

Fractured Conversations: Indigenous literature and white readers  
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Like Douwe Edberts  
Freeze dry coffee  
I stand motionless  
But full of feelings  
Gin, native, abo, coon  
An inquisitive academic  
Then asks 'are you Aboriginal?'

Do I punch  
Do I scream  
Do I raise my arms  
To ward off  
The venomous hatred  
Which institutionalized  
Racism leaves unchallenged  
As they collect their evidence  
To reinforce their 'superiority',  
And our 'inferiority'

Am I Aboriginal  
Am I Torres Strait Islander  
Am I South Sea Islander

I laugh inside, at her ignorance  
I shake my head,  
But how can I pity  
A person who is identified  
As the expert exponent on  
Indigenous Australians

Eh Professor, big shot,  
Big cheese, or whoever  
You claim to be  
You've really no idea

Love to chat sister,  
But there's faxes to send  
And protest letters to write

I turn and walk away  
Preserving my dignity  
Without humiliating hers.

‘Feelings’, Lisa Bellear

In this article [1] I take the poem ‘Feelings’ by Lisa Bellear and a discussion of students’ reactions to this poem in the classroom as a starting point for an exercise in what Michelle Fine calls ‘witnessing whiteness’ (57-65) – that is, making whiteness visible to white people. The poem does this through a process of denaturalising or defamiliarising whiteness; making it strange. Alterity, as Michael Taussig reminds us, is a relationship, not a thing (130), and a recognition of the relational imbrication of whiteness in its others makes apparent the hierarchical structure which endows white people with ‘unearned privilege and conferred dominance (McIntosh qtd in Dyer 9). In foregrounding whiteness and making it visible for the white reader, the poem points to the ongoing colonial relation between white and indigenous constituencies. It reminds us yet again of how the postcolonial nation has been contracted through the figure of race[2] and of the objectification of the indigene. The poem, I argue, makes the white reader stand apart from and ‘witness’ the embeddedness of whiteness within the zone of racialised intersubjectivity. A recognition by white people of the racial location of whiteness within the intimate social relations of the everyday in turn allows for the possibility of the democratisation of racial identity and a ‘rearticulation of cultural, social and political citizenship’ (Giroux 130). We can read the academic figured in the poem as indexical of whiteness. Although she is not identified literally as such, her unmarked racial identification and her institutional status place her, at the very least, in a position homologous to that of a white person. That her racial identity is not named can, in fact, be seen as symptomatic of the invisibility (to white people) of whiteness – its significance as the category against which (racial) difference is measured. As Richard Dyer observes, ‘white power secures its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular’ (qtd in Lipsitz 369). Or, as other commentators have put it, ‘people [are] not favoured socially because they are white; rather they [are] defined as ‘white’ because they are favoured’ (Ignatiev and Garvey). Whiteness derives its meaning from its relationality; it is precisely the racialisation of minoritarian groups that enables the consolidation of an imagined community of whiteness, that is, the bringing together, in a collective, of ‘white’ Australians of diverse and otherwise often antagonistic class, regional, generational, ethnic and religious backgrounds (Lipsitz 370).

Turning to the poem, my central argument in this article is that the rhetorical questioning of the poem opens up a space of potential dialogue and puts the reader in a position where they can both reflect upon their whiteness and also upon the process of racialising the other. I argue that this space is, above all, a space of potentiality and incipience. It can be seen as a field of relationality in which affective and bodily reactions produce qualitative intersubjective change. [3] This relationality – our coming-together or being-together as racially differentiated others – is logically and ontologically prior to our separate(d) racialised identities. As Brian Massumi would argue, those identities are ‘inseparable from the immediacy of [their] relation’ (Massumi, ‘Too-Blue’ 197). When we do become consciously aware of the relationality, our awareness is always of ‘an ongoing participation in an unfolding relation’ (196).

The project of whiteness studies is precisely to make conscious this ‘unfolding relation’ between whiteness and its racialised others. One might anticipate that an awareness of this relation might constitute a basis upon which dialogue might be founded. I suggest that Belleair’s poem, in making visible or defamiliarising whiteness, opens up the potential for such a dialogue. However, what in fact eventuates within the encounter dramatized in the poem, is the evacuation of dialogue. The academic, and the institution of which she is representative, are characterised as being too focused on the ‘collection’ of ‘evidence’ on ‘Indigenous Australians’ to listen when the indigenous ‘evidence’ assumes a subject position and speaks. The poem investigates this space of encounter, its fractured temporalities and reinscription of white entitlement. In its many-layered textuality it figures a space of reading and listening which, while never divested of white power, does produce an affective response (in non-indigenous audiences) and hence the potential for movement and change.

The space of encounter within the zone of racialised intersubjectivity is opened up through the direct address of the poem where the reader occupies the same position as the internal addressee, the academic.[4] The academic has initiated the exchange by asking the poet to identify herself as an Aboriginal. This process of naming is foregrounded by Belleair for its will to power and is seen as part of a continuum of colonial violence in which the other is named, categorised and classified according to race descriptors for the purposes of colonial management and domestication.[5] The paradigm of contemporary descriptors – Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander – invokes earlier taxonomies, such as the genetic classifications ‘half-caste’, ‘quadroon’ and ‘octoroon’, which comprised the social darwinist base of the eugenics-driven programs of the ‘Protection’ era. Belleair also lists the slang namings of indigenous people, the racist terms ‘gin’ ‘native’ ‘abo’ and ‘coon’ which, in the vernacular context, perform the same function as other specialised lexicons in placing indigenous people at the bottom of a hierarchy of races.

The poet invites the reader to occupy the academic’s position and to name the indigenous person: ‘Am I Aboriginal/ Am I Torres Strait Islander/Am I South Sea Islander’. These rhetorical questions are stripped of their question marks and take on the force of statements. Colonising ‘inquisitiveness’ is not as innocent or unmotivated as it might appear; behind it is a genocidal history of race management. The fact that no answer is supplied by the poet foregrounds the act of asking – the will to know, to define, to objectify.

It is the dialogic, interactive space that is opened up in the posing of these questions by the indigenous addresser, in her redirection (through internal monologue) of these questions to the reader, that will be the focus of my discussion in this article. Through the use of rhetorical questions and the vocative case the academic (and the reader) find themselves drawn into the intersubjective space which constitutes the site of the racialisation of the indigenous other. Whiteness, historically resistant to questioning, is asked to account for the names through which it racialises the indigene. The process of racialised naming, thus exposed, reveals the supplementary logic of race. The process of making visible the constitutive dependence of whiteness on a race hierarchy challenges

whiteness' claims to origin, coherence, stability, purity, unity etc. Whiteness meets its supplemental displacement; the epistemologically unsustainable status of race as a category is exposed. Whiteness is foregrounded as a category of power-differentiation; the academic is an 'expert' because she is white and her whiteness is established precisely through claims to expertise and knowledge, that is, the elaboration of the categories of 'superiority' and 'inferiority'.

Once whiteness and race have thus been made analytically opaque, we can further unpack the social relations of this racialising moment, specifically as they involve gender. The indigenous addresser enacts this shift for us, when, challenging the academic's expertise and authority, she addresses her as 'sister'. The shift into a gendered relationality troubles the racialised intersubjectivity further. The use of the word 'sister' here is palpably ambiguous for the white reader; it can be read as either a warning off or a summons. It is ironic. On the one hand, it deconstructs the supposed understanding of the two parties as to the academic's authority and opens up a distance between the two women.[6] On the other hand, the term 'sister' convokes the two women as interlocutors – drawing the academic into the intimacy of a recognition of her investment in racialised intercorporeality. The indigenous addresser's convocation, I would argue, enacts a call to the academic to account for herself. In foregrounding the racialised and gendered contingency of the two women, the addresser also confirms their difference and renegotiates, in her own terms, their relationality on the grounds of mutual respect; her actions are directed towards 'preserving [her own] dignity / Without humiliating [the academic's]'

How can we theorise this space of relationality further? I want to make a short detour at this point, taking the work of three communitarian philosophers, Jean-Luc Nancy, Maurice Blanchot and Georges Bataille, as a starting point for investigating the possibility of an 'anti-communitarian communitarianism' (Ghandi 12-22). These three philosophers' discussion of community would seem initially to offer an inviting way of thinking about contemporary Australian society, particularly if we emphasise their work's deconstructive theme. Bernasconi, for example, suggests that Nancy conceptualises a community which 'begins with the acknowledgement that community aims at an impossible immanence' (Bernasconi 4). A deconstructive theorisation of community resists this desire for presence. Borrowing from Bataille, such a theorisation foregrounds insufficiency, incompleteness and incompleteness. It introduces the possibility of (momentary and/or provisional) sharing and commonality but also insists upon maintaining an (impossible) openness of community (which is, by definition, bounded) to the other; it maintains an acknowledgment of irreducible difference and radical alterity.

The possibility of such a community is thus caught up in its own impossibility. A deconstructive conceptualisation of community imagines, after Blanchot, that 'the community, no matter if it has existed or not ♦ in the end always posit[s] the absence of community' (Blanchot 3). Blanchot, like Nancy, points to the difficulty of rethinking the concept of community whose tendency to totalitarianism has resulted in a history of 'grandiose miscalculations' and a 'background of disaster that goes much further than

ruin' (1). He develops the idea of the absence of community by drawing on Georges Bataille's formulation of 'the negative community: the community of those who have no community' (Blanchot 24). The phrase 'negative community' might be considered more apposite than the term 'community' in figuring the intersubjectivity of indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

I would like to suggest, however, that it is important to foreground our investments, as white scholars, in our call for the convening of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples under the sign of community. Nancy and Blanchot were theorizing the possibility of community against the backdrop of the devastating consequences of mid-twentieth-century fascism, especially that of the Third Reich (which can be seen to exemplify Blanchot's horror of history's ruinous 'grandiose miscalculations' [1]). The mobilisation of these theorists by contemporary white Australian scholars working in the area of cross-racial and critical race projects, foregrounds historical parallels between the two groups. Just as European fascism prompted in large part the work of the French philosophers, Australia's colonial history of terror can be seen to have given rise to a similar melancholy and nostalgia among white Australian intellectuals and their drive to resurrect and reformulate the possibility of community in contemporary Australia. We can locate the white imperative for a re-examination of the idea of community in late twentieth century white anxiety. Moreover, given that the concept of community is easily mobilised in the service of an assimilationist agenda, I feel reluctant to invoke it in a discussion of the zone of indigenous and non-indigenous intersubjectivity. The question then arises as to what kinds of anti-racist exchange might be possible in this zone, and whether the trope of a conversation or dialogue might be more useful than that of community.

To return to Bellel's poem, I'd like to suggest that the indigenous narrator's address to the academic precisely problematises the notion of a 'community' of indigenous and non-indigenous women. I'd argue that the concept of 'community' is put under erasure through the indigenous writer's defamiliarisation of the reader's whiteness. Although not completely dispensed with it is problematised and rendered ambiguous through the convoking of the academic as 'sister'. This term of address is the inverse of the traditional notion of 'sisterhood' familiar to us as the basis of the foundationalist feminism of the 1960s and 1970s.[7] The tonal ambiguity of Bellel's use of the word 'sister' as a term of address militates against it being read as a utopian evocation of a racially-neutral, unified collectivity. In fact this is precisely what the term in the addresser's speech act challenges.

Having destabilised the authority of the white academic, the indigenous addresser does not completely foreclose on a space of renegotiation between the two women. The space that she evokes deconstructs the race hierarchy in which white women's experience is the normative base of the being-in-common of all women. In critiquing the authority of the academic the indigenous addresser reconfigures this space and it is she who defines this space of alternative relationality, one which is not based on the power of the white woman to name and define the 'other'. In the simple act of claiming the right to speak, to name the white woman ('sister', in this case), and to refuse or deflect the will to colonise,

Bellel redraws the boundaries of that discourse of the being-in-common of women known as feminism. The radical rupture that the poet enacts in refusing to answer to the terms that the academic makes available to her, and her assumption of agency in naming – not only in the context of self-definition but also of the relationality of the two women – affirms and preserves her radical heterogeneity.

Thus she is not simply recasting traditional feminism into what Robyn Wiegman calls ‘feminisms-in-the-plural’ in which formulation minoritarian women are positioned as ‘late arrivals’ and racial difference is understood as a ‘second-order concern’ (Wiegman, ‘Feminism’s Apocalyptic Future’ 812). The feminisms-in-the-plural model domesticates difference, eliding its incommensurability. By refusing to conflate difference with subjectivity, the relationality that Bellel’s addresser calls into being resists any simple formulation of identity politics; it invokes instead a racially polyvalent, non-normative imaginary. It accommodates rather than disavows the white anxiety and fear that attend upon difference and the memory of a history of colonial terror. Rather than allowing for the repression of white anxiety, in the dramatic space of relationality and response-ability opened up in this poem, Bellel shapes a zone of co-habitation in which the reader can inhabit the anxiety of whiteness without either capitulating to or disciplining it.

This anxiety is very real, as I am constantly reminded when I use this poem in a teaching situation. I’m always taken aback at the level of (non-indigenous) student anger in reaction to it. Students experience the indigenous addresser’s (what I consider polite but firm) refusal of the academic’s demand that she be named, as disturbing and confronting. The poem drives directly into the dense affect which saturates the troubled zone of encounter. If this zone is characterised by white anger and anxiety, it is also a zone of intense ‘feeling’ for the indigenous poet, as the title of the poem suggests.

Literature has long been recognised as an effective means of textualising the embodied performance of everyday life. Everyday life comprises the concrete practices which embody and perform difference. The body is the site where power stops being abstract and becomes material; where it is acceded to or struggled against. Within the public sphere of the nation the ‘citizen’ is an abstraction, a generic ‘person’ who is non-corporeal. This non-gendered, abstract bodiless ‘person’ masks, of course, the persistence of white male privilege. However, the indigenous woman who has never had the privilege of suppressing the body and becoming naturalised as a citizen, is hyperembodied, hypervisible. The minoritarian poet ‘experiences’ the epistemological violence of naming as a physical violence; it objectifies the indigenous subject, rendering her momentarily mute and frozen. As Massumi suggests, relationality registers bodily before it registers consciously (Massumi, ‘Too-Blue’ 196). She ‘stands motionless’, next wondering how to re-act: ‘Do I punch / Do I scream / Do I raise my arms to ward off / The venomous hatred’. Once again, the question marks are dispensed with. These are purely rhetorical verbal gestures, miming the physical effects of power. The poet dwells in the pain of the colonised body. This is a moment of the failure of dialogue. The indigenous addresser ‘turn[s] and walk[s] away’. However, this turning away, this silence on the indigenous addresser’s part, is also a moment of cross-racial civility, brokered by

the indigenous addresser. In refusing to take part in a coercive dialogue the indigenous woman acts to 'preserve' her own 'dignity' without 'humiliating' the white woman.

In spite of my reservations about the application of the concept of community to the zone of co-habitation of indigenous and non-indigenous constituencies in Australia, Jean-Luc Nancy's discussion of 'literary communism' offers a way of figuring the relationality of indigenous literary texts and white readers. Nancy's theorisation of literary communitarianism takes as its starting point a discussion of the singularity of being. Nancy describes individuals as singular beings who are present to themselves only to the extent that they are offered or 'exposed' to one another (Nancy 58). Our sense of self is coterminous or co-originary with our being 'exposed' to contact with another self outside us. He breaks down the word 'exposed' to suggest that individuals are 'posed' in exteriority. This concept of exteriority suggests an outside coming into consciousness through the intimacy of an inside (xxxvii). Nancy argues that we come into being as selves in the presence of another; singular beings are always constituted in the act of sharing (25). To reiterate, Nancy is proposing a non-immanent definition of sharing: 'sharing is always incomplete or it is beyond completion and incompleteness' (35).

Turning to the subject of literature he argues that literary texts expose the singularity of being and that singular beings are always communicated to other beings in the singular. Further, we are 'convoked' as singular beings by literature which enacts, in his words, 'a contact ♦ a touching, the transmission of a trembling at the edge of being' (61). He contrasts literature's exposure of singular beings to myth's totalitarian will to power. Myth, he argues, endows community with closure and individuals with destiny. Literature on the other hand interrupts myths of origin and destiny: 'it is upon the exposure of singular beings that myth is interrupted' (62).

In interrupting the scene of myth and exposing the singularity of being literature can recover the voice of minorities suppressed by the colonising mythic discourse of nationalism. I want vigorously to resist the idea that the other is thereby assimilated to a national community. Rather, I am interested in how the communitarian address of literature productively foregrounds a zone of relationality.[8] In this zone the dynamics of intersubjectivity are complex and polyvalent. On the one hand we can read, in the literary address of indigenous literature, the strategic counter-hegemonic self-representation of indigenous writers. We can also, I would argue, read in it the finitude and interruption of mythic whiteness.

Paraphrasing Nancy, I would suggest that the cross-racial encounter in Bellar's poem dramatizes the scene of singular beings exposed to each other. The poem reminds us that race and whiteness are performed through the micropolitics of everyday social relations. It prompts the white reader to wonder whether whiteness can be renegotiated in order to move beyond it as a trope of domination. In the poem Bellar reconfigures what has variously been called the 'contact zone' (Pratt), the intersubjectivity of indigenous and non-indigenous Australia (Langton) or more recently the zone of national reconciliation. In her figuring of the exchange between academic and indigenous poet, Bellar develops an ethics of relationality. In the Australian context we can use the terms 'co-existence'

and 'co-habitation' in order to gesture to the co-presence of multiple and heterogeneous histories, memories and futures. Before turning away to the tasks awaiting her as an indigenous activist, the indigenous addresser reaches out to the white academic and folds her back into an ethics of relationality. This is, I would argue, an example of indigenous renegotiating of the politics of cross-racial exchange, an act subtended by the (indigenous) brokering of new modalities of whiteness. In the speech act of the poem we witness the performance of a set of intersubjective negotiations. The poem repositions whiteness within a space of co-existence and co-presence which affirms difference politically, culturally and socially. This repositioning constitutes, in effect, the renegotiation of the racialised social contract of the postcolonial nation.

This space of co-existence is not entirely comfortable, coherent or predictable for the white reader, as the ambiguity of the term of address, 'sister', demonstrates. Bellel's ethics of relationality derive centrally from the recognition that race and whiteness comprise a set of (inter)affective identifications. It emphasises the need for white people to inhabit our uncertainty and anxiety productively, without disablement or disavowal. It means accommodating new modalities of otherness which move beyond the binary of friend/foe. The fact that my students find this poem so confronting underlines the necessity of a pedagogy that accommodates what Spivak refers to as 'moments of bafflement' (qtd in Giroux 308) and encourages students to entertain the idea that it is possible to expand our performative repertoire of whiteness to witness but not be paralysed by our various affective dispositions of anxiety, grief, shame, fear, defensiveness and anger. The sense of confrontation that the poem evokes in the classroom points to the intense interaffectivity of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples and the fact that the effects of white affective imbrication in the racialising process of indigenous people are, despite the best efforts of white intellectuals, ungovernable, conflictual and exorbitant. Even if we can stand outside our whiteness intellectually, white anxiety is something we cannot easily, if ever, divest ourselves of.

Can dialogue or conversation, then, productively accommodate both white affect and indigenous agendas? If so, what kind of conversations? Perhaps those which allow for (white) silence/listening; for gaps, disjunctures, belatedness, non-alignment; for conversations each side of which are fractured into different temporalities. It is interesting to note that the 'dialogue' enacted in the poem is not a conventional verbal conversation taking place in real time. In fact there does not seem to have been any 'dialogue' (between the internal addresser and addressee) in this sense at all in the poem. The white academic's inability to listen and her aggressive 'inquisitiveness' leave the indigenous addresser no other option but to 'walk away'. Ironically, the moment of the indigenous addresser's 'turning away' from the dramatized encounter within the poem, however, reconvenes that failed dialogue through the poem's opening out into another audience, that of the poem's external addressee, the reader.

Indeed the academic's question and the indigenous persona's response appear to take place in parallel temporal/psychic zones (they are talking 'past' one another) and are brought together in the poem only as a virtual dialogue. The academic's question apparently meets with silence; the indigenous poet's response is formulated as interior

monologue. It may be that conflicted cross-racial dialogues in real time are also often marked by this kind of belatedness. The double scene of whiteness – of defamiliarisation and recognition; of repetition and reversal – means that white ‘responses’ are always at one remove from the event; they are always already too late. The cross-racial interlocutors are weighed down by history; there is simultaneously too much or too little to say. Virtual conversations (figured in memory or literary texts) can be seen as one instance of the instability (yet persistence) of the concept of cross-racial ‘community’ for indigenous and non-indigenous women. They remind us of Nancy’s characterisation of community as ‘unworking’, [9] as a site of fragmentation and suspension (Nancy 31).

The relationality between indigenous and non-indigenous people figured in ‘Feelings’ is overdetermined by many intersecting identifications – race, class, gender etc. While we may want to confine indigenous people to a (white-mobilised) category of race, the space of encounter which the poet figures is also characterised by gendered and also classed intercorporeality. The levelling effect of the term ‘sister’, for example, can be seen as being staged within the arena of class. The poet defines her indigeneity in terms of political activism and an embodied ethical professionalism. In claiming this kind of subjectivity, it might be argued, she challenges the claim of whiteness to be the exclusive index of social status and undermines ‘the feeling that ‘middle-classness’ in Australia is the sole reserve of White people’ (Hage 92).

The poem thus demonstrates the imbrication of race within a range of multiple identifications. Indigeneity, in the rubric of this poem, is understood in terms of political activism. In this the poem could be said to articulate a political imaginary of indigeneity. This relational political imaginary figures the spatial and temporal co-presence of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples who have previously been separated by the chronological hierarchy of social darwinism. This new political imaginary (so astutely and powerfully articulated by Mick Dodson in his Corroboree 2000 speech where he located himself and PM Howard within the same generation of Australians, for example), positions indigenous and non-indigenous people in a space of co-existence and co-habitation, where hierarchy is replaced with a sense of the coevalness of contemporary indigenous and non-indigenous modernisms. It is concerned (to borrow again from Nancy) less with the issue of defining who we are (although this project is indispensable in some contexts) than of imagining how we can live together in order to realise a broader vision of socioeconomic redistribution and the expansion of egalitarian social relations and practices.

The rearticulation of whiteness is central to this project. I do not here anticipate the triumphalist emergence of a seemingly benign and newly innocent whiteness or a post-racist society which has moved beyond racial division (Wiegman, ‘Whiteness Studies’). Rather the new whiteness would be constantly attentive to the persistent and ongoing reconfiguration of white power. Indeed, perhaps a necessary and inescapable condition of the new whiteness is that of dubiety and of inhabiting the difficult question as to whether an anti-racist white subject is in fact possible. We would be well advised to be mindful of George Lipsitz’s reservation about ‘the critical difficulty of that subject whose self-

production can only reconfirm a universal narcissistic white logic' (qtd in Wiegman, 'Whiteness Studies' 123).

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#### Notes

1 An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the 'Critical Contexts and Conversations' conference, Coolangatta, April 2002. 2 The first substantial piece of legislation passed by the parliament of the newly established Commonwealth in 1901 was the Immigration Restriction Act which inaugurated what has come to be known as the White Australia policy (Hirst: 285).

3 My argument here draws on Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*. London: Duke University Press, 2002.

4 This is not to imply that I'm reading this poem as an autobiographical statement which invokes the category of unmediated personal experience. I am suggesting rather than the speech act of the poem enacts a performative self in relation to a set of various addressees (ie the internal addressee to whom the vocative voice is directed; the reader; and possibly but, to me, least significant the 'real' addressee in the 'real' encounter which the poem presumably describes and references). While this performative self is not necessarily fixed or originary, there is an inevitable slippage between the addressee and addresser of the internal speech act of the poem on the one hand and the reader and the poet on the other.

5 In my own naming/identification of the indigenous poet I draw on Bellear's identification of herself as 'an indigenous urban feminist' (Bellear, *Beyond Reconciliation* 102)

6 Bellear comments that 'I deliberately chose the term *sister* as opposed to *tidda* which usually refers to indigenous women or white women who are genuine [in their anti-racism]' (personal correspondence with the author, 16/9/04). 7 Bellear comments that 'I deliberately made the academic a woman to make the point that non-Aboriginal women can be just as insensitive as men' (personal correspondence with the author, 16/9/04). My thanks to Lisa Bellear for her incisive comments on this article in draft form.

8 I would, once again, want to resist the notion of a coherent or essentialised literary community. The audiences or publics that indigenous literature convene are many and various, often reading or contextualizing the texts in very different ways. The main audience that I am focusing on in this article is a white audience reading indigenous texts.

9 This term (*desoeuvr*) which he borrows from Blanchot, has also been translated as 'inoperative', as in the title of the University of Minnesota Press edition of *The Inoperative Community*.

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