Listening to Bamewawagezhikaquay’s Teachers: Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s Citational Cosmopolitics

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Recommended Citation
Johnson, Shelby (2022) "Listening to Bamewawagezhikaquay's Teachers: Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s Citational Cosmopolitics," Criticism: Vol. 64: Iss. 3, Article 18.
Available at: https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/criticism/vol64/iss3/18
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Cover Page Footnote
I am deeply grateful to colleagues who have been interlocutors on this project, especially Sari Carter, Jeremy Chow, Sam Plasencia and Mariam Wassif. I would also like to thank Kate Ozment and Lisa Maruca for facilitating this special issue, and Megan Peiser for sharing her essay with me in draft. It is a privilege to think with all of you.

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LISTENING TO BAMEWAWAGEZHIKAQUAY’S TEACHERS: JANE JOHNSTON SCHOOLCRAFT’S CITATIONAL COSMOPOLITICS

Shelby Johnson

Nin zhe ka we yea
Ishe ez hau jau yaun
Ain dah nuk ke yaun.

To my home I shall return
That is the way that I am, my being
My land.

—Bamewawagezhikaquay (Jane Johnston Schoolcraft), “On leaving my children John and Jane at school, in the Atlantic states, and preparing to return to the interior”¹

Anishinaabeg stories are embedded in relationships and relationship-making practices—they constitute them. . . . Many see stories as the living strands (indeed, even living beings themselves) that constitute the relationships Anishinaabeg hold between themselves and with all of creation.

—Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwewidam J. Sinclair, and Heidi K. Stark²

In March 1839, Bamewawagezhikaquay (The Sound the Stars Make Rushing through the Sky, also known as Jane Johnston Schoolcraft) placed her two children, John and Jane, at a residential school and returned to her home in what is now the settler state of Michigan.³ In deep grief, she penned a poem in Anishinaabemowin: “Nin zhe ka we yea / Ishe ez hau jau yaun / Ain dah nuk ke yaun,” which her husband, federal Indian agent and ethnologist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, acknowledges he “freely”
translated: “It is learning that calls them; but tell me, can schools / Repay for my love, or give nature new rules?” While Henry’s lyric somewhat retains Bamewawagezhikaquay’s critique of white educational institutions in her questioning of “[giving] nature new roles,” it cannot encompass the poem’s cosmological sensibility. Indeed, his translation misses what Bamewawagezhikaquay would have understood as an “embodied ecology,” Tanana Athabascan scholar Dian Million’s term for a recognition that “the land is us, it is in us, in memory and resonance with living generations lived in close relation with places.” To more precisely reflect Bamewawagezhikaquay’s perspective, contemporary scholars often render her stanza as an assertion of co-belonging with people and the land: “That is the way that I am, my being / My land.” Margaret Noodin, an Anishinaabemowin language scholar, similarly translates the lines as a contrapuntal acknowledgment of loss and homecoming to generationally known places: “It is near / I am alone / As I go / My homeland.” These translations bring into relief Bamewawagezhikaquay’s recognition that Anishinaabe praxes of being human are related to being with landscapes, a position shaped by her mother Ozhaguscodaywayquay and her grandfather Waubojeeg’s teachings rather than the European literature she encountered in her Irish father Johnston’s library. In this essay, I argue that Bamewawagezhikaquay’s writings cite Anishinaabe cosmologies, including lineages of human and nonhuman teachers and perspectives on animate archives that should inflect new approaches to textual studies.

Bamewawagezhikaquay’s literary output, which included poems and stories composed in Anishinaabemowin, went largely unpublished in her own lifetime. Although a few of her writings reached wider circulation through a handwritten literary magazine she coedited with Henry—Muzziniegun, or the Literary Voyager (1826–1827)—some were mediated through his ethnographic texts, including Algic Researches (1839). Yet Henry rarely attributed these texts to Bamewawagezhikaquay, a bibliographic practice that undoubtedly reflected his ethnographic priorities, which emphasize universally accessible and abstracted knowledge directed at white settlers. Henry often translated her retelling of Anishinaabe stories out of their tribal-national contexts and instead took them as broadly emblematic of “the philosophy of the Indian mind” rather than as situated knowledge-ways. While “On leaving my children” immediately indexes the settler structures of power that shaped Bamewawagezhikaquay’s life—the occupation of Anishinaabe lands, confinement of Indigenous children in residential schools, colonial practices of coerced assimilation, attempted erasures of
Indigenous languages—the poem expresses, I contend, a “citational cosmopolitics,” what I define as a practice where Bamewawagezhikaquay invokes, and occasionally translates into English, human and more-than-human agents in the cocreation of Anishinaabe knowledge. As Bethany Schneider reminds us, “Translation and citation are related terms. Each entangles notions of movement and transport—to ‘cite’ something is to ‘summon, call; arouse, excite.’” In this sense, Bamewawagezhikaquay’s oeuvre challenges Henry’s early advocacy for the discipline of ethnography, a field that by the end of the nineteenth century would devote itself to “salvaging” Native cultures before their “inevitable vanishing.” Instead, her citational praxis goes beyond Franz Boas’s critique of salvage ethnography and his self-identification as a “cosmographer.” For Boas, “cosmographer” signals a scholar who considers every phenomenon “worthy of being studied for its own sake,” but for Bamewawagezhikaquay, the point is not to “study” but to live with human and nonhuman beings—to live with their ongoing survivance, as Anishinaabe critic Gerald Vizenor puts it.

By naming Bamewawagezhikaquay’s citational orientation a “cosmopolitics,” I further build on philosopher Isabelle Stengers’s term “cosmopolitics.” Stengers derives cosmopolitics from “cosmopolitan” to merge two related epistemologies—cosmos and politics—where cosmos indicates what we still do not know about “multiple divergent worlds” and politics reflect “articulations of the unknown” which we could “eventually be capable” of naming. In resisting the totalizing impulses of settler ethnographic writing, Bamewawagezhikaquay cites generational webs of human and nonhuman relations within a plural and “divergent” Anishinaabe cosmos largely “unknown” to settlers, while her stories extend these webs into a resurgent future. Indeed, her citational praxis constitutes a mode of ethnographic refusal, what Audra Simpson (Mohawk) defines as practices of Indigenous sovereignty opposed to settler paradigms of recognition. By calling the citational mode in “On leaving my children” a cosmological praxis of refusal, I additionally locate Bamewawagezhikaquay in resistant Indigenous epistemologies that Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith calls “dissent lines,” to show how her writings restore both Anishinaabe bodies and bodies of knowledge in long-standing relations with local landscapes.

In what follows, I contend that Bamewawagezhikaquay cites Anishinaabe art forms as animate archives that encompass dense embodied and ecological relations, where plants like pine trees and corn coordinate knowledge and history against colonial representations of Indigenous cultures within protocols of ethnographic salvaging, where
the racializing of a static “Indian mind” accompanies tropes of inevitable “vanishing.”\textsuperscript{15} Hers is a mode of thought that intersects with resurgent frameworks on orienting to Anishinaabe writings, including birchbark maps and cliff paintings, not as inert objects but as dynamic nodal points in shared and ongoing acts of communication, where texts are “living beings themselves,” as Doerfler, Sinclair, and Stark observe in this article’s epigraph.\textsuperscript{16} To do this, I build on literary critics who have approached Bamewawagezhikaquay as a biracial poet whose manuscript writings prompt us to move beyond the book as the analytic frame for engaging with Native archives and on scholars who have foregrounded her portrayals of intricate environmental networks.\textsuperscript{17} My critical approach therefore extends what Gordon Henry Jr. (Anishinaabe), David Stirrup, and Noodin define as “the politically nimble, formally various purposes to which Anishinaabeg writers have put their literary outputs.”\textsuperscript{18} In particular, I am influenced by the lessons of Anishinaabe medicine woman Keewaydinoquay, as well as Cree and Métis ethnobotanists Mary Sisiip Geniusz and Wendy Makoons Geniusz, to examine how Bamewawagezhikaquay cites plants as her teachers and relatives, a model of attribution that poses vital interventions for bibliography studies.\textsuperscript{19} Above all, Bamewawagezhikaquay’s citational praxis reflects an Anishinaabe cosmos of human and nonhuman copresences and their cocreations of literature. And her cosmos is rooted in place-based conceptions of plants and landscapes as knowledge-bearers and living archives.\textsuperscript{20}

“The One I See, the Pine”

Bamewawagezhikaquay’s lyric “My being / the land” enunciates an ongoing Anishinaabe existence within historically and geographically negotiated land relations that have important implications for thinking book history differently in terms of nonhuman animacy—an insight that opens up other poems in her oeuvre where she depicts plants and geographic formations as living archives, especially in “To the Pine Tree” and “On the Doric Rock, Lake Superior.” As Susan Berry Brill de Ramírez notes of “To the Pine Tree” and “On leaving my children,” Bamewawagezhikaquay centers movement within and homecoming to her community, with the former poem representing her return as a child to Sault Ste. Marie in 1810 after spending time abroad with her father’s family in Ireland.\textsuperscript{21} Desperately homesick, Bamewawagezhikaquay related to a friend that after crossing the Niagara ridge and seeing her beloved woodlands, she exclaimed, “There pa! see those pines!”\textsuperscript{22} She originally penned “To the
Pine Tree” in Anishinaabemowin but provided her own English translation, which models a cultural and linguistic accuracy distinct from Henry Schoolcraft’s largely imprecise and sentimentalized version of “On leaving my children.” However, unlike with “On leaving my children,” the conditions of Bamewawagezhikaquay’s movement to and from Ireland do not reflect the wholesale effort to eradicate Indigenous cultures exemplified in residential schools but constituted a brief visit to her father’s family, with the promise of returning to her Anishinaabe family. As such, Bamewawagezhikaquay adumbrates her intense attachments to Anishinaabe traditional territories with clarity in her translation of the poem, of which the final stanza reads:

Not all the trees of England bright,
Not Erin’s lawns of green and light,
Are half so sweet to memory’s eye,
As this type of northern sky. (lines 13–16)

Here Bamewawagezhikaquay contrasts her bonds to Ireland by materializing long-remembered connections to Anishinaabe landscapes, which she alternatively characterizes through *filiation* (“the pine, my father” could refer to her urging her father to observe the trees or it could be an address to the trees themselves) and *affiliation* (the pine “hails me, with a friend’s delight”).

Given the poem’s rhetorical context, Bamewawagezhikaquay’s lyrics also intervene in Romantic modes of imperial nostalgia, where travelers would often write about their feelings on returning home, a sentimental mode that portrays migrancy as an interruption in an otherwise intimate connection to place. Instead, “To the Pine Tree” memorializes her passage as a homecoming within a conventional Anishinaabe cosmogony. Peguis First Nation scholar Niigaanwewidam J. Sinclair explains that Anishinaabe stories emphasize “transmotion,” a belief “Anishinaabeg peoples have always been on the move, on their imaginative and narrative terms.” Indeed, he explains that transmotion “is a sovereignty concept,” or a cosmology of “material existence,” which gives shape to “the ways bodies travel, live, and die in this life.”

Stories of Niizhwaaso-ishkoden Ningaanaajimowin, or the Seven Fires Prophecy, represent the centuries-long movement of the Anishinaabeg from their residence with Wabanaki peoples on the Atlantic coast to their present home farther west, including their six pauses on the long passage until their seventh, and final, homecoming to Mooningwanekaaning (Madeline Island). While “To the Pine Tree” invokes Irish and British sites of imperial attachment,
orienting with Anishinaabe story conventions reveals Schoolcraft’s sense of mobility not as a displacement, but as a state of being, reflected in the pine’s “ever green” flourishing. Bamewawagezhikaquay thus challenges settler imaginaries in which Indigenous communities are violently conscripted as subjects who can be displaced, as Jodi Byrd (Chickasaw) reminds us, where the cultural and citational work of US expansion re-formats Native life as removeable and, ultimately, disposable.25

With Byrd in mind, I want to explore how Bamewawagezhikaquay’s gestures toward Anishinaabe movement open affordances for recovering her citational practice in “To the Pine Tree” as a recovery of place: “The one I see, the pine / I return back to my homeland.” Indeed, Noodin’s translation emphasizes Bamewawagezhikaquay’s acknowledgment of pine trees as relative:

Bizindamig ikeyaamban—Listen in that direction
Gii-ayaad awiiya waabandamaan niin—He was there I saw it myself
Zhingwaak, zhingwaak nos sa!—The pine, the pine my father!
Wiin eta gwanaajiwi wi—He is beautiful
Gaagige wezhaawashkozid—Forever he is the green one.
(lines 8, 11–12, 17–18)26

As illuminated by Noodin’s translation, Bamewawagezhikaquay’s vision of botanic kinship comes more fully into view when read with Wendy Makoons Geniusz and Mary Sisiip Geniusz, who are Anishinaabe-mashkikiwikwe, medicine women and ethnobotanists, and their recordings of their mentor Keewaydinoquay’s teachings on plant gathering and healing traditions. Keewaydinoquay relates that several species of pine flourish around the Great Lakes, including zhingwaak (white pine), apakwanagemag (red pine), and okikaandag (Jack pine).27 While each tree is significant for Anishinaabe medicinal practices, whose saps and barks are utilized as burn balms and as inhalants during sweat lodge ceremonies, I wish to linger with zhingwaak as the pine species Bamewawagezhikaquay cites. As Keewaydinoquay explains, “[T]he white pine was like a fine lady. . . . Every aspect of her being is refined and genteel,” from her slender needles to her smooth, gray bark.28 Zhingwaak’s sap, clear and thin, is valued as a base for lineaments within
everyday healing work of mothers, aunts, sisters, and grandmothers in the community.29

By reading zhingwaak within this medicinal tradition, I believe we can recover from the poem a curative “grammar of animacy,” Potawatomi botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer’s term for Anishinaabemowin verb structures that ascribe personhood to nonhuman entities.30 Although translations of “To the Pine Tree” generally render the pine as masculine, Keewaydinoquay’s teachings suggest that we might understand zhingwaak within matrilineal relations—she “was like a fine lady.” The pine’s welcome marks Bamewawagezhikaquay’s return to her mother and her mother’s people, human and nonhuman. At the same time, with colonial expansion, deforestation accelerated throughout Michigan and Wisconsin where zhingwaak flourished because settlers considered the white pine ideal for ship masts and building materials.31 Zhingwaak became imbricated within imperial economies of extraction that elided complex ceremonial and medicinal uses. Yet by reading with Anishinaabe grammars of relation, “To the Pine Tree” cites a cosmos of coextensive kinship at odds with what Dakota scholar Kim Tallbear describes as a colonial “animacy hierarchy,” or a settler epistememe that cultivates economic and ontological interactions incompatible with Indigenous attributions of mutually obligated human and more-than-human existences, exemplified in practices that she calls “being in good relation.”32 Yet because zhingwaak’s uses are primarily curative, Bamewawagezhikaquay’s citation extends a tremulous hope for a resurgent healing of her Anishinaabe community.

While I have considered “To the Pine Tree” as a summoning of matrilineal medicine and botanic kinships, scholars have mapped additional citational matrixes in other poems. I want to pause with these critical conversations, specifically with “On the Doric Rock, Lake Superior,” because they open further avenues for retrieving Bamewawagezhikaquay’s representations of landscapes as animate archives. Schneider argues that “On the Doric Rock” wryly responds to US naval officer Melancthon T. Woolsey’s efforts to “teach” Bamewawagezhikaquay the history of the Pictured Rocks on Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Yet she was surely aware of these centuries-old lithic pictographs, which Ojibwe writer Louise Erdrich suggests continue to speak to the Anishinaabeg: “The rock paintings are alive.”33 Although Woolsey declares the cliff paintings illegible, the poem’s ekphrastic perspective invokes their animacy within ongoing Anishinaabe communication, even while the poem as a whole argues that the cliffs were devised by “the great good sovereign of the skies,” who “[hath] left but traces of his fingers here” (lines 30, 32). Yet precisely who
Bamewawagezhikaquay cites as the “great good sovereign of the skies” is in question, as she could be denoting the Christian God, the Anishinaabe culture hero Nanabozho, who first invents pictographic writing, or the human artists who painted the cliff’s surface.

Schneider explicates Bamewawagezhikaquay’s complex citations of Woolsey’s letter and settler Christianity, as well as Anishinaabe aadizookaan (traditional storytelling), in the poem through Jacques Derrida’s definition of the “trace,” “which does not let itself be summed up in the simplicity of a present” but reveals “the disappearance of the origin.” The line “[T]races of his fingers here” evinces what Schneider calls an “anticitational citation,” where stanzas render “a philosophy of the ‘here’ to which [settler] citational structures do not stick,” even or especially, from the view of the Derridean trace, when signification is endlessly deferred. Instead, Bamewawagezhikaquay improvises “a radically indigenous model of presence.” Likewise, Stirrup argues that “On the Doric Rock” portrays a “terrain that is already charted, storied, narrated, and read. . . . And if the superimposition of European tropes fails to erase those preexisting marks, the resulting palimpsest” subverts colonial efforts to dispossess landscapes of not only Native peoples but also of their stories. Building on this work, I read the citational ambiguity in “On the Doric Rock” as a deliberate exercise of opacity in Édouard Glissant’s sense—as Bamewawagezhikaquay’s refusal to name what settlers desire to know about Indigenous lifeways, making it impossible for Woolsey to then “explain” Anishinaabe cultural practices back to her. Yet even if zhingwaak and the Pictured Rocks’ status as living archives remains somewhat opaque, Bamewawagezhikaquay’s citational praxis still gestures toward bidirectional communication: the pine trees “hail me, with a friend’s delight” and the Pictured Rocks call its viewers to “[look] up to nature’s God above the skies.” In these poems, Bamewawagezhikaquay evinces a kind of “listening otherwise,” in Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson’s words, to the land—“listen in that direction,” as she puts it in “To the Pine Tree.” When she traverses Anishinaabe terrain, the cliffs and trees actively call her, hail her, summon her—cite her—into being too.

“Cover Me Anew with Fresh Earth”

While Bamewawagezhikaquay’s citational praxis is, if sometimes subtly, an invocation of plants and cliff formations as relatives and teachers, Schneider’s analysis of “traces of his fingers here” extends an additional critical question: Why Derrida at all? Why not an Anishinaabe conception
of language and thus of citationality? In Anishinaabemowin, for instance, name’ is a verb that means “to find/leave signs of somebody’s presence.” Turtle Mountain Ojibwe poet Heid E. Erdrich glosses name’ as a metaphor for communication: “[It] arises from an Anishinaabe-centered epistemology that relates writing with landmark, and marking with ongoing presence in place. . . . When we find what another leaves, we are connected across time.” If we turn to Bamewawagezhikaquay’s cosmos as vibrantly alive with material “leavings,” rather than Derridean “traces,” then we can see how she roots her citational cosmopolitics in a here of storied landscapes—of human-ecological communication across time and space. These leavings are not tethered solely to linguistic signs, as they are with Derrida, but inhere both within “embodied discourses,” Osage scholar Robert Warrior’s phrase for the generational transfer of Indigenous knowledges through social routines, and “embodied ecologies,” Million’s term for cosmologies of shared human and nonhuman existence. Building on this work, I consider how Bamewawagezhikaquay’s citations orient differently to questions of origins—only ever infinite regression in Derrida—through her retellings of emergence tales.

If Bamewawagezhikaquay’s citational cosmopolitics is at once a deliberate practice of opacity circumscribed by the conditions that attend writing within settler systems and a gesture toward ongoing and future formations of anticolonial epistemologies, then her origin stories extend Anishinaabe grammars of kinship to the matter of emergence and growth. Her stories continue to build on the somatic and aural “leavings” of Anishinaabe communication—the pine tree who “hails me, with a friend’s delight”—to disrupt the ethnographic surveillance of settler textualities. In this way, her stories reflect Métis and Anishinaabe scholar Melissa K. Nelson’s contention that Native oral stories are vital sites for scientific and social knowledge formation because they represent learning and citation as a sensuous method of becoming situated in a local ecology, a process she calls “getting dirty.” An Anishinaabe cosmos such a process illuminates and emphasizes both porous boundaries between human and more-than-human bodies and multidirectional postures of attention, as learners listen to plant and animal teachings, what Nelson further describes as “a messy, visceral, eco-erotic boundary-crossing entanglement of difference that can engender empathy and kinship and a lived environmental ethic.”

In “Corn Story,” for instance, Bamewawagezhikaquay narrates the origins of mandaamin, or maize, for Anishinaabe communities, when a stranger sacrifices himself to become corn as a gift to honor a boy’s transition from childhood to adulthood. She deliberately begins the story at this liminal moment in the youth’s life, which is paralleled by his
environmental surround as winter shifts to spring: “It was on the first indication of spring, that his eldest son, had arrived at that age, when it is thought necessary for youth to fast, to see what kind of spirit would be his guide and guardian through life.”45 After fasting for many days, the young man is approached by a stranger dressed in a “deep green” blanket and feathers.46 He acknowledges the youth’s devotion to his community and that his motives in fasting are “to do good to [his] fellow creatures.”47 The stranger then tells the boy to “wrestle with him as it would be only by his courage and perseverance, as well as strength, that he could hope to succeed in his wish to do and get good for mankind.”48 At the struggle’s climax, the stranger urges the youth: “[W]hen you have knocked me down—clean the earth of weeds and roots and make the earth very soft and bury me. . . . Be careful never to let the grass or weeds grow on the hillock where I am laid and once in the month cover me anew with fresh earth. If you follow my instructions you will do good to your fellow creatures.”49 In order to know corn, in other words, the young man must participate in its cultivation—a haptic knowledge that arises from listening to and touching the stranger and the earth.50 As such, mandaamin gestures toward and cites dense knowledge-ways that extend across time and space, embracing the existence of Manitou like the stranger, the generational ceremonies of Anishinaabe life, and seasonal agricultural routines.

In contrast to Bamewawagezhikaquay’s cosmopolitical perspective in this story, settler dismissals of Anishinaabe ceremonies and agricultural practices persistently “unwitness,” in Drew Lopenzina’s resonant phrase, the different regimes within which mandaamin signified.51 In many Indigenous traditions, corn emerges from a woman and reflects the significant labor that Native women contributed as the primary cultivators of farmlands.52 In retelling a Potawatomi version of the arrival of corn, Kimmerer recalls another origin story, where a woman falls from the sky but grasps seeds in her hand, which flourish later on earth: “Skywoman buried her beloved daughter in the earth, the plants that are special gifts to the people sprang from her body. . . . From her breasts grew corn, from her belly the squash, and we see in her hands the long-fingered clusters of beans.”53 Closer to Bamewawagezhikaquay’s own context, in The Life of Black Hawk (1833), Mahkate:wi-meši-ke:hke:hkw similar relates that corn is a gift from a “woman of the clouds,” who rewards Sauk generosity in sharing food with her in a time of scarcity.54 In tales by the Anishinaabeg and their Sauk and Potawatomi neighbors, not only are zhingwaak and mandaamin on an equal cosmological footing with humans, but they also challenge nineteenth-century settler conceptions of pedagogical hierarchy, where plants or animals are rarely teachers. Indeed, however mandaamin
Bamewawagezhikaquay concludes “Corn Story” by figuring the stranger’s clothing into the parts of mandaamin: his blanket becomes the corn’s husk and his feathers the tassels, which must be “pulled away” in order to eat the kernels. Hers is a “telling . . . and teaching” that the young man uses to instruct his Anishinaabe community in their “careful attention to this plant.” Her somatic foregrounding of mandaamin as “a friend . . . [to] all mankind” starkly contrasts with colonial portrayals of first encounters with the plant. In her survey of colonial herbals, for instance, Wendy Makoons Geniusz cites John Gerard’s 1597 description of “Turkie corne”: “We have as yet no certain proofe or experience concerning the vertues of this kinde of Corne.” He leverages this unfamiliarity into a racial taxonomy—“certain proofe” and continues: “[A]lthough the barbarous Indians which know no better, are constrained to make a virtue of necessitie, and think it a good food; whereas we may easily judge that it nourisheth but little, and is of hard and evill digestion, more convenient food for swine than men.” Here Gerard not only negates the value of mandaamin within Anishinaabe foodways but also denies the validity of their scientific knowledges, instead rendering them “primitive” superstitions. Maya and Zapotec scholar Jessica Hernandez reminds us, however, that Indigenous agricultural routines reflect familiarity with botanic cycles and needs: when cultivated together, corn stalks and leaves protect other plants traditionally grown with it, including beans and squashes, the “three sisters.”

In the end, Bamewawagezhikaquay’s narrative exigence takes seriously the teachings of plants like mandaamin and zhingwaak, as well as geographical sites like the Pictured Rocks, with humans thereafter living these knowledges in everyday practices or seasonal ceremonies: the young man, after all, “observed every thing he had been directed to do.” Nonhuman beings and entities teach inhabitants “how to live life,” what Michi Saagiig scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson calls “land as pedagogy,” with Bamewawagezhikaquay’s other stories and poems also embracing animals like wolves and robins as teachers. As such, her writings evoke an expansive definition of textuality, where nonhuman beings produce generational knowledge and transmit it to the future, often through evocatively material and somatic textures—sound, taste, and touch are significant vectors for archival creation. Moreover, her citational cosmopolitics summon not only the tangible and audible
processes of shared communication inherent to Anishinaabe textualities but sometimes diffuse unseen forces too—spirits from the sky, root systems beneath the earth. In all these ways, Bamewawagezhikaquay cites a cosmos where, as Chickasaw novelist Linda Hogan puts it, “What is valuable lives, in much the same way as in dreams, beneath the ground, just outside of human sight, sometimes just a bit beyond reach.”

“As Long as There is Mondaumin”

As Heid E. Erdrich observes, Bamewawagezhikaquay’s stories take care “to give attribution (in the Ojibwe manner of saying who ‘gave’ the song or story) . . . within an Ojibwe literary tradition.” While more obvious pathways exist for considering Bamewawagezhikaquay from frameworks in textuality studies, given the dispersal of her literary output in manuscripts or in books published under other peoples’ names, pursuing a cosmopolitical method opens new avenues for re-imagining Indigenous book history. In modeling one approach, Megan Peiser (Choctaw Nation) urges for capacious conceptions of the archive as entry points for engaging with Native knowledge systems and, in this special issue, explicates a citational practice embodied by the seeds of Tanchi Ohyo, Corn woman: “These seeds hold stories, histories, families and relationships, they hold sacred covenants between people and our more-than-human relatives.”

Bamewawagezhikaquay’s writings likewise show that the Anishinaabeg and their teachings will endure “as long as there is Mondaumin to live and grow from the ground.”

In addition, while many scholars recognize that book history is rarely commensurate with Indigenous story routines, less acknowledged is that archives as living beings are illegible within settler ontologies, predicated, as they often are, on sharp distinctions between human life and (non)human (non)life. Yet what could it look like for textuality studies to cite lineages of teaching—not only Keewaydinoquay to Mary Sisiip Geniusz and Wendy Makoons Geniusz, or Ozhaguscodaywayquay to Bamewawagezhikaquay, but plants like mandaamin and zhingwaak to her? What if book history oriented not to texts not as inert objects but as animate beings? Bamewawagezhikaquay, when read with cosmopolitical answers to these questions, extends vital alternatives to textuality studies, for zhingwaak and mandaamin are not colonized subjects of empire, but flourishing teachers, who continue to call Anishinaabe sovereignty into being.
**Shelby Johnson** is an assistant professor at Oklahoma State University, where she researches and teaches on sexuality, race, and ecocriticism in the long eighteenth century. She is completing a book arguing that figures of a gifted earth organize anticolonial intimacies.

**NOTES**

I am deeply grateful to colleagues who have been interlocutors on this project, especially Sari Carter, Jeremy Chow, Sam Plasencia and Mariam Wassif. I would also like to thank Kate Ozment and Lisa Maruca for facilitating this special issue and Megan Peiser for sharing her essay with me in draft. It is a privilege to think with all of you.


3. She signed her name variously, including “J.S.S.,” “Leelinau” (Henry Schoolcraft’s nickname for her), “Jane Schoolcraft,” and “Bamewawagezhikaquay.” I have decided to use her Anishinaabe name throughout.


8. This expansive cosmology of personhood extends Eduardo Kohn’s argument in *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013): “Life thinks, thoughts are alive. . . . Wherever there are ‘living thoughts,’ there is also a ‘self.’ . . . ‘We’ are not the only kind of *we*” (16).


27. On pines and conifers, see Geniusz, Plants, 83–95.


29. Geniusz, 84.


31. Geniusz, Plants, 85. As Peter Linebaugh further argues in The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009): “The expansion of the British empire was by means of wood products and it was to the end of acquiring wood products” (90).


35. Schneider, “Not for Citation,” 138.

36. Schneider, 138; emphasis in original.


46. Bamewawagezhikaquay, 184.

47. Bamewawagezhikaquay, 185.


49. Bamewawagezhikaquay, 186.


57. Geniusz, 6 and 95.


66. I draw from Māori poet Robert Sullivan’s point that “Māori knowledge brings many together to share their passed down wisdom in person to verify their inheritance,” in *Star Waka* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999), 59. On citing teachers, see also Wendy Geniusz, *Our Knowledge*, xi–xvi.


68. In this article, I turn to reading and citation as dynamic processes, drawing from Lisa Brooks’s argument that a “critical concept in the Abenaki language” is “awikhigawôgan,” which she defines as “the activity of writing [and] energy in motion.” For Brooks, “until an awikhigawôgan has taken shape as an instrument, the process of awikhigawôgan is ongoing. . . . I am absorbed in this process now, perhaps you are, too” (xxii). See *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).