

The Meaning of Written English: A Place to Dream as One Pleases [ABSTRACT]

Reid Gómez

I examine Rey Chow's assertion that the process of racialization parallels the challenge of coming to terms with language. In 2011, Anthony Webster coedited the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* special issue "American Indian Languages in Unexpected Places" and called for an extension of his work on Blackhorse Mitchell's novel *Miracle Hill: The Story of a Navajo Boy*. My argument looks at writing as a matter of choices the writer makes (following William L. Leap's work in *American Indian English*) and the requirements expected of readers. Moving away from the error analyses and ethnographic readings that afflict racialized readings, I place Webster's work on Navajo poetics and intimate grammars into conversation with postcolonial theory and language revitalization work concerned with similar questions: what does it mean to write, and what does it mean to write in English? I argue that Mitchell resists the subjugation required of a colonial education through his refusal to write like a native speaker. He figures writing as a place to dream as one pleases; writing is the miracle on *Miracle Hill*. Readers can locate his choices throughout the text, particularly in his poem, "The Drifting Lonely Seed," his chapter on creative writing, and his speech at his grandmother's graveside.

To purchase the full article:

<http://www.uclajournals.org/doi/abs/10.17953/aicrj.41.4.gomez>