

Collaborative Auto/biography and Aboriginal “Enfranchisement” in *Occupied Canada*

In a prose poem included in Métis writer Marilyn Dumont’s 1996 volume *A Really Good Brown Girl*, the speaker, faced with a job application requiring an answer to the question “Are you a Canadian citizen?”, reflects: “I sometimes think to answer, *yes, by coercion, yes, but no* . . . there’s more, but no space provided To write my historical interpretation here, that *yes and but no*, really only means *yes* because there are no lines for the stories between *yes and no*.” The title of Dumont’s poem, “It Crosses My Mind,” suggests the degree to which the speaker’s very thought process is marked by her location at the nexus of competing discourses of citizenship. Her poetic response to the limited bureaucratic protocols of the application form implies that the supposedly “free” choice between checking the “yes” and “no” boxes is already prescribed both by the economic exigencies that lead her to apply for the job, and by the compulsory discourse of democracy, each of which demands that she be “qualified” for a position.

The collaborative auto/biography *Occupied Canada: a young white man discovers his unsuspected past*, written by Native activist Robert Calihoo and his friend white journalist Robert Hunter,¹ and published in 1991, was that year’s controversial choice for the Governor General’s Award for Non-Fiction.² *Occupied Canada* contributes to what Daiva Stasiulis describes as “the jostling for position and influence of diverse and competing paradigms or imaginaries of citizenship” that characterizes contemporary Canada (367). The particularly contentious state of affairs for Aboriginal communities is reflected in Dumont’s poem, which asks, “Are we distinct ‘survivors of

white noise,' or merely hostages in the enemy camp"? The question is more than rhetorical: the 1996 *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* recommends that Native Canadians should be recognized as having a "unique form of dual citizenship, as citizens of an Aboriginal nation and citizens of Canada" (Recommendations 2.3.8; cited in Henderson 421). The narrative of *Occupied Canada* is positioned within this conflicted space of possibility, where questions of coercion, democratic participation, and cultural belonging coincide.

In their adaptation of the conventions of autobiography and historiography, and their evocation of the traditions of collaborative ethnography, Calihoo and Hunter's work narrates "the stories between *yes and no*," to whose lack in narratives of Canadian citizenship Dumont attests. In so doing, their account occupies an ambivalent collaborative space, in the obvious sense that it is an auto/biography written by two individuals, but also because it both cooperates with and counters the oppressive—yet potentially empowering—"enemy," the dominant discourse of Canadian liberal democracy. This doubleness is a form of literary hostage-negotiation, in which Native identity itself—personal, cultural, and political survival in the face of the overwhelming interference of "white noise"—is at stake. In *Occupied Canada*, collaborative authorship raises doubts about autobiography's generic fiction of a "complete and responsible" self-articulating subject (Lejeune 192) and its mirror image, modern liberal democracy's legal fiction of the enfranchised citizen. Yet this narrative also risks a collaboration with these fictions in order to mobilize their literary and political power. In this regard, *Occupied Canada* is an "autoethnographic expression" as Mary Louise Pratt uses the term: an account that, rather than offering itself as an "authentic" self-representation, involves a "partial collaboration with and appropriation of" the dominant culture's idioms (7).

In her discussion of "as-told-to" life stories of Native American people written in collaboration with white co-authors, Susan Forsyth remarks in passing that historically, "the course of Native American lives has . . . in a metaphorical sense, been written for them: US 'Indian Policy' dictated where and how (and often for how long) they should live. Writing other lives," she concludes, "is both a literary *and an administrative* process" (145 emphasis mine). Cheryl Suzack has recently emphasized the importance of understanding "how legal texts inform and complicate our reading of the life stories of Aboriginal women, in order to claim legal texts as an overlooked discursive arena within which to recover the historical and cultural

formation of Aboriginal women's social subjectivity and agency in the Canadian nation state" (117). While Forsyth focuses her discussion on the literary elements of collaborative auto/biography, and Suzack reads legal texts as "an important material background against which to read Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*" (117), I would argue that Calihoo and Hunter's account makes "the imbrication of identity politics with political and legislative discourse" (Suzack 127) an unavoidable element of the auto/biographical narrative: Calihoo's very identity is presented as the product of his interactions with Canadian government policy, and his legal, cultural, and bureaucratic interventions are the unavoidable motor force of his literary life story. So, while Calihoo is a fully literate, English-speaking subject, his is in a perverse and partial sense a "dictated" autobiography. This paradox is, perhaps, one reason why *Occupied Canada* is narrated in the third-person voice, a "stylistic awkwardness" (Mumford, "Wrighting History" 27) several of the book's reviewers found problematic (see Seaton, Maracle), but which I would suggest registers the degree to which Calihoo's subjectivity is legislated by outside authorities.³

Mohawk commentator Brian Maracle writes that, "If *Occupied Canada* were a human being, he/she would be a manic-depressive genius under psychiatric care for a multiple personality disorder. The book has been put together by two people—but that's just part of the problem behind the book's schizophrenic nature" (J1). Maracle's incisive comments acknowledge the degree to which *Occupied Canada*—not to mention the authorial team, or Calihoo's own status as both an autobiographical subject and Canadian Native citizen—is both collaborative and compromised. Calihoo's uneasy position as a person of mixed European and Native heritage is articulated in terms quite similar to Maracle's when he asks himself at one point in *Occupied Canada* whether his ability to "pass" as white means he is schizophrenic (67). The question for readers, perhaps, is whether to consider this condition as it manifests itself, both in Calihoo's character and in the formal entity of his auto/biography, as psychological and pathological, or to insist on reading the historical, social, and legal contexts that produce this "schizophrenia" in relation to a narrative of "normalized" Canadian citizenship.

The third person voice thus signals the book's persistent difficulty in presenting a singular, coherent, "authentic" authoring subjectivity. Indeed, it is hard to know by what name to call the autobiographical subject of *Occupied Canada*, so qualified is his identity by its geopolitical locations, cultural contexts and legislative fiats. While *Occupied Canada*, the volume's cover tells

us, is co-authored by its subject, Robert Calihoo, readers initially meet the child known as Robert *Royer*, who is subsequently represented in a succession of different ways:

Among the prisons, the streets, the boys' school, the foster home, the reserve, and his original life with [his grandmother] Mama, Robert Royer had picked up several identities: Bob Calihoo, Robert Royer (*en français*), his nickname Rob Roy, a joke about his "Scottish" blood, then Rob Royer—or just Royer—and finally plain Bob Royer.

Each name suggested a style of self presentation (205).

As Betty Joseph puts it of another work, "The narrative continuity of the story is found . . . not in the continuity of an evolving consciousness" as in traditional autobiography, "but in the recording of positions that emerge through . . . struggle" (56-7). Phillippe Lejeune suggests that in autobiography, what the public consumes is "the full-fledged subject which we want to believe is true" (194), here presumably the authentic voice of a non-literate cultural "other" (196). In *Occupied Canada*, however, this desire for unqualified cultural "otherness" is persistently denied or inaccessible. The volume's narrative breaks what Lejeune calls the "autobiographical contract," in its collaborative composition, its third person voice, and its relentless qualification of its subject.

Calihoo's story is too complex to summarize in this essay, but I will indicate some key junctures where administrative and auto/biographical processes intersect: raised in Edmonton as a well-behaved suburban "white boy" by his Scots-Canadian grandmother, who harbours a pronounced antipathy for Indians, Robert is reunited on his grandmother's death with the runaway white mother he never knew and his French-Canadian stepfather, who eventually send him to a Jesuit school for delinquent boys. When he flees the school, Robert looks up his father's name—the only thing he knows about Albert Calihoo—in the phone book and contacts him. Robert learns, when his father takes him in, that the paternal-side members of his family are, to his great surprise, Crees from the nearby Michel Band Reserve. Robert is thus confronted by a family rendered unfamiliar by what he had been taught by his grandmother to think of as an alien race. His claim to whiteness is, for the resistant boy, "proven" by his fluency in the discourses of nationalism and Western religion: "This was all a mistake anyway. He wasn't one of these people. He didn't belong. He was white. He could sing 'O Canada' and 'God Save the Queen' and recite the Lord's Prayer" (23). On his arrival at the Michel Band Reserve, Robert surveys the

appalling living conditions of his new home with horror, and his imposing grandfather, seeing the look on his face, responds: “The enormous Indian’s mouth twisted and the words grated out of him: ‘This’s what it means to be Indian’” (21). In keeping with the *bildung* tradition of the autobiographical genre, Calihoo’s life narrative has an educational impetus: it is driven by his course of instruction in what “it means to be Indian” in Canada, in the economic, cultural, and bureaucratic narratives that situate his subjectivity and emplot his biography in complicated and contradictory ways.

Calihoo’s claim to this distinction is both intermittent and unstable: he discovers retrospectively that he retained legal Indian status for much of his young life as a “white boy” living with his grandmother and kept ignorant of his paternal origins, but was automatically “enfranchised” when his mother’s second marriage, to a white man, endowed Robert with legally-recognized status as white—though it turns out this automatic re-designation results from the application of an outdated statute, and Calihoo eventually has it reversed, actively staking legal claim to his Aboriginal cultural inheritance. As a young man, Calihoo witnesses the break up and sale of his family’s reserve, a process “called ‘enfranchisement’ in reference to the fact that, until 1960, Indians could only gain the vote by giving up their status” (Henderson and Ground 202).⁴ For the Michel Band members, enfranchisement offered both a way out of desperate economic conditions—the possibility of “a New Life” (41)—and the prospect of democratic representation.⁵ However, as Darlene Johnston puts it, enfranchisement “was a constant reminder to First Nations people that continued membership in their own communities was inconsistent with participation in Canadian society; that they could only have a place in Canada if they renounced their heritage and denied their identity” in a gesture of “self-alienation” (363, 361). Indeed, in this case, the continued existence of the Michel Band as a community was inconsistent with participation in Canadian society. As a result of the enfranchisement, effective on 31 March 1958, “the Michel Band ceased to exist” (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 39) and its constituency was declared, as Caren Buss put it, “to no longer be Indians” (Government of Canada). The matter of representation is further developed in *Occupied Canada*’s account of the events leading up to the enfranchisement, when a local priest points out that non-resident band members had no say in the discussion, having already lost their status by leaving the reserve, without having acquired any compensatory voting rights off-reserve: “They were non-status Indians now,” the Indian Agent responds, “Non-status

Canadians, too, the priest countered” (39), calling attention to the position of civic negation occupied by members of the Calihoo family.

Paid \$22,000 for his share of the reserve, Calihoo’s father is promptly asked to hand over his green treaty card: “he wasn’t an Indian any more. ‘Congratulations,’” the Indian Agent says (41). Albert’s enfranchisement ostensibly allows him prerogatives of citizenship denied to Indians in 1958, which included the right to vote and purchase alcohol. He discovers, however, that the recognition of such privileges is another matter: “To his dismay, he discovered that, when he marched into a bar and ordered a drink, the bartender and other customers still considered him an Indian. To them, he looked like an Indian, therefore he must be an Indian—and it was illegal for an Indian to drink. He was bounced” (42). Belonging, Albert’s experience with this expulsion from the pub/public place demonstrates, is authorized by both official and unofficial measures. Indeed, the informal territorialization and policing of civic space is pointedly established in the opening of *Occupied Canada*, in which the Royer family’s quiet white suburban neighbourhood in Edmonton is invaded by a “battered green Hudson” loaded with “long-haired, pigtailed, dark-skinned” Native people, an event to which Robert’s Mama responds by snapping at Robert’s uncle, “‘Indians! Get your gun, Andy!’” (3-4). Robert’s father, significantly, later meets him driving “a battered old green Hudson” (17), suggesting that “Mama” effectively polices both civic and domestic space.

While technically enfranchised, the former Michel Band members find themselves both without literal territory and occupying a cultural and bureaucratic no-man’s land. Calihoo, significantly, launches his autobiographical quest at the very moment he discovers the contradiction in the terms of his official identity: “although [the Michel Band members] weren’t officially Indians any more, because they had been born on the reserve, they weren’t registered as Canadian citizens either. *Taking his first halting steps in search of his official identity*, Rob Royer discovered he didn’t have one. He existed in a kind of legal limbo, neither Canadian nor Indian” (69, my emphasis). A possibility suggested in comments by Robert Smith is thus realized: the phenomenological conceptualization of the autobiographical subject as constituted by “reason and cogitation” shades “‘into a more pragmatically political one, where ‘self-constitution’ in the political sense can indeed be managed through ‘self-representation’” (cited in Joseph 57). This “self-constitution” is performed, not simply with the claim to voting rights, but with the autobiographical narrative’s address to the ways in

which “Indianness” is controlled in Canada through the legislation of identity.⁶

Calihoo’s subsequent life on the streets leads to a number of criminal convictions, and he lobbies from prison to restore his status as an Indian, discovering that while the Province of Alberta is willing to concede his claim, “there was another Canadian catch:” the rules insisted that to claim Indian status, you had to belong to a specific reserve, and the Michel Band Reserve no longer existed. “Bob,” the narration observes, “spent quite a few nights laughing raggedly alone in his cell over this one” (69); his narrative both highlights and ironizes the connection between citizenship and territorial/communal claims because the insight comes while Calihoo is incarcerated. In response to Calihoo’s inquiries, the province creates a special category for members of the former Michel Band: “The Alberta General Indian List,” with five Calihoo’s its only registrants. Calihoo, while technically restored to his status as an Indian, cannot regain his Band membership, since his Band was not and could not legally be reconstituted. Indeed, the Michel community could not represent themselves to the Canadian government in order to make claims for the reconstitution of or recompense for the reserve, since, as Henderson and Ground point out, “If there are claims which can be advanced on behalf of those Bands [that were enfranchised], there is, under the current specific claims policy, no one with standing to advance them” (202).⁷ This legal nicety is surely typical of what Neal Ferris would call the ongoing legacy of “catastrophic bureaucracy” in Canada’s relations with Native people (164). *Occupied Canada* tells us that “Bob now began to joke that he was ‘Chief of the General Indians’” (69), adopting a mock-legal title to authority, read as more broadly representative of what it means to claim Indian status, and as a literary rendering of the democratic “representation” of which Calihoo’s band is deprived.

This tactic addresses a question Susan K. Bernardin sees as a continuing challenge to Native American literary studies, a question that invokes the language of democracy: “Namely, what kinds of discourses ‘count’ as culturally authoritative and persuasive and according to whose cultural authority?” (487). Several reviewers of *Occupied Canada* seemed particularly offended at Calihoo and Hunter’s claim in a historical section that modern European democratic concepts might have roots in the traditions of the Iroquois Confederacy (see Brett and Byfield). These reviewers seem anxious about maintaining the concept of democracy as solely authored by western European culture (presumably making it European culture’s prerogative to

bestow on others as it sees fit). A central irony of *Occupied Canada* surely rests on its characterization of undeniably influential democratic principles and practices as “the great gift of the Iroquois” (190) to European culture, precisely the principles and practices whose rhetoric frames the colonial government’s regulation of Aboriginal citizenship and agency, as is borne out in Calihoo’s life story.

Certainly Calihoo learns the kinds of discourses that “count” in Canadian society and in government bureaucracies. In prison, he crosses another key autobiographical threshold: “Bob Royer went to the prison library, got out a copy of the Indian Act, and began to take charge of his destiny” (66). Royer’s agency at this point is thus defined by his collaboration with and resistance to the document that legislates not just his personal autobiographical subjectivity, but which governs the collective claims of Native people to representation in Canadian democracy: “Having hauled himself on board as an Indian, he knew he had to play henceforth by the rules of the Indian Act” (70).

In prison he compensates for his curtailed formal education by reading Canadian history. The middle 13 chapters of *Occupied Canada* are offered as the record of Calihoo’s research, an unearthing of his cultural and familial heritage—which turns out to be not just Cree but Iroquois, the “Karhiio” family having originated in a small group of Mohawks who emigrated to the West from Caughnawaga Quebec in the nineteenth century. Calihoo’s research forms the basis of efforts to reconstitute the Michel Band Reserve and reclaim the Band’s historical territory. The middle section of *Occupied Canada* is also, more generally, the account of 500 years of Native-white relations in Canada.⁸ Reviewers were uncomfortable with the book’s generic “two-headedness,” the “stapling of a history onto a biography” (Mumford “Wrighting History” 28), but as Lenore Keeshig-Tobias perceives, the history book within the biographical narrative offers a “radically revised view of Canadian history through Native eyes;” Calihoo’s auto/biography is focused through the lens of a pan-Indian cultural biography.

Occupied Canada’s structure intimates that the version of Canadian history embedded in the central portion of the book is the result of reading from “the inside” out, of research initiated while Calihoo was incarcerated. Part I thus ends with Calihoo’s discovery of Canada’s “unsuspected past,” a discovery that runs parallel to auto/biographical revelations. This version of Canadian history counters narratives of national progress, reading from the standpoint of Calihoo’s personal, familial, and communal stories: “Knowing

as he did how his family had ended up, he went back into the history of his people without any distracting illusions about how fairly or democratically they had been treated. And he began to read . . . [sic] (72). The historical section follows, beginning in Part II. However, Calihoo's co-author Robert Hunter claims that the idea for this aspect of the book came to *him* when, after representing Calihoo (who was ill) at a meeting of the Native Council of Canada in Ottawa in a bid to have the Michel Band reserve granted recognition, Hunter discovered the Calihoo family's Iroquoian history of migration to the West: "The book I had intended to write, telling Bob Royer's dramatic story of self-discovery, suddenly exploded in my mind into something far more staggeringly ambitious, never mind a mere TV series or a movie: a revised history of Canada, no less! From the *Native* point of view!" (Hunter 68). Hunter's own flamboyant claims to authorship here certainly complicate the notion that the historical portion of *Occupied Canada* is told "from a Native point of view;" they also signal a troubling nexus in the collaborative relationship.

The fact that Hunter makes the claim in his own autobiographical narrative, *Red Blood: One (Mostly) White Guy's Encounters with the Native World*, in which he asserts special spiritual connections with Aboriginal people, based in part on the discovery that his great-grandfather married a Huron woman, makes the matter more perplexing. This gesture represents what Bonita Lawrence calls an attempt at "border crossing" by "*virtually* white people" who invoke a distant Native ancestor, "usually for some form of personal gratification—including claiming (with dominant culture authority) the right to speak with a Native voice" (13). In *Red Blood*, Hunter, apparently aware of his compromised posture, characterizes his difficulties in accommodating his work strategies to the concepts of democracy and consensus used by his Native employers: "Not knowing at the time that I had any Native blood in me at all, I started to see myself as that most pathetic of creatures, a failed wannabe Indian" (65). As Warren Cariou recognizes, Hunter's discovery of his distant Native connection becomes a mystical validation for him, and he takes "a rabid and disproportionate glee in the prospect of having a blood connection to Native people. . . . He wears his Nativeness as a badge of authenticity, a guarantee of political and spiritual rightness." We must, I would contend, see Hunter's description of his act of political representation at the Council meeting (which is not included in the narrative of *Occupied Canada*) as confounded in Hunter's own perceptions with his later claim to represent himself in his autobiographical text as

(mostly) white, but—obviously much more important to Hunter—as partly Native. This mix of motives participates in a process Cariou identifies in which the racial other in Hunter’s ancestral “woodpile” becomes a site of projection, a process anticipated in the collaborative dynamics of *Occupied Canada. Red Blood*, which could easily be subtitled “A middle-aged white man discovers his unsuspected—but much desired—past,” might well be considered Hunter’s attempt to appropriate the narrative of discovery initiated in *Occupied Canada* for his own autobiography. The account is revealing not just because of the ways it hints at the troubled dynamics of authorship in cross-cultural collaboration—which are never overtly referenced in *Occupied Canada* itself⁹—but also because it sets in relief the differences between Hunter’s and Calihoo’s claims as citizens: for Hunter, the claim to Native lineage is akin to honorary citizenship; it presents no risk to his privileged status in Canadian democracy, and in fact further “enfranchises” him to speak for Native issues.

Calihoo’s auto/biography is thus a record of how the auto/biographical subject is both regulated and administered *collaboratively*, by its inextricable involvement with the dynamics of collaborative composition and with varieties of public discourse. When he is released from prison, Calihoo achieves his Bachelor’s degree in Social Work and, by a strange set of circumstances, following his participation in an occupation of the Department of Indian Affairs offices in Calgary, is offered a job in the government Department itself, where he is eventually charged with a Native affirmative-action program, whose aim is the *collective* representation of Native people within the matrices of power. Calihoo’s employment with Indian Affairs is a development *Occupied Canada* narrates as a kind of penetration of the “alien camp” (as Dumont puts it): “Steady. Get that degree. Infiltrate. Bore from within” (216); he collaborates with the “enemy” with the goal of reconstituting it. His efforts to convince bureaucrats to give place to Native people in the administration of Indian Affairs meet relentless indifference and resistance. This section of the auto/biography reads as an account of the breakdown of the potential for “cultural participation,” with its “extension of Aboriginal citizenship into Canadian affairs” (Borrows 75-6). Indeed, *Occupied Canada* eventually characterizes Calihoo’s journey into the bowels of bureaucracy in terms that echo Joseph Conrad’s classic fiction of imperialist administration, describing Calihoo’s career in Ottawa as an exploration of “the heart of darkness . . . at the centre of the Canadian system” (218), a “dark region” suppressed by the enlightened rhetoric of Canadian liberal

democracy (225). There is also a dark appropriative side to the cross-cultural collaborative effort Calihoo and Hunter undertake.

By using the form of historiography and auto/biography, Calihoo and Hunter both evoke and resist a related set of public discourses: the mythology of the dying Indian race, linked with the history of the Department of Indian Affairs, and mobilized through the bureaucratic rhetoric of assimilation: in effect, *Occupied Canada* reverses this rhetoric by beginning with a Scots-Canadian “white boy,” and following the process of acculturation *into* his status a Native person. The doctrine of assimilation is also associated with a corresponding anthropological discourse of salvage ethnography, which, as Cynthia Wentz suggests, is traditionally “aimed at preserving the essence of ‘disappearing cultures’” (16) and is often accomplished through the form of the collaborative or dictated auto/biography, since the participation of the authoritative ethnographer implies that the documented culture is “too weak or unsophisticated to recognize or preserve the significant elements of its own identity” (Wentz 2-3). Calihoo and Hunter attempt to resist—and, indeed, reverse—the implications of the rhetoric of assimilation and salvage ethnography, even as their collaborative work registers the continuing power of the ideologies that fuel them. Early in its narrative, *Occupied Canada*, for example, offers an account of Robert’s trip to the hospital with his grandmother, where he glimpses Native tuberculosis sufferers: “Mama said they were dying off anyway” (17). The young “white” boy can barely bring himself to look at the faces of these patients: they serve as the uncanny reminder of a cultural past and potential future of which Robert is not at this point aware: “Robert did not like being watched by dying people. It was almost like being watched by ghosts” (17).

At his grandmother’s funeral, a threshold between his “white” and “Native” identities, Calihoo is aware of a space opening up between him and his white relatives: “It was as though a plug had been yanked and his world was suddenly swirling down a drain, following her into darkness. . . . Now that she was in the pale blue coffin with its little clasps clipped shut, lowered into that doorway-sized hole in the ground, with clay thrown in on top, he was just that much more removed than the rest of them, as though he was locked in some sort of invisible box of his own” (10-11). The young Robert later views his new home on the reserve as a kind of “purgatory”: “Maybe he had died, halfway died” (23). We might begin to wonder whether this is a life story or the story of Robert’s symbolic death into Native culture. *Occupied Canada* lays the responsibility for this ironic, elegiac narrative trajectory at

the feet of the Indian Affairs bureaucracy, whose “red tape” binds Calihoo to the past “like a mummy”: “The Indian Act contained within it, as if in a jar of formaldehyde, the body of the captive Indian. It was meant to keep him in a state of rigor mortis” (70). The figure of traumatic mortification also occurs in the person of Nelson Small Legs, Jr., an activist friend of Calihoo’s who, in response to the defeat of his passionate attempts to counter the Indian Affairs bureaucracy, commits suicide; his body is found dressed in full ritual regalia (215): with great respect to Calihoo’s friend, the narrative states that “In a very real sense, Nelson had merely done what Bob felt Ottawa wanted all Indians to do – to cease existing” (216).

Thus an anecdote that reverses such scenes of mortification is allied with Calihoo’s engagement in the active pursuit of Native cultural practices, specifically hunting and, perhaps even more important, storytelling. Calihoo conveys a story told to him by his normally taciturn father Albert while hunting, a story about another hunting expedition Albert undertook with a friend. Hearing a shot, and seeing a moose lying on the ground, Albert assumes his partner has left the dead animal to pursue another: “Albert went over, laid his rifle against the moose’s flank, and sat down on top of it to start rolling a cigarette. Suddenly, the moose was up on its feet, dumping Albert, the gun, and the cigarette makings, and charging away into the bush.” The lesson, his father tells him, is that “sometimes moose will lie down when their horns are drying. Albert had been quite wrong to assume it was dead” (26-7). Calihoo and Hunter, significantly, describe Calihoo’s reclamation of Native status as coming back from “legal death” (246). In the final section of *Occupied Canada*, he anticipates the legal battle to reconstitute his family’s reserve, compelled in part by his discovery that the Department of Indian Affairs has, in a back room from which he has been deliberately restricted, a number of file boxes pertaining to the Michel Band Reserve, boxes labelled with the word “EXTINCT:”

[T]hey were technically known as a ‘vanished people.’ It had been outrageous enough to have had his personal Indian identity snatched when he was a kid, but this was taking it away from everybody at once, kids included, breaking them off from their own history, denying their inherent worth. Dead. Buried by bureaucrats. Buried in legal-sized cardboard boxes, locked away in Ottawa. Worse, swallowed by bureaucrats—Canadian bureaucrats. The Calihooes. The dead, extinct, lost band of Calihooes (243).

The autobiographical narrative of *Occupied Canada*, conflicted as it is, stakes a claim to the *life* story, running counter to this narrative of extinction. It is,

significantly, an auto/biography that ventures a future claim based on legal and extra-legal responses to issues of representation and identity.

A reciprocal component of *Occupied Canada*'s resistance to the narrative of the tragically doomed Indian, is its contradiction of the corresponding notion of the "extinguished" land claim. This response is in the book's final section allied with a model of citizenship based on the treaty rights negotiated by First Nations *as* First Nations, and with the notion of the activist "Native occupation." Legal theorist Sakej Henderson asserts that the normalized narrative of democratic participation "masks the oppressive legacies of colonialism and racism" while fostering "a sense of unity, shared civic purpose, and a basic sense of belonging among a diverse population" (417). Henderson argues that First Nations people might refuse the "invitation" to federal citizenship in favour of maintaining their *sui generis* and treaty rights as *First Nations* citizens. While *Occupied Canada* does not explicitly develop such an argument, it opens up the space for imagining it. Lawrence insists that addressing the question "Who is an Indian?" in Canada must begin "with the colonial project of land theft and regulation of Native identity" (16). From his childhood, when his grandmother obsessively policed the racial boundaries of her Edmonton suburb, to Calihoo's early life in prison, when he worked to institute the Bail Reform Act, a law that redressed the existing terms of bail which prevented most Native people from release, because reserve land, held in trust by the Crown, could not be used as surety (62), to its very title which, of course, evokes the problem of *legal* title and the nation-state, *Occupied Canada* asks readers to consider the link between territorial claims and the fraught relationship to citizenship for Aboriginal people in Canada. *Occupied Canada*'s conclusion gestures toward the potential of Native acts of resistance to the "Canadian Empire" (263) in working for legal restoration of treaty rights, and the recognition that collaboration has its limits, as demonstrated in present-day occupations and stand-offs, like Oka, that marked Canada's "Indian summer of 1990," and to which the epilogue of the book refers (262). *Occupied Canada* stakes a claim to the auto/biographical subject position in order to assert the privileges of citizenship and to identify and recognize its deficiencies. Henderson submits that "Canadian citizenship . . . is a narrative confidently plotted from the colonial 'insiders' perspective." Calihoo and Hunter's story undermines that confidence, revealing in the process that narrative's—and its own—"inconsistencies and incoherences" and the "prismatic existence" they construct for Native people (Henderson 417).

NOTES

- * I am grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and to Kristen Warder for their contributions.
- 1 Hunter (best known as founder of Greenpeace) and Calihoo met in 1973 at an environmental cleanup after a freighter accident at the mouth of Johnstone Strait. They later worked together when Calihoo was employed as band manager for the Kwakiutl Nation, which hired Hunter to help with public relations in its fight against a development project in Port McNeill (Hunter 58-60).
 - 2 See Byfield; Marchand; Mumford, "Beyond writers' bloc;" and Ross on the controversy, and Jones, "Slash Marks the Spot" on critical difficulties in interpreting activist aesthetics.
 - 3 The actual dynamics of the collaboration and, indeed, the outcome of Calihoo's story are difficult to ascertain, since Hunter died in 2005 and I have been unable to locate Calihoo. Cass Sadek of McClelland & Stewart writes that "We too have been searching for Robert Calihoo for quite some time, but it seems he has disappeared. Our royalties department has done an exhaustive search . . . but nothing has turned up."
 - 4 "Until 1985, the various *Indian Acts* have made provision for an entire Band to voluntarily give up their Indian status, divide their collective assets and take ordinary fee simple title to their former reserve lands." The Michel Band was one of only two communities that ever took this step (Henderson and Ground 202).
 - 5 Gilbert Anderson, Chief and President of the Michel Band, observed that the latter was one motivation for the Michel Band enfranchisement: "My ancestors had no MP to talk to about their grievances, as we did not have a vote in those days. . . .Therefore, enfranchisement was the only alternative in order to obtain some independence from Indian Affairs" (Government of Canada).
 - 6 See Lawrence's "*Real*" *Indians and Others* for a theorization and case study of the ways in which Native identity is produced as a "highly contested set of realities" (6).
 - 7 Anderson testified in 1999 that "The Michel Band consists of approximately 703 people who have [now] regained Indian status under Bill C-31. We are currently housed on the general list. There is only one general list in Canada and I think we are the only people who are on it. We are actually descendants of the original Michel Band. . . . When we were first dealing with governments on the issue of trying to get re-established, we were considered to be a 'non-entity' by those governments. Therefore, we had to develop the Friends of the Michel Society. We represent solely the 703 persons who have status and are descendants of the Michel Band" (Government of Canada).
 - 8 *Occupied Canada* was published the year before Ronald Wright's *Stolen Continents: the "New World" through Indian Eyes since 1492*.
 - 9 These dynamics are explored in Griffiths and Campbell's *The Book of Jessica* (see, for example, York 157-82) and Wiebe and Johnson's *Stolen Life* (see Egan, Jones "Stolen Life?").

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