
The International Reach of E. Pauline Johnson / Tekahionwake

L'impact international de E. Pauline Johnson / Tekahionwake

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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/eccs/3367>

DOI: 10.4000/eccs.3367

ISSN: 2429-4667

Publisher

Association française des études canadiennes (AFEC)

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 June 2020

Number of pages: 73-93

ISSN: 0153-1700

Electronic reference

Carole Gerson, "The International Reach of E. Pauline Johnson / Tekahionwake", *Études canadiennes / Canadian Studies* [Online], 88 | 2020, Online since 01 June 2021, connection on 11 June 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/eccs/3367> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/eccs.3367>

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The International Reach of E. Pauline Johnson / Tekahionwake

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Canada's first notable Indigenous literary author, the Mohawk writer E. Pauline Johnson / Tekahionwake (1861-1913), appealed primarily to Canadian audiences, who valued her publications and recitations for their contribution to their sense of belonging to the places to which they or their families had immigrated. Her enthralling performance of Indigeneity extended to the larger English-speaking world, and, in line with the international publishing conditions of her era, she frequently depended upon American and British publication venues, sometimes modifying her work and her self-presentation to appeal to the expectations of foreign audiences. Many decades after her death, her contexts of reception were significantly expanded by new translations of her work, often in unexpected locales.

La première auteure littéraire autochtone remarquable du Canada, l'écrivaine mohawk E. Pauline Johnson / Tekahionwake (1861-1913), a séduit tout d'abord le public canadien, qui appréciait ses publications et ses lectures de poèmes, qui renforçaient leur sentiment d'appartenance aux lieux vers lesquels eux-mêmes ou leurs familles avaient immigré. Sa mise en scène passionnante de l'indianité s'est étendue à d'autres pays anglophones puisque, du fait des conditions de publication internationales de son époque, elle dépendait souvent des lieux de publication américains et britanniques et modifiait parfois son travail et sa façon de se présenter pour répondre aux attentes de ces publics étrangers. Plusieurs décennies après sa mort, ses œuvres commencent à être connues dans d'autres régions, parfois inattendues, grâce à de nouvelles traductions de son travail.

Pauline Johnson's Contexts

Long hailed as Canada's first notable Indigenous literary author, the Mohawk writer E. Pauline Johnson / Tekahionwake (1861-1913) appealed primarily to Canadian audiences, for whom she asserted a Native presence within the country's nascent national identity, through the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth. During her lifetime and for many decades after her death, Johnson's Euro-Canadian audience valued her publications and recitations for their contribution to what literary critic Terry Goldie termed "indigenization" (GOLDIE 1989, 13-17), meaning that her work enabled settler Canadians to feel at home by giving them Indigenous stories that fed their desire to belong to the places to which they or their families had immigrated. While Johnson frequently depended upon American and British publication venues, her most consistent readership was in English-speaking Canada. Because non-Canadian interest in Johnson has been sporadic, it is salutary to examine her occasional appearances in other locales and in translation for what these reveal concerning the contexts in which her writings occasionally reached unexpected corners of the globe, and to compare the formats in which they appeared. During her lifetime, her international reach was limited to English-speaking countries and was motivated by promotion of her performing career and

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of her writings; later international interest has been sparked by intermittent fascination with Indigenous North America.

Johnson's heritage and cultural education well suited her role as a public representative of Indigeneity. Born in 1861 in her family home of Chiefswood, on the Six Nations Reserve at Ohsweken (near Brantford, Ontario), Emily Pauline Johnson was the fourth and youngest child in an unusual mixed-race family.¹ Her Mohawk father, George Henry Martin Johnson (Onwanonsyshon) (1816–1884), was both a hereditary and elected chief whose fluency in the reserve's six Aboriginal languages enabled his work as a translator and whose stories and experiences formed the basis of some of Pauline's writings. Her English-born mother, Emily Susanna Howells (1824–1898), ensured that her daughter was well educated in the English literary classics, an influence that is evident in her poetic style. Pauline was also an avid canoeist and member of the Brantford Canoe Club, through which she acquired expertise and enjoyed experiences that appeared in much of her writing. After the death of her father in 1884, she turned to writing as a means of support (as did many women of her time), and developed a career as a performer who only presented work that she had written, creating a charismatic persona that represented both sides of her heritage. She adopted her paternal grandfather's Mohawk name of "Tekahionwake" (meaning double wampum) and appeared in a constructed "Native" buckskin dress², with her hair down, for the first part of her program, returning for the second part transformed into a Victorian lady, in a cream-coloured evening gown, with her hair pinned up. Her travels on the performance circuit took her across Canada many times, along with three visits to England. She also performed occasionally in the Northeastern United States and spent the summer of 1907 on the Chautauqua circuit of public lectures and performances. While she was accompanied on stage by different male partners, Johnson never married, instead pursuing a career that marked her as one of her generation's independent New Women. Most of her 165 poems appeared in three volumes published during her lifetime; there were also three volumes of stories and journalism.³ Pauline Johnson spent her last years in

¹ Most mixed-race families in the colonial world arose from the joining of European men with Indigenous women, whereas the Johnson family was created by the marriage of an elite Indigenous man and a middle-class Englishwoman.

² See KOVACS 2017 for an enlightening discussion of Johnson's costume in relation to notions of authenticity.

³ Johnson's collections of poetry are: *The White Wampum* (1895); *Canadian Born* (1903); *Flint and Feather* (1912) and many later editions. Her collections of stories and journalism are: *Legends of Vancouver* (1911) and many later editions; *The Moccasin Maker* (1913); *The Shagganappi* (1913).

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Vancouver where she died of breast cancer on 7 March 1913, three days before her fifty-second birthday.

While specifically Native content appears in only about ten per cent of Johnson's poems, Indigenous stories in prose and verse constituted at least half the material on her programs. Her most popular performance pieces included narratives celebrating the courage and ferocity of Mohawk warriors, or wistful romantic legends featuring faithful Indian maidens. Coming from Johnson's pen or mouth gave these accounts of mortal conflict or thwarted love a sense of authenticity, thrilling white audiences while validating mythical aspects of Native cultural history, thereby demonstrating her skill at what Philip Deloria describes as "Playing Indian" at a time when being ethnically Indigenous was viewed (by white people) as sufficient qualification to speak for all Native people, regardless of specific tribal differences and identities. Confirming that notions of authenticity are always a construct belonging to a specific time and place, Lionel Makovski, editor of Vancouver's *Daily Province Magazine*, thus justified his publication of Johnson's Salish stories: "[...] Miss Johnson, being herself an Indian, has a peculiar insight into the lives of the coast tribes, and it is natural that they will tell her their legends, when to all others they will remain silent" (JOHNSON 1910a, 2). The variety of Johnson's references demonstrated the grace with which she wore her public role as the embodiment of Aboriginal Canada as she used her platform to dramatize characters who asserted Native rights and values. While she usually spoke as a Mohawk from Six Nations, some of her pieces voice the concerns of other Native groups, especially those in western Canada. She severely criticized the tendency of white Canadian writers to homogenize all Natives into a single generic "Indian" (JOHNSON 2002a, 177-83) and usually ascribed a specific identity to the persona or characters in her writings. These range from the Iroquois of her home territory to plains tribes who are sometimes identified as Cree ("The Cattle Thief") or Sioux ("Silhouette"), to the coastal cultures whose stories she received from Joe and Mary Capilano, and interpreted in *Legends of Vancouver* (1911).

Today, critics see Pauline Johnson as exemplifying what Ruth Phillips has termed "reverse appropriation of the stereotype" (PHILLIPS 2001, 28), exploiting her popularity in order to reverse the historical gaze and challenge colonial paradigms. In the words of Native Studies scholar Daniel Heath Justice, "[...] many of Johnson's poems [...] are fierce condemnations of Canada's inhumanity, spoken in the voices of defiant Indigenous women taking steady and unflinching aim at the blind self-justifications of the patriarchal Canadian state and its citizenry" (JUSTICE 2018, 63).

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Current Indigenous literary critics frequently affirm that political significance is intrinsic to the work of all Native North American writers because they “live resistance” in the words of Patricia Monture Angus (ANGUS 1999, 26) and, by its very existence, their writing is “a call for liberation, survival, and beyond to affirmation” to cite Armand Garnet Ruffo (RUFFO 1999, 110). This affirmation was earlier established with Johnson. At the end of the nineteenth century, she raised many of the points later developed in Thomas King’s prize-winning study, *The Inconvenient Indian* (2013), a best-selling book whose failure to pay attention to Pauline Johnson I find puzzling and disappointing.

Johnson’s dramatic monologue, “A Cry from an Indian Wife” (JOHNSON 2002a, 14-15), first published in 1885 in *The Week* (Toronto), served as her signature piece. It was her first poem to appear in a major Canadian periodical, and she recited it at the landmark Canadian Literature Evening of 16 January 1892, sponsored by the Young Men’s Liberal Club of Toronto. Although Johnson was not previously unknown, this performance marked a debut of sorts by putting her in the company of Canada’s literary elite. Johnson’s poem was the only political item on the program⁴ and was noted as such in the press. The *Globe* printed the full poem (with its revised ending that states “By right, by birth, we Indians own these lands”) alongside its reviewer’s claim that Johnson’s performance “was like [hearing] the voice of the nations who once possessed this country, who have wasted before our civilization, speaking through this cultured, gifted, soft-voiced descendant” (*GLOBE* 1892, 5). Continually conscious of the power of her voice, in “The Cattle Thief” (1894) Johnson spoke through the daughter of a murdered Cree chief who had sought food for his starving band. Protecting her father’s body, the narrator directly berates British settlers for robbing her people of land and food: “How have you paid us for our game? How paid us for our land? / By a *book* to save our souls from the sins *you* brought in your other hand” (JOHNSON 2002a, 99). Newspaper reviewers of Johnson’s performances responded that “more striking even than the elocutionary power is the train of thought that is awakened” regarding “the hardships of the Indians at the hands of the white man” (*EMERSON JOURNAL* 1897), and that “when Miss Johnson stood before the audience and said ‘the land is ours’ it was enough to cause a shrinkage of the conscience” (UNCLE THOMAS 1892, 4).

⁴ A copy of the program is preserved in Frank Yeigh’s scrapbook for the Young Liberal Club, Frank Yeigh papers, F 1085, Archives of Ontario.

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Figure 1: Publicity photos of Pauline Johnson, c. 1892, Vancouver Public Library

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From 1892 to 1909, Johnson crossed Canada many times, performing her stories and poems from Prince Edward Island to Vancouver Island and published her work in national and local periodicals. She also looked to foreign outlets for the dissemination of her writing. Although her books were mostly issued in Canada – where she has remained consistently in print for well over a century – many of her poems, stories, and articles first appeared in British and American periodicals, which offered a wider readership and a steadier income. Culturally, Johnson was oriented towards Britain and against the United States, reflecting Imperialist sentiments at a time when those who sought to establish Canada's prominence within the British Empire conflicted with those who sought closer ties with the United States.⁵ While she often criticized Canada's mistreatment of Native people, Johnson also frequently cited British notions of honour and fair play. In 1896, her poem supporting the National Policy of Canadian trade tariffs against American goods, entitled "The Good Old N.P.," envisioned "French and English and Red men" standing "shoulder-to-shoulder" (JOHNSON 2002a, 118-19) in common cause. In "Canadian Born" (first published in 1900), which provided the title of her second book (issued in Toronto in 1903), she celebrated being "born in Canada beneath the British flag," and proclaimed, "The Yankee to the south of us must south of us remain" (JOHNSON 2002a).

Despite Johnson's staunch Canadian nationalism and pro-British Imperialism, her recourse to American periodicals comes as no surprise. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, scores of literary Canadians worked in the burgeoning American publishing industry as writers, editors, press readers, and the like; many of them moved permanently to New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, as described in Nick Mount's study, *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York* (2005). Those who were determined to remain in Canada, such as L.M. Montgomery (best-selling author of *Anne of Green Gables* and many subsequent titles), depended financially upon the American market, even while writing stories with distinctly Canadian settings. Hence it is not surprising that Johnson's first publications were five poems that appeared from 1883 to 1885 in *Gems of Poetry*, a modest New York literary magazine issued by former Montrealer, John Dougall.⁶ In 1885, she transitioned to the major Toronto periodical, *The Week*, which became one of her primary publication venues, along with Toronto's weekly *Saturday Night*, and the daily *Toronto Globe* newspaper.

⁵ For an insightful depiction of this issue, see *The Imperialist* (1908), a novel by Sara Jeannette Duncan, who was Johnson's fellow resident of Brantford, Ontario.

⁶ *Gems of Poetry* (1880-1885) ceased upon the death of its publisher in 1886; John Dougall was a well-known figure in Canadian publishing: http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/dougall_john_11E.html

In the 1890s, as her reputation grew, she placed more work in American periodicals, to which I'll return later.

Pauline Johnson in London

In contrast to her frequent publications in the United States, Johnson's relatively sparse publications in Britain all appeared in relation to her three visits to England, her mother's homeland. In line with the colonial mentality of her time, Johnson followed the course taken by many of her fellow Canadians, in all walks of life, by seeking both validation and income from the Imperial centre. One goal of her first trip across the Atlantic, in May 1894, was to publish her first book in London – an unusual perspective, given that in the 1880s and 1890s, most Canadian poets of her generation turned to presses in Boston, Philadelphia, or New York when they chose to publish their books outside of Canada. During the spring and summer of 1894, Johnson enjoyed a triumphant season of London performances, thanks to the stewardship of Sir Charles Tupper (a future Canadian prime minister) and Lord Aberdeen (Governor General of Canada), who introduced her to such influential figures in London society as Lady Ripon and Lady Blake (GREY 2002, 176-80). English reporters who interviewed Johnson highlighted her decoration of her London studio with masks, wampum, and other “reminders of her Indian home and associations” (P.A.H. 1894, 358), artifacts that did not accompany Johnson when she toured in Canada. Their display in London nicely illustrates Rayna Green's later historical analysis that “[t]he beginning of Indians playing Indian takes place not in America, but in Europe [...] creating and feeding a perturbing curiosity about Indian clothing, Indian decoration, food, even sexuality” (GREEN 1988, 33). Johnson's skill in meeting the expectations of receptive Britishers proved an effective strategy that led to the publication of *The White Wampum* in 1895 in an elegant edition from the avant-garde London publisher, John Lane. While Johnson had little direct involvement in fashioning this book, its selection of poems, along with its physical format, contributed to the construction of her exotic public persona (GERSON 2004).

Of the approximately 100 poems that Johnson had written before the end of 1894, only a dozen refer directly to First Nations topics, yet eight of these are among the thirty-six poems selected for this volume. More importantly, seven “Indian” poems are placed at the beginning of the book, thereby casting a Native aura over all the following verse. The book's cover complements this orientation with its image of a tomahawk draped with a wampum belt and single word: “Tekahionwake.” As if to separate the strands of Johnson's identity, the spine bears the title “The White Wampum” stamped in gold, above the name E. Pauline Johnson. On the title page, the small crossed tomahawks placed above the names of the book's three publishers (Lane in London, Copp Clark in Toronto, and

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Lamson, Wolffe in Boston) promised readers on both sides of the Atlantic the thrill of encountering savagery within the comfort of the familiar aesthetic format of the codex (GERSON 2012).

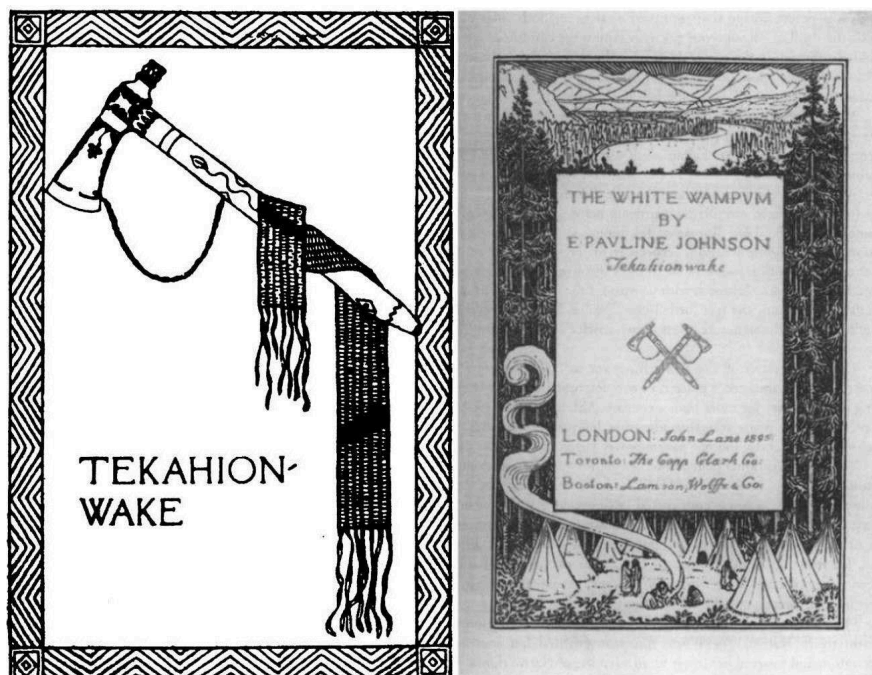


Figure 2: Front cover image and title page of *The White Wampum* (1895); copy owned by Carole Gerson.

This little book had several lasting effects on Johnson's career. Most obvious was the permanent addition of "Tekahionwake" to her signature, a name appropriated from her grandfather, as she did not possess her own Mohawk name (nor, apparently, any Native garments before the creation of her costume). Tekahionwake subsequently became Johnson's regular pseudonym, used primarily in her professional life, whereas her letters show that in private she was "Pauline" to her friends and "Paul" to her siblings. She was often identified in print by both names: "E. Pauline Johnson—Tekahionwake," or "E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)."

British reviewers demonstrated how the design of *The White Wampum* shaped its reception, in line with Megan Benton's cogent observation that "[w]e

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cannot read a text without also, simultaneously and inevitably, reading its form” (BENTON 2000, 5). They mistakenly stated that “the subjects [of Johnson’s verse] are mostly Indian” (LITERARY 1895, 704) and perceived her poetry as the work of an exotic “red Indian from Canada” (BLACK 1895, 839) whose verse was the swan song of a “fast-dying race.” (LITERARY 1895, 704). While fascinated with Johnson’s ethnicity, many evinced discomfort with what they saw as the “melodrama and fustian” of her Native poems, and preferred her more conventional lyrics that “sing of those themes common to the world at large” (STAR [London] 1895). The review in the prominent London literary magazine, *Black and White*, directly elucidated the tension between advocacy and aesthetics that coloured Johnson’s reception in England. On the one hand, the anonymous reviewer found Johnson intriguing for voicing “the wrongs of the Indian” and giving “expression to the mind and the moods of a strange, interesting race, of which we have heard nothing hitherto save what was reported by observers from the outside.” On the other, he describes her dramatic monologues like “The Cattle Thief” as “hardly poetry at all” (BLACK 1895, 839). This visit led to a few additional London appearances in print: three poems in *Black and White* in 1895 and 1896, and an article in the *Ludgate Magazine* in 1897.

No further London publications ensued for nearly a decade, until Johnson’s return visit from April to November of 1906. This sojourn yielded four articles that appeared in the London *Daily Express* newspaper while she was there, followed by one poem (a non-Indigenous romance of “the olden” days titled “When George Was King”) in the Christmas issue of *Black and White* after her departure. Exoticized in the *Daily Express* as “Tekahionwake, the Iroquois Poetess,” Johnson played into this persona by adopting stereotypical Native diction, referring to the passage of time as “many moons,” to herself as standing on “moccasined feet” (JOHNSON 1906b), and to Europeans as Palefaces. The first piece in this series, “A Pagan in St. Paul’s Cathedral,” is a parodic tour-de-force in which Johnson subverted the power order by assuming a naïve “Redskin” persona that played into the expectations of her British readers. Likening Buckingham Palace to a wigwam and St. Paul’s Cathedral to an Onondaga longhouse where the outlawed white dog sacrifice is being performed, the speaker audaciously snubs both crown and church to assert the value of the Indigenous “Great Spirit” as a proponent of peace. Because the mock Indian persona of this piece differs from Johnson’s usual voice, it continues to baffle critics who, in my view, forget that Johnson was an adept satirist and therefore misread its “simplistic language” (MONTURE 2014, 91) as “patronizing to her own people” (FRANCIS 1992, 119). Johnson’s last visit to London, in 1907, produced just one article, “Longboat of the Onondagas,” in a London-published serial titled *Canada*.

Johnson in the United States

Whereas Johnson's performances and publications in England were driven ideologically by her desire to affirm her connection with the Imperial centre, her connection with United States was driven materially by her need to access the lucrative American periodical market. Johnson's American publication history divides into two separate phases. The first, largely focused on canoeing, began in 1891 with six articles – mostly about sports and recreation – that appeared in the *Weekly Detroit Free Press* from 1891 to 1893. Through 1892 and 1893 she also contributed thirteen columns, under the title "Outdoor Pastimes for Women," to the "Monthly Record" supplement of *Outing*, a prominent New York magazine that specialized in sports, outdoor recreation, and adventure travel. Here, through a maternal-feminist argument about building the health of future mothers, Johnson promoted girls' involvement in seasonal activities: snowshoeing, skating, tobogganing in winter; archery, cycling and canoeing in summer. These one-page articles were followed by additional exposure in New York with the authorship of two series of somewhat fictionalized canoeing stories in *The Rudder* (1895-97) and several pieces (prose and poetry) in *Harper's Weekly* (1894, 1896). Her three brief sketches that appeared 1895-97 in *Our Animal Friends*, the New York-based juvenile magazine of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), set the stage for the subsequent phase of her American presence, which included a substantial body of work for young readers.

While no records remain of Johnson's earnings from these magazines, we do know that in 1905 she was recruited to supply specifically Canadian stories for two connected Illinois serials, *The Boys' World* and *The Mother's Magazine*, at the rate of six dollars per thousand words. Both were issued by the David C. Cook company of Chicago and Elgin, Illinois, a firm that specialized in Sunday School materials. As explained by Elizabeth Ansley, editor of *The Boys' World*, "what we are in need of are good Canadian stories . . . with the real patriotic ring – stories where the loyalty does not seem forced. We have many Canadian subscribers, and we wish to give them of our best, and what will appeal to the best in them, and the love of country is a part of every boy whether of Canada or the United States."⁷ From 1905 until 1913, as Johnson's health declined and her performance schedule diminished, *The Boys' World* and *The Mother's Magazine* became her primary source of income. She contributed dozens of stories and articles to each, with those in *The Boys' World* usually highlighted on the front page. Native content appeared in about half these pieces, including a remarkable

⁷ Elizabeth Ansley to Johnson, 8 Nov 1905; Johnson Fonds, Box 1 File 3, McMaster University.

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six-part series on “The Silver Craft of the Mohawks” in 1910.⁸ The proportion of Native content was higher in *The Mother’s Magazine*, which served as the first venue for her memoir, “My Mother,” and for some of the stories that were later gathered into *Legends of Vancouver* (1911).

In contrast to the exaggerated “red Indian” identity that she assumed for her British audience, Johnson made no special effort for American readers. In poetry and prose – from articles about Native life or canoeing to juvenile stories advocating good behavior – her persona was essentially the same in Canadian and American periodicals. She always wrote as a Canadian, with occasional references to “young Canada” or “Little Lady Canada,” and she didn’t Americanize sites and circumstances in order to make them more familiar to American readers. For example, when a young man attends university, it is identified as McGill, in Montreal (JOHNSON 1909, 13). A story about boys who learn how to raise beavers on their family ranch concludes: “as every American boy loves the eagle on his national coat of arms, so is the building beaver dear to the heart of every boy who has pride in being a Canadian” (JOHNSON 1910b, 4). Her accounts of Indigenous people usually ascribed a Canadian locale to descriptions of Iroquois or Mohawk cultural practices, and her stories concerning the West Coast are clearly set in British Columbia, where she spent her final years and received stories from local Indigenous friends. Stories about white settlers take place in rural or wilderness settings in Saskatchewan or Muskoka, or sometimes just “the Northland,” sites that she knew well from her travels and acquaintances.

Subsequent Canadian literary authors have frequently bemoaned British and American lack of interest in stories set in Canada; to cite Hugh MacLennan’s oft-repeated complaint: “Boy meets girl in Paris, France, that’s great. ... Boy meets girl in Winnipeg and who cares?” (MACLENNAN 1959, 18-20). However, with Johnson, the only instance of Americanization that I have discovered occurred in a 1906 Thanksgiving story. While set in Canada, “Dick Dines with his ‘Dad’” appeared in the issue of *The Boys’ World* for November 24, to coincide with the American date of Thanksgiving, whereas in 1906, Canadians celebrated the holiday on October 18.

After Johnson’s death in 1913, *Flint and Feather* (a volume that collected most of her poems) and *Legends of Vancouver* remained consistently in print in Canada and new collections of her stories were issued in Toronto, but there is no evidence of publication, sales, or reviews in the United States.

⁸ Based on Johnson’s revised manuscript in the Vancouver Museum, this series was reissued in 2004 as *North American Indian Silver Craft*. Vancouver: Subway Books, 2004.

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However, Johnson received attention in another quarter, from the critics and writers involved in the quest for authenticity that was an significant component of early twentieth-century American modernism; to cite critic Helen Carr: “Modernists, in America as elsewhere, drew on ‘primitive’ art as a critique of bourgeois philistine modernity. Native Americans were now seen not as an ‘immature race’ but as inheritors of ancient wisdom. Primitivism was reborn” (CARR 1996, 200). Modernism was most comfortable with Indigenous people when they were cast as primitives and studied by anthropologists, whose salvaging of “original” native culture corroborated with the modernist effort to discover new, more authentic modes of expression. The connection between Imagism and the recording of Native American songs at the beginning of the twentieth century has been well noted (COLOMBO 1983, 103-04; CARR 1996: 222-29). “Indian” poetry became especially visible in 1917 in a special issue of *Poetry* (Chicago), followed in 1918 by George W. Cronyn’s *The Path on the Rainbow*, the first anthology of North American Indigenous verse. Consisting largely of translations by anthropologists, this book also included poems by several literary interpreters of Indigenous culture. Pauline Johnson was the book’s only genuinely Native author, and was admitted on the insistence of the publisher, despite the view of the editor that her poems “show how far the Indian poet strays from her own primitive tribal songs, when attempting the White Man’s mode” (CRONYN 1918, 162-63). She was singled out in reviews and in subsequent criticism as “ironically, the most traditionally Western and the least Indian in both content and form,” an attitude still dominant in 1983, when an American critic studying primitivism in modern American poetry faulted Johnson’s work as “excessively romantic,” and having “little to do with actual Native American modes of life and expression” (CASTRO 1983, 31; TAYLOR 2016). Such judgements might have been reduced had Cronyn selected poems from Johnson’s oeuvre that specifically express an Indigenous perspective, such as “Lullaby of the Iroquois,” “Ojistoh,” or “As Red Men Die.” However, his chosen poems – “The Lost Lagoon” and “The Song My Paddle Sings” – albeit both about canoeing (an implicitly Native activity), are not explicitly Indigenous in content and stylistically demonstrate Johnson’s mastery of received English literary form. Hence they aroused the ire of such advocates of free verse as Louis Untermeyer, whose review in *The Dial* denigrated Johnson’s poems as “jingles” (COLOMBO 1983, 104). Indeed, the reluctance of masculine critics to appreciate Johnson’s accomplishments as a poet per se was a common fate of women writers during the modernist era, regardless of their ethnicity.⁹

⁹ This issue has been addressed by many feminist critics, among the most notable being GILBERT and GUBAR 1987, 1988.

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The Canadian recuperation of Johnson that began in the 1980s and has subsequently accelerated, has had a modest counterpart in the United States, where Johnson's recognition is largely due to the work of Dr. A LaVonne Ruoff, who wrote the Introduction to the University of Oklahoma Press's 1987 reprint of Johnson's 1913 collection of stories titled *The Moccasin Maker*. One of this book's stories, "A Red Girl's Reasoning," has caught the attention of a number of American editors of recent anthologies of Native literature and of American Indigenous scholars such as Beth Piatote (2013) and Mishuana Goeman (2013). Ironically, despite Johnson's personal discomfort with the United States, she is categorized as a "Native American" in many academic resources, including the MLA Database, and also appears as such in American reference books.¹⁰ This current attention obliquely accords with Johnson's original goal of establishing a profitable presence in the United States, but in my experience, American critics seldom recognize the significance of her Canadian nationalism or her allegiance to the British Empire. On the other hand, while scholars of late nineteenth British culture such as Edward Marx, Antoine Burton and Judith Walkowitz have documented how London welcomed natives of the Indian sub-continent who presented polished displays of the exotic insider, they have yet to include Johnson in their analysis.

Johnson in Translation

Most book-length translations of Johnson have occurred in unexpected regions, where her representation has been shaped by local perspectives. Some of these volumes are translations of her previously published books, notably *Legends of Vancouver* and her final collection of poetry, *Flint & Feather*. In other instances, where translators have compiled their own selections, we can see how their choices reflected their interpretations of Johnson's significance. This pattern began in Ukraine in 1962. To commemorate the centennial of Johnson's birth (a year late), Professor P.H. Zelenski, a philologist at Lvov University, brought out a small volume of Johnson's selected poems, alternating the original English texts with versions in Ukrainian and Russian from different translators. He explained that Johnson was chosen as "a progressive Canadian writer" whose poems express "struggle against the enslavers," identified as "the Anglo-Saxon and French colonialists."¹¹ This theme of Indigenous resistance to injustice is announced in the two poems that open this little volume, "Wolverine" and "The Cattle Thief," which recount incidents of the white man's mistreatment of Native people, and

¹⁰ For example, Johnson's books of poetry are listed in the bibliography of "Works by and About Native American Women Writers" in GREEN 1984.

¹¹ Translation of Zelenski's Introduction by Google Translate.

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continues through further selections. However, this volume diminishes the significance of Johnson's gender by omitting her two most prominent narrative poems written in a first-person female voice, "A Cry of an Indian Wife" and "Ojistoh." This book was followed by a 1996 Ukrainian translation of *Legends of Vancouver*, published in Kiev and prepared by Mykhailyna Kotsyubynska, a prominent dissident and translator whose Introduction praises the nobility and resilience of Indigenous people (JOHNSON 1996a). Kotsyubynskaya concludes by drawing parallels between Johnson and Lesya Ukrainka (1871-1913), Ukraine's admired national poet who was Johnson's contemporary and whose best-known book, *Forest Song*, Kotsyubynskaya sees as containing symbolic similarities with *Legends of Vancouver*. Presumably intended for younger readers, this book's many colourful illustrations stress exotic stereotypes: for example, all the male figures wear the eagle headdresses of Plains tribes, rather than the distinctive styles of West Coast cultures.

More is known about the 1988 Russian translation of a selection of Johnson's stories and poems overseen by Alexandr Vaschenko of the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow. He was a scholar of comparative literature and linguistics whose interest in the resistance of minority cultures to assimilation led to his visit to Six Nations in the 1980s, followed by a return visit of a Pauline Johnson delegation to Moscow in August 1992.¹² Representing the work of three translators and titled *The Lost Island and Other Stories*, Vaschenko's edition was printed on thin paper with black and white interior drawings, and hard-bound in a bright red glossy cover with colourful illustrations based on West Coast Indigenous art (JOHNSON 1988). It was aimed at younger readers and its large print run sold quickly (JOHNSTON 1997, 227-28). The Russian-born graduate student who assisted me with this project recalls having the book when she was a child, and with the assistance of a family member, she easily obtained an inexpensive copy for me in 2019, more than thirty years after it was published. Vaschenko's Introduction presents Johnson through her biography, and his book's contents include a wide selection of Johnson's writing: thirteen of the fifteen stories in *Legends of Vancouver* (omitting the two that feature European subjects), six juvenile stories from the twenty-two pieces in *The Shagganappi*, and twenty-five assorted poems. The six boys' stories, mostly set in the Canadian wilderness, present positive views of Native youth by advocating respect for the environment and congenial interactions between Indigenous and white characters. The selected poems represent Johnson as a lyrical describer of Native experience in the Canadian landscape (especially canoeing) and a teller of

¹² <https://www.spirit-wrestlers.com/excerpts/Vaschenko.html>; my thanks to Linara Kolosov, M.A. candidate in the English department at Simon Fraser University, for her assistance.

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romantic stories, rather than as an advocate for justice. Here too, “A Cry of an Indian Wife” and “Ojistoh” are absent, thereby diminishing attention to Johnson’s gender. In 1996, Johnson appeared again in a Russian volume intended for younger readers, whose title, *Mify i legendy Ameriki*, translates as “Myths and Legends of America” and whose Introduction expresses a strongly anti-colonial message (QUIRK 2005, 133). In this anthology of North American Indigenous stories, Johnson’s translated stories from the Vaschenko volume are set beside Longfellow’s *The Song of Hiawatha*. (QUIRK 2005, 133-34).

In 2002, there appeared a Chinese translation of *Flint and Feather*, Johnson’s final volume of poems, which was first published in English in 1912 (QUIRK 2005, 130). This edition’s preface represents Johnson as a compliant voice seeking harmony among Canada’s “ethnic minorities,” a position that is consistent with China’s state policy of suppression of its own ethnic minorities, according to my Chinese-speaking informant.¹³ On the other side of the globe, in response to inquiries from a German canoeing enthusiast, I sent copies of Johnson’s relevant canoeing stories, thereby contributing to his article published in 2012 (THEISINGER 2012).

To my knowledge, these various instances of international interest have each essentially been one-off events and haven’t inspired further international attention to Johnson. Even in Germany, where there has been much “Indianthusiasm” (to cite the term coined by Hartmut Lutz as the title of a recent book about the European fascination with Indigenous peoples of North America), Johnson has not attracted enough attention to warrant significant translation.¹⁴ The WorldCat catalogue lists a German translation of *Legends of Vancouver* from 2016 that is an on-demand publication, with just one copy currently held in a recognized library, the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek in Leipzig.

Although Pauline Johnson enjoyed an avid cross-country audience of spectators and readers in English-speaking Canada, she has had no following among Canada’s French-speaking population. Her few documented performances in Montreal were given in English during the 1890s, under the watch of W.D. Lighthall, a well-known man of letters and Johnson’s occasional patron. The programs of literary translation between Canada’s two official languages that began in the 1970s focussed on current authors rather than writers from the past. Hence Johnson did not appear in French until 2012, in a volume marketed as a centennial edition of *Legends of Vancouver* (which had actually appeared in

¹³ My thanks to Yiwen Liu, Ph.D. candidate in the English department at Simon Fraser University, for her assistance with this edition.

¹⁴ Hartmut Lutz; email 9 Apr 2019; <https://www.wlupress.wlu.ca/Books/I/Indianthusiasm>

1911), without the support of a translation grant. In a personal conversation, Louis Anctil, the book's Vancouver-based publisher, told me that this volume's primary market is not Quebec, but French immersion school programs in English-speaking Canada, where Johnson's translated stories help teachers to fulfill new requirements to include Native content in the curriculum.

These versions of Johnson's stories in French were recently joined by a large selection of her poems translated by Corinne Béoust, an artist in Paris who contacted me in December 2016 with some questions about Johnson's vocabulary. Her determination to do justice to Johnson as a remarkable woman poet has resulted in a handsome edition that was self-published in Paris in 2018 as *Pauline Johnson: Poèmes* (JOHNSON 2018). Unlike Johnson's previous translators, Béoust was initially attracted to her not as an intriguing Indigenous author, but as a compelling female poet. She first became acquainted with Johnson's work when she was asked to translate "Fire-flowers," a brief lyric that creates an analogy between the spontaneous appearance of purple fire-flowers in burned-out terrain and the eventual healing of human grief, with no explicit reference to Indigenous matters. The ninety-five poems in this volume are arranged to highlight Johnson's poetry about nature, the Canadian wilderness, and personal interiority, alongside her explicitly Native work. Hence this selection offers a nicely balanced representation of Johnson's talents and oeuvre. To date, we are aware of just one review: written by Joël Vincent, it appeared in May 2019 in *Diérèse* and favourably compared Johnson with other noteworthy women poets such as Emily Dickinson and Christine Lavant (VINCENT 2019). Needless to say, Corinne and I both hope that her book will extend Pauline Johnson's impact in la francophonie, and that it will inspire more ongoing attention than has been the case with her translations into Chinese, Russian, and Ukrainian.

During her lifetime, Johnson's work appeared only in English and her travels were limited to English-speaking regions of North America, as well as three overseas journeys to London. Her desire to go to Australia never materialized, and her plans to tour Jamaica were shattered by the earthquake that demolished Kingston on 14 January 1907. Yet long after her death, her words travelled to places she never envisioned visiting in person, in translations that she could never have foreseen. Current international interest in the world's Indigenous cultures may contribute to the expansion of Pauline Johnson's reach as an outstanding and effective woman writer who was a talented poet in her own right, and who gave voice to Native people in their continuing contestation of colonialism.

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