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Review of *Listening to the Land: Native American Literary Responses to the Landscape* By Lee Schweninger

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from non-Indian relationships,” Schweninger analyzes the complicated portrayal of the landscape in Native American literature in the context of this stereotype, which he calls the “Land Ethic Stereotype,” the framework with which he begins his study of a wide range of twentieth-century Native writers from a number of Native nations.

This complexity plays out in a variety of ways for the Native writer who feels “obligated on the one hand to resist and refute generalizations and stereotypes, yet who at the same time, on the other hand, feels obligated to identify what he feels to be a genuine Native American worldview or philosophy concerning the land that differs significantly from a non-Indian or European American worldview”; Schweninger negotiates this tension throughout his own readings of Native texts. Readers interested in the Great Plains will be especially pleased to see his work on Louise Erdrich, John Joseph Matthews, Gerald Vizenor, Linda Hogan, Vine Deloria Jr., and N. Scott Momaday. Schweninger offers a complex analysis that makes this book a welcome contribution to the fields of American literature, American Indian studies, American studies, and environmental studies.

After his evaluation in the first chapter of the Land Ethic Stereotype and his critique of historian Shepard Krech’s *The Ecological Indian* (1999) in the second, Schweninger turns his attention to some of the best-known Native writers. What sets this book apart, however, is his focus on these authors’ works that appear less frequently in literary criticism—including Erdrich’s memoir *The Blue Jay’s Dance* (1995), Linda Hogan’s *Sightings* (2002), and John Joseph Matthews’s autobiography *Talking to the Moon* (1945)—while contextualizing them within a recognizable and coherent Native literary tradition. Organized thematically, the book’s eleven chapters take on questions of authenticity, representation, and identity in a pleasing style that is theoretically grounded but accessible and lively, appealing both to scholars with a specialized focus and general readers with an interest in the volume’s subject matter.

Listening to the Land: Native American Literary Responses to the Landscape. By Lee Schweninger. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008. x + 242 pp. References, index. \$59.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

In *Listening to the Land*, Lee Schweninger demonstrates a Native American connection to Mother Earth to be a prevailing stereotype in cultural representations of Indigenous peoples in literature, television, and film. While refusing to dismiss “an indigenous relationship to, appreciation for, awareness of, or understanding of the land that is significantly different

The text could easily be adopted for graduate students in a seminar but is accessible enough for undergraduate research on the topic as well. Readers may wish, as I did, for Schweninger's conclusions about the texts he explores, but the book remains an excellent study of Native textual explorations of land, environment, and ecology.

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