

Citation information. *in esse: English Studies in Albania*. Volume 4, Issue 1, Page 137-154.
ISSN 2078 – 7413.

From the Chameleon’s Back: John Trudell on the Civilization of “Name Callers”

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Abstract

This paper analyses the work of John Trudell (b. 1946), Native American author, poet, musicians, and an ex-political activist, whose life is imbued with strife, conflicts, sacrifice, pain, but also joy. Being one of the leaders of the American Indian Movement, Trudell has devoted his life to danger and his charismatic speeches and poetry lines are full of explosive insights about, what he calls, sovereignty trade. Trudell’s most poignant thesis is that in the programming history of, as he coins it, the technological-religious-industrious civilization and the civilization of “name callers,” indigenous peoples of Americas may forget not only that they have had nations, who are progressively losing their sense of nationhood, but that they are also human beings because they have been intensely seen only as artefacts. However, he transcends the mere political discourse by developing surprising metaphysical inroads about coherence of thought, freedom of choice, and necessity of developing a new perceptive reality as the only way to fight not only for native rights, but also against the aggressive civilization as a whole. Trudell explains that everything is energy, that human beings consist of the same elements as all the rest of natural world. Just as processing these elements sometimes leads to creation of toxic materials, such as uranium, the same happens with programming human beings who thus forget their responsibility towards being human and towards the universe.

Keywords: *American Indian Movement, sovereignty, perceptive reality, programming, name, nation, human being, artefact*