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Authenticity, Right Relation and the Return of the Repressed Native in James Galvin's *The Meadow*

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This essay reads acclaimed poet James Galvin's 1992 semi-autobiographical novel through the lenses of Martin Heidegger's notion of authenticity and Patrick Wolfe's discussion of settler-colonialism. I argue that Lyle, arguably the novel's main character, is portrayed as living "authentically" in contrast to the deep inauthenticity of Ferris. I connect Western authentic dwelling with settler-colonial logic, centering my account on the figures of the "lazy" and "magical" "Indian." Ultimately, I find that far from rejecting settler-colonial logic Galvin's text plays out of a return of the repressed of the present absence of indigenous persons in the land and the text. ***Keywords:*** *James Galvin, Heidegger, settler colonialism, indigeneity, right relation, place and space, the American West.*

In the Great American Indian novel, when it is finally written, all of the white people will be Indians and all of the Indians will be ghosts.

–*Sherman Alexie*

Although there has not been a great deal of scholarship on it, James Galvin's semi-autobiographical novel *The Meadow* has had a place in the university classroom for some time. It is often read alongside the likes of Ivan Doig's *This House of Sky*, the work of Wallace Stegner, William Kittredge, Terry Tempest Williams, Judy Blunt and others in literature classes that focus on Western United States writing of place. In fact, my first encounter with *The Meadow* was in an undergraduate course I took with Leon "Pete" Sinclair at the Evergreen State College, a fact that leads me to say that Galvin's novel has been at least on the margins of academe virtually since its 1992 publication. For this reason, among others, a sustained look Galvin's novel is a worthwhile undertaking. In concert with the appearance and rise of Western Studies within the American academy and the subsequent academic interest in Western writing, an American cultural investment in the U.S. West as a place and space of meaning(s) remains very much in effect. This is perhaps most evident in the tremendous growth in population in the Western United States in the past thirty years or so.

It is in both of these contexts, academic and social, that I propose to examine Galvin's text. I aim at two points here. The first is that the kind of authentic "right relation" to the land that we find in *The Meadow* and which is reflective of the appeal of the American West as imagined place, as a cultural construct, to many white Americans can be understood in

terms of twentieth century philosopher Martin Heidegger's thought. The second is that this trope of authenticity is the result of the cultural psychology of what Patrick Wolfe and others call the paradigm of settler colonialism. Indeed as I shall argue such authenticity is predicated on the forced removal of Indigenous peoples, and their consequent near absence, while it at the same time plays out settler-colonial anxiety of that removal in a deeply troubling fashion.

I argue then that *The Meadow* trades on a specific type of authenticity, one that the mainstream and usually white culture of the contemporary intermountain West finds itself largely in comportment with. The notion of "authenticity" has of course been highly charged in humanistic discourse since at least the 1980s, although such discourse focuses on racial and cultural understandings of authenticity. I speak here of a related conception of authenticity, one that like assumptions of cultural authenticity serves to draw what Hayden White calls a horizontal line between cultural formations[1], but that is at the same time of a broader scope: the authenticity of the right relation to the natural world as a reaction to modernity that gets played out in very interesting and problematic ways in the American West, especially when seen in terms of the paradigm of settler-colonialism.

In their introduction to *True West: Authenticity and the American West*, William Handley and Nathaniel Lewis deploy the concept of authenticity as it relates to what we might call the ideology of the West, or at least the white ideology of the West. *True West* primarily concerns itself with two variations on Western authenticity, the first being what constitutes the "real West" against the creeping "fake West." The real West is seen as, basically, one of cowboys, Indians, miners, shoot-outs, etc.: the mythic Wild West with which we are all too familiar. This mythic Wild West is in opposition to the fake West of—let us say for example—the dude ranch or the ranchette.[2] The other conception of authenticity mobilized in *True West* is concerned with American Indian cultural and racial authenticity. This notion of racial or cultural authenticity has been perhaps the dominant object of study in the humanities situated as it is at the crux of structural racism, identity politics, cultural autonomy and the like. We humanists remain in the process of critiquing the kind of essentialism that such cultural authenticity plays on. Authenticity in the sense in which I shall use it, however, does not rightly belong either in or to the discourses that Handley and Lewis work with, although as my epigraph from Alexie's poem "How to Write the Great American Indian Novel" suggests, a certain spectral yet absolutely crucial residue of the question of Indigenous authenticity remains, a fact I will discuss at the end of the present essay.

The authenticity I query here then is less a social phenomenon or a mythic one, although it has aspects of both, than it is an ideological and philosophical one. Authenticity as I use it in this paper has to do with idea of a correct way of living in accordance with nature, the environment, the

world. This authenticity rests on a version of what I will call, in a nod to feminist Christian theologian Mary C. Grey, the "right relation."[3] The right relation is both an ecological and a cultural comportment; it is the "proper" and non-exploitative way of interacting with the natural world. Perhaps no other modern philosopher has devoted as much time to thinking through these issues as Martin Heidegger. Despite Heidegger's unfortunate politics, and as the recent publication of certain portions of the so-called Black Notebooks clearly show that those politics were both deeply ingrained and fraught with racism, his thought can help us to shed a brighter light on the issue of authenticity.[4] In Heideggerian terms, and more precisely the terms of Heidegger's seminal *Sein und Zeit* (hereafter *S&Z*), known as *Being and Time* in English, authenticity is an authenticity of being (not of Being); it is the authentic way of what Heidegger calls "being-in-the-world." I will argue that Galvin and Heidegger have a similar perception or sensibility about the world, one which will allow us to look a little more deeply into *The Meadow*. Beyond merely noting a concordance though, I want to address what I consider to be the ultimate effect of this notion of authenticity in the context of the settler colonial subconscious in terms of what appears to be an absence of any concern with Indigenous peoples in *The Meadow*. Ultimately we will find that while the absence of the native in the text follows the logic of settler colonialism in the most obvious way, that same logic has a very interesting residue or trace it seems to leave on the text.

Lyle's Authenticity in "The Meadow"

As noted above, *The Meadow* is a fictionalized account of its author's life as a rancher on the Wyoming/Colorado border. It tells a multigenerational story that centers on the titular meadow, tracking the meadow's owners and visitors through many decades. The main story centers on Lyle Van Waring, the meadow's fourth owner, and the narrator's (named "Jim," and a fictionalized version of Galvin himself) interactions with Lyle. Lyle is quite aged by the time Jim renews their relationship (Jim returns to the ranching life after being away for some time), and in some ways the novel's central theme is Jim's grief at Lyle's death. More important than this central theme, however, is the novel's worldview. Few books, including Stegner's meditations on the value of life in the rural West, more elegantly portray the Western notion of authenticity than does *The Meadow*.

At the heart of *The Meadow* then is a dichotomy, a binary correlation. This binary is not strict—it has many gradations—but it nonetheless undergirds the narrative. This dichotomy shows itself most obviously in the characters of Lyle on the one hand and Ferris on the other. Lyle is in an authentic, right relation with the land—and possibly the world—and Ferris typifies the opposite. Ferris is blight personified, a man with no sense of authenticity of being, which is to say that at first glance, he is a "thoroughly modern" man. If the meadow itself is the geographic and spiritual locus of

the book, the relationship that Lyle maintains with it, one of respect and stewardship, forms the instantiation of the authentic right relation. Ferris, positioned as he is on the barren ridge top above the meadow, makes a mockery of that relation. Not only does he lay his land to waste, as we shall see, but he shows his ignorance in his choice of land in the first place: it is simply not fit for habitation. In the meadow life is hard, but with respect and care, both a person and the land may be maintained. This is clearly not the case for the land Ferris occupies, and it is a crucial point. Ferris, although we are never privy to his thoughts, seems to understand his land not in terms of relationship, of wise use, but in terms of exploitation. Like William's Cronon's subtle mockery of southern Californian housing in the opening salvo of *Uncommon Ground*'s "In Search of Nature," Ferris' selection of property in terms of its capacity to provide a desirable location is pure folly. This, of course, is because he does not *understand* the land, and more specifically because he does not understand that it is not *space* but *place*.

Lyle sees things differently, and the meadow is nothing if not a place in the richest sense of that term. This place-ness, the capacity for rootedness, or as the later Heidegger might call it "dwelling," rests in turn on the possibility of a relationship.[5] That is the meadow as a dwelling place is to be understood in terms of its ability to develop and sustain a relationship between human and the flora, fauna, and terrain of that specific plot of land. This foregrounding of what we might call an ethical relation clearly valorizes both the meadow itself as dwelling place and even more importantly, it valorizes Lyle himself.[6]

As the novel begins, Galvin writes in a key bit of foreshadowing that Lyle "lived so close to the real world it almost let him in" (4). This phrase can usefully be seen as the book's program statement. Lyle, of course, lives in the meadow. The meadow then is cast as the *real* world; it is figure for the reality of the natural world that surrounds us. Lyle lives in the real world when he lives in the meadow, and what this means and what readers are to note is that Lyle is the type of person who knows *how* to live in the real world, how to live authentically as it were. This meadow is not available to all; one has to be in relation, the proper—even ideal—relation to the world to live in it and to be "almost" let in. Everything in Lyle's life, except his relationships with people is, in a sense, perfect. In the narrator Jim's "first dream," this fact is noted: "Here's the first dream: Lyle is still Lyle, still driving the '59 Studebaker that sounds more like it runs on an electric motor that a gasoline one it's tuned so fine, but you can tell it's a dream when he drive it into Denver" (9). Already the reader sees that Lyle is a master of the right relation, of authenticity. Lyle would never dream of letting his car fall into decrepitude, in fact he could not allow it. Note how the perfectly running engine is not part of the dream, but a part of reality. The narrator as much as says here that he is not idealizing Lyle, that Lyle really is the kind of man who keeps a thirty year old engine in perfect condition.

But this first dream gives the reader more than just snapshot of Lyle's authenticity; it sets up that same authenticity as in contrast to modernity, to waste, and ultimately to Ferris. It is the same modernity that is the target of the novel's central critique, and as such Ferris' role is just as important as Lyle's. In fact, in addition to depicting Lyle's basic comportment to the world—concerning nature, machines, and work—that dream also works as foreshadowing of his death later in the book. Evident too in the first dream is the pastoral function which the meadow itself, and by proxy its occupant Lyle, serve for the narrator and for the reader. Indeed, Galvin is a bit heavy-handed when the dream juxtaposes authentic, right relation-ed Lyle entering the Denver metroplex with the imagery of tape measures gone awry. In the dream, Galvin writes, "[t]he pickup is loaded down with tape measures of many sizes, all sprung out of their cases. …We start unloading them, but we can't because we are cutting our hands to shreds…. Then we are both crying because we can't get the tapes out and Lyle doesn't understand the directions for getting out of the city" (9). Denver as modern metropolis, Lyle's lostness in it, and the symbolism of tape measures — tools of measuring and portioning run out of control — all clearly point to a world, to a Being, that is out of control as well. For the narrator and for the reader, the meadow and Lyle's relation to it are the panaceas for this life out of control. As Jim the narrative voice tells us: "I want to go to Sheep Creek [the meadow], too, but I can't because of all these tape measures, different sizes, too heavy to lift, too sharp to touch without slicing my fingers" (10). The Sheep Creek meadow is a haven for Jim, an almost Edenic place that exists just out of reach of the fractured modern world. And Lyle is a solitary Adam, a Rousseauvian noble savage living in harmony with his world. And this image should be familiar to us; it is the dominant fantasy of white life in the West. It is the cowboy, the ethical rancher, and of course the romanticized "magical Indian:" a figure to which I will return later. Crucially though, as becomes clear later in the novel, this capacity for authenticity that Lyle demonstrates is not to be understood as fantastical. His authenticity is *not* a dream. Nor are readers to think of Lyle's specific right relation as something of limited practical value. We could all stand, the novel tells us, to be a lot more like Lyle. So what is Lyle like?

He is not a Luddite as we saw with the finely tuned engine above, but he shuns most of the mod cons. When his machines do break, he fixes them rather than buying a new one. Of Lyle's tractor, Galvin writes approvingly, "whenever it broke, Lyle fixed it—even if he had to forge a part himself, up in the shop, right in the middle of haying" (16). The reasoning here is not so much to do with a refusal of technology but with a certain kind of harmonious practicality that flaunts itself in the face of the modern era of disposability, planned obsolesce, and what Marx identified as the commodity fetish. By way of introducing what will become a more thorough analysis below, let us look at this passage through a Heideggerian lens. In terms from *S&Z* Lyle understands tools and machinery in their equipmentality, their pragmatic

contextual position in terms of what they do. This is what Heidegger calls in *S&Z Zuhandenheit* or ready-to-handedness and it is itself crucially predicated on what he calls the referential totality of the worldhood of the world as I will discuss in a little more depth below. For now though, let us note that on this Heideggerian understanding equipment is not understood in terms of its capacity to do things but instead in the context of its relation to the world at large. In *S&Z* then Heidegger opposes the ontologicality of *Zuhandenheit* to the "onticity" of *Vorhandenheit* or presence-at-hand, the latter being instrumental means/end thinking. As Heidegger puts it in the late essay "The Question Concerning Technology," that instrumental logic is the logic of technology which explains technology's "essence" as that which "enframes" (*Gestell*).

Lyle then sees in terms of equipment and not technology, in terms of the authentic ontological comportment of *Zuhandenheit* instead of the inauthentic ontic comportment of *Vorhandenheit*: "Lyle began to develop a philosophy of technology that had to do with whatever method did the best job, not like the rest of the culture he lived in, using the methods that were fastest" (55). While Galvin uses the term technology, Lyle's pragmatic orientation, his concern with what works best, is the mark of someone not caught up in the enframing means/end thinking of what Heidegger calls technology. It may appear that Lyle values only efficiency, an approach that might indicate a certain instrumentality, however it is clear that efficiency is not what is truly at stake. When we see the words "did the best job" in this passage, this resolutely does not mean something like "the method that uses the least effort to get the job done." Instead it means to do the job right; to do it correctly; to do it authentically. And such authenticity is immediately juxtaposed to its other—the modern world. Lyle's authentic approach is "not like [that of] the rest of the culture he lived in." This juxtaposition is a crux for the novel—a key to the sensibility of authenticity in *The Meadow*. Lyle's way of doing, his very way of being, is contrasted to modern society or culture here well before his foil Ferris arrives on the scene to illustrate much the same thing. Authenticity of being, the right relation, does not exist in modern "culture" in the purview of *The Meadow*, and of course it is this fact that forms the basis of the novel's developing elegiac tone. *The Meadow* mourns the loss of the right relation; the loss of authenticity of being and this mourning is its center.

Just before the passage quoted above, Lyle's building technique is discussed at some length. Galvin writes, "He drilled and pegged the logs together the old way because they couldn't afford spikes; only the roof boards and shingles had nails. But he found it a good way to build. Not as fast, but pegged walls are stronger than spiked, even if you could afford the spikes and the trips to town to get them" (55). Economy here plays some role in Lyle's methods but in fact we suspect that he wouldn't have purchased the spikes even if he had the money to do so. This suspicion is played out much later in this passage in which Jim the narrator asks, "What the hell is that?" Lyle answers, "A saw":

> "What kind of saw?"
> "For cutting a wooden wheel. It cuts a perfect circle."
> "What do want to make a wooden wheel for?"
> "A wheelbarrow."
> *I knew better than to ask why Lyle didn't just slide down to the True Value and get himself one with a nice rubber wheel.* [Emphasis added] (200)

The narrator does not actually tell us why he knows better than to ask but by this point we know all too well; it is not a matter of poverty or stinginess on Lyle's part, nor is it a matter of doing the best job. Instead it is a matter of authenticity. Lyle does not *buy* commodities—he *makes* tools even when the making is less efficient than the buying would be. As Jim puts it, "So he [Lyle] stayed with the old methods and became a master builder with logs," (55) and a master maker of tools we might add. Of course what is unwritten in all this, and what lies not too deeply under the surface, is that Lyle's insistence on a kind of unalienated labor is rather strange in the context of this modern world. To a certain extent, then, Galvin doesn't simply valorize the occasionally grouchy Lyle's authenticity and right relation. In fact, in a section concerned with the meadow's first owner App Worster, Galvin notes in what amounts to a reversal of a well-known passage from *Walden* "that the price of independence is slavery" (11).[7] For both App and Lyle, life in the meadow, which is nothing other than a life of authentic independence, is a life of—if not slavery—indentured servitude. It is avowedly not a life of ease despite the fact that Galvin heavily romanticizes it. We must note though that this servitude is master-less one, and that while App and Lyle and Frank must work and work and work until death, still this work is both fulfilling and to them, and even more crucially an object lesson in authentic living.

Galvin is doing his best here to make it clear that the right relation does not guarantee happiness. Indeed, insanity caused by isolation must be feared by those who live in too close to the "real world," as the story of Lyle's sister Clara tells us.[8] Life in the meadow and places like it, says Galvin, is not easy. But there is little doubt that he shows that this difficult life is, if done correctly, an authentic way of being. Work, struggle, and resoluteness in the face of trouble: these are the values heralded in *The Meadow* and they are of course the mythic values of the "authentic" West.

Heidegger, Authenticity, and the American West

They are also reminiscent of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. In *S&Z* Heidegger sets up a number of roughly equivalent binary structures, a few of which we have already seen: ontological and ontic, authentic and inauthentic, ready-to-hand and present-to-hand, existential and "existentiell." For the present analysis though, what is important are the meanings of authentic and inauthentic.

Heidegger is perhaps most famous as the founding father of Existentialism, that once mighty and presently mostly irrelevant branch of so-called continental philosophy. It is not his existentialism *per se* that I find useful in Heidegger however. Some contemporary philosophers based in the United States are leading a charge to reclaim the value of some of Heidegger's thought which does not fit under the rubric of what we—perhaps stereotypically—think of as existentialism. Among these thinkers are Hubert Dreyfus, Albert Borgmann, and Mark Wrathall. These men champion a portion of Heidegger's thinking that is subtler and somewhat more difficult to understand than the Kierkegaardian notions of *angst* and the authentic relation toward death and which has informed later Existentialist thinkers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. This Kierkegaardian strand of Heidegger's work is evident in the second Division of *S&Z*. Tellingly, Dreyfus' book-length explication of *Being and Time*—entitled *Being in the World: Division I*—does not even address Division II of *S&Z*. What Dreyfus and Borgmann are interested in is Heidegger's conception of Being and the question of Being.

Heidegger begins *S&Z*, in a habit that he will never quite shake, with a very extensive "introduction" that in fact works through the text's main concerns in thumbnail form. Put simply, Heidegger addresses three primary points in *S&Z*. First we have what he calls the question of Being, meaning that Heidegger seeks to reclaim the importance of asking questions about Being, that which is closest to us but ever distant. This is the project of Heideggerian ontology. Heidegger's lifelong complaint against Western philosophy and what he calls metaphysics is that it ignores this question as unimportant, either because Being is taken for universal and thus not worth delving into, or that Being is "indefinable," or that Being is self-evident and transparent (22-23). The bulk of Division I of *S&Z* then is devoted to a detailed and complicated analysis of Being-in-the-world as a way to begin to open up this question of Being. This is the thought that is experiencing a resurgence today. Heidegger's second main goal is an explication of the role of Time and temporality in Being. As he writes, at least in his early thought, "time as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of Being" (1). Finally, this combination of an examination and disclosure of everyday Being and its horizon in time are meant to lead into the question of the meaning of Being, or in a more prosaic formulation, the meaning of life.

But it is Heidegger's discussion of Being in *S&Z* as well as his later, more mystical work, which may help us to query *The Meadow* further. Put simply, Heidegger thinks philosophy has gone wrong in that it privileges theory over life.[9] Heidegger's great contribution to philosophy then was a particular brand of holism that he called Being-in-the-world. By this being-in-the-world Heidegger meant that what we are, our very Being as it actually is, is not outside or above or somehow different from the world but a part of it and indeed wholly reliant upon it. Heidegger pulls the rug out

from under the dualism of mind and world and all the *aporias* it has caused then by rethinking our relation to the world.

This rethinking is done in a variety of ways, perhaps most famously in his discussion of equipment and the referential totality and it is in the context of this discussion that Heidegger's discussion of *Zuhandenheit* and *Vorhandenheit* occur. Very basically, Heidegger poses that we understand things by how we relate to them, and that we do so in our Being primordially and not in thought or in theory. Equipment and tools are defined by what they do. And this definition rather than being simply instrumental serves to "open up" (Heidegger's terminology) the referential totality of the world. For each hammer there is the nail it must hit, the work it does, and how this work plays out in the everyday world. The hammer's being, then, is not that of an object but that of a reference. This reference shows the interplay of the entirety of the world, or as Heidegger calls it, the worldhood of the world. Our interaction with this world is primordial, it is the ground-state of our ontological Being; it is existence such as it is and the referential totality of the world that is revealed by and in this existence in a very basic way. Being to Heidegger, then, comes before theory, before thought, and is the very foundation of what a human (Heidegger uses the German compound *Dasein* or "being-there" for human) being is.

In Albert Borgmann's words what we have at play here is both a kind of "radicality" and a kind of "concreteness" in Heidegger's thought. The radicality is the reformulation of central philosophical ideas, Cartesian dualism in particular, and the disclosing of an entirely different way of thinking about how we exist in the world to that of modernity. The concreteness shows itself in Heidegger's concern with the average everyday world and its artifacts and trappings.[10] So, we might say, Heidegger uses concreteness, everyday living, to instantiate his radical reconsideration of Being. And that reconsideration is itself a reaction to modernity.

That reaction is perhaps most evident in *S&Z*'s concern with authenticity and inauthenticity. For *Dasein* to live inauthentically, is to live embroiled in society, in what Heidegger calls "the they"(*das Man*) and is subject to society's opinions and trends rather than comported to the world in a "circumspect" manner. Authenticity is to not get caught up in what he calls "idle talk," "curiosity," and "ambiguity." These three typify what Heidegger thought of his contemporary society: that it was full of people who talked on and on about "the big issues" with little or no circumspection, relying on endless "facts" to back them up; that a facile kind of surface level curiosity fed this sort of idle talk; and that irony, or ambiguity, or the inability to be resolute was a creeping symptom of this. Inauthenticity then is typified by immersion in fast-paced, technological modern life, which seeks to relentlessly bring every thing "close," thus obliterating a circumspective understanding of the referential totality of the world.

Why would *Dasein* live inauthentically? As a way of avoiding *angst*. *Dasein* is special in the sense that it is concerned with its own death. This concern

with her own being makes the question of Being as such, that is the question of why there are such things as Being and its opposite Nothing, primary to her—even if she is not aware of its primacy. According to the Heidegger of *S&Z*, the awareness of the eventuality of our own deaths manifests as *angst* which in turn essentially structures the human experience. There are two different reactions that a human being might have to this *angst*. The first—the inauthentic—is to ignore *angst*, to put off considering one's mortality by immersing oneself in the shallow social interactions of "idle talk" and "the they." The authentic path is a more difficult one. It is predicated on facing and accepting the fact of one's own death and the *angst* it produces in a "resolute" fashion. To do so, again according to Heidegger, opens one up to one's authentic selfhood, an opening up which in turn leads to a fuller and more fully authentic engagement in life and the world. Note the similarities to Lyle's life in the meadow here. Just as in *The Meadow*, Heidegger's path of authenticity is not an easy one. It involves hard work, physical for Lyle and emotional for Heidegger. And both of these valences carry with them more than a hint of the heroic struggle against modernity, a struggle that below will be shown to be deeply tied to notions of place and pre-modernity.

What is implied, if not yet explicitly stated, in *S&Z* concerning inauthenticity of Being is an opposition that Heidegger poses based on a sensibility about the world. Authenticity of Being is a certain type of circumspect comportment to the world that is at its base a nostalgic, romanticized ruralism. Heidegger's examples often consist of simple tools, artisanal imagery, agrarian references (farmhouses, etc.), and a subtle but nonetheless present valorization of rural life. What Heidegger actually means, I argue, when he uses authenticity and inauthenticity of Being, is a particular "simpler" way of living that has been romanticized for hundreds of years. Authenticity of being-in-the-world can be usefully seen as something very similar to Marx's idea of unalienated labor. Doing our work in a concerned, circumspective, simple, resolute, unalienated fashion—this is authentic Being. So too is a thoughtful separation from society, living in time with the seasons, and so on. Heidegger finds beauty and even a certain kind of truth (although no doubt he would have winced at the word) in the rural and agricultural life and its rhythms, hands-on approach, and pastoral lifestyle and this sensibility runs throughout his work. For example, Heidegger's first post-World War II book, entitled *Holzwege* (translated in 2002 as *Off the Beaten Path*). Its prolegomenon reads,

> 'Wood' is an old name for forest. In the wood there are paths, mostly overgrown, that come to an abrupt stop where the wood is untrodden.
> They are called *Holzwege*.
> Each goes its separate way, though within the same forest. It often appears as if one is identical to another. But it only appears so. Woodcutters and forest keepers know these paths. They know what it means to be on a *Holzweg*. (xiii)

It is not without credibility to say that this passage could have appeared in *The Meadow*—the tone is very similar. But before we return to Galvin just yet, let us look a bit at the later Heidegger.

In the essays "Building Dwelling Thinking," "On the Origin of the Work of Art," "The Question Concerning Technology," "The Age of the World Picture," and the "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger develops thought further partly in response to the problems posed by his attempt to both ontologize and critique modernity as well as very possibly, as Jürgen Habermas proposes, in response to his own complicity with and endorsement of National Socialism. Following Albert Borgmann again, Heidegger gives up on an ahistorical ontology of Being (i.e. radicality) and shifts to a notion of epochal Being. That is, and this is particularly evident in "Question Concerning Technology" and "Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger still thinks that the proper way to access the question of Being is through *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world, but he acknowledges that this world, in its culture or, to use Borgmann's term its general dispensation, we might say ideology, changes. While Heidegger abandons terms "authenticity" and "inauthenticity" in these later works, the sensibility underlying the use of these terms is not only still present, but stronger than ever. "The Question Concerning Technology" is primarily concerned with redefining technology as not instrumental in the sense that it helps us to do things, but as a framework or "enframing" dispensation toward the world which alienates us from Being-in-the-world as we ought to be. Instead of "disclosing" or "unconcealing" the worldhood of the world, technology and modern life "conceal" and obscure and, in fact, destroy authentic Being. Modern life itself therefore is inauthentic, although again he no longer uses the term, not only because it is alienated from a traditional, right relation to the world but because it actively hides that relation.

In *The Meadow* then, like *S&Z*, the authentic right relation comes through work and through struggle. The men Galvin writes about have "learned the recitations of the seasons and the repetitive work that seasons require" (4). The example of the displaced App's alcoholic son Ray cutting wood to "earn" his much needed morning drink—he woke with alcoholic tremors—serves a useful example of the value of work in *The Meadow*. Galvin writes, "Ray figured if he hauled a load of firewood in and split it for the kitchen stove, that would be worth a drink, maybe even in Margie's eyes" (145). Even Ray, the inveterate drunkard who so powerfully contrasts with Lyle's quasi-heroic fastidiousness, knows the authentic value of work. Galvin portrays the alcoholic Ray, normally the sort of character seen as hopelessly degenerate, as a man who needs to earn his drink through the justification of work. Ray could have just taken the drink—his wife is not yet awake—but chooses not to. Instead he must engage in a valorized practice, a useful, honest task in order to allow himself to satisfy his addiction, his physical need. Margie, Ray's wife, is used as the rhetorical justification for the need to do this work, but in fact it is Ray's relationship to work showing itself

here. That relationship exemplifies the notion so central to the novel that despite the difficulty of living in this corner of Wyoming, there is a "right" way to live one that is demonstrated by many, if not all, of the characters in the text. Compare this valorization of work found in *The Meadow* to Heidegger's discussion of Van Gogh's peasant shoes in "The Origin of the Work of Art."[11] Both Galvin and Heidegger relentlessly valorize a rural model of "honest" work; work that is different from a modern conception of work in that it is both toilsome and deeply responsible; it is entirely connected. For Heidegger, the imagined peasant woman is authentic being in practice and it is no coincidence that this picture is romantic and pre-modern. And this would seem to be exactly the model of authentic life in the West that Galvin too romanticizes and eulogizes in *The Meadow*.

Authenticity and Its Discontents: Ferris as Foil and Objections to the Discourse of Authenticity

As noted above though, a few characters typify either a partial or total absence of this kind of Heideggerian authenticity. One of these is Oscar Marsh. Marsh, while he is not lambasted in way Ferris will be, is counterpoised to Lyle and Ray early in the novel. Marsh, Galvin writes, "is more of a classic kind of Wyoming rancher [than Lyle]. Besides everything else that means, it means if it moves he shoots it" (18). Lyle and Ray, on the other hand, have respect for even "the vermin" of the West: coyote and beaver. Early in *The Meadow* Lyle and Ray discuss the virtues (primarily toughness) of the coyote, and the supposed intelligence of a beaver. This discussion, presumably one that "classic Wyoming ranchers" who are hostile to coyotes would not have, serves to indicate that Lyle and Ray are authentic bearers of the right relation who manifest a deep respect for nature even in its most frustrating aspects. Oscar on the other hand has very little such respect; he takes pleasure in destruction of such "vermin." He is not utterly hopeless though; he too admires the toughness of a coyote, namely a two-legged one that he has, of course killed: "Oscar said if he'd known that old boy was missing two legs and still getting along, he didn't know whether he would have shot him or not" (18). The toughness of coyotes is anthropomorphized into a mirror image of the toughness of the people who live near Sheep Creek, and even this "classic Wyoming rancher" has to respect toughness—even if it appears in an animal despised by ranchers. So while Marsh may be a bit more destructive and "modern" than Lyle, his closeness to the land seems to have produced at least a modicum of authenticity.

But Lyle and his authenticity need a foil for contrast. That foil is none other Ferris, who is the *ne plus ultra* of the failure of right relation and of authenticity. Unlike Marsh, Ferris, whose first name is never given, has no redeeming qualities. In the chapter directly before Galvin introduces him, Ferris' presence is foreshadowed and not subtlety. In a discussion between Ray, Jim, and the narrator concerning the coming sale of parcels of land

near their homes Ray says, "You've got to realize. And so do I. You own a whole section, and these people [*an interesting phrase*] that are fixing to ruin this country just want their own personal little piece of heaven. We gotta move over and let 'em in. You've got your section. You've got your memories of the used-to-be same as I do, and they can't squat on that" (89). To this Jim responds, "It'll be a country of club for white trash" (89-90). This response is instructive for the current analysis. While the rueful elegy that Ray and Jim are engaging in here seems to be a common one—indeed there are few among us who have not felt that some place we consider special is being or has been ruined by growth—in the framework of *The Meadow* the sentiment in question ties directly into the sense of authenticity. On display is an unresolved chauvinism between the "us" of Lyle, Frank, Ray, and Jim and the "them" of, in particular, Ferris, a chauvinism that will prove very interesting. We discover elsewhere in the novel that Jim's family are relative newcomers to the place of *The Meadow*, but they are well-established in terms of authenticity presumably because they are more like Lyle than like Marsh. The point is, and it is a vital one that will allow a transition to another phase of analysis, that one's authenticity has little or nothing to do with how long one has been in a place. So while the sales of private parcels being debated above heralds new arrivals, it is not just the newness that is the problem. These people will not even be, Ray seems to say, *capable* of the kind of right relation that Lyle personifies. And it is Ferris who illustrates this terrible truth.

Ferris first appears on page 92, in a passage narrated not in Jim's voice but instead as if Lyle were speaking. This marks the first example of a pattern that will recur throughout in which most of material devoted to Ferris comes out of the mouths of characters, often Lyle's in particular, rather than Jim's. This strategy lends Galvin's critique itself a certain authenticity of its own. Rather than having the narrator rant at us about how awful Ferris is, a rhetorical choice that could easily undermine our faith in the veracity and decency of the narrative voice and thus of the character Jim, we get descriptions and impressions of Ferris from other well-liked main characters. Ferris is an interloper, a newcomer, a lot buyer, a settler of sorts. The first time we get an account of Ferris' "spread," Lyle sarcastically describes the "little piece of heaven"— a forty acre lot on top of an arid, windswept hillside covered in dilapidated moving trailers—by saying "The trailers were overfilled with junk, mostly old appliances—washers, dryer, refrigerators, freezers—all mixed in with more nondescript pieces of white enameled sheet metal—shower stalls, possibly—and auto body parts" (92). Lyle ironically describes Ferris' "new country estate" (92) as "a treeless, waterless ridge top that would be a sure-enough wind tunnel in the three month's time, at least five miles from the nearest source of electricity that could power any of those appliances even if they could have been fixed or used someday" (92-93) and as "forty acres of exactly nothing" (93). He concludes with an appropriate phrase with which the reader no doubt

identifies, and which coincidentally resonates with a comment Heidegger makes in his final interview, "God help us."[12] Ferris' inability to understand both the land itself and what it can and cannot provide will become of much importance later in *The Meadow*, and it is key to our sense of Ferris' inauthentic way of being.

Ferris makes his next substantive appearance in yet another passage narrated by Lyle. In this case, Ferris comes to Lyle's door to ask for help in getting his broken down truck started. Ferris asks for jumper cables, but of course without another car he cannot jump his pickup. Lyle inquires as to what the problem is, notes that it is unlikely that a jump start will do the job, and gets effectively hijacked into helping Ferris. They go to Ferris' dilapidated pickup, and when Lyle attempts to jumpstart Ferris' vehicle, Ferris refuses to turn his ignition. As Lyle says, "I yelled for him to start it, but he just smiled and said it wasn't ready, at which point I understood that his battery was indeed dead, his generator shot, that he knew it perfectly well, and that he intended not to jump start his truck, but to charge his battery off of mine at the risk of melting not only the cables, but the wiring in both vehicles" (112). In addition to this bit of dastardry, Ferris is party to perhaps even greater sin in that he has married a very ugly woman. Again in Lyle's words,

> Then I caught sight of the most chilling vision of all. Sitting stock-still in the backseat was the hulking form of an enormous woman, possibly the ugliest woman I ever seen in my life. She had a pronounced moustache and her eyebrows were a straight thick line like a piece of greasy rope stuck to her forehead. Her hair was curly black and all sprangled out, and she had on this tiny straw cowboy hat that looked like she must have screwed it on. The look in her eyes said, "If you address one word to me I'll tear your head off and suck out your guts." (111)

While we can certainly enjoy Galvin's tour-de-force jocosity, this passage is just another example of Ferris' lack of authenticity; it is no different from his theft of Lyle's assistance and battery life. In the case of the battery Ferris acts in direct contradiction to the appropriate moral code of the novel as it is illustrated by Lyle's fence repair for a neighbor. Ferris is two-faced, dishonest, and exploitative. He either cannot or chooses not to respect or honor the land or the culture valorized in the book. His hideous wife may be seen in this light as well—in being married to a hideous woman, Ferris perverts the right relation on a human level. Men in the West are, of course, supposed to marry wild, strong, beautiful women!

In pages 132-138, the Ferris saga comes to a close. "Ferris became the most popular topic of conversation around coffee tables in ranch kitchens throughout Albany County," Lyle tells us (132). This is due not primarily to "the aggressively sorry poverty he [Ferris] lived in," but rather, "The real

topic of speculation was where did he get all them horses and how did he expect to keep them on forty acres of ridgetop with no water" (ibid). We then find out that in addition to insulting authentic living with his life of squalor, Ferris is also boarding horses for city-dwellers, but he cannot water or feed them because his land is too barren and he is too cheap. In the following six pages, we find that Ferris is letting the horses run free into others' land. He then abandons the animals in the winter, leaving them to die of a charming mix of starvation, thirst, and hypothermia. Ferris' cruelty seems unbounded here, and in fact we learn that he has "been brought up on rape charges two or three times in Collins and had gotten off each time" (136). The latter is clearly not an example of Galvin's mastery of understatement. In spite of this, and maybe even because of its heavy-handedness, the section is important.

If Lyle is the personification of the authentic right relation, Ferris is an object lesson in inauthenticity. He either has no regard or no knowledge of the land. His very presence is an affront to this right relation; he tries to live where Galvin might say that no one is meant to live, whatever that means. As we have seen Ferris exhibits a laundry list of behaviors that fly in the face of the right relation: squalor, waste, deception, cruelty, exploitation, lack of respect for nature and domestic animals and on and on. Galvin none too delicately shows that living in an inauthentic manner is not only disgusting but that it is an indignity that one suffers upon the land, his or her neighbors, and perhaps even upon the world as a whole. It is the presence of Ferris then that as a foil that brings Lyle's authenticity to the fore. This effect is, if not precisely dialectical, certainly one of the distinction making the difference. This observation is perhaps obvious upon even a quick reading of *The Meadow.* But Ferris may be something other than merely a foil, or to put it more clearly the relationship between Lyle's authenticity and Ferris' inauthenticity may have repercussions that are both wider and more specific than we have heretofore seen.

Thus far we have seen that both Galvin and Heidegger share a certain ruralist pre-modern sense of authenticity as well as a disdain for modern inauthenticity. Both seem to posit the idea that one can and should live in a right relation to the world, to nature, through work despite the difficulty of doing so in the modern world. This is, of course, a normative claim that both use to critique the modern way of doing things. In the writings of Heidegger and in *The Meadow* then the authentic life is contrasted to modern objectification, consumption, waste, environmental destruction, cruelty to animals and the like. I think Heidegger would find comfort in Galvin's statement about Lyle with which we began with, "He lived so close to the real world it almost let him in" (4). But we know that these kinds of valorizations of the rural, the only territory in which the right relation appears to be possible, are deeply ideological to their respective cores.

Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City* makes perhaps the first and most important analysis of ruralism as ideology through a historical

study of the pastoral in British literature. Williams' main claim is that the pastoral mode, originally more of a formal device, evolved into a view of the country as the pre-capitalist past while the city tends to represent a modern, capitalist alienation. Williams writes that "[p]eople have often said 'the city' when they meant capitalism or bureaucracy or centralised power, while 'the country,' as we have seen, has at times meant everything from independence to deprivation, and from the powers of an active imagination to a form of release from consciousness" (291). The force of Williams' argument, one that has developed since, is that the country/city dichotomy conceals the material mode of production called capitalism and its very real social implications. My interest here is not in his economic materialism but with the ideological implications of authenticity as such. For Williams, the pastoral plays out "a real conflict of interest, between those settled on the land and those settled in the city, which continually defined itself in the shifting economy of the time, [that] could be made the basis of an ideology, in which an innocent and traditional order was being invaded and destroyed by a new and more ruthless order" (49). For the purposes of this discussion, Williams' "new and more ruthless order" can be understood to be modernity, as it is in Heidegger, *The Meadow* and as it is developed by philosophers like Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor, while the "innocent and traditional order" is of course nostalgia for the past, for authentic placed-ness.

So when Williams writes that "on the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue" (1) this point easily applies to *The Meadow* and to what I have called Heidegger's ruralist sensibility. In both the "natural way of life," the right relation, is indeed inscribed deeply onto the country. Of course the country Heidegger writes and thinks about is not the same as Galvin's. Nonetheless, the similarities in the symbolic weight that has accrued to nature and the right relation in both are evident. Williams subjects this symbolic weight to analysis, something that both Galvin and Heidegger fail to do in important ways. Williams notes, "What we can see happening… is the conversion of conventional pastoral into a localised dream and then, increasingly, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, into what can be offered as a description and thence an idealisation of actual English country life and its social and economic relations" (26). This idealization of actual country life is exactly what I argue is occurring in Galvin and Heidegger. Heidegger engages in an idealization of actual German country life and Galvin does so with ranching life in Wyoming. And both are responses to and critique of modernity.

Roberto Maria Dainotto works this out in his "'All the Regions Do Smilingly Revolt': The Literature of Place and Region." Dainotto's work follows Williams' but stops short of Williams' historical materialism. In fact, Dainotto's article is more concerned with regional literature's nationalist undercurrents. He writes,

> As a spatial metaphor, the binary region/center proposes naïve polarizations between nature and culture, rustic and industrial life, authentic and imagined communities, marginalized region and marginalizing national center. It is in this reevaluation of notions of authenticity, of natural and organic community, that I see regionalism as an attempt to revive some particularly nationalist ideals by passing them off as 'new' regionalist ones. (488)

Dainotto disambiguates regionalism from what he terms "postcolonial and multicultural discourses," the idea being that while regionalism and postcolonial discourses "share many of the [same] concerns" (491), they are ideologically opposed. Dainotto draws on the same notions of nostalgia and romance as Williams does, connecting the past with tradition and authenticity. He writes that in regionalist work, like Galvin's and like Heidegger's, "The past becomes a place—a region about which we can make studies and write novels and that we can bring back, ideally, in our undesirable present as a moral prescription" (493). Dainotto even goes so far as to claim that "there can be little doubt that a nostalgia for a sense of lost purity is at work behind the fantasy of the regionalist cure" (503). He is absolutely correct about the connection between regionalism and its accounts of authentic being and nationalist urges.

Authentic Whiteness in the West: The Settler-Colonialism and "The Indian"

And it is to nationalism and related topics that I now turn. Of course Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism in the 1920s and 1930s is well known and the depth of that involvement is only becoming clearer with time. The nationalistic aspect of his thought is present in much of his work, even when that nationalism is not clearly coterminous with Nazism.[13] But we might struggle a bit to make similarly damning case for *The Meadow*. While the novel clearly broadcasts its debt to the so-called cowboy myth, a myth that Richard Slotkin, to name only one scholar, has shown to be deeply nationalist, it is not clear how an American text published in 1993 could be working through any pressing nationalist concerns. Is *The Meadow* simply reiterating the reactionary legacy of the cowboy myth (think of John Ford Westerns), a trope that certainly persists and structures discourse and practice in the Western United States but that is increasingly irrelevant on the broader scale of American society? There is of course some of this kind of thing in *The Meadow*, as there is in many of the other self-consciously "Western" texts of the mid to late twentieth century, some of which I mentioned at the beginning of this essay. But there is something else as well going here, an active if perhaps subconscious engagement with the logic of what Patrick Wolfe and others have termed settler-colonialism, a persistent logic that continues to iterate itself over and over again in settler society. It is here then that we can turn toward an aspect of *The Meadow* that

can only be called its present absence, and an intensely telling one at that. I speak of course of the necessary other of the mythical cowboy. I speak of course of "the Indian."

The Meadow, like many other canonical or quasi-canonical "Western" texts, is not particularly concerned with the issue of race. Indeed if it is the case, as it is argued in Critical Whiteness Studies and related fields, that one of the markers of whiteness is that fact that it has the privilege of being "unmarked" or "invisible,"[14] we see just this on display to varying degrees in many Western texts. But the unspoken assumption of whiteness is particularly striking in *The Meadow*. There is, it would seem, simply no need for Galvin to mention the race of most of the characters because it is nearly inconceivable that they would be anything other than white. While the history of the Western U.S. is itself marked by a great deal of racial strife involving conflicts between white settlers and all manner of persons of color, it is particularly striking that Galvin's book, which plays into the mythos of the Wild West that Handley and Lewis note, makes no notable mention of Indigenous persons. Unlike similar semi-autobiographical texts set in the West that make passing, although often very anxious and problematic, acknowledgement of American Indians (Doig's *This House of Sky*, Blunt's *Breaking Clean*, Williams' *Refuge*) *The Meadow* is silent on the topic.[15] But despite the absence of Indigenous persons in the text, it is clear enough that in contrast a certain kind of *indigeneity* is very a much a part of Galvin's notion of an authentic right relation. Ferris, whom we must assume is white, is as we have seen unable to understand this place precisely because he is an interloper, a settler even, who does not see the land in the same way as the "indigenous" Lyle does. The "white trash" Ferris is a classic redneck—destructive, exploitive—even if he does come from the relatively urbane state of California.

Interestingly, though, Galvin's depiction of Ferris as the wasteful, cruel, and destructive foil to Lyle's authentic right (and perhaps white) relation paints Ferris in terms of what we might call, along with Hayden White, the ignoble savage, or at least as a variation of that trope. Here is an instructive passage on one persistent trait of the ignoble savage from Polish ethnologist and missionary Martin Gusinde's study of the Yaghan people of Tierra del Fuego found in Marshall Sahlins' seminal *Stone Age Economics*:

> [The Yaghan, or as Guside calls them the Yamana] do not know how to take care of their belongings. No one dreams of putting them in order, folding them, drying or cleaning them, hanging them up, or putting them in a neat pile. If they are looking for some particular thing, they rummage carelessly through the hodgepodge of trifles in little baskets. Larger objects that are piled up in a heap in the hut are dragged hither and yon with no regard for the damage that might be done them. *The European observer has the impression that these Indians place no value whatever on their utensils and that have completely forgotten the effort it took to make them*…. A European

> is likely to shake his head at the boundless indifference of these people who drag brand-new objects, precious clothing, fresh provisions, and valuable items through thick mud, or abandon them to their swift destruction by children or dogs…. [T]hey are completely indifferent to material possessions. (Gusinde qtd. in Sahlins 12-13) [Emphasis added]

One can almost hear the paternal frustration in Gusinde's voice here, a frustration stemming from his perception of Yaghan waste and irresponsibility. As White points out regarding the necessity of the trope of the ignoble savage for the noble savage, "the European" is essentially defined by the "savage" in the above passage. Here that definition is not racial, although the rhetoric of "savagery" is of course always already raced. Instead the "savage" is defined by her irresponsibility and wastefulness, which in turn indicates that "the European" must be defined in part by her responsibility and her respect for material possessions. What we see in Gusinde's account of the Yaghan is the *initial* logic of settler-colonialism. Wolfe argues that this logic underlies the account of the ignoble savage, although he does not use the phrase. According to Wolfe the ignoble, wasteful Indigenous person Indian is "typically represented as unsettled, nomadic, rootless" and this characterization is used by settlers to justify expansion (396). Indigenous land is desired by settler-colonists for agriculture, "forestry, fishing, pastoralism, and mining" (395). Of these agriculture and pastoralism, the very same pastoralism we see in the ranchers of *The Meadow*, operate on "a rational means/ends calculus that is vouchsafing its own reproduction, generating capital into a future in which it repeats itself" (ibid). Settler-colonialism then turns "agriculture [and in the Western U.S., pastoralism in the form of ranching], with its life-sustaining connectedness to land" into "a potent symbol of settler-colonial identity" (396), an identity which is in contrast to the unsettled, nomadic and wasteful ignoble savage who supposedly treats her land like she treats her material possessions, letting it lie fallow, unmanaged, and unproductive.[16] And indeed, the fact that numerous Western North American Indian tribes were at least partially seasonally nomadic and thus supposedly "unsettled" could be, and was, used as a justification for settler-colonial land grabs, even if that justification was—as Wolfe notes—often provided well after the actual fact of seizure, displacement, and genocide. This kind of justification and its related concepts like stewardship can profitably be seen as tied to a theory of "wise use" *avant la lettre*, a point of view that reveals the policy of wise use itself to have roots in the logic of settler-colonialism.

The Meadow of course takes place in the late twentieth century, long after settler-colonial discourse of something like wise use has helped to serve its purpose of, as Wolfe puts it in the title of the essay upon which I am drawing, the elimination of the native in the American West. Rather than exhibiting itself in an active mode that might enable the seizure of lands then, the anger that Jim, Lyle and others feel for Ferris is one of passive

resentment that is meant to be indicative of the changes occurring in the U.S. West during the late twentieth century. That resentment may resemble the logic of settler-colonialism, but the fact that all of the characters in *The Meadow* are white surely indicates that Galvin's notion of authenticity is little more than a faint echo, a vestigial remnant, rather than a so-called return of the repressed. And of course the problem with Ferris is not that he is nomadic but that he is settled, but he is settled in the wrong way. He is a settler, not a native! It would seem very odd indeed then to claim that the language used to describe him should be understood in terms of the trope of the ignoble savage. And yet, that is the language we have even if at first blush it seems not to map onto this discourse well. What it *does* map well onto, though, is a settler-colonial evolution of the hoary ignoble savage, a modernized iteration of that unfortunate trope that serves to justify continued colonial occupation of Indigenous territories: the trope of the despised and degraded "reservation Indian."

Let us look at an early example of the discourse about supposed Indigenous "savagery" transforming into that of the debased "reservation Indian." There is perhaps no better taxonomy of white tropes of "the Indian" than that found in Reverend Albert Keiser's 1922 *Lutheran Mission Work Among the American Indians*:

> There naturally appears a great diversity in the description of the Indian. First we have that noble figure of romance with his admirable characteristics, largely a creation of the imagination. The other extreme we meet in the opinion of the colonial pioneer, who wished for his opponent a resting place under the sod. And descriptions have made known in late years the Reservation Indian, dirty, lazy, and shiftless. As a matter of fact, all these characterizations are generalizations which ignore the marked differences which exist between the various tribes and under changing circumstances. (10)

Keiser would seem to have quite a liberal view here, at least for 1922, one that acknowledges that these views of "the Indian" are stereotypical. But of course he must go on:

> However, it must be admitted that the Indian was a savage, with the virtues and the vices of the same. *Under the degenerating influence of the whites his many admirable traits were overshadowed by the development of the baser instincts*. In time not only his outward condition, but also his character underwent a marked change by force of circumstances. (ibid) [Emphasis added]

A better account of the transformation from the trope of the ignoble savage to the "reservation Indian" could not be hoped for. The "reservation Indian" is, of course, worse than a savage. She is the most corrupted kind

of human being, one who is—as we can see in Keiser's words—no longer even in authentic relation with her own "savagery." As such, even Keiser's condemnation of white "influence" and the guilt it would seem to entail indicates a variation of what is called, after Melville's *The Confidence-Man,* "the metaphysics of Indian hating."

That metaphysics has by the time of the mid twentieth century taken on a new valence. In the reservation era, the trope of the "reservation Indian" no longer allows Indigenous peoples to be seen even as Keiser puts it "savages." They themselves are now the vestigial presence, degraded and perhaps hopeless wastrels living in squalor. As a result, the picture of the ignoble savage that in some sense helped settlers to displace and eliminate American Indians in all manner of horrific ways loses its relevance and is replaced by its flipside: the fully romanticized view of the ultimate noble savage—the "magical," and of course necessarily vanished, Indian. The magical Indian, of course, lived in perfect "harmony with the land" and "used every part of the animal" she killed. We needn't waste time rehashing the obvious point that the magical Indian is just as problematic and damaging a stereotype as is the reservation Indian or the ignoble savage. Let us note instead that the magical, and therefore invisible, Indian is nothing less than the avatar of the authentic relation; she is the paradigmatic example of the right relation. And this fact would seem to have an important bearing on *The Meadow*'s dichotomy of authenticity and inauthenticity.

The Return of the Repressed and the White "Indian"

One of the deeply cruel ironies of settler-colonialism is that even after it has affected its scorched earth policy on Indigenous peoples it has not finished with them. As Wolfe writes, "[o]n the one hand, settler society required the practical elimination of the natives to establish itself on their territory. On the symbolic level, however, settler society subsequently sought to recuperate indigeneity in order to express its difference—and, accordingly, its independence—from the mother country" (389). And it is here that we can see the remains of the nationalist valences of the dichotomy of authenticity and inauthenticity found in Heidegger in the trope of the authentic settler-colonist. There is perhaps no more striking example of this effect than the cultural appropriation of Northwest Pacific Coast Indian iconography in western Washington State, British Columbia, and Alaska. But the point is, according to Wolfe, that "[the logic of] elimination *refers to more than* the summary liquidation of indigenous people though it includes that. In its positive aspect, the logic of elimination marks a return whereby the native repressed continues to structure settler-colonial society" (390; emphasis added). We might object to the use of the adjective "positive" here but that objection does not dull Wolfe's crucial insight—that the logic of elimination in settler-colonialism includes what can only be called a spectral return of that which, and those who have, been eliminated. And this point in turn explains a great deal about the kind of authenticity found

in *The Meadow* and how it differs in a key way from Heidegger's despite its many similarities.

This logic of elimination and the spectral return of "the native" then allows us to read the central tension in *The Meadow* in a radically different way. Let us look back on Lyle, Galvin's paragon of authenticity. Lyle represents the ultimate right relation; he is perfectly in tune with the land; he is careful and thoughtful in his engagement with the world; he does not waste; he is *placed* in a key way. Lyle, despite being white and a product of settler-colonialism, has an authenticity that can only be called "indigenous." He can only be so, of course, because actual Indigenous presence has been eliminated from the meadow. That elimination is what allows Lyle to become authentic in the first place, to take on the role of an ersatz Indigenous person in the very real absence of actual Indians. What the elimination of the Indigenous ironically allows then is for Lyle to become, for all intents and purposes, himself the magical Indian. This is the ultimate form of cultural appropriation in late settler-colonialism, and it is precisely this kind of deeply disturbing shape shifting in which Indigeneity—originally cast as naïve and wasteful savagery, "noble" and otherwise—becomes idealized and romanticized, authenticated if you will, as a result of its near elimination. But of course the problem for settler-colonial society in the American West is that qualifying "near" in front of the word elimination. In order for the magical Indian trope to establish itself, actual Indigenous lives, both in terms of living culture and in terms of the legacy of settler-colonial genocide, must not get in the way of "a good story." This is why whites in the American West need the trope of "reservation Indian" and why that figure is so often despised. The trope of "reservation Indian" exists so that whites can themselves claim authentic placedness as magical, but crucially white, Indians.

The central tension in *The Meadow* between authentic Lyle as the magical white Indian and the entirely inauthentic Ferris, also white, should and does play out this settler-colonial logic. Ferris, who would seem to represent the "reality" of the modern (white) world, is in fact nothing other than the avatar for the troublesome reality of Indigenous life after settler-colonial seizures: the hated "reservation Indian." Despite the absence of Indigenous persons and history in *The Meadow* then, the book is essentially structured by the elimination of the native, a logic that demands the latter's absence and while at the same time requiring her presence. *The Meadow* "solves" this "problem" in true settler-colonial fashion by transforming whites into ersatz Indigenous persons. In doing so, the novel plays out the *aporia* of settler-colonialism by simultaneously and figuratively casting those Indians who do not have the decency to vanish as utterly inauthentic while at the same time idealizing the non-existent "magical" Indian through, always of course, whites. *The Meadow* takes this logic of late settler-colonial society to its proper extreme by displaying what can only be called an unconscious return of the repressed native. This is evident not

only in the uncanny absence of Indigenous persons in the text itself but also in its reliance on white settler-colonial tropes of Indigeneity to work through its binary of authenticity and inauthenticity. To be sure, the return of the native as magical Indian in *The Meadow* is a figurative return, one in which actual Indigeneity is only further eliminated. What we have in Galvin's text is almost a dream logic in that it operates less on a principle of metaphor, in which we can pass from what is said to what is meant, than of shape shifting and metamorphosis. Lyle is not a metaphor for a magical Indian. He *is* a magical Indian, a de-raced Indian, a white Indian in the full complex depth of whiteness as anti-signifier. Finally in the authentically right-relationed Lyle the dream of the settler-colonist can come true. The white man becomes the Indian, the authentic magical Indian that only ever existed, where else? in the settler-colonist's dreams.

But if Lyle's transformation into an authentic but ersatz magical white Indian is a kind of dream work, Ferris's figuration as the reservation Indian, should be understood on the other hand as metaphorical. The white man has again become the Indian here, but in Ferris' case white tropes of "Indianness" have not been metamorphosed away or subsumed into body of the settler-colonist. In fact the reverse has occurred. To the settler-colonist the "reservation Indian" represents deeply problematic evidence of the former's logic of elimination. This of course explains hatred for actually existing Indians, or as some Western whites call them, "prairie niggers," even as these same whites idealize the always absent magical Indian. Because of the way that Ferris is marked—as lazy, deceitful, wasteful, filthy, cruel to animals, violent, impoverished, dishonest—we cannot help but think of the ignoblest un-savage, the worst of the worst: the reservation Indian. If in Lyle's case the white settler-colonist takes on the authentic nobility of the magical Indian just as he establishes his authentic "rightful" place in and on the land, things are different in Ferris' case. As an inauthentic newcomer to the Sheep Creek area then, Ferris must be understood in terms of an intense guilt about the logic of elimination. What is Ferris other than a settler-colonist himself, one who comes not to rule but to live, to "erect […] a new colonial society on the expropriate land base" as Wolfe puts it (388)? His inability to understand the right relation to the land, what Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington term an "attachment to the land [with] a fundamentally unfamiliar form," replays and reinscribes the initial genocidal moves of settler-colonialism (2). But this time it is the colonists themselves, like Lyle, who are threatened with displacement. And who threatens to displace them but the very "Indian" they understand in terms of her present absence? Bateman and Pilkington again:

> Although the settler colonial projects were instigated in previous centuries, the effects are permanent and the process is still current. The settlers, now often second or third generation, consider themselves to belong to the country in which they were born and attempts by indigenous peoples

> to reclaim land or assert prior ownership of resources and territory leads to conflict and resentment. (2)

Finally then, although it might appear that *The Meadow* is in contention for what Alexie calls with deep irony the "Great American Indian Novel" in which "all of the white people will be Indians and all of the Indians will be ghosts," the novel falls short of this ignoble distinction. For although Lyle is the white magical "Indian,"—safely de-raced, idealized and de-historicized—in casting Ferris as an ignoble reservation Indian who is at the very same time a settler-colonist threatening to eliminate and displace the "authentic" white magical "Indians," *The Meadow* crucially transforms the white Ferris into a "real Indian:" the ignoble un-savage. *The Meadow*, whether it knows it or not, has in Ferris an "Indian" who is not at all ghostly, who is fully present. As the avatar of the "reservation Indian," he embodies settler-colonial guilt and its consequent disdain, even repugnance, with that which it has tried to eliminate. Ferris then represents the post-expansion iteration of settler-colonial logic, and in doing so powerfully dramatizes the settler-colonial fear in the face of calls for Indigenous repatriation and reparation—calls justified not ultimately by notions of authenticity but on the historical fact of prior dominion and by the shameful legacies of settler-colonialism throughout the world.

Notes

[1] See White's "The Noble Savage Theme as Fetish" from *Tropics of Discourse*.

[2] We know of course that the myth of the Wild West is nothing if not a simulacrum.

[3] See Grey's 1989 *Redeeming the Dream: Feminism, Redemption and Christian Tradition*for a much more sophisticated take on the right relation. Although my use of the phrase is not as explicitly religious as is Grey's, there is a certain kind of religiosity at stake in *The Meadow*'s depiction of the right relation.

[4] For overviews of the "Black Notebooks" and their contents see "Release of Heidegger's 'Black Notebooks' Reignites Debate Over Nazi Ideology" by Paul Hockenos on *The Chronicle of Higher Education* website and "Heidegger's Notebooks Renew Focus on Anti-Semitism" by Jennifer Schuessler in the March 13, 2014 issue of *The New York Times* (also available online).

[5] See Heidegger's well-known essay "Building Dwelling Thinking" in *Basic Writings* for a detailed treatment of these matters.

[6] As I note later, this relation, as ethical as it might be, is in the American West at least predicated on a prior removal of Indigenous peoples – forcibly through relocation and genocide, conceptually through tropes of "open land," and legally through Chief Justice John Marshall's so-called discovery doctrine.

[7] From "Economy":

> I sometimes wonder that we can be so frivolous, I may almost say, as to attend to the gross but somewhat foreign form of servitude called Negro Slavery, there are so many keen and subtle masters that enslave both North and South. It is hard to have a Southern overseer; it is worse to have a Northern one;

> but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself…. The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation." (49-50).

[8] On the novel's first page and in the context of the first dream, the reader is told, "The dreamer, outside this dream, has only seen Lyle ruffled once. That was the time his sister, Clara, put his rifle in her mouth and painted the roughsawn boards in his room with her brains" (9).

[9] He shows this mostly clearly in his reading and critique of Descartes in Division I, Chapter III, Section 18 of *S&Z*. The idea that we are somehow separate from the world, that we "think therefore we are" (the *cogito ergo sum* of Descartes), that there is the mind (and its apperceptions or *phenomenon*) and the "thing as such" (Kant's *noumenon* or *das Ding an sich*) as opposed to this mind is seen as radically incorrect by Heidegger.

[10] For example when explaining how our directional comportment to the world is founded on bodily Being-in-the-world, Heidegger uses the example of an old-fashioned (contemporary at the time of composition of *S&Z* of course) turn-signal on a car, one that has a flag that pops up with an arrow on it. His discussion of tools mirrors this, choosing an artifact like a hammer for example.

[11] "From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stands forth. In the stiffly solid heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field, swept by a raw wind. On the leather there lies the dampness and saturation of the soil. Under the soles there slides the loneliness of the field-path as the evening declines. In the shoes there vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening corn and its enigmatic self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field" (*Basic Writings* 159).

[12] When asked in a 1966 interview with the magazine *Der Spiegel*first published in 1976 after Heidegger's death about whether individuals and/or philosophy might help humanity to escape "purely technological relationships," Heidegger famously answers "*Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten*": "Only a god can save us" (*The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* 106-107).

[13] The question of to what degree Heidegger's thought is infected with nationalist and National Social ideology is still very much under debate, especially now in the wake of the so-called Black Notebooks.

[14] For more on this see, among others, Ruth Frankenberg's 1993 *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* and John T. Warren on "Whiteness and Cultural Theory: Perspectives on Research and Education" in 1999's Volume 31, Issue 2 of *Urban Studies*.

[15] I choose to use the term American Indian due largely in part to Drew Hayden Taylor's short essay "Oh, Just Call Me an Indian" found in, among other places, Joseph Bruchac's edited volume *Returning the Gift: Poetry and Prose from the First North American Native Writers' Festival* (Tucson and London: University of Arizona Press, 1994).

[16] We should note with Wolfe that this depiction often had little to do with the reality of Indigenous economies which often did engage in agriculture, and who taught Europeans how to grow beans, squash, and more.

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