Matthew L.M. Fletcher. *The Ghost Road: Anishinaabe Responses to Indian Hating*. Fulcrum Press, 2020. 201pp. ISBN: 9781682752333.
https://fulcrum.bookstore.ipgbook.com/the-ghost-road-products-9781682752333.php

The title of Matthew Fletcher's newest book is dark and a bit scary, as is the cover image. It tackles "ancient" and "modern" forms of Indian hate in the United States, aptly creating a distinction from past and present. Situating Indian-hating in the past would lead a reader to think that past forms of hate aren't still informing the daily lives of Indigenous peoples (they are) and that in contemporary times there are "simple repetitions of the older examples of Indian-hating" (170). This is central to the message this book conveys: Indian-hating is past and present, but it need not be future.

The Ghost Road: Anishinaabe Responses to Indian Hating is profoundly different than Fletcher's previous publications, both in style and content. While much of Fletcher's work could be classified as being of service to the discipline of law, namely in bringing clarity to Federal Indian law and to Tribal Courts and legal systems, this new work infuses storytelling, historical recounting, and Anishinaabe philosophy into topics of Indian policy and law, crafting for us a very readable text. In many ways, this is a significant departure for Fletcher, but also a return home to Anishinaabe storytelling and its ultimate purpose—to get us to think! The narrative form he uses is accessible, straightforward, and also witty, whilst avoiding the citational crutch. Fletcher carefully chooses spaces in which to take "judicial notice" (which some might call social commentary) about the state of affairs leading to Indian hating in the US, both in the past and present.

The Anishinaabe stories that bookend concisely written chapters are thoughtfully chosen to reflect the issues engaged in each chapter, and they provide such memorable imagery that many of those stories stayed with me long past the chapter, allowing me to engage more deeply with the content. Fletcher starts the book with this statement: "Indian-hating is a murdering giant that must be defeated" (xi). His main characters include judges, Nanaboozhoo, Snapping Turtle, an ambassador to France, congressmen and presidents, Andahaunahquodishkung, jeebiwaag, Betosegay, Nokoqua, authors, Indian agents, manidowaag, abenoojiaag, journalists, property owners, tribal citizens, scholars, Mashos, windigo, and the Old Toad-Woman to name a few—with a brief shout out to Homer Simpson on page 50.

I quickly understood and fell in love with Fletcher's approach – tell an Anishinaabe story at the front of your chapter. Make it interesting and compelling. Offer different versions and nuances without confusing the reader or prescribing what they are to understand or

how they are to understand it. Give them agency, but help them. Respect that Anishinaabe stories have levels of complexity. Do not force an interpretive lens on your reader. Circle back at the end of your chapter and hint to the reader why you think the story is relevant to this particular subject (note that he does this with the book's overall structure as well). It's brilliant. It's also inherently Anishinaabe. For example, when an issue arises and you seek the advice of an Elder or a Knowledge Keeper, they will often respond with a story. There may be moments in time when you're listening to the story where you wonder to yourself, "what could this possibly have to do with the issue at hand?" So, while you are listening (reading), you are also thinking about why this story was introduced. This activates your brain, your spirit, your cultural knowledge, your humility. So often, when I read, I forget to engage. I read passively, and I need to remind myself to analyse. I really appreciate how Fletcher wove this story methodology into his new book in a way that draws in the reader and gives them a responsibility to be thinking while reading. He is applying what many Anishinaabe scholars have written about and practiced in their work, in a variety of disciplines. He also frames the stories in the pillars of the seven grandfather and grandmother teachings and the mino-bimaadiziwin as the foundation of Anishinaabe inaakonigewin (law), and he reminds of their importance throughout.

Being a scholar of Canadian constitutional law relating to the "Aboriginal peoples of Canada," reconciliation, and of Indigenous laws and legal orders (especially relating to lands and waters), I initially wondered if a book about Anishinaabe responses in the US context would be relevant. Let me tell you that it is: Fletcher paints a compelling picture about historic hate as being largely based in theories of superiority, with an underlying objective of acquiring land, displacing Indian people from their territories (this is the kinder version of what might be called genocide), and exploiting the land, water, and everything on, in, and over it.

When I finished the book, I looked back at the cover. I felt unsatisfied at the promise that Anishinaabe "responses" would be central. I didn't come away from it thinking that I now had the answers or solutions to the modern problems that were perpetuating the Indian hate Fletcher had detailed throughout the book. I was disappointed. And then I thought to the stories Fletcher told, and to the fact that Anishinaabe people have continued to thrive and survive according to law and practices, despite these attempts at dispossession and eradication. The traditional stories and how they are told reflect a deep Anishinaabe philosophical approach to problem "understanding" rather than problem "solving" as the single objective.

It also occurred to me that the need to stop Indian hating is not the responsibility of Anishinaabe people. It's up to settlers and their institutions, states, and all who benefit from the results of Indian hate (what Fletcher refers to as "paper entities"). I think this book is for them. In the absence of sitting them down with an Anishinaabe Elder who would school them and provide them with guidance through story, listen, and help, this book starts to open the door for thinking about Indian hating not as an Indian problem, but as a non-Indian problem which requires responses. It's a challenge of sorts. And I think that if we are to take reconciliation seriously, and also to think about how to come out of the climate change crisis that is upon us all, we need to repair relationships. Understandings from this book are a good place to start.

While I was reading the book, I thought about emailing Fletcher to ask why or how he chose the title of *Ghost Road*. Is it a link to the story that he tells in the conclusion? About the need to keep moving forward despite the ghosts of Indian hating that follow Indian people everywhere, and the tools we can pick up along the way? Maybe it's that the chibay-mikinaa is about the importance of spirit—the journey we make when we leave our bodies—maybe it's a statement against anthropocentrism? Maybe he is encouraging us to return to spirit? Maybe he sees that the end of capitalist societies as we know them are on the brink of collapse? Maybe it's a reflection of a journey we need to take, and the choices that will be before us, some of which are irreversible? It might also be that regardless of which version of the story we take up, the moral is that the Anishinaabe carry forward; maybe looking back, maybe only forward. Maybe. I'm not sure about my interpretations. I'll keep thinking about it. So should you.

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