810–31.

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