

From the first European efforts to colonize the lands later known as “America” through the policies of Manifest Destiny and beyond, the ethno-ecocidal eradication of indigenous bodies, cultures, and cartographies—although not without resistance and remainder--gradually transformed densely textured networks of indigenous peoples and places into a cleared and open space upon which a nation, America, could be imaginatively and materially composed. Enter the dream of America. Implacably, through devices ranging from invidious media and literary depictions to public policy and outright slaughter, the project of ethno-ecocide sought to secure indigenous lands as unambiguously “American,” that is, as lands over which American Sovereignty would reign supreme.

Yet, we may wonder: could it be that the carrier wave, or at least one among many conduits, of this implacable destruction has been the insistent questionability of America’s claim to unambiguous, unquestionable sovereignty? Could it be that this implacable destruction, along with the efforts of cartographic amnesia by which this destruction is extended and secured, indicate that we have undergone a collective trauma, a trauma resulting in symptoms that include the interminable and belligerent assertions of American sovereignty that have structured so much of this nation’s political history? Said otherwise, could it be that the claims of the dead, and even of the dead of other cultures, maintain an authority over us, compelling us to engage in spectacular displays of sovereignty that would convince the world – ourselves included – that we are free, autonomous, and without doubt, sovereign?

A few more questions seem pertinent here. Could it be the continual efforts of cartographic amnesia requisite to secure America’s self-representation as a fully sovereign nation-state manifest the impossibility of forgetting that which, to all appearances, seems to have been forgotten, i.e., the wanton

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by Adam Rosen

destruction of indigenous bodies, cultures, and cartographies that has allowed for the consolidation of the American dream and the residual claims of indigenous peoples upon the land? Could it be, then, that collective memory memorializes in the

