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Daniel Heath Justice. *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. xvi + 277 pp. $20.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8166-4639-5.

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Reading the Two Paths of Cherokee Literature On the cover of *Our Fire Survives the Storm*, a phoenix rises from a cluster of flames. It is a fitting tribute to its author's elaboration of and participation in what is perhaps the longest-running print literature tradition in Indian Country. Since the *Cherokee Phoenix* was first published in 1828, the bicultural image of the bird that gives birth to itself from its own ashes has served many readers and writers–Cherokee and non-Cherokee alike–as a figure for Cherokee survival through books and print. Unfortunately, the phoenix has also been taken to represent the fundamentally "assimilated" (and therefore "inauthentic") nature of Cherokee literary production. Whether viewed as classical or Christian symbol, this reading goes, the phoenix is a firmly Euro-western sign, and the Cherokee's adoption of it for their nation's newspaper masthead vignette, was an unembarrassed acknowledgement of their wholesale adoption of Anglo-American tastes and values. Daniel Heath Justice, however, strongly disagrees. He explicates this well-worn image anew, tempering it in the sacred fire of the Cherokee origin story–a fire that Cherokee poet Marilou Awiakta likens to "the spirit of the Creator, of the sun, of the people" (p. 203). By explicating the specifically Cherokee contexts for the phoenix's fire of rebirth, Justice asks his readers to consider how "a historically rooted and culturally informed reading of the Cherokee literary tradition help us to better understand Cherokee social history and vice versa" (p. 7). Justice's Cherokee-centered analysis derives from two main methodological approaches, each drawn from Cherokee tradition. The first approach is drawn from the Beloved Path, a Cherokee social and political practice epitomized by the life of Nanye'hi (Nancy Ward). Nanye'hi took up arms in 1755 and gained acclaim as a war leader. She later became renowned as a Beloved Woman, and spared the lives of many Euro-Americans. Justice observes that although outsiders (and some Cherokee) have represented Ward's actions as "betrayal," most "Cherokees today understand Nanye'hi's often contradictory approach toward preserving her cultural identity while adapting to the demands of the present" (p. 41). Justice presents Ward's actions as exemplary of the Beloved Path, a pursuit of balance and compromise that has the survival of the Cherokee Nation and its people as its ultimate goal. The second path is Chickamauga Consciousness, exemplified by the heroic military leadership and cultural resistance of Nanye'hi's cousin, Tsiyu Gansini (Dragging Canoe). Justice sees Chickamauga Consciousness as a "strategic" term (p. 142), a needed counterbalance in Cherokee society to the white [Beloved] path of accommodation and peace" (p.155). Tsiyu Gansini's story is necessary, Justice argues, because it helps right the balance between resistance and accommodation that is central to Cherokee culture. Through the combined paths, Justice recovers a methodology that "places the literature in relationship to some of its historical antecedents and its cultural contexts (p. 30)," and that "gives a new vocabulary for exposing the depth and significance of Cherokee literature and intellectualism" (p. 31). Justice's application of the Beloved Path and Chickamauga Consciousness to Cherokee literary history is divided into three parts–"Deep Roots," "Geographies of Removal," and "Regeneration"–as the book moves in a roughly chronological fashion from the 1730s to the 1990s. After a chapter on the Removal, that briefly touches on the way that Chief John Ross employed both Beloved and Chickamauga ways in his battle for Cherokee nationhood, Justice settles into a series of author-centered readings drawn from three periods in Cherokee literature. The first extends from the 1880s through the 1930s and includes discussions of Lynn Riggs, John Milton Oskison, Will Rogers, and Emmet Starr. Each individual lived most of his professional life away from the Cherokee homelands, yet "all saw their Cherokee ancestry as central to their selves" (p. 94). Of the four, Starr emerges as the most interesting given the way Justice reads his exile and post-allotment literary production in terms of the Chickamauga "principle of strategic defeat" (p. 142). Where the reading of Riggs is somewhat derivative of the work of Craig Wom-

ack, Justice's attention to the *History of the Cherokee Indians* (1921) by Starr is refreshing for the way its exposes Starr's "unflinching exercise of intellectual sovereignty, embedded fully in Cherokee culture and history and ignoring the conventions of written history of time" (p. 136). This is not an easy task, since Starr was a southern Democrat, a Freemason, and an evangelical Christian who, at first blush, appears to fit perfectly with outsider characterizations of Cherokee literature as assimilative. Justice argues, however, that Starr "advocated a political Chickamauga consciousness rooted in a Cherokee nationhood that encompassed Christianity" (p. 138). "If he was convinced that his people were doomed to erasure," Justice asks, "why would he continue fruitlessly working on books that were rooted in the concept of Cherokee continuity" (p. 140)? *Our Fire Survives the Storm* concludes with a series of readings in contemporary Cherokee literature. Among the works Justice examines in some detail are Marilou Awiakta, *Selu: Seeking the Corn-Mother's Wisdom* (1993), Thomas King's *Truth and Bright Water* (1999), Wilma Mankiller, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People* (1993), Geary Hobson, *The Last of the Ofos* (1999), Robert Conley, *Mountain Windsong* (1992), and Diane Glancy, *Pushing the Bear* (1996). For Justice, these works "provide a representative sampling of today's most compelling Cherokee writers" and "most clearly … express the principles of Cherokee nationhood[2] (p. 151). Although each reading is interesting in its own right (with Wilma Mankiller's non-fiction autobiography being the most overtly "nationalist" text in the study), Justice's interpretation of *Truth and Bright Water* by King is perhaps the most rewarding. Because he seems most comfortable with contemporary literature, Justice is able to stretch here, productively engaging the most troubling categories imposed on Cherokee literature and authors–outland, mixed-blood, assimilated. King's novel, with its Canadian border setting, shifting temporal perspectives, and largely non-Cherokee characters, allows Justice to ponder "how do we establish bonds of nationhood when they have been damaged or severed for generations (p. 169)? Unlike King's other works, which have employed the Cherokee syllabary and Cherokee protagonists, *Truth and Bright Water* "demonstrates the profoundly Cherokee sensibility" of its narrative through other means (p. 169). Justice's sensitivity to the subtle (and Cherokee) means by which King "Cherokeeizes Native Canadian literature" (p. 170) offers perhaps his greatest interpretive payoff, pointing the way for additional studies that may wish to consider how other Native national literatures work in urban, off-reservation, and even transnational settings. *Our Fire Survives the Storm* ends with a manifesto–"The Stories that Matter"–that reflects what will perhaps be the book's most lasting legacy: the clear articulation of a Cherokee-centered literary separatism that re-imagines both phoenix and flame as complementary, constitutive gestures of Cherokee peoplehood and sovereignty.

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