Red Feminist Literary Analysis: Reading Violence and Criminality in Contemporary Native Women's Writing

By

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Abstract

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This dissertation argues for the development of a red feminist literary analysis in the context of recent calls for a more ethical literary criticism in Native Studies and the more recent articulations of Indigenous feminisms. As a contribution to the field of Native literary analysis, it seeks to intervene in the gaps of literary nationalist approaches by reading the works of Zitkala-Sa, Janet Campbell Hale and Linda Hogan from a red feminist perspective which makes central considerations of gender. Using contemporary Indigenous feminist theory and history as the foundation of such a literary approach, this dissertation asserts that these texts offer important insight into the ways in which Native women's experience under colonialism has been shaped by gender oppression and colonial violence. In particular, this dissertation focuses on these Native women writers' gendered critiques of sexual violence and criminality as the organizing themes through which these works describe, and also attempt to unravel, the ideologies which normalize such conditions. Beginning with the early twentieth century non-fiction writing of Zitkala-Sa, followed by the short fiction of Janet Campbell Hale set during termination and the Red Power era, and ending with the contemporary fiction of Linda Hogan which evades specificities of time and nation, it also makes the historical claim that such feminist considerations of gender oppression and gender justice are not a "recent" focus for Native women who have theorized the conditions of colonialism or the politics of decolonization throughout contemporary literary practice.

For my mother, Cecilia Marie Cantú Nason

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Chapter One

Introduction: Native Women's Feminist Organizing in the Red Power Era, Laying the Groundwork for Contemporary Indigenous Feminisms

> Let your women hear our words.
>
> --Nancy Ward, Speech to US Treaty Commissioners (1781)

> The women know as much as the men do, and their advice is often asked. We have a republic as well as you. The council-tent is our Congress, and anybody can speak who has anything to say, women and all. . . . If women could go into your Congress I think justice would soon be done to the Indians.
>
> --Sarah Winnemucca, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883)

> For spite I feel like putting my hand forward and simply wiping the Indian men's committee into nowhere!! No—I should not really do such a thing. Only I do not understand why your organization does not include Indian women. Am I not an Indian woman as capable to think in serious matters and as thoroughly interested in the race as any one or two of you men put together?
>
> --Zitkala-Sa, Letter to Carlos Montezuma (1901)

This project engages contemporary Indigenous feminist thought and practice and current discourses in Native literary criticism which ground literary analysis within the context of Native peoples' political efforts for self-determination and decolonization. As demonstrated in recent scholarship by Indigenous feminists Cheryl Suzack, Shari Huhndorf, and others, Indigenous feminism is an intervention in the nationalist turn in Native literary studies and an important contribution to the discussion of ethical literary analysis. Specifically, Huhndorf argues in her most recent work, *Mapping the Americas: The Transnational Politics of Contemporary Native Culture*, that Native literary nationalisms, which have dominated the field in recent decades, have been inadequate in addressing many aspects of contemporary Native cultural production. In particular Huhdorf argues that Native literary nationalists "have devoted little attention to writing by Native women, especially those works that attend to issues of gender, and they have thereby reinforced the marginalization and political containment of indigenous women under colonialism" (4). Cheryl Suzack has argued that in seeking an ethical literary criticism, the subject of *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective* (2008), critics must be attendant to the various ways Native peoples' identities and social relations have been remade by the discursive power of colonial law and policy, which produce the colonial subject not only through categories of race but also through redefining gender relations. In order to do so, Suzack argues that "an ethical Native literary criticism must

remain vigilant to the conditions of cultural production from which emerge the identity categories we inhabit and employ in our cultural criticism;" as such those conditions require an intersectional approach that, for Suzack, feminist analysis and standpoint theory offers (171).

This dissertation addresses the lack of critical attention to Native women's literature that Huhndorf notes in a way that locates these works within a critical discourse specific to Indigenous women's experience and identities as feminists and activists. For as Suzack notes, "the study of Native American literature must be constituted through the terrain of political representation in order to transform the relationship between theory and practice" (171). However, exactly how to conduct such analysis, or rather what gives form to an Indigenous feminist literary practice must not be the work of one person or one project. Indeed, theoretically, literary critics might avoid such an undertaking because the terms of what constitutes Indigenous feminism are necessarily open and contested. Moreover, any project which claims to offer a definitive Indigenous feminist literary approach is more likely to produce its own exception rather than a sustainable or viable critical practice. This project therefore takes a humble position as it attempts to, on the one hand, lay the groundwork for a "red feminist" literary practice, and on the other, avoid asserting that its analytical moves are the quintessential method of Indigenous feminist literary analysis.

While what constitutes a red feminist literary analysis will be more fully discussed in Chapter Two, this dissertation's most basic claim is that gender as a field of social relations and power must be at the center of literary analysis that claims to unlock the political aims and anti-colonial critiques of early modern and contemporary Native women writers. Whether these writers claim feminist identities or not, the literature they produce requires a Native feminist approach in order to understand the ways Native women's literature articulates a gendered critique of colonial discursive systems, which as Suzack notes, "privileges as normative [the] male tribal identity" (171). Yet, this claim must be qualified in the sense that Native women's experience under colonialism is one that can never fully be described through an analysis focused on gender only. As Indigenous feminists consistently argue, what makes Indigenous feminism "indigenous" is a critical focus on the relationship between colonialism and intersecting oppressions including those produced through race, class, sexuality and gender.

However, before engaging with literary theory or undertaking analysis of the works of Zitkala-Sa, Janet Campbell Hale or Linda Hogan, I turn to the context of Native women's feminist history and the struggle to define a Native women's movement in the United States during the period of heightened political engagement most commonly referred to as the Red Power era, a period beginning in the late 60's and ending in the late 70's, roughly.[1] In the next section, I sketch the history of Native women's engagement with feminism from the mid 1970's through the early 80's by examining the descriptions of these years by Native women who participated in various events and rights movements of the period. The key texts and debates in this history have become familiar to many scholars interested in contemporary Native feminist scholarship. Yet I offer this brief overview in order to think through the arguments against feminism in

Native women's scholarship which took hold in the late 1990's. This later set of critical voices often serve as a way of grounding recent articulations of Indigenous feminisms as more critical, but I believe sometimes at a cost of positioning current Indigenous feminist voices as emerging from a very reactionary context or as a "development" in Native women's organizing. Therefore, revisiting the period in which Native women activists and scholars struggled to articulate a Native women's movement attentive to gender and Native self-determination serves as both a foundational history and perhaps a cautionary tale for contemporary Indigenous feminist thought and practice. Following this section, I offer a brief description of the chapters to follow.

Women of Color Feminist History: A Missing Chapter

The epigraphs that open this introduction were chosen to highlight the historical presence of anti-sexist critique by Native women since the founding of the United States, a nation built on the dispossession of Native peoples by earlier colonial states, a process the U.S. continues. Beginning with Nancy Ward's admonishment and request that women might better understand what was at stake in the coming together of nations (the U.S. and Cherokee) to Zitkala-Sa's admonishment and request that Native political organization's not dismiss the contributions of Indian women, these epigraphs demonstrate both the unique position that Native women offered in terms of anti-sexist analysis of colonialism as well as anti-sexist analysis of contemporary Native political institutions. Indeed, in the case of Nancy Ward, as the "last" Beloved Woman, she would spend the last few years of her life petitioning the Cherokee National council to resist removal and any further ceding of Cherokee lands. For Sarah Winnemucca, her quote echoes the sentiment of Ward's speech to the Treaty commissioners, but read in today's context, it serves as a reminder of the socio-political dimension of dispossession. A fundamental critique of contemporary articulations of Indigenous feminisms is the ways Native women's political power within their own communities has been marginalized through the remaking of governance structures based on colonial models dependent upon patriarchy. As such, Native women's intellectual history of anti-sexist critique is necessary to contemporary Indigenous feminist practice. Yet, in reviewing the available history of even the most active era of Native organizing in the United States from a feminist perspective, one is confronted with the limited research in this area.

Part of this lack of historical attention may be representative of the silencing of Native women's feminist politics of recent decades. While Indigenous feminism has re-emerged in recent years, as one group of scholars describes their work, "without apology,"[2] the scholarship in the field of Native studies immediately prior to the 2000's was marked by a rejection of feminism based on the criticism that it was incompatible with Native peoples' political goals for self-determination and Native women's tribal identities. In Canada, Aboriginal feminist Joyce Green points out the absence of feminism in scholarship in the introduction to *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*. She writes, "The slim literature on Aboriginal women contains virtually nothing by Aboriginal authors claiming to be feminists or to write about Aboriginal feminism" and in contrast a "number of writers unequivocally reject feminism for Aboriginal women"

(14). This rejection, Green argues, can be traced to the neglect of gender analysis in much of the work by intellectuals in the early decades of Native studies.[3] Green writes:

> In Canada, since the 1970's, the academic literature has been strengthened by the emergence of a cadre of Aboriginal intellectuals, most of whom were gender-blind or hostile to gendered analysis. . . This led to a consensus . . . that feminism was an alien ideology inimical to the political and cultural objectives of Aboriginal women in particular and Aboriginal peoples in general. (15)

Similarly, Shari Huhndorf argues that Native women nationalists' critiques in the 1990's characterized by Huanani Kay Trask, M. Annette Jaimes and others often positioned feminism as against tribal nationalisms; therefore, they argued, feminism undermined Native nationalist movements for self-determination. However Huhndorf points out the problem with such an uncritical acceptance of nationalism is its positioning of Native women in ways that reproduce the gendered violence of colonization. She writes:

> The opposition between sovereignty and feminism positions male-articulated nationalisms as the sole site of indigenous resistance to ongoing colonization and it deflects questions about the ways patriarchy shapes the internal dynamics of Native communities and activist movements. In a stark recapitulation of colonial narratives about Native women's complicity, this lack of sustained critical analysis of nationalism from within indigenous communities posits assimilation (an accusation frequently leveled at feminists) or submission to patriarchy as the only paths available to indigenous women. (113)

Both Green and Huhndorf locate the limiting and false assumptions that "feminism" could only ever be oppositional or outside of Native political thought and practice. This false notion, Green argues, has led to "Non-indigenous scholars . . . uncritically accepting the proposition that feminism was inauthentic, un-Aboriginal and in other ways deeply problematic for Indigenous peoples" (15). Native feminist scholar Andrea Smith points out that Indigenous feminism is not now (or was in the past) merely about advocating for a "politics of inclusion" ("American Studies" 309). Smith argues that this position incorrectly, "presumes that feminism is defined by white women" which devalues the contributions of Native women to feminist thought and practice generally, as well as ignores Native women's interventions to contemporary decolonization efforts (309). In order to effectively see the value of Native feminist analysis, one must take seriously the specific vantage-point of which Native women articulate their politics.

Such a "re-centering" is of course often misunderstood. In *From a Red Zone*, Patricia Penn Hilden describes the value of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's concept of "moving the center" from the assumed universality of a particularly Western epistemological standpoint to one that recognized that there are many centers from which to theorize one's politics and experience. She describes her own effort to advance Thiong'o's point

met with the dismissive reframing of this idea with postcolonial trends in theory. She writes, Thiongo's "words so startled a white British geography lecturer that she cut me off . . . 'I'm so tired of this center-periphery stuff . . . Let's not have any more of that!'" (4). Hilden notes this particular scholar had incorrectly dismissed Thiongo's "more sophisticated concept with what she recognized, the once popular 'center-periphery' dichotomy" rather than a fundamental shift in perspective, illustrating Hilden's overall point (4). Hilden explains:

> What she did not see is that hers is the world where 'we-ness' is white: 'they-ness' is nonwhite. 'Feminism' as practiced by these Euro and European American women, means letting 'them' enter the wide world of WE. The center does not move, it just expands outward . . . (4)

As Smith and Hilden argue for the necessary re-centering of perspective and experience for Indigenous feminist theorizing, other feminist scholars have begun the work of re-orienting the historiography of anti-racist feminisms. Feminist historian Becky Thompson's challenges the way "hegemonic feminism" defines feminist thought as consisting of the following four categories: "liberal, socialist, radical and *sometimes* cultural feminism" (my emphasis, 337). These categories also center white women's leadership and relegate women of color feminisms as an off-shoot of a monolithic white women's movement, or to use Hilden's words again, the "center does not move, it just expands outward."

While Thompson offers little insight into Native women's feminist activism during the second wave, she makes an important observation about the periodization of mainstream feminist history, which marks the height and decline of feminism from the late 60's to the early 80's. Thompson argues that this orientation is particularly rooted in the milestones of white hegemonic feminist activism. In contrast, she notes that a "periodization of the women's movement from the point of view of multiracial feminism would treat the late 1960s and early 1970's as its origin and the mid-1970's, 1980's, and 1990's as a height" (344). This periodization is somewhat supported by the writings of Native women feminists during this period who describe the coming together of conferences during the 70's, the publication of Native feminist texts in the 80's, yet as noted before, there is a transition in the scholarship in the 90's. Of course, one could argue that even these essays which rejected feminism were an important moment in contemporary Indigenous feminist historiography.

Yet even amongst histories attentive to re-centering women of color to the narratives of feminist movements in the 1970's, there is still little attention paid to Native women's organizing at this time. For example in Benita Roth's history, *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana and White Feminist Movements in the Second Wave*, she explains her decision to leave out Native women's organizing because of the lack of available archives and the assumption that the divided loyalties and small number of Native women feminists lessened its historical value. She explains that feminist organizing in the Native American community "was delayed and made relatively difficult by competing loyalties and overall political circumstance;" therefore, she chose her three

movements based on their "multistate scale" and the "timing of their emergences" (3). However, Roth points to a brief article written by Sherna Burger Gluck and her research partners, Maylei Blackwell, Sharon Cotrell and Karen Harper on Women of Color's second-wave feminist organizing. What this article reveals, though limited, is a number of touchstone events later more fully described by Native scholar Rayna Green that begins to give shape to the feminist organizing of the latter half of the 1970's.

Conferences and Coming Together (1974-81)

Turning to Gluck et al, similar to Roth's more expansive history, their project attempts to unhinge the focus of "second-wave" histories on the "actions of mainly white women's groups" to the wider consideration of women of color feminisms (32). Unfortunately, the section on Native women's feminist activism in the US is quite underdeveloped, but offers four moments of anti-sexist Native women's activism during this period. Of these four, three revolve around Native women's participation in and organizing women's conferences including: the National Women's Conference in Houston (1977), the first Ohoyo Conference in Albuquerque (1980), and the second annual conference sponsored by Ohoyo in partnership with the North American Indian Women's Association titled "Indian Women at the Crossroads"(1981) (42-3) .

The National Women's Conference in 1977 was a mainstream event sponsored by the U.S. federal government and planned as part of the nation's bicentennial celebration as well as in recognition of the UN's International Women's Year in 1975. The Ohoyo conferences, on the other hand, were sponsored by the newly formed group of Native women activists and scholars under the same name in 1979, the North American Indian Women's Association and the US Department of Education. The final example identified by Gluck is the creation of the Native women's activist network Women of All Red Nations (WARN) which she cites as occurring in 1978, although the date is much earlier in 1974. WARN, a more radical group, emerged out of the Red Power organizing of the American Indian Movement and did not identify as a feminist organization. However as Gluck and Andrea Smith have noted, within WARN leadership, members like Madonna Thunderhawk have claimed this position. Despite the brief nature of Gluck's overview of Native women's anti-sexist activism, this assessment attempts to fill the gap in the feminist historiography on the organizing activities of Native women during this period.

These key moments are also discussed in Rayna Green's essay "Diary of a Native-American Feminist." Published in *Ms. Magazine* in 1982, Green's "diary" chronicles events which represent the "parts that make up the American Indian Women's Movement" in the late 1970's and early 80's (330). Green's "diary" does not presume to offer a comprehensive account of Native women's activism at this time, because as Green points out, there are "as many versions of Indian feminism as there are tribes" (331). The events which she focuses on are oriented around conferences in which Native women activists and academics participated to discuss various issues, but also came together to speak to Native women's experience and gendered concerns.

Her diary begins with an entry about Native women activists' participation at a 1977 energy development conference in Billings, Montana attended mostly by Native tribes from the state. Green recounts a Mohawk woman's speech which galvanized the Native women at the conference. In this speech, the woman strongly challenged a Native man's definition of tradition or the "old ways" which he had argued meant Native women should stay out of leadership positions. Green writes that the Mohawk woman's speech placed the women in attendance "squarely in the feminist consciousness" (331), and they came together in protest of such anti-woman rhetoric and deployment of "tradition." Although the conference was focused on decidedly different political issues, the question of Native women and feminism had come to the surface. Similarly, Native women's gender politics would find representation at more mainstream feminist events as well.

In addition to the National Women's Conference noted in Gluck et al, a Native women's delegation convened at another "majority" event, the 1979 National Women's Studies Association Conference in Lawrence, Kansas. Green gives a fuller accounting of the conference in an article she writes for the NWSA newsletter that same year. Reporting on the event, Green notes that twelve Native women academics met "partly [to] participate in a symposium on Indian women, and partly to formalize the organization of a network of academic Indian women" ("American Indian Women" 6). Green emphasizes the meeting "was informed by a strong sense of our relative invisibility as scholars, feminists, and activists" (6). Alongside Green, Native scholars Clara Sue Kidwell and Bea Medicine organized a Native women's symposium at the conference. Green writes that "an unusually large number of other Indian women . . . all prominent educators, political leaders, and advocates for Indian women's advancement" also participated (7). The organizers had three initial goals: "to identify and create a network of Indian women scholars and academics; to produce a definitive bibliography of works on and by Native American women; and to determine whether the NWSA would offer a sympathetic and useful context in which to operate as Indians and scholars" (6). Following the convention, Green reported to have at least "125 names with others coming in," addressing the first goal, while the second goal would culminate in the publication of her well-known text *Native American Women: A Contextual Bibliography*, in 1983.

The third goal was less successful both based on her accounts of the interactions between women at this initial conference and the relatively small number of Native women who attended the conference the following year. While Native women at the 1979 NWSA convention stressed the importance of building better and more informed relationships with others, such a goal could not overcome the unwillingness of others at the conference to shift the center. She points out that the "[i]nterchange between the Indian and non-Indian women attending the panel confirmed our feeling that Indians are, in general, a mystery to most people" (7). Moreover she writes, "most of the women in our group felt a real distance between their goals of activist commitment and their work within a non-Indian scholarly Association representing the women's studies movement" (7). Indeed Green reveals that these same "scholar-activists" had already

formed their own "national consortium called 'Ohoyo' (Choctaw for 'woman')" which hosted its first annual conference in the fall of 1980.

Significantly, Green's description of the Ohoyo conference is marked by the memory of a discussion about the 1978 *Santa Clara v. Martinez* Supreme Court decision. The court had held that there was no remedy at the federal level via the Indian Civil Rights Act for Julia Martinez , a woman who sued on behalf of her children denied tribal membership and thus inheritance rights. The decision effectively upheld the Santa Clara Pueblo nation's right to discriminate based on gender; the Martinez children were denied membership because their father was from another Native community. The Martinez children's lack of access to tribal membership (and therefore inheritance of their mother's property) was based on a 1939 membership ordinance which recognized all children of Native men but recognized only those children of Native women from other Santa Clara Pueblo men (Ferguson 289). Green writes that "all of us are grateful that the court upheld tribal sovereignty" in the sense that the court did not intervene in the tribal government's right to determine membership critiera[4] ("Diary" 331). However, Green notes that the women remain divided in assessing the *justice* of the matter, noting that "Mrs. Martinez and all the others [who were forced out of their communities] still haunt us" (332). She echoes the words of many women of color activists facing such contradictions:

> The double bind of race and sex is too real. Two powerful words—tradition and equality—do battle with one another in Indian country. But whose version of tradition and whose version of equality should we fight for? (332)

In her last entry on the second national Ohoyo convention in 1981, Green seems to suggest the tensions between sovereignty versus Native women's "justice" which sobered the last meeting had subsided. She makes the observation that in a discussion advocating for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, Native women from over 30 different nations saw "no conflict of interest between justice for Indian women and tribal sovereignty" should the Equal Rights Amendment be enacted in Oklahoma (333). Yet in terms of self-identifying "feminists," she concedes that "most here would not describe themselves" in this way, yet "they are all quite clear about the need for attention to Native women, and they are vocal about the burdens they bear because they are female" (333). This vexed relationship with the term "feminism" rather than anti-sexist practice would eventually come to dominate the discourse around Native women and feminism in the 90's. However these series of prominent and well-documented conferences point to the fact that during this period of activism, and indeed from its inception, even in the most contemporary social movements, gender focused and anti-sexist organizing has always been part of and has existed alongside social justice struggles of Native women and Native peoples in general.

Indigenous Women's Network (1985)

In "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty and Social Change," Andrea Smith writes:

> Native women's activist theories about feminism, about the struggle against sexism both within Native communities and at large . . . are complex and varied. These theories are not monolithic and cannot simply be reduced to the dichotomy of feminist versus non-feminist. (118)

Smith quotes Janet McCloud, Tulalip activist, who recalls how women in the Native rights movement were essential to its success. McCloud recalls that during this period of Red Power activism, "women were really the backbone of everything" (Smith 119) yet she feared that sexism within the movement would lead to losing women's political will. In order to avoid such a consequence, McCloud organized a gathering at Yelm, Washington in 1985 which led to the formation of the Indigenous Women's Network (IWN). McCloud, a longtime and respected Native rights activist, points out that she saw her role in organizing the conference and later as a member of the group as being a "buffer because the men [in the movement] were saying the 'Indignant Women's Organization . . . They kinda felt threatened by the women organizing'" (119). It would be her community standing that would conceivably serve as a "buffer" to the long-standing tactic of dismissing Native women's organizing *as women* in such a simple but effective way.

Anishnaabe activist Winona LaDuke is one of the women who McCloud refers to as the "backbone" of activist politics at the time. In LaDuke's 1986 essay announcing the formation of IWN, she focuses on the group's goals however, rather than its criticisms of sexism within the larger Native rights movement. She writes that the "gathering in Yelm, Washington last August, hosted by the Northwest Indian Women's Circle . . . afforded a precious opportunity to share experiences, ideas, and visions" (235). Most importantly, the conference of "more than 200 Native women organizers . . . brought a renewed sense of support and empowerment" (235), and she adds that "women who often would not be the ones speaking up at other 'meetings'" had a chance to contribute in important ways (236). Finally, LaDuke closes with the IWN's statement of purpose which describes the necessity for a Native women's organization such as theirs:

> As indigenous women we have personally struggled against overpowering forces. Indian women are abused, mistreated, battered, sterilized, and are victims of institutional racism and poverty in double doses, as women and as Native Americans. . . We are compelled to address the problems that confront us. (237-38)

LaDuke goes on to note that the IWN's own planning meetings included the concerns around issues of identity described by Green, Kate Shanley, and others, were expressed as anxiety about "women's liberation" overcoming community cohesiveness. LaDuke writes that, "None of us thought what we were doing … was simply adopted from the

women's movement" (238). She ends by addressing "those who brought up the issue of divisiveness . . . 'trust us a little—we are from the community, after all'" (238).

LaDuke's request for trust echoes McCloud's positioning of herself as a "buffer" from dismissive attacks which pit Native women's organizing against "community" interests. I end this section of my brief historical overview with the formation of the IWN largely because its formation seemed to mark a moment of confidence in Native women's anti-sexist and women-centered organizing as well as gestured towards an "indigenous" global sense of purpose. However, while this organization has maintained itself, the discourse on feminism in scholarly literature seems to have stalled in the decade that follows. Yet before addressing this critical turn, I want to briefly address the literary arena of Native feminist thought during the early 80's.

***A Gathering of Spirit* (1983): Native Feminism & Literature**

Becky Thompson's timeline of multiracial feminist milestones discussed earlier includes the 1983 publication of *A Gathering of Spirit* as an important milestone, though she does not discuss its significance. In this collection, editor Beth Brant brings together the creative work of, at the time, up and coming Native writers such as Linda Hogan, Janice Gould, Wendy Rose, Winona LaDuke, Luci Tapahonso and others along with art, creative writing and letters submitted by Native women in prison, including Mary Bennett, Rita Silk-Nauni and Share Ouart. Brant describes the origins of the collection as a special issue of the lesbian feminist magazine *Sinister Wisdom*, edited by Michelle Cliff and Adrienne Rich between 1981 and 1983. In fact, the collection was originally published in 1983 as volumes 22 and 23 of *Sinister Wisdom* before being published on its own in 1984 by Sinister Wisdom Books and again by Firebrand Books in 1988.

In Brant's introduction, she focuses on the shared experiences of the voices presented and on the subject of sisterhood, a word often critiqued as an overgeneralization of women's relationships across difference. Yet Brant writes: "Sister. The word comes easily to most of us. Sisterhood. What holds us to that word is the commonness as Indians—as women" (10). Brant's focus on the word sisterhood is worth noting, but not in terms of its association with mainstream feminist paradigms. Brant underscores the experiences these writers share as both Native peoples and as women, which allows for Native women to "recognize each other" as Indigenous peoples under patriarchal colonial conditions (10).

Although it is a small volume consisting mainly of poetry and letters from Native women in prison, it also includes a number of essays by Native women scholars on the subject of feminism or Native women's political activism around gender. As it is a collective project first published by a feminist journal, *A Gathering of Spirit* is significant in the history of Native women's feminist thought in conversation with not only Native women, but also with a mainstream feminist audience. It marks a point in the conversation where the differences between "feminism" as majority discourse and Native politics is still a topic of discussion, but not the only focus for its contributors. Brant references these early critiques of mainstream feminism, alongside a critique of

Native nationalist movements, when she describes the sources of anger which contextualize Native feminist politics at this time. She writes, "We are angry at Indian men for their refusals of us. For their limited vision of what constitutes a strong Nation. We are angry at the so-called "women's movement" that always seems to forget that we exist" (11).

While this anger positions Native women's politics in a reactionary position to these other two movements, Brant also points to a much longer historical tradition for Native women's feminist identity. These words serve as an epigraph to this introduction but are worth repeating: "*We are not victims*. We are organizers, we are freedom fighters, we are feminists, we are healers. This is not anything new. For centuries it has been so" (emphasis in the original, 11). The identities claimed in this statement cover a wide swath, but unapologetically include "feminist" among them. More importantly, the assertion that a feminist identity "is not anything new," is echoed by contemporary Indigenous feminists who seek to locate definitions of that term within their own cultural contexts and histories.

Most contributions to *A Gathering of Spirit* do not theorize explicitly on Native feminist thought; however, Kate Shanley's essay "Thoughts on Indian Feminism" begins to articulate what this might mean in the context of Native women's contemporary organizing. Despite her reservations on speaking from an overly academic space or for all Native women, Shanley attempts to theorize some core values of Native feminism from her perspective. She argues that although the term feminist has yet to hold a consensus among Native women, "the word 'feminism' has special meanings to Indian women" (215). This meaning specifically includes "the idea of promoting the continuity of tradition, and consequently, pursuing the recognition of tribal sovereignty" (215). Much of the essay points to the way identity continues to play a role in the discussion on Native feminism, particularly at this point in time, although one could argue that Native identity in the late 70's early 80's preoccupied much of the Native political discourse. She argues that one's various social identities can simultaneously contribute to a situated political practice without weakening one's critique or commitment to other transformative politics. She also notes that while Native feminism may have some common goals with mainstream feminists, particularly in terms of violence against women and children, her main point throughout the essay is that "Indian feminism . . . must be powerful on its own terms" (215).

While Shanley's essay demands recognition of "Indian feminism" as its own thought and practice, other entries turn to a discussion of the Native rights movement and radical organizing of the period. These entries specifically critique the blatant sexism within militant Native nationalist movements of the period, a point that Brant addressed in her introduction. Two poems in the collection directly address this theme, Lakota writer Gayle Two Eagles' "The Young Warrior," and Debra Swallow's poem "Keep a Dime." In Two Eagles' biographical sketch for the collection, she urges all "closet Indian feminists, come out!" (238). Her poem begins with the awakening political consciousness of a young Lakota woman who had been "brought up thinking she was special and good" and a "woman warrior" (119). Yet with the coming of the

"new orators/Telling of the old ways" this young woman is confronted with their version of "[t]radition as told by men" (119). Ignoring their edict that the "woman's squad is assigned to the kitchen," she offers "[q]uiet defiance to the men who say, 'respect your brother's vision,'/ She mutters, 'respect your sister's vision too" (119).

It is at this point the poem shifts in voice and directly addresses all Native people listing the places where the protagonist had participated in activist protests, including Wounded Knee, Sioux Falls, Custer and Sturgis. Significantly, the poem follows this list of key protests with more private moments where the woman had "listened to the women who were beaten by the men they love,/ or their husbands" (120). Finally, the woman remembers the times she "gave strength to the women who were raped/As has the Sacred Mother Earth" (120). At this point, the poem breaks to highlight a single line which notes these events left the woman "asking where Tradition for women was being decided" (120). The poem ends with this now wiser Lakota woman looking at her young daughter who "also has a vision" (120). Presumably her daughter's vision is similar to the one that opens the poem—one of being "special" as a Lakota woman. However, unlike her mother's vision, this young girl has witnessed the added layer of injustice towards Native women within her own community as well as outside of it. Two Eagles poem repeatedly turns to "vision" as a trope referencing both an unrealized, but hoped for future as well as the ability to see clearly. In both instances, sexist practices, not only the injustice produced by colonialism, impact Native women's vision(s). This internally directed critique at the Native rights movement highlights the violence experienced by women in the movement, as well as challenges the doctrines of "tradition" manipulated by some men to secure their own power.

Importantly, however, Two Eagles questions "Tradition" (with a capital T) not as a primitive or inherently sexist category of knowledge—a critique Native women have long dismissed as mired in Western expectations of indigenous ways of being. Instead, Two Eagle's poem questions Native men's refusals to interrogate contemporary assumptions about tribal "tradition" that she recognizes as too similar to that "written in history books by white men" (119). Her poem advocates for knowledge that she "was brought up thinking" in which she too was "special and good" (119).

Similarly, Debra Swallow's poem in the volume takes up the subject of Native organizing during this period and focuses on women as foundational to its success and maintenance. Her poem reads as a list of tasks that women in the "movement" managed to accomplish on little sleep, with little money and less support. The list is a breathless one replicating the relentless pace of work for women in the Native rights movement. For example, she writes, "sleeping bags/legal pads/ (gotta write tomorrow's press release)/Organizing rallies, slide shows/Speaking forums, pow wows, feasts" (216). The simple rhyme scheme also contributes to feelings of redundancy and a sense of expectation that accompanies "women's work."

While Swallow's poem does not openly critique sexist practices within the Native rights movement, her list sheds light on the contributions and leadership of Native women in the movement. As the list develops, the tasks seem more and more

impossible and all consuming. In particular, the focus on the literal cost of such commitment is reflected as an emotional cost as well. The list notes the material cost of "gas money, postage, air fare, cab fare" as well as the intellectual energy required to "[t]each the children and their parents the/1868 treaty and Leonard Peltier, the IRA-BIA" (216). The final lines of the poem underscore that "women's" role in this movement is framed as complete sacrifice and unpaid labor: "Spend your money on the movement/But keep a dime for the phone,/it's worth a lawyer you know./Women's work is never done" (216). The irony of the last line in Swallow's poem between the colloquial meaning of "women's work" and the roles Native women filled in the movement resonate with later representations of the era, most notably depicted in Mary Brave Bird's biographical account in *Lakota Woman* (1990), elaborated further in *Ohitika Woman* (1993). Traces of Native women's contribution and the sexism which they faced serve as the backdrop to the only movement novel on the period, Jeannette Armstrong's *Slash* (1985).

Contemporary Reflections

In Patricia Penn Hilden's 1995 memoir *When Nickels were Indians*, she narrates her personal journey through various elements that contribute to one's identity, (racial, political, cultural); elements that converge, sometimes contradict, but nevertheless shape the lives of most urban Native peoples. One chapter, "De-Colonizing the (Women's) Mind," focuses primarily on feminist thought and activism that informed Hilden's political consciousness in the 70's and 80's. Hilden notes the contested relationship between mainstream feminists and Native and working-class women activists existed to be sure, but she also remembers a diverse Native feminist and anti-sexist activist community. She writes, that though there were and still are women who turn to more exclusively race-based organizing, "At the same time, there are feminists—albeit with carefully nuanced positions—in Indian Country" (159). Of course, she points out that identifying as feminist within militant Native organizations or communities during this time was not always welcome, yet necessary. She writes:

> Only when feminism arose among Native women did they—we—began to elicit serious male attention. And often in those early days, or so it seemed to me, it was primarily negative. Like our African-American, Latina, and European-American working-class sisters, Native feminists in my circle were frequently told that the women's movement was white and middle-class, useless for the struggles of Indian women. (168)

In this same chapter, Hilden points out that Native feminist activism then, as now, was unique from mainstream articulations of feminism because of an adherence to community values which remain "inclusive," echoing the words of both LaDuke and McCloud. She writes: "Community based efforts, in keeping with Native tradition, are marked by their willingness to hear various points of view—from women in tribes where traditions differ considerably as well as from women from indigenous communities all over the globe" (159). Hilden posits that this "more inclusive feminism" that brought together Indigenous women across tribal nations, "may arise

from the . . . widespread awareness that certain gender relations were brought across the ocean from Europe and imposed on unwilling Native populations . . . through overt government policies that always excluded women from decision-making processes . . ." (160).

Hilden acknowledges multiple perspectives on feminism, but asserts, however, that there is also a simple historical point to be made in terms of the dismissals of feminist-oriented activism and thought in these years. She writes, "the backlash against mainstream feminism, felt throughout the United States in the 1980's, has its counterpart in Indian Country," though she posits that certain "barriers," such as traditional understandings of gender relations and "suspicions of outsiders' prescriptions," made that backlash "less effective" (173). This limited backlash would come from an unlikely place however. It would not be from men in the movement nor non-Native gate-keepers; it would come from the work produced by Native women scholars defining their own nationalist politics in the 90's.[5] As these activist scholars sought to differentiate their politics from gender-based, and perhaps "rights-based," to the articulation of Native nationalist or sovereigntist discourse, they asserted more openly their political allegiance to Native organizing rather than "feminism" which perhaps had become less meaningful and less radical as Women's Studies became more institutionalized and became the gatekeeper to academic feminist thought.

What this brief overview reveals is a consistent relationship between two separate political goals: a commitment to anti-sexist politics, and a commitment to the self-determination struggles of tribal nations. In the end, this small set of examples, from Green's overview of various conferences, to the formation of groups like Ohoyo, WARN, and the IWN, to the publication of *A Gathering of Spirit,* demonstrate an active engagement with anti-sexist organizing by Native women on their own terms and as a part of their own movement. The fact that this history remains largely neglected speaks to the power of defining this era only through the male-dominated Red Power movement or through the mainstream feminist movement, even when such spaces are opened up for "women of color" in that history. This dissertation certainly cannot fill this gap either. However, I chose to begin this project in this manner, because I believe it serves to remind contemporary Indigenous feminists of the necessity to insist on feminist theorizing as just as essential to sustaining a critical conversation on gender in Native Studies. What is clear about this period is that Native women found real power in coming together as a Native feminist community (whether they employed the term or not). They envisioned "community" in ways that transcended tribal differences yet located a counter-discourse to the oppressive constructions of what Indian and woman meant to the colonizer in their rediscovery of or corrective understanding of "traditional" knowledge and gender systems. Indeed, coming together to theorize Indigenous feminisms and organize as Indigenous feminist women in the first decade of the 21st century would reinvigorate a stalled conversation, at least in the context of Native studies. This return of Indigenous feminist organizing provides the context for my own contribution to the field of Native literary studies and cultural analysis. I turn now to a brief description of the chapters to follow.

Chapter Overview

Chapter Two picks up the historical trajectory of this introductory chapter as it continues to tell the story of Native women's engagement with feminism to the current era, albeit moreso through the academic literature produced in the recent decade. While I do not spend much time on the now familiar critiques of feminism by Native women, I begin with perhaps the most exemplary of the Native women's nationalist and anti-feminist positioning, Huanani Kay Trasks' essay "Feminism and Hawaiian Nationalism" (1996). I begin with Trasks' critiques in a somewhat different way in terms of trying to locate how Native women's gendered politics were both present and also formative to her vision of anti-colonial politics. The majority of the chapter, however, turns to the ways feminist analyses have been rearticulated as an Indigenous women's project in recent years. At the same time, I turn to recent scholarly focus on defining an "ethical" literary criticism in Native Studies and in particular how this discussion has engaged gender as a part of that project. In the end, this initial chapter serves as the theoretical foundation for my analyses of the Native women's writing which constitutes the body of the dissertation.

In the remaining chapters, I turn to the literature of three Native women whose writings illustrate to me some of the core critiques of red feminist politics. Specifically, these writers' foreground the relationship of colonialism to the normalizing of Native women's oppressive conditions as the product of Native women's own transgressions, rather than the material and bodily presence of patriarchal colonialism and its gendered violence. These conditions, which produce the historical and contemporary epidemic of sexual violence against Native women, are made visible in a variety of ways and remain a constant focus of Native women writing about Native women's experience. Yet one of the most prominent examples of documenting such violence, Zitkala-Sa's contribution to the pamphlet *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes, Legalized Robbery* (1926) is rarely read within this context, if read at all.

In Chapter Three, I trace ways in which this pamphlet and Zitkala-Sa's non-fiction writing during the waning years of the assimilationist period are better served with what I am calling a "red feminist" approach that recognize her rhetorical choices as a function of her political commitments that are shaped by her experience as a Native woman, not as merely a function of literary trend. A secondary argument of this chapter is that red feminist scholarship must also seek to produce a Native women's intellectual history attentive to these early figures' contributions and theorizing of their own experience during some of the most oppressive eras. More than an argument for "representation" of women in this endeavor, this perspective on Native women's writing might also serve to problematize contemporary articulations of resistance inattentive to gender violence. More so, however, this chapter keys in on Zitkala-Sa's use of human rights rhetoric during this period. In the end, this chapter explores how such rhetoric might reflect current indigenous feminist critiques and strategies which turn to the global register of human rights for anti-violence organizing.

Chapter Four moves from the genre of non-fiction and the 1920's assimilation period to the genre of the contemporary short story and the 1950's termination era. In particular, this chapter examines the short fiction of Janet Campbell Hale placed in conversation with an earlier representation of Native women "criminals" found in D'Arcy McNickle's 1936 novel, *The Surrounded*. While critics are more familiar with Hale's representation of contemporary Native women and criminal deviance in the novel, *The Jailing of Cecilia Capture*, I am interested in how the themes of criminality and escape are developed in her collection titled *Women on the Run* (1999). Certainly the subject of violence is a key focus for Indigenous feminist organizing, but another common thread is the criminalization of Native women reflected in the overrepresentation of Native women in prison and other institutions. While the social reality of such trends is discussed as a result of colonial and racist policies and practices, in Hale's work, she often uses the subject of criminality as a way to show how Native communities have internalized sexist practices which send women "on the run" from their own homes and families. From a red feminist perspective, Hale's short fiction is important as it brings together two threads of "discipline": 1) how colonial policy and state institutions produce criminal women and 2) how Native communities are complicit with such practices of discipline and patriarchal violence when we refuse to make space for women returned/displaced by such policies.

Finally, Chapter Five brings together the themes of violence and criminality through a close reading of Linda Hogan's *Power*. My analysis of this novel explores how a deceptively simple "identity" narrative develops an incredibly elegant and sophisticated critique of colonial discourses which serve to disempower Native women. In order to do so, the story centers on the young female narrator's coming to understand how power is maintained and articulated through the Western discourses of patriarchal Christianity, knowledge (historical and scientific) and the law. Ultimately this novel is a story of "un-learning" those discourses upon which the violence of colonialism relies and also perpetuates. However, what is particularly interesting to me about this story is its equally astute critique of the ways those discourses of power are taken up by Native rights movements at the expense of Native women, the land and a network of relations that traditional knowledge depends.

In the end, the development of my own understanding of Native feminist practice is one that is related to a particular community of Indigenous women scholars who have guided my research over the last ten years. In particular, I am indebted to the group of Native women who came together under the label of the Red Feminist Collective (RFC) in the spring of 2003. Obviously the collective's name is a term I borrow to represent my Indigenous feminist reading practices and theorizing. It is not a reference to a Marxist analysis. It is, however, my way to pay respect to the women who have helped me think through what constitutes an ethical approach to engaging contemporary Native women's writing for its insights into: 1) describing the gendered conditions of colonial violence and 2) articulating an anti-sexist and decolonial politics. This approach I call a "red feminist" literary criticism, not as a gimmickry neologism or in the hopes of other critics taking up the term. It is a metaphorical and relational

gesture that I hope does justice to, and conveys the respect I have for, the women of the RFC.

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[1] For an overview of key historical moments in the Red Power era, see Alvin Josephy et al. *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1999. For recent literary analysis of the era, see Sean Teuton, *Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel*. Durham: Duke U P, 2008.

[2] *Native Feminisms without Apology Symposium.* April 28, 2006, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

[3] It is also important to note that the contested nature of "feminism" for Aboriginal politics in Canada is reflective of the history of Native women's organizing around issues of gender discrimination under the Indian Act before the passage of Bill C-31. For a review of this history, See Janet Silman, *Enough is Enough: Aboriginal Women Speak Out.* Toronto: The Women"s Press, 1987.

[4] However it should be noted that the Supreme Court's decision was more about the limits of the ICRA for federal review, and less about whether US recognition of tribal sovereignty trumped gender equality under the law. For an overview see Christina Ferguson, "Martinez v. Santa Clara Pueblo: A Modern Day Lesson on Tribal Sovereignty." *Ark. L. Rev.* 46.1, 1993. 275-302.

[5] For an overview of these critiques, see Shari Huhndorf's chapter, "Indigenous Feminism, Performance, and the Gendered Politics of Memory" in her most recent work, *Mapping the Americas: The Transnational Politics of Contemporary Native Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2009.

Chapter Two

Red Feminist Literary Analysis: On the Intersections of Indigenous Feminisms and an Ethical Native Literary Criticism

It is within the growing context of violence against women and the concomitant lowering of our status among Native Americans that I teach and write. Certainly I could not locate the mechanisms of colonization that have led to the virulent rise of woman-hating . . . without a secure and determined feminism.

–Paula Gunn Allen *The Sacred Hoop* (1986)

We must do this work because we are involved in a constant battle to be seen and heard as indigenous women. Indigenous men describing women's lives in the political sphere too easily subsume our stories within what they perceive as a more important battle for recognition of indigenous rights. Our stories cannot be implied in a larger story of our people, nor can we be simply portrayed as selfless, strong women without losing the very real experiences of indigenous women in all parts of our lives, including the political.

--Victoria Bomberry "Blood, Rebellion and Motherhood in the Political Imagination of Indigenous People" (2005)

We are alive.

--The Red Feminist Collective (2003)

The 1990's are marked by a strong stance against feminism by Native women scholars best exemplified by M. Annette Jaimes and Theresa Halsey's essay on Indigenous women, which equated feminism with assimilation (1992), followed by Huanani Kay Trask's dismissal of feminism in favor of nationalism (*Signs* 1996), through the closing of the decade with Laura Tohe's "There's No Word for Feminism in my Language"(*Wicazo Sa Review* 2000). As previously noted, these three essays have been effectively challenged by Native scholars in defense of recent resurgences of Indigenous feminist thought and practice, including Native feminists such as Shari Huhndorf, Cheryl Suzack, and Andrea Smith as well as literary nationalists Craig Womack, Robert Warrior and others. In order to avoid rehashing now familiar critiques, I only wish to address Huanani Kay Trask's essay on the subject of feminist theory and Hawaiian nationalism. My aim is not to defend feminism from Trask's critiques, but to demonstrate that, as she argues against the value of "American" feminism, she actually demonstrates the need for a Native feminist position, especially in terms of Native nationalist movements.

Trask's essay, "Feminism and Indigenous Hawaiian Nationalism," was published as a part of a volume on the relationship between feminist theory and practice for the mainstream feminist journal *SIGNS*. In her contribution to this issue, Trask takes the opportunity to be the dissenting voice on the efficacy of mainstream feminist *theory* in relation to decolonial *practice* for Indigenous peoples. She writes, "[a]s for feminist theory, I rarely think about it . . . The request for this article occasioned the first moment in many years that I have seriously considered the relationship between feminist theory and feminist praxis. More than a feminist, I am a nationalist" (915). However, in explaining her nationalist position as the more appealing politics, she is forced to define feminism in very specific terms. In order to do so, she limits the initial subject of feminist theory to a very liberal "American" and white academic feminism she encountered while an undergraduate during the 1970's. As such, her critiques on the value of feminism have to be considered within that specific discursive terrain and not within the multiple arenas of multicultural feminisms or any radical articulation of such a theory or practice.

Yet even in her rejection of "American" feminist theory, she notes that American feminism, as she experienced it as a young undergraduate in Michigan, was initially appealing. She describes being drawn to feminism's creativity and arts practice where she "focused on the growing field of feminist poetry . . . as the best expression of an alternative vision of society" (908). For Trask the "feminist imagination" which produced such poetry reflected her own values in which "life was honored and power reshaped into an enabling force for the protection of both the human and the natural world" (908). In addition, she notes that feminist thought seemed in line with her own understanding that "the oppression of women is connected to larger cultural postures regarding the value of life, of the living earth, and her bounty" (908). Thus for Trask, feminist poetry and what she describes as a "feminist Eros" within such creative work provided a space for her to think through what an "alternative vision" of social relations might encompass, as well as the processes within which those "larger cultural postures" produced gender oppression. Thus within the context of American academia, feminist art practice (outside of theory) provided that space through which Trask could develop her own Indigenous feminist critique and articulate her politics.

However, as Trask notes, when she returned home, American feminism did not translate to the political efforts and organizing of her Hawaiian community. Yet, this failing seems to be more the result of her definition of feminism in the limited terms within which she encountered such politics. For Trask, what she rejects is an American, or more specifically a liberal, feminism. For Trask given the particular genealogy of liberal feminist theory, feminist theory would not produce an "alternative vision" for Native Hawaiians. In particular she notes that an "American" feminist position depended on the existence of America, capitalist imperialism and in particular the nation-state which was produced through the dispossession of Native peoples. What this specific kind of feminism offered was "freedom" defined in rights discourse, granted from a sovereign that held no legitimacy in the eyes of Native Hawaiians.

Against a liberal American feminism, Trask argues that nationalist politics produced from within a specific Native context is the more appropriate space from which to theorize and organize. She writes, "[i]ssues specific to women still inform our identity as Native women leaders, but our language and our organizing are framed within our own cultural terms, not within feminist American terms" (910). Controlling the framing of such political efforts means that Native women should be the ones to define "women's issues," on their own "cultural terms" to decide "how women should lead our indigenous nations, and about the role, if any, of feminism" (911). For Trask, what is at issue is not *necessarily* the subject of a Native feminism, but more importantly, she argues against defining Native women's leadership and political identities through an "American" feminism, which, defined on those terms, represents yet another colonial discourse dictating how Native women should think and act.

As discussed in the introduction, however, Native women had been quite active in their own political movement both outside and within the framework of "American" feminism through organizing conferences, attending mainstream feminist events, starting their own Native women's organizations and publishing literature on the subject throughout the late 70's and 80's. In the field of literary criticism, the subject of Native women's feminist politics and cultural critique serves as the focus of Paula Gunn Allen's groundbreaking book on Native women's history and literature. Published in 1986, *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, has been recognized by contemporary scholars for its focus on the gendered dimensions of colonialism and its assertion that traditional knowledge and history of tribal peoples was the source of an alternative and more liberatory model of gender relations.

In his study of book-length Native literary criticism, Craig Womack notes the historical significance of *The Sacred Hoop* for the field as it was the first book-length study of Native literature, and it remains one of the most widely read texts on the subject to this day (*Reasoning Together* 21). However criticisms of the work ,which include critical discomfort with its sweeping generalizations about tribal life and the West, its ahistorical lapses, and its idealizing of what Gunn Allen names "gynocracy" in Native cultures, has perhaps led to its place in the academic dustbin for most contemporary discussions of Native literature.[1] However, no Indigenous feminist literary theory can overlook the importance of Gunn Allen's book and her critical claim which insisted that cultural critics in Native Studies must acknowledge that the colonization of the Americas depended on particularly misogynistic gendered violence and the suppression of Native women's power in their own tribal communities.[2]

These foundational claims are the focus of her introduction and are worth reviewing. Gunn Allen writes: "The colonizer saw (and rightly) that as long as women held unquestioned power . . . attempts at total conquest of the continents was bound to fail" (3). Of course, the colonization of the Americas did not result in "total conquest," her project sought to locate and "recover" the "feminine" within oral tradition, tribal histories and contemporary Native literature. Gunn Allen next turns to the simple statement: "Indians endure" (2). She makes this obvious claim to support the related argument that far from corrupted or inaccessible knowledge and tradition, there

remained a cohesive body of tribal knowledge which offered alternative ways of being and could serve as the roots of contemporary resistance and social change (2). Her third principle (written in her characteristic style of essentialist generalizations) notes that "traditional tribal lifestyles are more gynocratic than not, and never patriarchal" (2). Though this claim warrants qualification and certainly more specific description, it serves as the basis to her overall call to conduct a more ethical cultural criticism and activist politics by focusing on gender. She argues that "all responsible activists who seek life-affirming social change" must understand those "features" of tribal cultures that support a "gynocratic" social order or reject patriarchal norms (2).

Despite the limitations of her overly generalizing descriptions or idealistic interpretations of tribal "gynocracies," what remains important about Gunn Allen's *The Sacred Hoop* is her insistence that reading contemporary Native literature necessitated a "feminist-tribal approach." Gunn Allen writes, "If I am dealing with feminism, I approach it from a strongly tribal posture, and when I am dealing with American Indian literature, history, culture, or philosophy I approach it from a strongly feminist one" (83). Articulated in this way, the limitations of her model of literary critique are its positioning of feminism and tribal identity as two distinct conceptual frames which, a critic may take up at various moments and for various subjects of cultural critique. It is not a critical perspective that derives its theoretical perspective from an Indigenous feminist point of view, which is the focus of this project. Whatever the shortcomings of this model, however, one cannot discount the importance of her argument that a feminist-tribal approach is "essential" to Native American studies in the early years of the field's inception. Moreover, she names the reason for such an essential discourse, as she points out, in terms of the study of Native peoples and their cultural traditions, "the area has been dominated by paternalistic, male–dominant modes of consciousness" for too long (83). Specifically, she argues that a "feminist theory applied to my literary studies" helped her to trace "the patriarchal bias that has been systematically imposed on traditional literary materials and the mechanism by which that bias has affected contemporary American Indian life, thought, and culture" (85).

Despite Gunn Allen's call for a more socially conscious or ethical literary critique, literary studies would remain largely a conversation whose political investments where hard to connect to the social reality of contemporary Native struggle. In order to address this gap, Craig Womack's *Red on Red: Native Literary Separatism*, published over a decade later (1999), would argue for a similar rethinking of Native literary criticism's relationship to self-determination and the inherently anti-colonial dimensions of tribal literatures, traditional and contemporary. Yet instead of urging for a feminist oriented approach, Womack would assert that the field of Native literary criticism needed a tribal nationalist perspective and methodology. He argued "that Native literature, and the criticism that surrounds it, needs to see more attention devoted to tribally specific concerns" and the political aims of self determination (1). This tribal nationalist criticism would turn to "autonomy, self determination and sovereignty . . . as useful literary concepts" (11). In so doing, the field would make a space for Native scholars and a "literary criticism that emphasizes Native resistance

movements against colonialism, confronts racism, discusses sovereignty and Native nationalism, seeks connections between literature and liberation struggles, and, finally roots literature in land and culture" (11). Without a doubt, Womack's *Red on Red* stands as a critical turning point in the field of Native literary studies for once again linking culturally responsible criticism with re-centering tribal knowledge as the basis for analysis.

Shari Huhndorf notes Womack's contribution to the nationalist turn in Native literary studies in her 2005 assessment of the field of Native studies. In particular his emphasis on the "cultural distinctiveness embodied in oral traditions constitutes the primary foundation for sovereign nationalism" reclaim these traditions from the "anthropological approaches that reify and depoliticize [such] traditions" (1624). Huhndorf writes:

> Womack contends that 'the oral tradition has always been a deeply politicized forum for nationalistic literary expression' (51) because it teaches the distinct worldviews and histories on which tribal identities depend, cultivates a Native 'counter-consciousness,' and provides a basis for political critique by revising European conceptions of nationhood. (1624)

The critical interventions made by Womack and the literary nationalists to follow, Huhndorf argues, have not only "directly engage[d] the relation between intellectual and political sovereignty," they have also sought alternative methodologies that would accommodate such projects (1625). However, she also points out that this nationalist turn, and its tribally specific foundations, forecloses other considerations which might fall outside of nationalist readings, such as those more in line with a transnational or comparative indigenous approach.

However, Huhndorf asserts that "perhaps the most neglected area of the field [of Native Studies] remains gender studies" (1625). She notes that the reasons for this "neglect" are "numerous" and related to the inadequacies of mainstream feminist approaches to articulate a politics and social criticism amenable to the specific circumstances of Native peoples and colonization. She writes:

> Yet in Native America, the systematic disempowerment of women and institutionalization of patriarchy have been fundamental elements of colonialism, and Native women thus experience the violence and marginalization . . . that compelled the emergence of feminism in other social groups. Here, too, academia constitutes a microcosm of broader social relations. As my own account [of the field] suggests . . . Native American Studies (unlike Native literature) remains heavily represented by men. (1625)

As Huhndorf points out, there remains an absence in critical discourse which engages with Indigenous feminisms or Native women's cultural politics in general, an

observation that Paula Gunn Allen made almost 20 years earlier. Clearly, as Huhndorf and Gunn Allen's words demonstrate Native Studies, and the study of Native literatures in particular, have consistently ignored gender as an essential category for cultural critique (at least from a Native perspective), but not because ethical considerations, politicized analysis or even feminism have been off the radar in these fields. However, this absence has as much to do with the policing of Indigenous feminist engagement in the 1990's, examples of which I named at the beginning of this chapter. In these critiques, Native nationalisms seemed to be the preferred label from which Native women articulated their politics (at least in the published literature). This is not to say however that anti-sexist politics did not find expression even in such positioning. Yet, Native feminists and feminist theorizing would see a resurgence in the first part of the 21st century made visible and organized in very similar ways to previous practices in the 70's and 80's. Why this would happen is certainly due to a number of factors: as a response to nationalist politics' critical gaps, or in defense of the complexity of Native women's identities, or more likely and most importantly, in recognition of the urgency for a politics that would lead to the end of the systemic and epidemic levels of violence against Indigenous women globally.

Indeed in 1999, the US Bureau of Justice Statistics would release its report *American Indians and Crime* that found Native women to hold the highest rate of violent victimization over all other populations, a finding reiterated in the Bureau's updated report published in 2002. Of course, Native women did not need a government statistics bureau to reveal what they already understood as a part of their life experience and historical memory. Whatever the reasons, political or historic, the reinvigorated discourse around Native women's feminist politics in the 2000's would not only argue for its own necessity, but also differentiate itself as inherently an Indigenous project. For the remainder of this chapter, I turn to these most recent articulations of Indigenous feminisms in order to ground my concluding discussion of what constitutes this project's attempt at a "red feminist" literary analysis or critical reading approach.

Indigenous Feminisms at the turn of the 21st Century

The proliferation of Indigenous feminist scholarship in recent years is often linked to academic conferences organized around the subject of Native women's feminist politics and experience, an observation quite reminiscent of the 70's and 80's. For this chapter, I cite the following three major conferences as marking significant moments in the contemporary discourse on Indigenous feminisms: the Aboriginal Feminism Symposium, University of Regina (2002), the Indigenous Women and Feminism: Culture, Activism, Politics Conference, University of Alberta (2005), and the Native Feminisms without Apology Symposium, University of Illinois (2006). It should be noted the University of Alberta conference came on the heels of earlier discussions at the Indigenous Feminism Symposium, Kenyon College (2002), organized by Janet McAdams. This particular symposium would lead to the formation of the Red Feminist Collective (RFC) in 2003. Each of these conferences reflect a reinvigoration of Native feminist thought and practice in the 2000's, and each produced new scholarship published in various formats following each meeting. I should note that, up until this

point, my dissertation has been fairly chronological; this section reverses the expected order of that trend. I choose to end with the earliest document, the Red Feminist Collective's Manifesto, in order to emphasize its importance to my own particular project or a red feminist literary practice.

Making Space for Indigenous Feminism: Rethinking Tradition and the Importance of Global Relationships amongst Native Women

The 2002 University of Regina conference resulted in a collection of essays entitled *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, published in 2007. While many of the essays focus on specific issues around which Aboriginal feminist activists organized in Canada (hence the use of the term "Aboriginal feminism"), the collection also includes a section devoted to theorizing Indigenous feminisms more broadly. However, a major theme throughout the collection is reflected in the volume's title about "making space." In the context of the debates in Canada regarding discriminatory provisions in the Indian Act and the inclusion of Aboriginal women's rights in the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, debates which deeply divided mainstream Native women's organizations and the more male-dominated political leadership over gender issues, the role of "aboriginal feminism" was particularly contested.[3] Green points to a number of "disciplinary" tactics that have been deployed in dismissing or silencing Native feminists in this context. Of course, these disciplinary methods are quite familiar to all feminist women of color, including the most persistent tactic: questioning their cultural loyalty and identity, and therefore political, "authenticity" (24).

Given this particular tactic and the social context from which she writes, it is not surprising that her framing of Aboriginal feminism focuses on issues of identity and an "authentic" politics. For example, Green describes the "power of Aboriginal feminism" as:

> . . . an authentic expression of political analysis and political will by those who express it, who are self-consciously aware of their identities as *Aboriginal women*—with emphasis on the unity of both words. Aboriginal feminism interrogates power structures and practices between and among Aboriginal and dominant institutions. It leads to praxis—theoretically informed, politically self-conscious activism. (25)

The repeated term "self-conscious" perhaps echoes Taiaiake Alfred's concept of "self-conscious traditionalism" which argues for a critical approach to the ways tradition is redeployed in contemporary contexts.[4] More important than the origins of the term are Green's insistence that Aboriginal feminism's power lies within its ability to produce a unique set of critiques "between and among" Native and non-Native structures or institutions of power. This point is critically important as Native feminist theorizing cannot address the impacts of colonialism or the subject of violence without understanding the multiple layers and directions of such relationships. In other words, the value of Native feminist theorizing is the analysis it can offer of both those systems of the "colonizer" as well as those described through the processes of "internal

colonialism" or that which has become embedded in contemporary Native ways of being that produce and perpetuate harm against our own people.

A few essays continue to explore the disciplinary discourses of anti-traditionalism and inauthenticity. Yet at the same time that these scholars problematize how "tradition" is deployed in Native political circles, they also insist on the importance of traditional Indigenous conceptions of gender relations to their own feminist politics. However, they make this claim with a self-reflexive and more nuanced approach than earlier scholars such as Paula Gunn Allen. For example, Sami scholars Rauna Kuokkanen and Jorunn Eikjok interrogate the deployment of the trope of Native women as "strong women" or traditional matriarchs in their respective contributions to the collection. Both point out that these narratives serve to differentiate Native communities and cultural values from Western society in politically useful ways; however, these same narratives have also been used to conceal the contemporary reality of Native women's lives under patriarchal colonialism. Even more disturbing for the authors is how such narratives are used to discipline contemporary Indigenous feminist perspectives and critiques. For example, Kuokkanen writes:

> I have no doubt that there are traditionally strong Sami women left everywhere in Sami society. However to use the notion . . . to dismiss issues and concerns critical and important to Sami women, to bash or trivialize women and their initiatives . . . in the struggle for self-determination is short-sighted, selfish and deleterious to Sami society. (86)

In both essays, Kuokkanen and Eikjok stress the importance of Indigenous feminist perspectives in order to unmask how such narratives perpetuate gender oppression within Indigenous communities and politics. Both point to how these myths ignore realities of sexual violence, silence histories of Sami women's roles in contemporary political movements, and distort "tradition" in the name of solidarity between Sami men and women.

Eikjok adds an important dimension to theorizing gender from Indigenous perspectives requires an ability to accept that for Native peoples, gender difference is often a source of specific and valuable kinds of knowledge. One of the most important distinctions that Native feminists have made between majority feminist movements and their own is what Eikjok calls the "right to be different" (121). For Eikjok gender difference does not necessarily produce conditions of patriarchy. On the contrary, she argues that the "spotlight needs to be focused upon Indigenous women's experience, ways of understanding and perspectives to encourage new knowledge about difference and change in Indigenous society" (119). Problems arise, however, when contemporary discourses on Native womanhood essentialize that difference in ways which undermine both Indigenous worldviews and women's freedom. She describes the deployment of "mother earth" discourse as an example:

> Where is the Mother Earth ideology in all this? . . . 'The Mothers' of Indigenous worldview are being taken out of their original context and placed in the global context of today in a show of resistance against 'the western.' The problem is that the definition of woman becomes narrow and loses any potential for change. (118)

Metis feminist Emma LaRocque launches a similar line of critique against conceptions of Native womanhood that locate status and power in "totalizing and exclusionary" and "heterosexist framework[s]" (63). In particular, she critiques the celebration of "motherhood" as the quintessential characteristic of Native womanhood. Although she acknowledges such claims seek to recover a certain kind of ethic drawn from the acts of nurturing, teaching and healing, these activities often become the only sanctioned roles for Native women's participation in political movements and/or community life. She acknowledges, like Kuokkanen and Eikjok that this narrative of "honored" woman/mother serves an important rhetorical function for Native nationalist movements' need to establish "difference." However she warns that this political strategy often leads to an uncritical acceptance (even by Native women) of "tradition" as defined by a contemporary nationalist leadership who benefit from the consolidation of power through claims to cultural difference:

> Native women are "honoured" as "keepers" of tradition, defined as nurturing/healing, while Native men control political power. What concerns me even more is that in the interest of being markers of difference, many non-western women are apparently willing to accept certain proscriptions, even fundamental inequalities. (66)

While cultural difference is indeed real and important, LaRoque argues it is "much more dynamic, diverse, complex, and nuanced than what the popularized and stereotyped 'cultural difference' discourse suggests" (66). In the same manner, she argues that the issues Native women confront today require an equally nuanced and complex approach which Indigenous feminists could offer.

The final contribution to the section on Indigenous feminist theory turns from the strategic and productive space of difference (cultural or gendered) to the impacts of globalization for Indigenous women. Maori scholar Makere Stewart-Harawira discusses the importance of Indigenous feminist interventions in linking the local struggle for self-determination with the global struggle against new forms of imperialism and global capitalism. She writes, "I am convinced the most critical decolonization agenda goes beyond the reclaiming of Indigenous self-determination to the reclaiming of the whole globe from the grip of insanity fuelled by ruthless greed and ambition" (134). For Stewart-Harawira, Indigenous women's critical contribution to global struggles is their specialized knowledge of the sacred as well as Indigenous women's knowledge of other forms of governance.

She notes that while Indigenous women are the most "over-burdened" and "suffer the most horrendous forms of oppression . . . some of us are in positions of

privilege" (135). These women with "relative privilege" are those scholars such as Stewart-Harawira who have the time to write and theorize the direction, scope and practice of Indigenous feminisms (135). As such, she argues that an Indigenous feminism's most "urgent decolonizing project" is to "decolonize the local" in order to "transform the global" (136). She writes:

> Indigenous women who are in positions of privilege are called upon to vigorously refute capitalism's excesses and greed; to refuse the dominator politics of power-over; to refuse to give up our sons and daughters . . . to the warmongering that is now called democracy; to reject the greed that is now called freedom; and to stand firmly in the intersection of the politics of local and global. 136

While it remains unclear if it is Indigenous women who carry the sole responsibility to make such a stand or, as she puts it, "to re-weave the fabric of being in the world" (which would be quite problematic), her overall contribution is to add the crucial dimensions of global economic power to a subject often contained within the geographical boundaries of community or nation. Further, she insists that Indigenous feminisms can produce/recover knowledge essential to global struggles for freedom (136).

A consistent theme in all of these essays is the idea that Indigenous feminism as a political and intellectual project "makes space" for Native women's experience as a source of knowledge. As such, these women argue that no decolonial political movement or articulation of self-determination will be successful without feminist analysis from an Indigenous perspective and using such analysis as a critical foundation for transformative practice. For these Indigenous feminists, gender has been both a structure through which power is enacted as a dominating oppressive force, but also as a structure through which Native womanhood is defined as an affirmative and liberatory space.

Native Feminisms without Apology: Against the State and Hetero-Patriarchy

A second collection of essays borne out of the "Native Feminisms without Apology Symposium" in 2006 also interrogate common assumptions about Native women and politics. Although the book-length collection is forthcoming, a preview of some these works has been published in the American Studies Association journal *American Quarterly* (2008) along with some essays reissued in the Native Studies publication *Wicazo Sa Review* (2009). Andrea Smith and J. Kehaulani Kauanui's introduction to the *American Quarterly* edition underscore the ways Native feminisms can contribute to complicating sovereignty discourse, problematizing the concept of nation (on Indigenous terms) against the concept of the nation-state and highlighting the global dimensions of social justice:

> Native feminisms go beyond simply addressing women's status or calling for the inclusion of indigenous women's voices. Rather, Native feminisms

> transform how we understand the project of sovereignty and nation-building in the first place. They challenge how we conceptualize the relationship between indigenous nations and nation-states, how we organize for sovereignty, and how we tie sovereignty to a global struggle for liberation. (241)

Smith and Kauanui assert that Native feminism is necessary to the project of decolonization for two reasons: 1) "the imposition of patriarchy" on Native peoples was "essential" to colonialism and 2) heteropatriarchy "naturalizes social hierarchy" (241). The first claim is one quite familiar in most articulations of Native or Indigenous feminisms; the second claim is also familiar, but it underscores the need for scholarship that denaturalizes discourses on which heteropatriarchy rely. The feminists in this collection argue overall that without a "strong analysis of heteropatriarchy" Native scholars and activists "are less equipped to interrogate some of the colonial paradigms that might be implicit within purportedly pro-sovereignty political projects" (241). Underscoring the themes from *Making Space*, Smith and Kahalani point out, that up until recently, " the very simplified manner in which Native women's activism is theorized has made it difficult to articulate political and scholarly projects that simultaneously address sexism and promote indigenous sovereignty" (242). The group's most sustained critique is one that brings these threads together through an analysis of both internalized colonialism and settler-state articulations of nation and citizenship. In this collection, these scholars insist that, "Native feminisms demand a different notion of citizenship that is not just about inclusion into a homogeneous citizenry but that includes the entire spectrum of race, gender, age, and other axes of difference" (246). In so doing, Native feminists can articulate a "different model of belonging" that is more just for all peoples (246). Along these lines, feminist scholars in this collection focus on subjects such as the Indian Act in Canada (and its gendered implications), notions of citizenship and nation, Native women's experiential knowledge and testimony, Native women's articulations of space and place and, of course, Native feminist critiques of the nation-state.

In addition to these two sets of Indigenous feminist scholarship, the second conference mentioned at the beginning of this section will publish a collection under the same name *Indigenous Women and Feminism, Culture, Activism, Politics*. Since this collection is forthcoming, I turn now to an earlier set of conversations which pre-date the Alberta conference; these conversations culminated in the formation of a group of Native scholars under the name of the Red Feminist Collective.

The Red Feminist Collective

In 2002, a small group of Native Studies scholars met in Gambier, Ohio at Kenyon College invited by Creek scholar Janet McAdams for a symposium entitled *Indigenous Women and Feminism*. What came out of a series of conversations during this event was a call for an expanded and more visible feminist discourse in the field of Native Studies rooted in the intellectual history of Native peoples and engaged with the gendered concerns and experiences of contemporary and historical Native women. This group of scholars included Drs. Patricia Penn Hilden, Shari Huhndorf, Ellen Arnold,

Deborah Miranda, Ginny Carney, Janice Gould, Chadwick Allen, and Cheryl Suzack representing a wide range of disciplines and expertise. At Kenyon, the group came together to discuss the ways feminism described their own positions as Native women scholars, activists or writers. While some in the group raised important critiques of choosing the term "feminism" to represent the main objective, most came to the conclusion that such a term was applicable to their own politics. As Cheryl Suzack noted, feminism had been theorized and reformulated by many women of color, and as in the case of African American scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins, Audre Lorde and bell hooks, who were we to say such important work had been naïve or irrelevant to their own experience.

As a result of the Kenyon conference, a small group gathered again both at the University of California Berkeley and Stanford University in the spring of 2003, with additional participants such as Beth Piatote, Victoria Bomberry, and others. The resulting Red Feminist Collective met briefly over the next year as new members came aboard and others fell away; however, a small manifesto was formulated out of the key theme taken at the Kenyon conference. This manifesto, though brief and yet to develop, serves as the backdrop and inspiration for the work in this dissertation, and as such, I want to end with a small discussion of its importance for my own theorizing on a red feminist literary theory or analysis.

The RFC manifesto begins with the simple statement: *We are alive*. For Native women, colonialism is marked by a constant and pervasive gendered violence.[5] As in the often quoted words of Audre Lorde and echoed by Creek poet Joy Harjo, for many Native women there is truth in the statement that "we were never meant to survive."[6] Yet despite the devastating impacts of colonial violence, Native women activists, poets and scholars have described the injustices that faced their families and their communities in clear and direct terms. Early activists and writers, such as Nancy Ward, Sarah Winnemucca, and Zitkala-Sa, spoke and wrote about the gendered and violent nature of colonization in speeches, letters and autobiographical literature.

For example, Sarah Winnemucca writes in her 1883 text, "[m]y people have been so unhappy for a long time they wish now to *disincrease*, instead of multiply. The mothers are afraid to have more children, for fear they will have daughters, who are not safe even in their mother's presence" (48). Winnemucca's description of her people's unhappiness is more devastating given its placement immediately after an account of spring ceremonies in her Paiute community. In describing the flower ceremony she writes, "each girl . . . singing of herself . . . is not a girl any more,--she is a flower singing. She sings of herself, and her sweetheart, dancing along by her side, helps her sing the song she makes" (47). The lament for a space which underscores Native girls' self-worth, transformation, and place within the community are set against the violence of colonization. As a scholar, being a red feminist is to work to break the grip of violence against women, to eliminate its seeming inevitability and to challenge the impunity given to those who perpetuate it. This is a decolonial imperative, as red feminist scholars recognize the link between colonial violence and the interpersonal violence plaguing contemporary communities.

One of the most important tenets of the RFC manifesto requires that red feminist scholars "connect current feminist practices to their roots in indigenous women's continuous struggles" contemporarily and throughout history. In this dissertation, I argue that a necessary part of a red feminist foundation is the literary legacy of Native women activists and writers such as Winnemucca and others who have documented and witnessed colonial violence against Indigenous women. Echoing the original opening line of the RFC manifesto, "we are alive" in no small part, because these early women chose to speak out about the gendered nature of colonial violence. As a red feminist literary scholar, then, a central part of this project is to recover those activist texts, speeches, pamphlets, etc. of early Native women, and in particular for this dissertation, the writing of Zitkala-Sa.

At the same time, the desire to evaluate scholarly production only through a lens of "applicability," or praxis, often creates a dominant discourse of authenticity, and a silencing of intellectual projects whose subjects are deemed overly discursive, irrelevant or out of touch. As the two other collections have noted, a major disciplinary strategy against Native feminisms has been to insist that those who focus on internal critiques or even focus an external critique around gendered concerns has been to accuse Native women of not being truly part of the community. In order to address the relationship between theory and praxis, or the complex nature of identity claims and Native communities, the RFC manifesto advocates for an inclusive scholarly practice amongst its members. In addition to "articulating indigenous feminisms that are inclusive," the manifesto states that red feminist collective scholars must also "establish relationships with non-Native communities of women committed to the goals" of Indigenous feminism. By writing into the manifesto the need for inclusivity, solidarity, and pluralizing "feminisms," the group hoped to cast a wide net acknowledging common goals yet respecting difference. At the same time, this tenet of the manifesto is a rejection of the assertions that "feminism" is not a Native project. It also rejects impermeable boundaries between red feminist aims and those of other groups of women in terms of common goals, ideas and friendships.

Along these same lines, the manifesto ends by rejecting false tests of authenticity for its members--whether measured by blood quantum, membership status, off-reservation upbringings, or access to speaking one's Native language. As the work of Smith and others describe in their collection, citizenship and nation are terms that are too often under-theorized as they are applied to Native sovereignty efforts or forms of self-governance. In light of these issues, the RFC wanted to underscore that as a group, a collective foundation that recognized the distortions which settler colonialism had wrought on notions of belonging and subjectivity for Native women. We were not in the business of reifying those divisions under the auspices of false quantifications of experience and identity.

This is not to say, however, that *who* speaks from this perspective is an irrelevant subject. The manifesto also asserts the necessity that Indigenous feminist theory and practice be "specific to the needs of Native communities," and this principle requires knowledge from experience, both as a Native woman and as a part of one's community.

In this project, my approach to the literature, at its core, is to articulate how Native women write from experience which articulates both a necessary critique of the gendered impacts of settler colonialism as well as the sources from which to challenge the totality of such dehumanizing structures.

Conclusion

For a red feminist literary analysis, the project takes on the following dimensions. First red feminist literary analysis offers context specific political readings of Native literature that prioritize historical specificity and experience as a field of knowledge. It is a critical approach that recognizes that culturally specific understandings of gender exist and are a part of indigenous knowledge systems. This approach acknowledges that Native peoples do not live in a vacuum; we influence and are influenced by the non-Native world. For sure, this critical approach is not anti-intellectual and does not support invoking a false binary between "the community" and Native scholars to limit critical questions offered by literary texts and authors. Finally, I see red feminist literary criticism as parallel in many ways to the aims of Native nationalist criticism with each arena providing important checks on one another. In borrowing from those critics and in particular Lisa Brooks, red feminist literary criticism is a "gathering" (*American Indian Literary Nationalisms* 244), and like Warrior and Womack assert for literary nationalism, it is not a fundamentalist project but an *methodology* that is open to divergent sets of opinions yet which at their core are committed to the overall project of gender justice and self-determination.

In a related definitive gesture, I end this chapter with a discussion of the use of "red" over Native, Indigenous, Indian, etc. For sure, the term comes out of the original RFC, but I have come to appreciate it for other reasons as well. In *From a Red Zone, Critical Perspectives on Race, Politics and Culture*, RFC member Patricia Penn Hilden articulates two "zones" of analysis that for me, are at the center of a red feminist literary analysis. Hilden describes the first zone as the "red zone" itself that "moves the center" of scholarly analyses steeped in Eurocentric practices and tradition to an indigenous perspective that is "historically and materially grounded" and that is an active political consciousness, not simply a racial or ethnic identity. In the field of Native literature, the "red zone" becomes a dynamic and politically active space that can ground trans-national as well as open up more tribally specific readings. By describing the "red zone" as a *politically* defined space, one can acknowledge a community's shared history, but insist that contemporary Native identity is negotiated and informed by geography, gender, race and class, among other social categories. The second zone from which Hilden situates her work is one at the heart of this dissertation, that of "red feminism," a "zone within a zone "(11). Red feminism, Hilden argues, "is a very distinct feminism, one informed both by decades of struggle and the gradual separation of women of color from other feminists. . . . [It is] a practice . . . shaped by a radical critique of Western patriarchy and by a deep commitment to indigenous communities . . . [and] informed by continuing, and often radically different, oppressions suffered by women both within and without the indigenous world" (12). From such a dynamic space, red feminist literary analysis done well underscores that the gendered politics of Native women

writers is critical to the ongoing conversations about ethical analysis and activism. It takes as a foundational principle that when others have failed—be it scholars, activists, leaders or governing bodies—Native women writers have always theorized the contours of gender justice in their decolonial imaginings through the stories they write from their own experience and, more importantly, from a "deep commitment" to their Indigenous nations.

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[1] Womack notes that the criticism of Gunn Allen's text should note the text was published during the shift in feminist scholarship generally from recovering women's political and cultural contributions to those works that theorized the constructed nature of gender (22). In addition he argues that while her "monolithic treatment" of the West and Native America is problematic, scholars are much more readily accepting of the same tendencies in works like Vine Deloria's *God is Red* (28).

[2] Indeed, Native feminists and literary scholars Shari Huhndorf and Cheryl Suzack both make note of Gunn Allen's text in their reading of Native women's contemporary literature and drama.

[3] These debates are quite complex in terms of the various issues at stake, and I am not able to do justice to such history as a part of this project. For an analysis of these particular issues, see Kathleen Jamieson, "Sex Discrimination and the Indian Act." *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization.* Edited by J.R. Ponting. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986. See also Joanne Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women"s Activism." *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, 7: 1 (2006).

[4] See Taiaiake Alfred's, *Peace, Power and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto.* Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 1999.

[5] See Andrea Smith *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. See also Luana Ross *Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality*.

[6] Audre Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," *Sister Outsider*. Trumansberg NY: Crossing Press, 1984. 42.

Chapter Three

Human Rights Discourse and Reading the Red Roots of Red Feminism in Zitkala-Sa's Non Fiction Prose: 1919-1926

> Too often non-Native critics want their Natives to be Squanto [or] . . . la Malinche, . . . or Pocahontas, sacrificing her body and her health on the altar of mediation . . . . They prefer Sarah Winnemucca to Red Cloud, Gertrude Bonnin to Richard Fields.
>
> –Jace Weaver, *American Indian Literary Nationalism* (2006)

Critical considerations of Dakota writer and activist Zitkala-Sa's[1] literary contributions have for the most part focused on her creative and semi-autobiographical work published in *Old Indian Legends* (1901), in magazines such as *Harpers* and *Atlantic Monthly* (1900-02) and in her last book-length collection *American Indian Stories* (1921). Considerably less attention has been paid to the period of Zitkala-Sa's work in which she turned to the more political genres of activist journalism, pamphlet and speech writing which reflected her more grass-roots and autonomous activist travels and political organizing following her departure from the national pan-Indian organization, the *Society of American Indians* (SAI). Ada Norris claims this lack of critical attention is reflective of a general neglect on the part of contemporary scholars who address the assimilation era either by focusing on the early years of this period following the various Allotment legislative acts or the years immediately prior to the passage of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. She argues that historians of the assimilation period ignore the years between 1920 and 1933. Norris notes that even Robert Warrior's assessment of this same period in his important work on American Indian intellectual history in *Tribal Secrets* (1995) curiously skips over the years 1916-1925. She writes that this particular span of time was:

> . . . a crucial period for the development of indigenous activism . . .
>
> Zitkala-Sa in particular played a major role in transforming tribal and pan-Indian activism from a responsive, subordinate role to the assimilating US government into an increasingly self-determined movement. (212)

This "crucial period" in American Indian history also coincides with Zitkala-Sa's period as editor of the SAI's *American Indian Magazine* and later marks the transition from her role in the SAI to one of more "freelance activist work" (212). It is this more autonomous activist period that I find compelling in considering the role Zitkala-Sa plays in Native intellectual history and in particular, in Native women's feminist history.

In this chapter, I consider a number of texts from the period of Zitkala-Sa's work from 1916-1926. In particular, I examine a speech and an editorial from her years in the SAI as an elected officer and as the editor of *AIM* (1919), followed by a reading of a series of articles she wrote on California Indian tribes' fight to seek redress from the US government over the so-called "lost treaties" (1922-1924), and I end with an analysis of her contributions to the pamphlet *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes, Legalized Robbery* (hereafter referred to as the Oklahoma pamphlet) which she co-wrote with Charles Fabens and Matthew Sniffen (1926).

My reading of this period ends with the Oklahoma pamphlet for two reasons. First, this pamphlet takes as its focus a particular history, the Oklahoma probate court scandals of the 1920's which involved murder, sexual assault and rampant fraud of oil-rich Oklahoma tribal members, mostly Native women. This story is one which connects the dispossession of allotment era policy, and in particular, policy that relied on maintaining Native peoples' status as wards of the federal government, with the open and unchecked violence against Native women, the most critical issue for contemporary Indigenous feminist organizing and critique. Secondly, I want to insist that this particular text has been too easily dismissed by critics who have either analyzed it through literary sentimentality or simply not at all. In my early imaginings of this chapter, the Oklahoma pamphlet was my specific interest, but one that quickly developed into a broader interest in the period of Zitkala-Sa's writing leading up to this pamphlet. In reading the work that leads up to the publication of the pamphlet, I came to notice Zitkala-Sa's repeated turn towards the language of human rights, invoking a political discourse through which to read her contributions to the Oklahoma pamphlet rather than only through the constructs of sentimental literature. While the roots of human rights discourse in the West is intertwined with the moral claims which underpin American sentimental literature, I argue that Zitkala-Sa's experience as a Dakota woman might complicate the philosophical genealogy of such discourse in her own writing.[2]

In my analysis of the texts in this chapter, I attempt to make visible the ways Zitkala-Sa's themes, claims and rhetorical choices can be read as early iterations of an Indigenous feminist critique of violence through the discourse of human rights. Yet in reading the critical literature on her writing, it must be noted that most critics have decidedly rejected her work as "feminist" in orientation, even so far as to make the claim she was unconcerned with considerations of gender at all. The period within which she was writing (assimilation, red progressivism, first-wave feminism, etc) perhaps are what makes it difficult to categorize her work. In the section that follows, I examine some of the ways contemporary criticism has been limited in negotiating the various complexities of her life's work.

Zitkala-Sa as Mediator, Paradox, Sentimentalist and Race Activist

P. Jane Hafen's description of Zitkala-Sa's writing in, "Zitkala-Sa, Sentimentality and Sovereignty" is a representative example of the negotiations critics often make in

reading Zitkala Sa's body of work. Hafen argues that although Zitkala-Sa wrote through the "structures of popular sentimentality," in order to garner empathy from her non-Native audience, later essays "also represent the tribal nationalism that is the foundation of American Indian intellectual traditions" (32). In coming to this conclusion, Hafen runs through what I argue are four of the most common critical themes in contemporary readings of Zitkala-Sa which overall create a limiting discourse of critical apology. These four themes focus on Zitkala-Sa's writing as representative of American Indian cultural accommodation, of a conflicted and enigmatic soul, of early twentieth century women's literary sentimentality and of racial uplift politics which exclude considerations of gender. All four of these themes can be found in the overview which Hafen provides in her essay. She writes:

> The paradoxes of Zitkala-Sa's life abound. Though a woman writer, she creates male voices and heroes, emphasizing race over gender. She criticizes forced education and assimilation, yet allies with . . . Richard Pratt of the Carlisle lndian School in the legislative battle to outlaw peyote. She accuses Christianity while participating in Christian religions . . . Despite high emotion and the sentimentality of popular culture, Zitkala-Sa remains faithful to the Yankton sources of her work, presenting an amalgam of traditional culture and contemporary accommodations. (40)

The first theme the above quote identifies is to read Zitkala-Sa's literary texts through the lens of "accommodation" or to assert her role as a "cultural mediator" able to adopt and adapt the "rhetoric and ideology of the colonizers" (40). Although this particular critical approach has several incarnations, it generally focuses on her writing as a function of hybridity, performance or bicultural identity. To be sure, while the critical work that reads Zitkala-Sa as "cultural mediator" is not overtly negative, readings that play on this theme often lead to an indictment of her writing as easily co-opted by a liberal desire for reconciliation rather than serve Native claims for self-determination. For example in *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, Jace Weaver lists the interest in Zitkala-Sa and other historical figures as representative of a colonialist desire for the cultural mediator and accessible Native other. He writes:

> Too often non-Native critics want their Natives to be Squanto [or] . . . la Malinche, . . . or Pocahontas, sacrificing her body and her health on the altar of mediation . . . . They prefer Sarah Winnemucca to Red Cloud, Gertrude Bonnin to Richard Fields. (2)

Weaver's words here also serve as the opening epigraph for this chapter for a few reasons. First, the above statement represents a certain approach to nationalist criticism which defines Native resistance in delimiting ways which create a false binary, the militant warrior against the accommodationist Native woman. Secondly, while the discourse on American Indian literary nationalisms makes central the subject of cultural sovereignty and the critical importance of tribally specific readings, this statement points to its current limitations in dealing with historical figures such as Zitkala-Sa, whose

political efforts often moved trans-tribally and across Native national borders; or, in this specific case, activists who had to negotiate the intersections of race, class and gender. As Shari Huhndorf has effectively argued, a focus on the transnational is of particular importance because Native women's feminist politics are often produced through imagining the global alongside the local. Huhndorf writes that "Concentrating on the connections that tie indigenous communities together rather than on the boundaries that separate them allows me to raise questions about gender, imperialism, class, and the worldwide circulation of culture . . ." (*Mapping the Americas* 2). In addition she points out that "While the transnational indigenous movement is largely bound to the local, even national, concerns, it brings to the fore issues that extend beyond the tribal. Women's organizing, for example, has gained significant momentum in this new constellation of relationships . . . suggesting the possibilities that transnationalism created for indigenous feminism" (13).

To be fair, Weaver's quote attempts to describe the ways non-Natives co-opt Native women such as Winnemucca and Zitkala-Sa for their own purposes; however, by using the "warrior" figure as the "real" representative of Native resistance, he actually reifies the sexist and racist assumptions that underlie such co-optation. Moreover, in terms of Zitkala-Sa's and Sarah Winnemucca's actual political work and body of writing, his inference that these two women are the kinder, gentler version of Native activism is just simply wrong.

Related to the critical lens of the cultural mediator is the second critical framework that reads Zitkala-Sa' life as "enigmatic" and focuses on the contradictions in her political viewpoints. This critical theme is represented in Hafen's overview of Zitkala-Sa's work when she states that the "paradoxes of {Zitkala Sa's} life abound." For example, most critics agree that Zitkala-Sa fought consistently for Native self-determination. However, many of these same critics are made anxious by Zitkala-Sa's anti-peyote stance or her idealistic celebration of American democracy in her arguments for American Indian citizenship. These conflicting elements of her writing lead to readings which are more of a contemporary apology for her more assimilationist positions rather than seeking out the ways her writing reflects a certain political context or historical negotiation. Or worse, as Ada Norris has points out, many critics simply ignore the development of her thinking on these subjects over time. This point leads into the third critical theme which reads Zitkala-Sa's writing within the aesthetic conventions of sentimental literature or popular sentimentality.

Sentimental literary styles have long been associated with women's and people of color's writing of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, what constitutes the sentimental and its implications as a genre in terms of gender, race and class remains somewhat of an open question. As Nina Baym writes, "independent of whether one admires sentimentalism or scorns it, sentimentalism is always in the beholder's eye" (337). To borrow a definition of the sentimental from Joanne Dobson she writes:

> We can recognize sentimental literature by its concern with subject matter that privileges affectional ties, and by conventions and tropes designed to convey the primary vision of human connection in a dehumanized world. An emphasis on accessible language . . . defines an aesthetic whose primary quality of transparency is generated by a valorization of connection, an impulse toward communication with as wide an audience as possible. (268)

From this definition, anyone familiar with Zitkala-Sa's rhetorical style and favored themes would find the "sentimental" a fitting designation for much of her writing. Moreover, in terms of the sentimental narrative's "impulse toward communication" with its audience, it is not surprising that literary activists from the margins have appropriated the style to make their claims. Indeed, in her analysis of early Native American autobiography of the 19th century, Laura Mielke articulates how the tropes of sentimentality were appropriated by writers such as William Apess in his autobiography *A Son of the Forest*. However, Mielke argues that one must be critical in describing Apess work as simply conventional in its use of sentimentality as sentimental culture did not subvert racial hierarchies but in fact depended on them for readerly pleasure. She writes, "[i]n numerous texts . . . sentimental language and situations encouraged Euro-American readers to sympathize with Native Americans but also underscored an absolute physical and cultural difference" (248). In other words the affective connection established through sentiment was a form of imperialist sympathy with the Native other, not a critical kind of empathy that would require seeing Native peoples as fully human as whites. In her reading of Apess's work then, she argues that while he uses the popular form of sentimentality, he does so in a way which also calls attention to the readers' "hypocrisy of an affective culture" as he "alternately embraces sentimental rhetoric and punctures the pretensions of sentimental America" (251).

As Norris has pointed out critics reading the later period of Zitkala-Sa's writing have been "unable to read the political work of Zitkala-Sa's storytelling outside of the sentimental register, a project that requires understanding her stories in their indigenous priority" (223). For Norris, this "indigenous priority" includes Zitkala-Sa's use of traditional stories or her invocation of treaty discourse or the political discourse of law and policy.

The final and fourth critical theme that will be the challenged in this chapter is the critical assertion that Zitkala-Sa should not be read as a part of feminist intellectual traditions as she was "unconcerned" with gender, or to echo Hafen's assessment, she chose "[emphasize] race over gender." Even in work that attempts to locate the gendered dimensions of Zitkala-Sa's writing, critics de-emphasize her relationship to a conscious feminist orientation despite her work with the major feminist organizations of her time such as the GFWC. For example, in Patrice Hollrah's analysis of women and power in Native American contemporary literature, she argues that if anything, Zitkala-Sa's work is representative of a tribal understanding of gender—or what Hollrah calls "gender complementarity" rather than any recognizable feminist critique. While Hollrah's concept of gender complementarity attempts to theorize an analytical

approach which incorporates concepts of balance and reciprocity from an indigenous point of view, the application of this concept, much like earlier criticisms of Paula Gunn Allen's work tends to flatten the political force of such gendered critique in ways that promote the further marginalization and impact of Native women's organizing and political culture. For, in the end, Hollrah's argument is not much further removed from the more fundamentalist and damaging argument that what Native women really need is to support a basic tribal nationalism in order to be restored to their rightful place in contemporary society.

For example, Hollrah offers the following quote, which seems to challenge her own argument that Zitkala-Sa was ultimately unconcerned with a separate gender politics. In a 1901 letter to her then fiancé Carlos Montezuma, Zitkala-Sa chastises Montezuma for failing to include Native women in political organizing efforts:

> For spite, I feel like putting my hand forward and simply wiping the Indian men's Committee into nowhere!!! No—I should not really do such a thing. Only I do not understand why your organization does not include Indian women. Am I not an Indian woman as capable to think in serious matters and as thoroughly interested in the race as any one or two of you men put together? Why do you dare to leave us out? Why? (qtd in Hollrah 44)

For Hollrah, this quote demonstrates Zitkala-Sa's allegiance to gender complementarity rather than feminist sentiment, because she does not agree to "start" a separate Native women's political group. Within Hollrah's framework, Zitkala-Sa's desire to be included is due to her tribal understanding of the importance of gender balance rather than an explicit concern for Native women's marginalization. In another example, Hollrah provides an analysis of the Oklahoma pamphlet. Once again, she argues that the text documents Zitkala-Sa's commitment to gender complementarity rather than a feminist politics, because Zitkala-Sa's contribution to this investigation serves as the feminine "balance" to those of her male counterparts, Charles Fabens and Matthew Sniffen. Of course, Hollrah supports her claim by asserting that Zitkala-Sa is able to be the feminine balance by writing through the literary convention of sentimentality, particularly the "seduction narrative." Hollrah writes:

> The wonderful irony about how well Zitkala-Sa uses the English language is that she manipulates the language of the oppressor to further the rights of Indians. Thus, in a subtle way she creates resistance and liberation literature with sentimentalism. Her core beliefs however are situated within the context of gender complementarity. She sees her writing and work as necessary with that of men to make for a complete whole. (51)

The problems with the above quote underscore the resistance to both reading Zitkala-Sa's work from an indigenous feminist point of view or from outside of the sentimental lens of American literature. Part of that resistance lies with the desire to make Zitkala

Sa's political views fit neatly within a more nationalist discourse that, if concerned with gender at all, is only concerned with the subject insofar as it about the very liberal notion of equal representation, here tribalized as "balance." As the previous chapter demonstrates, Indigenous feminists have asserted that their feminist politics are more complex than Hollrah's concept is able to describe.

The context within which I want to place Zitkala-Sa's writing is within a discussion of violence and the gendered impact of colonization on women in regards to kinship and knowledge—two spaces from which to read the affective nature of her work often described as "sentimentalism." While the above themes are common enough in literary analysis of Zitkala-Sa's work, there are scholars who have approached her writing from more compelling standpoints and in terms which prove more useful in my analysis of her later work. Ada Norris's work for example asserts the importance of reading Zitkala-Sa's writing with an eye towards her changing activist interests and more autonomous political organizing under her own organization, the NCAI. Theoretically, Norris advances the claim that Zitkala-Sa's stories represent "a compelling politics and history of indigeneity" (*Zitkala-Sa* 10), with "indigeneity" offering a more useful critical frame as well. Norris describes this "politics of indigeneity" as one that "grounds a tribal world-view in such a way as to increase the depth and range of tribal alliances; instead of pan-Indian [read SAI] . . . indigeneity supports a trans-tribal politics" (200). Norris's use of this concept allows her to more fully describe the later period of Zitkala-Sa's activist work that is characterized by "engaging on the local level with tribal communities" while writing and working for large national activist networks. Norris correctly points out that after Zitkala-Sa leaves the SAI, that she rejected the method of "imposing a fixed bureaucratic structure, she responded to the specific needs of tribal and Indian communities and attempted to work from the ground up" (202)[3].

Similarly, literary scholar Lucy Maddox argues for the historically situated nature of Zitkala-Sa's writing as a unique contribution to American Indian intellectual history and political activism of the reform period, and in particular, during the later years of the SAI. In *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race and Reform*, Maddox sees Zitkala-Sa's writing during her tenure at the SAI as representative of her lifelong political goal to end further dispossession of Native lands through policy reform and grass-roots organizing. Further she insists that the political aims of Zitkala Sa's writing are consistently articulated through a political philosophy firmly grounded in her Dakota values. In this vein, Maddox argues that Zitkala-Sa's work was focused on educating white Americans about Native peoples. Maddox writes that "it was Indian voices . . . [Zitkala Sa] wished to translate to a white audience . . .[and] Unlike many of her SAI colleagues, . . . [she] continued to put the reservations and traditional Sioux ethos at the center of her philosophy" (150).

What is significant about both Norris and Maddox's readings is not simply their insistence that historical contexts matter, but that the historical period of Zitkala-Sa's activism reveals important ways in which she did not comfortably fit with other SAI Native intellectuals' approach to reform. It is Zitkala-Sa's refusal of the pan-Indian trajectory of the progressive movement alongside her trans-tribal/national rhetoric and

grassroots activism which complicate the "mediator" or "enigma" frameworks that reduces critical discourse to a conversation focused on mixed-blood angst, a crisis of tribal modernity or the manipulation of white desires for access to Indian pathos. In the sections that follow, I choose to read Zitkala-Sa's non-fiction writing from the critical perspective of red feminism which would allow for the multiple layers of her experience and politics more significance than that afforded by other approaches. Two of the most critical conversations missing from the discourse, I argue are the ways she did engage in a Native feminist critique of the period as well as the ways in which her use of what we might read as sentiment is actually her deployment of the rhetoric of human rights.

The Rhetoric of Human Rights and 'Where are the women?': Zitkala-Sa's Red Feminist Writing 1919-1926

Much of the critical focus on Zitkala-Sa's work can be explained in some ways by what Norris argues is the common practice of reading Zitkala-Sa's work ahistorically and without considering the trajectory of her growth as an intellectual and activist author. While many literary critics focus on Zitkala-Sa's creative period ending in 1902, few examine her activist pieces written in the late teens and 1920's. Indeed, as Norris argues, 1916-1925 is a "crucial period for the development of indigenous activism" (212). She goes on to note that in this period Zitkala-Sa reframes her "pan-Indian activism from a responsive, subordinate role to the assimilating US government, into an increasingly self-determined movement" (212). To support her claim, Norris reads through Zitkala-Sa's archive from this era highlighting Zitkala-Sa's focus on the local or grassroots organizing and her turn towards the rhetoric of treaty rights and sovereignty following Zitkala-Sa's break with the SAI in 1921.

It is Norris's account of this later activist period that comes closest to the critical positioning of my own reading of Zitkala-Sa's writing at this time. Importantly, Norris not only argues against the constant focus on Zitkala-Sa's assimilationist rhetoric of her early life, but she also raises the issue of gender in thinking about how one can read the work most effectively. Norris argues that, "[i]n her own way, Zitkala-Sa brought questions of gender into the same space as a commitment to holding tribal lands" (202). Unfortunately, Norris does not fully articulate how or what those questions of gender are that come to inform Zitkala-Sa's activism. In the pieces I will examine in the remainder of this chapter, I argue that Zitkala-Sa does more than simply raise the subject of gender; she argues emphatically for Native women's participation as a critical and political necessity for the future of Native self-determination efforts. Moreover, as she pushes for a more "indigenous" politics and "self-determined" movement, as Norris describes it, I believe Zitkala-Sa also invokes the trans-national and emerging critical register of indigenous global politics by turning towards the rhetoric of human rights. These rhetorical strategies and themes will also become important in order to understand the gendered dimension of her critique of violence and impunity in the Oklahoma pamphlet as something more than the tropes of sentimentality.

One of the first examples in which Zitkala-Sa uses the rhetoric of human rights is in an editorial comment she writes on the eve of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

Writing in the capacity of editor of *American Indian Magazine*, Zitkala-Sa is still associated with the SAI at this moment. In this editorial, Zitkala-Sa argues yet again for the necessity of American Indian citizenship in order for Native peoples to have legal standing and therefore control over decisions on their rights and properties. However, she takes a global stance to articulate this position by highlighting the symbolic importance of the Paris Peace conference for all disenfranchised peoples. In earlier essays for the SAI, the first world war and American Indian soldiers' participation in the war effort gives Zitkala-Sa the standing to invoke the world's struggle with "democracy" as a human ideal, not just a matter of equal rights. And while most scholars will argue that citizenship and democracy represent a less radical stance than modern Native nationalisms, in Zitkala-Sa's era, wardship seemed to be the only alternative.

As historian Paul Rosier notes in his research on the "international" in Cold War era Native politics, Zitkala-Sa's essay for *American Indian Magazine* is an early example of Native activists engaging international political discourse in the twentieth century. He points out that like other Native activists writing at this time, Zitkala-Sa "appropriates Wilsonian language to demand [Indian] rights in a post World War I world" (1302), specifically the doctrine of self-determination Woodrow Wilson had advanced at the Paris Peace Conference.[4] In a speech delivered by President Wilson in 1916 and published in *The Washington Post*, Wilson makes the statement that "every people has a right to choose the sovereignty under which they live." He goes on to say that "the small states of the world have a right to enjoy the same respect for their sovereignty and their territorial integrity," although he admits in this same speech that when "controlled by selfish passion," the US has "offended" such principles.[5] When Zitkala-Sa describes the conference in this essay and in her own words as a space where "little people of the world" may be "granted the right to self-determination" and where a large set of "diverse human petitions" are heard daily, she is directly engaging with Wilson's foreign policy pronouncements represented in this earlier speech (189)[6].

Legal scholar, Michla Pomerance notes that "Wilson's reputation as the champion of the principle of self-determination rests on the fact that, of all the peacemakers at Versailles, he alone publicly proclaimed the principle as the lodestar of the peace" (2). Therefore it is not surprising the Zitkala-Sa would incorporate his rhetoric. She recognizes the implications of President Wilson's key peace principle for American Indian citizenship and self-determination. However, what is important in this rhetorical move is that she positions herself in conversation not just with the President, as the leader of the United States but with the leaders of the world. At the conference, an international forum of nation-states would debate such human rights issues and the responsibility of modern nation-states to their citizens.[7] As historian Erez Manela points out, the Wilsonian principle of self-determination after the conference will resonate for years to come for many colonized peoples, especially for the countries in the East such as India. He writes "the spring of 1919 saw the launching of revolts against empire in numerous non-European societies and the expansion of anti-colonial nationalism to unprecedented intensity and scope" and that "once we remove the Eurocentric lens

through which the international history of 1919 is most often written, it becomes clear that the significance of the 'brief interval' of Wilson's ascendance far transcended the confines of Europe" (1328-29). While Manela focuses on the impact of self-determination for anti-colonial movements abroad, it is equally important to consider the global debate over this principle for American Indians. For certain, Wilson's principle of self-determination defined in 1916 as "a right to choose the sovereignty under which [one] lives" and "territorial integrity" would be enormously appealing to a Native activist writing during the height of the assimilation period. Indeed, Zitkala-Sa argues that the "Red man asks for a very simple thing—citizenship in the land that was once his own—America" (192), calling out the hypocrisy of "territorial integrity" for "real" citizens at the expense of the first peoples.

In addition to the international debate on self-determination, in this same editorial Zitkala-Sa links Native peoples fight for citizenship to other marginalized groups converging on Paris. For example, she tells her readers about other organizations that are bringing their causes to the conference to air their grievances and to seek global recognition. In regard to delegations at the conference to advocate for "self government," she names the Belgium delegation and those attending on behalf of Ireland. More importantly, she also focuses on the non-governmental groups organized around human rights: "Labor organizations are seeking representation . . . Women of the world, mothers of the human race, are pressing forward for recognition. The Japanese are taking up the perplexing problem of race discrimination [and] . . . The Black man of America is offering his urgent petition for representation" (192). Although Zitkala-Sa's focus in this editorial is exclusively on American Indian citizenship, it is clear that she is also keenly aware of its relationship to other justice struggles. She points out that President Wilson already included the "Black man of America" by sending W.E.B Dubois to the conference. In addition, by listing women's rights, along with class and race issues, as a part of a global discussion on world reconciliation she underscores the intersectional aspect of these diverse groups' aims for social justice and human rights on her own thinking. In fact by 1919, Zitkala-Sa had been working with mainstream suffrage organizations for at least three years formally, and informally she supported suffrage activists. For example, although she would not join the General Federation of Women's Clubs until 1921, the year she helps the group to start an Indian Welfare Department, she had already delivered a speech entitled "The Indian Woman of Today" to the National Woman's Party suffrage organization in June of 1918.[8]

Yet despite the importance of naming the issues of labor rights, racial equality or gender justice in Paris, her main question in this editorial piece centering on Indian citizenship is who will represent American Indians in these discussions? For her, American Indian status as wards of the US nation-state under federal law is why Native peoples are not at the table on this world's stage—a stage where nations, large and small, and non-governmental activists have come together to address human injustices. She argues that "the universal cry for freedom from injustice is the voice of a multitude united by afflictions. To appease this human cry the application of democratic

principles must be flexible enough to be universal" (192). Emphasizing the universality of democracy is a common tactic in Zitkala-Sa's writing especially as part of a larger argument for the enfranchisement of Native peoples. However, in this piece, she it is not simply extolling the virtue of "democracy." She is challenging those at the Paris Peace Conference, President Wilson in particular, and the global community to ensure that the "application" of freedom—and the theorizing of self determination—is open enough to include Native peoples. To be sure, for Zitkala-Sa the "voice of a multitude united by afflictions" includes the voices of American Indians, workers, blacks and women. The challenge Zitkala-Sa's makes to the world leaders is that these voices are not only recognized but more importantly, *heard* on the world stage. And if Native peoples are ultimately left out, she asks "What shall world democracy mean to his race?" (192).

The metaphor of the heard or "unheard" is one that Zitkala-Sa will turn to again and again over the next few decades, in relation to Native peoples as well as Native women. While the 1919 editorial inserts American Indian rights into international debates on self-determination and human rights, I turn now to a speech she delivers the previous summer to the Society of American Indian's annual convention. Only, instead of aiming her critique at the American government, in this speech, she urges Native peoples to recognize their own unique gifts and claim human rights for themselves.

"Address by the Secretary-Treasurer, Society of American Indians Annual Convention" Zitkala-Sa, Summer 1919

While the overall focus of this speech is about the need for political organizing, throughout the speech, Zitkala-Sa insists on the importance of Native women to that political project. In the opening of this speech, she thanks the SAI organizers for what their introductory words. But in so doing, she takes the opportunity to chastise the convention for the lack of women's participation in the event. She tells her mostly male audience:

> [I]t fills my heart with joy to hear these encouraging words from my brothers and as they have spoken of their high regard for an Indian sister, I know that it extends to all the Indian women in this country, and I hope my brothers that at the next meeting you will invite your wife to come with you and you will invite your sister to come with you . . . the Indian woman must come to the gatherings, she must listen with her mind open that she may gather the truths to take home to our little ones. (213)

While there may be a critical desire to read her words in this example as shaped by the ideas of domesticity, i.e. the home and the responsibilities of motherhood, I argue that the values of a red feminist criticism insist on recentering the *red* or the political within the rhetoric. Indeed, the critical focus that reads this speech as an example of the rhetoric of "accommodation" is not uncommon. In Hafen's analysis of Zitkala-Sa's relationship with the sentimental, she argues that this speech is a continuation of the theme of accommodation from Zitkala-Sa's earlier creative work. Although Hafen

acknowledges that much of the speech has "racially and linguistically specific" elements, she writes that "apart from the reference to the hunting trails, this speech could be from any inspirational speaker on virtually any topic" (39). However, it is not from just "any inspirational speaker" nor is this speech just about "any topic." In this speech, Zitkala-Sa focuses her audience on the political power of claiming human rights not only for their current political issues, but also for their own sense of self-worth, as well as that of the future generations.

In order to do these things successfully however, Zitkala-Sa argues that the success of Native activism depends on the full participation of the community, especially women. In this passage, she describes Native women as the ones who "gather truths." For Zitkala-Sa, in this role, Native women hold the knowledge essential for the *political* survival of future generations, a very different articulation of motherhood's social value than one afforded by mainstream ideologies of motherhood and domesticity.

In continuing her argument that the "greatest gift in life is consciousness" (213), she asks the convention attendees to consider the value of Native knowledge and experience. And though, as Hafen notes, this particular section is in line with that of any "inspirational" speaker's, it is also a prime example of turning the dominant discourse of race against itself. Focusing on the "virtues" of Indian blood, Zitkala-Sa argues that Native peoples' strengths lie within their own bodies, particularly their mind and hearts. She says: "Let us teach our children that their Indian blood stands for the virtues of their race" of which she describes as "honesty, clean living, and intelligence"—offering three adjectives that are the antithesis of common Native stereotypes. Another important point is her insistence that while not all in attendance cannot speak English, this fact should not keep them from participating in the convention. She argues that "we have come to commune with our minds, with our hearts" and therefore even language differences are not a matter of importance, or as she says "language is only a convenience" (214). Recognizing her audience, progressives in the SAI, however, she also notes that learning English has been essential for her in arguing for Native rights in white society. These arguments, of the virtues of Indian blood and the value of all voices, are the foundation of her overall argument that as rational, intelligent, human beings, Native people must be afforded the same human rights as all other peoples. She goes on to say that even though:

> . . . we have no voice in Congress . . . we are men and women with minds and hearts . . . We are like other human beings and we should not be afraid to hold up our heads. Let us stand up straight. Let us study conditions; let us give reasons why. . . . We must continue speaking and claiming our human rights to live on this earth that God has made . . . We are rational human beings. Shall we think or shall somebody think of us? (215)

Again, in this section, the significance of voice and having that voice heard is connected to being able to fully access human rights as others have. However, not being

heard by Congress does not negate those voices. In other words, Native peoples' right to speak, their humanity and ability to theorize their own conditions is not dependent on their recognition by the US federal government. This point is an interesting contrast to the critical assertion that Zitkala-Sa's crusade for American Indian citizenship and references to the applicability of American democratic ideals must be read only as accommodationist literary tropes.[9] And although she links humanity with "rational" thought she also notes that along with the mind, the heart holds equal prominence. I also find something valuable in the question that closes this quote. She does not ask shall somebody think "for" us but she asks convention-goers shall somebody think "*of*" us. Phrasing this question in this way suggests that for her "speaking and claiming our human rights" links the survival of Native peoples not only with active political participation but also within our own intellectual practice. Finally, she argues that this message of consciousness, human rights and the virtues of Native "blood" is one that must be taken as she says "not only to my brothers" but she emphasizes it must be taken to "my sisters" (216).

In reviewing these two pieces from 1919, and this last point in particular, the critical claim made by Hollrah, Hafen and others that Zitkala-Sa remained unconcerned with gender politics loses force. In the Winter 1919 editorial comment, Zitkala-Sa engages the rhetoric of self determination and links the cause of American Indian disenfranchisement with other oppressed groups, in particular the "mothers of the world" who converged at Paris to voice their positions. In her Summer 1919 speech to the annual SAI convention, Zitkala-Sa reiterates that the Native struggle for justice is a matter of human rights, but this time she admonishes the mostly male membership for leaving women out of their efforts. Indeed, the philosophical nature of her politics is inherently linked to the significance of women's knowledge represented in the articles she writes on the history and contemporary political aims of California Indians in the 1920's.

Zitkala-Sa's California Indians Series 1922

In Ada Norris's reading of the California Indian series, she attempts to recuperate the narrative form that Zitkala-Sa deploys from the limitations of literary sentimentality. She argues that overall, Zitkala-Sa "cited sentimental forms and romantic language [in an effort] to revise their narrative trajectories toward more explicit and political appeal" (223). For Norris, in the California series, Zitkala-Sa not only thwarts the closure of traditional literary sentimentality by "re-routing a romantic narrative . . . to focus on organizing and representing local tribal groups" leaving behind romantic tropes in favor of "treaty discourse" which emphasizes the political responsibility of the American state to uphold its agreements with tribal nations and attendant recognition of tribal sovereignty[10] (225-26).

Norris offers an important reading of the four essays that comprise Zitkala-Sa's writing on California Indians and their struggles for justice. In her analysis, she argues that Zitkala-Sa moves closer to a theory of "indigeneity" by moving beyond the tropes of romantic sentimentality to a "model of community and political organizing as a form

of narrative closure, which isn't closure at all, but narrative expansion" (231). For Norris, this "indigenous" version of politics better describes Zitkala-Sa's tribally centered yet cross-tribal unity she encourages in organizing American Indians nationally than the more often used "Pan-Indian" designation. In this series of essays, which she writes after being invited to visit with California Indian tribes in 1922, Zitkala-Sa hopes to bring to the mainstream American audience the story of the "lost treaties" in which whole tribes were disenfranchised simply through Congress' refusal to ratify treaty agreements. It is this focus on the "indigenous plot" of treaty histories that for Norris signals a significant shift in Zitkala-Sa's political and literary identity (225). In my reading of this series, however, I am more interested in the continuing focus on Indian rights as human rights as well as the gendered nature of her arguments.

In the first installment of her California Indian series, published initially in 1922 in the *San Francisco Bulletin* and later in 1924 in the *California Indian Herald*, Zitkala-Sa opens her essay with the story of a ceremony performed by California Indian women that as an organizing metaphor asserts the presence of ancient Native women's knowledge and the modern world's unwillingness to hear those who would hold such knowledge. She tells the reader about the practice in which a new California Indian mother places "a very tiny, sacred token of her baby in [the] topmost shoot" of a redwood sapling along with a prayer for the baby's well-being and future. Writing about her visit to the remaining redwood forests of California, Zitkala-Sa contemplates these "prayer trees" amongst which she now meditates, and listens "for the Indian prayers . . . thrilled with the feeling that I heard them" (251).

Immediately following this quite beautifully rendered scene, she changes the peaceful tone of her narrative by describing the destruction of this sacred space and the language and knowledge it holds. She writes what a "catastrophe it was when both the big trees and the ancient race of red men fell under the ax of the nineteenth-century invasion. Could their every wound find tongue, I am sure not only pebbles, but mountains of stone would rise up in protest" (251). In fact, she makes this link for her readers pointing out that the earth's protest can be seen in the violent earthquakes and storms in the region. She points out that such a belief, though considered "superstitious" by some has been articulated by venerated Western philosophers such as Henry David Thoreau. This comparison is important in not only emphasizing the similarities between Native and Western worldviews but also because it asserts that the more ancient and rooted philosophy of Native peoples surrounds white Americans. As a part of the soil, the trees and overall landscape, these Native women's prayers remain more powerful than white men's law or policies. She also emphasizes what is at stake in the continued attack on Native peoples, and women in particular, through the felling of these trees in the name of American progress.

Indeed, this first essay sets up for her mainstream audience the importance of recognizing the voices that fill the forests of California. She reminds her readers that although "new laws have sprung up to protect, at least, our big trees," she wonders however, "when will our hearing become sensitive enough to catch the Indian mother's prayer wafted broadcast by the ancient trees" (251). In reiterating the importance of

such knowledge, she points out to her mainstream white audience that "The Indian is older than the sphinx" (252). In fact she argues that "we have a living sphinx in the red man" and white Americans should acknowledge the gifts which Native peoples have given to the world. While this argument is one she has made before, it is important to point out the story she uses to support her point. She proceeds to tell the story of corn, in which an Indian woman hears the "piteous cry" of the corn amongst the stalks. She points out that in saving the corn seed by hearing the cry and in a mothering gesture carrying it away in her arm, the Native woman teaches all to be "appreciative of food given by Mother Earth" (252). It is a lesson that beyond environmental stewardship teaches peoples to have respect for all life the land supports.

She closes her first essay in this series by revealing that she used to wonder why her people "fared so badly under the foremost democratic government of the world" (252). In answering her own question, she refuses race as the primary cause, and instead posits that the true reason stems from what could only be described as a death drive and an insatiable greed that has sickened the white race. It is a sickness which she argues is also responsible for the "monumental attempt at suicide by the Caucasian race" in promulgating the First World War. She continues with further explication of what she calls "our Indian philosophy" (252). She writes:

> To an Indian, life is a profound mystery. It is too sacred for us to extinguish it wantonly in ourselves or in others. Again I reiterate, truths and laws of life are universal. They may be seen by those who have eyes to see. The American Indian is far from being blind. (253)

She closes her essay with the call for her white audience to try and hear the voices of the Indian mothers within the now grown redwoods. She writes:

> The very next time you spend your vacation among the redwoods or climb old Indian trails in the Yosemite Valley, take your radio set and 'listen in' on the life of the American Indian, past and present. 'Live and let live.' (253)

The irony of juxtaposing tourism and leisure technology with the history of dispossession is not unintentional and in many ways thwarts the closure of sentimental narrative. However, what is interesting about this particular essay is her attempt to situate "universal truth" and a human rights philosophy about the sacredness of life solely within the sphere of American Indian philosophy and traditional knowledge. Additionally, the juxtaposition of democracy and Western philosophy as unable to stop the "suicide" of WWI and in fact engender Native dispossession, against her articulation of a more ancient, rooted and life affirming Native philosophy represented by the Indian mothers' prayer trees, is an important break from her celebration of Western democracy and seems to suggest that she views human rights as more in keeping with traditional Native values. Like Thoreau, Zitkala-Sa comes to this subject by contemplating the woods, but in these woods, the voices are specifically Native and female. And although the refrain she argues people will hear may seem at first glance, apolitical and cliché, the

"live and let live", taken in the context of a devastating California Indian history whereby conservative estimates document a population decline of 80% in less than 30 years, it is profound enough. By Zitkala-Sa's own figures printed in this series, she writes that within the span of "seventy cruel winters" the population declined from "210,000 to 20,000" or by over 90% since the signing of the treaties.

As in the 1919 speech to the SAI, Zitkala-Sa invokes human rights to describe this horrific history in the second essay of this series. She simply states "In the delirium of the gold fever, white men forgot the human rights of the California Indians" and the government "under the pretext of protecting the white man's interests . . . forgot to extend the same American protection to the first Californians" (256). Norris points out that this section "puts a high emphasis on original legal documents. It is as if [Zitkala-Sa] is giving the U.S. another chance to act in accordance to its own foundational legal principles of equality, fairness and contract" (229). In the context of Zitkala-Sa's strategy when invoking human rights discourse, I argue that this shaming more than seeking to embarrass the failings of her American readership, she invokes the federal government's inability to live up to its own ideals on the world stage.

In addition to emphasizing the consequences of denying human rights to Native peoples, Zitkala-Sa also uses the language of "sickness" to describe white actions as the "delirium of gold fever." She details in this piece, the many violations of human rights against Califronia Indians as result of this sickness, including the "hordes" of white men who "like mushrooms" sprang up to attack California Indian villages, as well as the laws passed to keep Indians from owning guns to protect themselves. As she says, these violations led to creating a people "without a country" despite treaties that were signed in good faith and had afforded the California Indians "7,500,000 acres . . . 'for ever and ever'" (255-56).

The third essay of this series follows the narrative trajectory of most of her pieces, one many critics are familiar with. The formula goes something like this: Tell a story exalting the virtue of Native peoples, followed by the story of extreme injustice, and end with a call for justice in which the now shamed white audience can participate. Importantly, however she refuses to allow that participation to remain to use Norris's term "in the sentimental register" in which the audience's moral redemption can be easily obtained in sympathizing with the victim through Christian charity rather than substantive change. As Norris points out in her own reading of this series, Zitkala-Sa is distinctly doing something different than other reformers of the period that rely on tropes of "romantic form" or the sentimental. I am indebted to Norris for her repositioning of this series within a more politicized discourse. Norris writes that this series: "shifts from the romantic narrative of the Indian woman, her tree and her child and the mountain rock of last recourse, to tell a history of treaty abrogation" (227).

But along with the language of treaty discourse, by viewing the story she tells through the another global register of human rights, in particular the international debates on the meaning of self-determination, other details become important to highlight. Specifically, in this third installment, Zitkala-Sa points to the impact of

refusing to afford the basic human right of self-determination. She points to the lack of medical aid and care, the lack of access to education, and the exploitation of California Indian seasonal farmworkers in the fields of Lake County. She asks her readers if they want to be like the "lawless ruffian of the raiding party" who struck "a match" to the "Lost treaties" of the 1850s. Or, do they want to defend "our national honor" for as she reminds them "the people are the government" (258). In emphasizing the "national honor" of the US, Zitkala-Sa is at this moment placing the US on the world's stage of scrutiny. Only a few years earlier, President Wilson had championed the global human right of self determination, yet Zitkala-Sa points out that such rhetoric has yet to be applied in America. For, as she noted earlier, the sickness of greed had allowed the Americans to "forget the human rights" of California Indians.

In this last installment entitled "Heart to Heart" Zitkala-Sa reminds her California Indian hosts of the strong and lasting familial bonds Native peoples have always emphasized in organizing their communities. Calling them her "fellow kinsmen," she writes:

> I was born on the Dakota plains, and had the privilege of living out of doors: and of knowing that an Indian tribe is really a big family circle" adding that "no real man cared to save himself alone and see the rest of the folks die."(262)

This manner of invoking Dakota family ties and the shared responsibilities for group survival are not unique to Zitkala-Sa alone. In an essay on Dakota writer Ella Cara Deloria, literary scholar Maria Eugenia Cotera quotes Elizabeth Cook Lynn's argument that "much of the scholarship on Deloria's writing has seriously misunderstood the implications of her work to the nationalist struggle for tribal survival." She goes on to say that Cook Lynn argues that "the importance of the '*tiospaye* concept as a nationalistic forum for the people' is left unexplored in Sioux literary practices" (58-59). In this same article, Cotera quotes Deloria's definition of the concept of tiospaye in the Dakota worldview, " In *Speaking of Indians* Ella Deloria defines the *tiyospaye* as 'a group of families, bound together by blood and marriage ties, that lived side by side in the camp circle'"(70).

Norris notes that Zitkal-Sa also saw the metaphor of the camp circle as a particularly compelling symbol. She points out that Zitkala-Sa drew the image and used it on the official letterhead of the NCAI. However she does not go so far as to point out its connection to the concept of *tiospaye*. In the last essay from the California Series, declaring her life on the Dakota plains as the origins of her philosophy of what it means to belong to the tribal community and in turn understanding the sanctity of human life, she not only invokes a tribal worldview for a foundation of the human family but also as the basis of humanity—or the essential core from which human rights spring forth.

In the paragraph following her definition of a tribal community and its core value in humanity, she privileges this knowledge as that which "is the very essence of the Sermon on the Mount of which our white brothers talk in their modern churches. "

She reminds her audience that Native peoples came to this revelation long before in their "ancient forests" that the whites had "unfortunately" chosen to destroy in order to worship in churches (262) or, as she calls them in this essay, the "little boxes of God." Significantly, she closes her essay by asking California Indian peoples if they might have read her Oklahoma report. In this way Zitkala-Sa is widening the "big family circle" in this essay, expanding the scope of *tiospaye* from her own particular tribal upbringing, first to the California Indians and then to the Native nations in Oklahoma. What carries over from this series in turning to an analysis of the Oklahoma pamphlet, is the theme of a violated humanity, the importance of listening to the "human cry" of the oppressed and a violation of human rights that is gendered as much as it is racialized.

As Zitkala-Sa has asked us to do in the last essay, I will now turn to the Oklahoma pamphlet, which has for the most part only been given a cursory review by most critics. To be sure, this is due in part to the critical issue that arises in analyzing the pamphlet in literary and Native studies, namely the fact that it is a multiply authored text. Yet it stills stand as an essential document in its effectiveness and for me, its contribution to the archive of Native women's critiques of gendered violence. While Patrice Hollrah has offered perhaps the most prominent literary analysis of the pamphlet, the common critical themes discussed at the beginning of this chapter bind her argument to seeking out the sentimental tropes of Zitkala-Sa's storytelling within this pamphlet. In contrast, others argue that Zitkala-Sa's writing moves beyond such literary designations in this pamphlet. For example Laurie Lisa simply asserts the pamphlet itself lacks sentiment, and Norris argues that in this piece, Zitkala-Sa successfully "makes the transition from activist writing based in a romantic or sentimental model of appeal to a more sensational muckraking style" –a change Norris argues began with the California series (232). However, in my own argument regarding the underlying thread of human rights during these years, and the gendered focus of her critiques, I argue that this pamphlet serves as an ancestral text to contemporary critiques of gendered violence.

Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes, Legalized Robbery, Bonnin, Sniffen and Fabens (1924)

In the California series, Zitkala-Sa asks her white readers, who unlike Native peoples have the right to vote, to encourage the passage of a jurisdictional bill through Congress that would allow California tribes to bring their claims to federal court. The irony of such reliance on the federal courts and Congress is not lost in her writing. In the Spring 1919 editorial comment for the *American Indian Magazine*, Zitkala-Sa discusses the need for more autonomy in managing Indian claims in light of two cases: the refusal by the courts to hear the Sioux's Black Hills claims and the Osage fight to choose their own legal counsel. She points out that Native peoples as non-citizens "have no legal status" and that tribes themselves do not fall under the "general jurisdiction of the Court of Claims" due to federal law (201). Therefore, she points out, that Native peoples must rely on "the consent of Congress, of which they are non-constituents" or the Bureau of Indian Affairs for legal counsel (201). However she notes that Native peoples' "voice will not be heard . . . until our government uproots the Bureau system," a system which

she argues is motivated by its own interests, and one of its many interests is maintaining the necessity of its own existence (201).

Much like legal scholar Robert Williams, Jr. will point out nearly ninety years later,[11] Zitkala-Sa argues that the federal government's racist view of Indian humanity is what motivates the defunct and paternalistic system. She makes a similar point in a 1921 essay, "Americanize the First American," only this time asserts American Indian human rights to make this argument. She writes that: "Whenever a plea for our human rights is made, this despotic-grown bureaucracy issues contrary arguments through its huge machinery . . . It silences our inquiring friends by picturing to them the Indians' utter lack of business training," and their inability to ward off the "wiles of unscrupulous white men" (245). Zitkala-Sa argues that instead of upholding laws which claim to protect Native peoples by making them "wards" of the state, that perhaps "Congress [might] enact laws to restrain the unscrupulous white men" rather than "defranchise [sic] a law-abiding race" (245). For her, the legal status of American Indians under this "despotic-grown bureaucracy" is a "wardship growing more deadly year by year" (245).

The force of naming the impact of federal Indian law and policy as "deadly" to American Indians is a common theme in Zitkala-Sa's writing. As the epigraph to this section illuminates, this "deadly" relationship might be remedied if the US would only live up to the ideals it promoted to the world after the WWI. In these essays from 1919 Zitkala-Sa invokes the ideals Wilson asserts in Paris regarding "self determination" and the international debates on human rights through emphasizing the emptiness of American democratic ideals within Indian country. For how could any discussion on human rights, or the championing of self determination come from a country that does not afford basic human rights to peoples within its borders? Morever, Zitkala-Sa's writing in the Oklahoma pamphlet reveals that such hypocrisy allows not only for the dispossession of Native lands but also engenders devastating violence on Native bodies, particularly women.

The 1924 pamphlet, which Zitkala-Sa co-authored with Matthew Sniffen of the Indian Rights Association and Charles Fabens of the American Indian Defense Association details the level of corruption in six counties of Eastern Oklahoma in the county courts and related enterprises of lawyers, judges and businessmen, "not even overlooking the undertaker." To be certain, the exploitation of Native property and the violence against Native men, women and children confronted all three investigators of the Oklahoma pamphlet in brutally real ways. In reviewing over 14,000 probate cases, conducting interviews of American Indians in the counties and analyzing court proceedings, Zitkala-Sa and her co- investigators produced a scathing report on the conditions in Oklahoma for Native peoples at this time. As the report details, what engendered the overwhelming level of corruption was a 1908 act of Congress which transferred all probate matters for Native peoples in Eastern Oklahoma from the Department of the Interior to Oklahoma county courts. This transfer of jurisdiction, coupled with the oil boom, the ability to inherit oil headrights by non-Native spouses and the ease with which Native peoples could be deemed legally incompetent and

appointed a "legal guardian" to administer their affairs, promulgated a cycle of violence against Native women that is almost unbelievable in its organization and cruelty. It is part of the same story that would inspire the novel *Mean Spirit* by Linda Hogan, and *A Pipe for February* by Charles H Red Corn.

In rethinking the limited way that the pamphlet is read in contemporary scholarship, I examine a small section that becomes the focus for most critics since it is the one we know for sure Zitkala-Sa wrote herself. In this section, subtitled "Regardless of Sex or Age", Zitkala-Sa recounts the stories of three American Indian women: 18 year old, Millie Neharkey, 7 year old Ledcie Stechie and Martha Axe Roberts. In each of these case histories, Zitkala-Sa interviewed the victims or surviving family members and in the case of Martha Roberts, she attended a court hearing, visited her in her home and interviewed bank officials on her and her family's behalf. In fact, it is this last case that would lead to a libel suit filed against Zitkala-Sa and her publisher brought by the Judge named in this section of the pamphlet.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, literary critic Patrice Hollrah is one of the few critics to examine this section of the pamphlet. To her credit, Hollrah reminds her readers that though sentimental in its tropes, the pamphlet "is not fiction" (48). However, in assessing the literary tropes of Zitkala-Sa's case studies, Hollrah argues that Zitkala-Sa repeatedly relies on sentimental formula and in particular the "seduction narrative" to "intensify the emotional impact of her writing" (49). To be brief, the tropes which Hollrah links to sentimental narrative are the figures of the scandalized kidnap victim, widow, orphan, and the "old frail grandmother"(50). Indeed, in all three cases in this section of the pamphlet, the American Indian women can be described in these ways. However, in reading these women as tropes of an organizing discourse of white womanhood on which the seduction narrative and sentimental fiction relies, the rhetorical value and power of these case studies is emptied of their critique of racialized and gendered violence.

While Zitkala-Sa never uses the phrase "human rights" in the section credited to her in this pamphlet entitled "Regardless of Sex or Age," in all three case studies she focuses her audience on the inhumane acts against Native peoples, insisting on their common humanity. In the first case study, Zitkala-Sa begins with the story of Millie Neharkey, an 18-year-old woman, who was kidnapped, raped and defrauded by her appointed legal guardian and his criminal conspirators that included the president of the Gladys Belle Oil company, Tulsa "pioneer" Grant C. Stebbins.[12] Zitkala-Sa relies heavily on a newspaper account of the conspiracy which she follows up with her own story of meeting the young girl. Noting the "long private conference with this little girl" Zitkala-Sa's short description of this experience is striking. However, the rhetorical effect of keeping that conversation from her audience creates a literary distance that sentimental narrative would not employ. Rather than tell her readers the titillating details she writes, "I grew dumb at the horrible things she rehearsed . . . There was nothing I could say" (26). Norris points out that silence is a common trope in Zitkala-Sa's writing which she uses to avoid sentimentality and to keep prying eyes of the public

at bay from something only Native peoples could fully understand, in this case the horror of repeated rape.

In addition to keeping her readers at a distance, she notes her own shocked silence that Millie's story invokes, not allowing her readership off the hook entirely. She reminds of them of the brutality of the girl's rape; she writes: "Mutely I put my arms around her, whose great wealth had made her a victim of an unscrupulous, lawless party, and whose little body, was mutilated by drunken fiends who assaulted her night after night" (26). In this quote, Zitkala-Sa is able to wrap her arms around the young girl, but the readers are asked to participate in another remedy. She tells them that although Millie's "terrified screams brought no help then, --but now, as surely as this tale of horror reaches the friends of humanity, swift action must be taken to punish those guilty of such heinous cruelty . . ." (26). What is significant about this passage is the ways it makes those who would ignore the young woman's screams as perpetrators of violence and accomplices to that brutality. In witnessing for Millie Neharkey through telling her story in this way, Zitkala-Sa offers not the sensational tale of sexual conquest (she is "dumb" on the subject), she asks for redress and justice based on a common humanity.

In telling the story of seven year old Ledcie Stechi, the loss of voice and the failure of others to hear are more directly tied to the assimilative policies of the county and federal government. In "A Seven Year Old Victim" Zitkala-Sa opens with the statement, "[t]he smothered cries of the Indians for the rescue from legalized plunder comes in a chorus from all parts of eastern Oklahoma" (26). In this section she tells Ledcie's story of being unfortunate enough to own a "rich oil property in McCurtain County" making her a target of the system of legal guardianship. Zitkala-Sa details the ways the appointed guardian in Ledcie's case kept her and her grandmother in starvation conditions, refusing to administer more than 15 dollars a month for food and transportation. When authorities from the Indian office found Ledcie "emaciated" and weighing only "47 pounds" they placed her in Wheelock Academy where she might have received better care. However, Zitkala-Sa reports that the guardian pulled the young girl from the school, fearing he might "lose his grasp on his ward" (28). In only a month's time Ledcie dies, and based on the condition of the body, the grandmother believes she had been poisoned. Zitkala-Sa narrates this scene:

> Greed for the girl's lands and rich oil property actuated the grafters and made them like beasts surrounding their prey, insensible to the grief and anguish of the white haired grandmother. Feebly, hopelessly she wailed over the little dead body, its baby mouth turned black, little fingernails turned black . . . In vain she asked for an examination of the body, believing Ledcie had been poisoned. 'No use. Bury the body', commanded the legal guardian. (28)

In Hollrah's reading of this passage, she focuses on the metaphor of "beasts surrounding their prey" as yet another example of the trope of male sexual aggression in the seduction narrative. To me, this metaphor places the men outside of humanity

turned so by the greed and death drive which Zitkala-Sa names in her 1919 comment as the root cause of Native genocide in a nation of supposed democratic ideals. The theme of unheard voices is also the driving metaphor of this passage as noted by the "feeble" cries of the grandmother, and the "in vain" requests for a proper investigation. Moreover, like the "mutilated" body of Millie Neharkey, the men in this story have little regard for Ledcie's body or the evidence of violence it represents. Zitkala-Sa also links the community's deafness with the willful turning away of the court to the system of neglect or the protests of Native voices. She writes, "The Court has already appointed a guardian for the grandmother—against her vehement protest. She, too, will go the way of her grandchild, as sheep for slaughter by the ravenous wolves"(28). However as in Millie's story, she offers the "good people of America" a chance to redeem such human injustices (28).

Finally in the last case study Zitkala-Sa narrates focuses on Martha Roberts and her family. As yet another horrific example of impoverishment at the hands of a legal guardian, Zitkala-Sa tells how Martha's fourteenth month old baby dies because her guardian refused to allow for medical care, a proper living environment and no more than $1.50 a week. When Martha tries to find remedy in the courts, Zitkala-Sa reports, "The Osage County court would not hear this tragic story of the Shawnee woman whose identification it had refused to recognize" (30). However she writes, "[w]henever Judge Sturhill spoke (he was the legal guardian's attorney), the Courts hearing improved" (30). She concludes her narrative by arguing:

> . . . under the present bias of the County Court, where judge, ex-judge and 'professional guardian' combine their forces, the Indian is legally bound and gagged. There is no hope for justice so long as these conditions are permitted to remain . . . The human cry of this Shawnee woman is a call to America for defense and protection. (32)

Concluding these three case studies by returning to the now familiar trope of a "human cry" to America for legal redress and protection, Zitkala-Sa brings her narrative back to the responsibility of all humanity to recognize Native peoples as worthy of human rights to "live and let live." Thinking of this pamphlet in this context is admittedly tenuous in terms of the more fully realized identification with human rights in the California series. However, what this framework offers rhetorically is the ability to think of these case studies in their full political impact as stories of violence against Native women not simply tropes of the "feminine mind." Moreover reading this text outside the sentimental register and within a more politicized rhetoric of Indigenous human rights, I want to rescue her gendered critique from being simply a "trope" of a particular literary style which does not subvert the status quo but actually relies upon hierarchies of race and gender. Indeed the "appeals to humanity" if read through a sentimental register become nothing more than literary elements which accommodate a generalized theme of restoration. In my view, this appeal to "humanity" is based on her growing critique of the federal government's culpability in the human rights violations within their own borders that allow such violence against Native women to go unchecked.

What I also hope to have shown is that throughout Zitkala-Sa's texts from this period between 1919 and 1924 is her commitment not only to her race, but also to Native women. Certainly it is significant at least that her participation in the Oklahoma investigation is as an agent of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and as a representative of their Indian Welfare Committee, which she convinced the leadership to develop in 1921. Her affiliation with the GFWC would remain an important political affiliation when mainstream Indian reform organizations would no longer offer her support. In coming back to those binding critical themes, the assertion that she privileged race over gender, seems to be a false one. Perhaps what critics are seeing in her work is not so much a privileging of one set of politics over another, but in fact is an *embedded* Native feminist politics essential to her political vision for the self determination of Native peoples that cannot be separated from her overall anti-colonial efforts.

To be sure, the deaf ear that has been turned to the epidemic violence against Native women contemporarily has been the organizing issue for Indigenous feminists today. Zitkala-Sa's attempt to locate an organizing principle of human rights from an indigenous world view, for her rooted in a Dakota upbringing and the concept of *tiospaye*, offers much to a red feminist politics in terms of both the limitations of human rights discourse in terms of the ways it gets reclaimed as sentimental affectation as well as ways it may hold potential for contemporary organizing at the global level in terms of bringing Native women together in solidarity. Additionally, this story is important for the genealogy of red feminist historiography. In thinking about what might constitute the "red roots" of red feminism in my early iterations of this project, I always had this particular pamphlet in mind. Being invested in Native women's contemporary critiques of gendered violence, I returned to this pamphlet again and again, because it underscores the historical legacy of colonial violence to the current culture of impunity for perpetrators of contemporary violence against Native women. Moreover it is an important story of a Dakota woman activist who traveled to Oklahoma to meet Native women firsthand, sit in on their court cases, console them in their living rooms and then produced scholarship and writing in her efforts to hold accountable a system of law and policy, which not only dispossessed Native women of their land and property, but also made them targets of sexual violence and murder.

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Norris found in reviewing Zitkala-Sa's letters, that sometime beginning in the 1930's, Zitkala-Sa starts signing her correspondence with the phrase, "yours for our human cause" instead of her decades-long and better known sign-off, "yours for the Indian cause" (252). This change perhaps marks an important shift that began to reveal itself as early as 1919 in Zitkala-Sa's thinking about the global scope of her politics. Norris argues that this shift is more "than an assimilative fantasy or a collapse of native issues into an undifferentiated multiculturalism, but an indication of the political scope of indigeneity" (252). As such, Norris claims one can read this "gesture toward a 'new humanism'" as Zitkala-Sa's attempt to "recast and open the scene of indigenous activism" that seemed to have stalled by the 1930's. I would agree with Norris's claims

here but add that this gesture is one articulated throughout her non-fiction writing throughout the late teens and 20's, which invokes the relevance of human rights to Native political claims. The value of recognizing this aspect of her work rescues her writing from a discussion of affective sentimentality (which resonates with the accommodationist narrative of criticism on her work).

Although, as others have asserted, Zitkala-Sa did not overtly address gender in much of her work, she insisted that Native women's exclusion from leading progressive organizations like the SAI would only lead to failure. She would also choose to assert the importance of Native women's voice and knowledge again and again and highlight the gendered and violent impact of Bureau paternalism on the Indian women of Eastern Oklahoma. This legacy of violence laid bare in the Oklahoma pamphlet will be echoed in the work of contemporary Native women fiction writers. The stories of violence and resistance will, like Zitkala-Sa's writing, attempt to hold accountable the patriarchal force of law and policy. These contemporary stories however will also highlight the criminalization of Native women that goes hand in hand with these histories of violence. This element of red feminist critique, the criminalization of Native women, will be the focus of my next chapter.

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[1] While Zitkala-Sa was born Gertrude Simmons and later took on the married name Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, I choose to refer to her as Zitkala-Sa, a name she chose for herself in her literary and public career.

[2] A recent similar approach to African American literature can be found in John Shuler's dissertation manuscript, *Calling out Liberty: Human Rights Discourse and Early American Literature*. New York: CUNY, 2007.

[3] Of course, this commitment to local communities often characterized the tensions in her life, most famously noted as indicative of the rift which ended her engagement with Chicago doctor and fellow Carlisle Boarding School graduate Carlos Montezuma in 1902. She refused to become a Chicago city doctor's wife and Montezuma refused to be a reservation doctor at Zitkala-Sa's request. Her subsequent marriage and the next fourteen years would be spent on the Ute reservation where her husband Raymond Bonnin (also from her tribal community) worked.

[4] For an overview of history of Indigenous peoples international political efforts, see Ronald Niezen's, *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: U of Califorinia P, 2003. Niezen begins this history with Six Nations leader Levi General Deskaheh's presentation to the League of Nations in 1923. Zitkala-Sa's editorial does not necessarily complicate this historical narrative, but one issue that may be raised is in regards to Niezen's statement that "the self–evident futility of appealing to the courts and legislatures of the national governments" of nation-states "did not in itself lead to an internationalization of indigenous politics" until after the 60's and 70's (30). Again, Zitkala-Sa's writing and even to some extent the ways she envisioned the NCAI, might have gestured to the international at an earlier point than Niezen names. I realize however that the scope of this potential claim is too large to support given the limited body of work I am reading in this chapter.

[5] "Nations Must Cooperate in Common Cause, Declares Mr. Wilson, for Impartial Justice." May 28, 1916; ProQuest Historical Newspapers. The Washington Post (1877 - 1991). pg. A6.

[6] Unless otherwise noted, articles and speeches by Zitkala-Sa in this chapter are from the following edition edited by Ada Norris and Cathleen Davidson: Zitkala-Sa, 1876-1938. *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

[7] Human rights historians point out that although ultimately the final covenant did not include human rights provisions such as that proposed by Wilson or the delegation from Japan for example, it was an important moment in initiating the global discussion on such issues. For example, human rights scholar Burns Weston writes: "the Covenant establishing the League of Nations (1919), while not formally recognizing 'the rights of Man' and while failing to lay down a principle of racial nondiscrimination as requested by Japan (owing mainly to the resistance of Great Britain and the United States), nevertheless committed the League's members to several human rights goals: fair and humane working conditions for men, women and children; the execution of agreements regarding traffic in women and children; the prevention and control of disease in matters of international concern; and the just treatment of native colonial peoples" (270).

[8] See "Indian Woman to be Speaker: Mrs. Gertrude Bonnin Will Discuss Her Race Before Suffragists" June 2, 1918. *ProQuest Historical Newspapers. The Washington Post* (1877 - 1991), pg. 17. Unfortunately I have not been able to find a copy of the speech itself.

[9] Although I did not include a reading of the short essay "The Coronation of Chief Powhatan Retold" published in the Winter of 1919, it's interesting to note that in this essay, Zitkala-Sa tells her readers of Mrs. Wilson's genealogical link to Pocahontas. She notes that like Pocahontas, Mrs. Wilson is being received with pomp and circumstance along with her husband at the Peace conference. However, she makes the claim that Pocahontas—not the Wilsons—deserves the credit for being the "first emissary of democratic ideas to a caste-ridden Europe" which she brings from the "tribal democracies of the new world" (196).

[10] Norris borrows the definition and concept from Chadwick Allen, *Blood Narrative*.

[11] See *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights and the Legal History of Racism in America*. Indigenous Americas. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

[12] "Grant Case Stebbins." *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History & Culture*. Oklahoma Historical Society. Accessed March 2007. <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/S/ST027.html>

Chapter Three

Criminality and the Native Woman "Outlaw" in D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded* and Janet Campbell Hale's *Women on the Run*

> The most characteristic distinguishing mark is the heavy tempo of adjustment, the autonomy of standards which have been handed down from their ancestors and better times. That many Indians of the older generation believe their values are superior to ours, in the midst of biological and national defeat, of hunger and cold, is a phenomenon affecting even the treatment of delinquency. We learn, for instance, that no particular disgrace is attached to an arrest or conviction; "not infrequently those who suffer the penalties of the law are looked upon as more or less notable characters." We can enforce our laws, but not acceptance of those mightier enforcers, our moral codes.
>
> --Hans Von Hentig, "The Delinquency of the American Indian" (1945)

> "It's too damn bad you people never learn that you can't run away. It's pathetic"
>
> --D'Arcy McNickle, *The Surrounded* (1936)

> "They told . . . me they would be back and if I hid you instead of returning you to them they would lock the two of us up. I pretended I didn't understand. You know what? I'm not scared of them. Not scared of their jail either."
>
> --Janet Campbell Hale, "Claire," *Women on the Run* (1999)

In *Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality*, Luana Ross argues that the overrepresentation of Native women in Montana prisons is best understood when considered within the context of the history of federal Indian law and policy. In reviewing the major developments regarding adjudicating and prosecuting crime in Indian country, Ross cites the major acts and legal case history that granted power to state and federal courts. These acts include the General Crimes Act of 1817 (which gave the federal government jurisdiction over inter-racial crime), the Assimilative Crimes Act of 1825, the creation of the Court of Indian Offenses in 1883, and passing of the Major Crimes Act of 1885 following the Supreme Court's ruling in *Ex Parte Crow Dog* which held that Native tribes had exclusive jurisdiction on crimes committed between tribal members on Indian land. The Major Crimes Act, served as a legislative remedy to *Ex Parte Crow Dog,* extended federal jurisdiction to include intra-racial crimes for seven major crimes, currently extended to fourteen. While these acts transferred jurisdiction from traditional tribal justice systems to the federal government,

in 1953 Public Law 280 (and various other state statutes since) conferred criminal jurisdiction to state courts and law enforcement agencies in five states.[1] Ross points out that an amendment in the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 gave many states the authority to "retrocede jurisdiction already assumed . . .if burdensome" further complicating jurisdictional issues (25). While this amendment in the ICRA seems to reinstate some tribal autonomy in criminal cases, the ICRA itself, notes Ross, "effectively confin[ed] action in tribal courts to misdemeanors" (25). This legal history, along with the random application of PL 280 and other state statutes, has resulted in a jurisdictional nightmare for Native communities. [2]

As chapter one illustrates, such jurisdictional questions have muddied the waters so much that crimes of violence against Native peoples often go uninvestigated and unprosecuted, creating a culture of impunity for violent perpetrators. In this chapter, I move from Zitkala Sa's literary critiques of this legacy of violence and impunity to focus on the critiques of criminality in Janet Campbell Hale's short fiction. What these stories highlight is the fact that the impact of federal Indian law regarding jurisdiction not only contributes to unprosecuted crimes of violence, but these laws also contribute to the high rates of incarceration for Native peoples in Indian country in the twentieth and twenty-first century. As Ross points out, since most tribal police do not have the same powers as state or federal agents, "an imbalance [exists] whereby Euro-American police steadily send Natives to Euro-American courts and jails, while tribal police can only stand by and observe white criminal behavior" (26).

As legal scholars have pointed out, all of these statutes have been upheld by US courts based on the legal assumption that Native peoples "primitive" justice systems could not possibly adjudicate modern criminal cases. The basis for these laws is thus linked to the discourse of assimilation. For the most obvious example, the initial purpose of the Court of Indian Offenses was to adjudicate crimes mostly defined by assimilationist goals. For instance, typical offenses included "immorality" or participation in traditional ceremonies. Moreover Ross contends, in the case of Native American women, assimilationist era policies saw women as a special target for this element of colonial surveillance. Ross points to a telling quote from the 1910-1923 Superintendent's Annual Narrative and Statistical Reports. In this report, the superintendent writes that "Indian women as a rule are much more conservative and cling more to the old practices of their ancestors than the men" (Ross 39). Lamenting the lack of "progress" in assimilating Native peoples, the writer of this report argues that Native women are the most effective hold-outs blocking the goals of federal Indian policy at the turn of the century and thus should be watched more closely.

While Ross's work brings attention to the contemporary overrepresentation of Native peoples in prison, criminalization of contemporary Native peoples is not a new subject of study. In fact, in 1945, criminologist Hans Von Hentig attempted to make sense of the high arrest and incarceration rates of American Indians recorded in the years spanning 1935-1941. In this early study, Von Hentig is alarmed at the large statistical disparities especially given the fact that white criminal deviance had declined during these years, in large part he supposes because of the "mobilization and plenty of

war work" available (75). Although he makes the passing argument that perhaps misplaced "anti-mongoloid" racism might be a factor, which existed due to America's war with Japan, he asserts that "there is little conscious discrimination against the Indian in court" (78). Exonerating the US justice system, Von Hentig argues instead that American Indian criminality is the result of a variety of biological and cultural factors that predispose "primitive" peoples to deviance. While Von Hentig's hypotheses are easy to dismiss as relics of scientific racism, these claims in various forms remain deeply entrenched in the American imagination, particularly the inevitability of American Indian deviance in the modern world.

Moreover, this post Indian New Deal analysis offers important insight not only to the racial ideologies of the times, but also to the gendered assumptions of American Indian criminality during a period considered more "progressive" than the previous decades of assimilation policy. I begin this chapter with an exploration of the ideas in Von Hentig's analysis in order to lay the foundation for a red feminist reading of Native women's criminality in Janet Campbell Hale's contemporary short fiction collection, aptly titled *Women on the Run*. Von Hentig's racist analysis of what leads to Native criminality leads me to first read how Native writers challenged these assumptions by looking at a contemporary text published only nine years earlier than this study, D'Arcy McNickle's 1936 novel *The Surrounded*. This novel, like Hale's short fiction, focuses on a Salish community, though his setting is the Flathead Indian reservation in Montana. As one of the earliest representations of criminal Native women and the "outlaw," McNickle's novel proves to be not only thematically relevant to compare to Hale's contemporary work, it also seems to be a subconscious source for the ways Hale thinks about the "outlaw" and criminality in these stories. While the previous chapter is primarily concerned with the issue of gendered violence, this chapter will add another layer to Native women's politics in literature, a layer that shifts the critical focus from sexual violence to the violence of forced exile and the severing of kinship bonds resulting from assimilation era policies and the hyper-criminalization of Native peoples and women.

Hans Von Hentig and "The Delinquency of the American Indian" (1945)

Before analyzing Hale's short stories that explore the impact of the legal policies of relocation as well as the lost stories of Native women's activism in the 1960's and 70's, it is important to understand the reality of American Indian criminality in the decades leading up to this period. If there were a silver lining to reading the racist views contained in Von Hentig's early "study," it would be the valuable statistical information he extrapolates from various sources, including the 1934 *Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States* conducted by the federal government anticipating the era's Indian New Deal reforms. As contemporary criminologists point out, the limited statistics tracked by the Bureau of Justice Statistics often leave out American Indian data or fail to break down populations by gender or race.[3] In addition, contemporary crime statistics often rely on self-reporting, or worse, the assumptions of local, county and state officials as to the racial background of incarcerated peoples. Indeed, Von Hentig points out that his research was limited due to the fact that Uniform Crime reports

stopped tracking gender and race data after 1941. Given this narrow data set, Von Hentig reports that between 1936-1941 arrest rates for Native males over the age of 15 are 2510.3 per 100,000 compared to 835.5 for whites. For Native females over the age of 15, arrest rates are 596 per 100,000 compared to 57 per 100,000 for whites (in other words 100 times higher than white women!). The incarceration rates are not much better, with Native males incarcerated almost five times more often than whites and Native women almost *ten* times more often than white women during this five year period (76).

As mentioned previously, Von Hentig refuses to explain these enormous differences as resulting from racial bias, at least not racial bias directed against Native peoples. For Von Hentig, the supposed biological inferiority of Native peoples accounts for most criminal behavior. For example he argues that the high levels of alcohol related crimes can be explained by Native "malnourishment" that exacerbates Native people's inherent "craving" for alcohol. He further states that Native men's propensity to steal cattle and horses may be the result of innate "short-circuit-like intensity of the avidity that links hunter and prey" (80). Perhaps the most doomed in regard to racial inferiority, is the "breed" however. Von Hentig points out that "superintendents on reservations point at the fact that outlaws from white society have for generations sought the frontier and mingled with the Indians. Many 'breeds,' of course, are illegitimate children and grew up under a double handicap" (78). He also notes that the kind of "breed" matters, whether mixed with white Norwegian stock or Mexican blood. Interestingly, however, he notes that despite the "widespread opinion that mixed bloods are more delinquent than full-bloods," this "notion [was] not apparently applied to females" (78). In other words, a Native women's mixed-blood heritage made her more socially acceptable to Bureau authorities, a reflection of attitudes that regarded Native women's bodies as a path to alienate Native lands to white men either through marriage or inheritance.[4] The criminal deviance of Native men is gendered insofar as, according to Von Hentig, a Native man's racial biology causes him to act out ancient hunter and prey instincts while his more violent criminal tendencies are the result of "outlaw" blood, or worse yet to Von Hentig, Mexican ancestry. In regard to Native women, Von Hentig's analysis argues that their crimes are generally the result of sexual promiscuity and lack of civilized morals. For example, he points out that when asked if there is a social stigma for children born "out of wedlock" or their mothers, Native women simply laugh at the idea.

Yet what seems at first glance a concession to Native peoples, he comments that "minor forms of sex delinquency" are also found in white populations. However, in a footnote to illuminate this claim, Von Hentig writes, "The Children's Bureau of Minnesota states that 'In one of the worst localities it is said that the white lumberjacks regard the little Indian girls as fair game and few girls escape them'" (81). The casual nature of this comparison—Native "crimes" of adultery or "illegitimate" births, to white men raping little girls—is astonishing for any time period. Yet, this footnoted comment speaks to the normalized nature of sexual violence against Native women and girls during this era, a feature of violence against Native women that continues to this day. In thinking about Zitkala Sa's efforts to invoke outrage in the American public over the

rape and murder of Native women in the 1920's, it is no wonder such efforts had little immediate impact.

Von Hentig concludes his overview of American Indian criminality by offering the final conclusion that "Indian delinquency differs from that of other racial groups" (82). This "difference" he asserts is the result of the rapid pace of history and American expectations that would assimilate the unassimilable into modern society. What is at first confusing about his final concluding paragraphs, which take a strange turn to health disparities and statistics on tuberculosis and diabetes, is best understood as a part of the overarching narrative of primitivism he constructs throughout his essay. Within this narrative, Native peoples cannot survive modernity or its organizing structures. In Von Hentig's analysis, modern law is a discourse that Native peoples can never really comprehend. In his analytical point of view, race is inherent and therefore, the American dream of class uplift (which can save poor whites or at least ensure their good health) cannot save Native peoples. Indeed, he argues that "deadly as want and the exigencies of the machine age can be, abundance is more fatal" and he points to the trouble of Zitkals Sa's "poor rich Indians" in Eastern Oklahoma to prove his point. For Von Hentig, Native peoples are doomed by the march of progress; therefore, high rates of incarceration—and one can assume violence—is solely a manifestation of this fact.

While Von Hentig's conclusions about American Indian incarceration and arrest rates focus on the stereotypes of Native primitivism for an answer, most notably primitive sexualities for Native women, biological deficiencies or uncontrollable racial "instincts" for Native men, his overall conclusion warrants further review. I quoted his final analysis as the opening epigraph of this chapter, because, like most narratives of Native savagery by white men, it can be read against the grain for glimpses of Native resistance. He writes, "That many Indians of the older generation believe their values are superior to ours, in the midst of biological and national defeat, of hunger and cold, is a phenomenon affecting even the treatment of delinquency" (83). He further laments that Native communities often consider their criminals "notable characters" and that their "community status remains unaffected by a penitentiary term" (84). In the end he simply states that white men can "enforce" the law "but not . . . our moral codes" (83).

Although Von Hentig does not understand the colonial critique embedded in American Indian indifference to "a penitentiary term" or in the "older generation's" belief in the value of their moral code, Native writers of this same period emphasized such critiques. In Zitkala Sa's writing during the late 20's and early thirties, she saw this "superior" Indian moral code as a contribution to the global debate on the meaning of human rights and self-determination, unacknowledged though it may have been. Writing during this same period, Metis writer D'Arcy McNickle would offer another argument for self-determination in his critique of the "criminal" Indian, linking ideas of Indian "delinquency" to the politics of assimilation. I turn briefly to McNickle's first novel to pull out key themes that are central to understanding the link between colonization and criminal deviance in Native America. In the end, I will argue that Janet Campbell Hale takes up these key themes and, at the same time, rewrites McNickle's

doomed criminal, making central Native women's critiques of the gendered impacts of colonial control and assimilationist expectations.

Contesting the Savage: D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded*

In 1936, D'Arcy McNickle, published his first novel, *The Surrounded*, which took nine years to complete and which came out just two years after his appointment in the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the Indian New Deal administrator John Collier. McNickle's novel chronicles the return of the boarding school educated Archilde Leon to his Salish reservation community in Montana, and the novel is set within the devastating period of allotment and assimilation policy of the early 1900's.[5] Written to challenge these policies and assert the need for a new policy era of self-determination, the story of Archilde's homecoming is fraught with tensions between the assimilationist expectations of his boarding school, his church and the state, and his love and growing respect for the traditional people represented by his mother Catherine and the aging chief Modeste. Like Zitkala Sa's activist journalism, McNickle's novel served as a warning and testament to the ways assimilationist ideologies ultimately dehumanized Native peoples, only McNickle would turn his creative focus on the constant surveillance of Native peoples by colonial institutions, represented in his novel by the local sheriff, game warden, Indian agent and local priest.

Throughout the text, Archilde and the reader are confronted with the meaning and consequences of the novel's underlying metaphor of being "off the reservation" or outside the bounds of colonial control and surveillance. This metaphorical space serves two functions in the novel: as a space of potential freedom and as a space of hypervisibility and therefore regulatory violence. In the end, this borderland between reservation and white America is the setting for Archilde's and various family members' ruin at the hands of federal and state law enforcement. While the term "off the reservation" has common definitions, I turn to the late Paula Gunn Allen's description of the theoretical implications of the term:

> 'Off the Reservation' . . . designates someone who doesn't conform to the limits and boundaries of officialdom, who is unpredictable and thus uncontrollable. Such individuals are seen as a threat to the power structure. They are anomalies: mavericks, renegades, queers. (6)

While Gunn Allen's initial association is with how an individual embodies the term, she moves towards what I emphasize in terms of McNickle's and later, Hale's writing—the actual implications of the *space* outside reservation borders. She writes, "Originally the term meant a particular kind of 'outlaw,' a Native person who crossed the territorial border, called a reserve or a reservation. In those days, 'the reservation' signified a limited space, a camp to which Native peoples . . . were confined" (6). In moving beyond what it means to be "off the reservation" in terms of individual identities, I believe both McNickle and Hale theorize the space itself in their writing in both positive and negative ways. While the Native lands "off the reservation" (and they are Native lands), are certainly a space of potential freedom for McNickle's characters

should they continue to elude capture, these "off-reservation" spaces also engender extreme violence against those individuals who dare to move freely within these spaces. The danger of the reservation border itself is made visible but the hyper-policing of these areas.

While McNickle's novel never explicitly states that the most prominent scenes of violence occur literally outside Flathead reservation boundaries, there are hints that the mountainous setting represents that boundary, and to be sure, the mountain trails are heavily policed by state and federal agents personified by game warden and county sheriff. In the first "off-reservation" scene, just before Archilde's mother avenges the murder of her son Louis, Archilde encounters the county sheriff on a mountain trail. At the sight of Sheriff Quigley, Archilde thinks to himself, "It seemed that every time an Indian left the Reservation, he almost certainly ran into the sheriff and had to give an account of himself" (117). At this moment, Archilde wishes he could turn his horse around as he would normally do to avoid a confrontation with the Sheriff and his questions. Later, in a pivotal scene, another colonial agent, the federal game warden comes across the family's camp. Archilde sarcastically laments, "the woods seemed to be full of the guardians of peace" (125). Yet even though these wooded mountains are heavily policed by state and federal law enforcement, these off-reservation spaces are representative of an old way of life in McNickle's novel, as well as an escape from colonial surveillance and the expectations of reservation assimilation—especially for Archilde's mother Catherine and his girlfriend Elise.

It is important that the novel represents the surrounding mountains as this space of possibilities, particularly for the Native women in the text. Setting aside for the moment that these mountains are witness to several tragedies, they are a hopeful space for McNickle's female characters when they find themselves in a hopeless situation. In the beginning, it is Catherine who convinces Archilde to take her hunting, one can assume to see (and save) her son Louis, who is hiding in these mountains to avoid being arrested for stealing horses and is the fictional representation of Von Hentig's horse-thieving "breed." Archilde notes the "foolishness" of Catherine's request given her age and limited sight and hearing, but he agrees to the trip. Interestingly, as they travel deeper into the reservation borderland, Archilde notes that they seemed to be "trying to go backward in time rather than in mountain fastness" (116). For Catherine, the off-reservation space revitalizes her, and despite meeting Sheriff Quigley early on, she continues to enjoy the mountains and the hunting trip. While Archilde is off tracking deer, she fishes and cooks their meal thinking to herself: "The fish tasted fatter up here . . . It was good to be out of her cramped cabin" (118). While the moment is brief, for a time in these mountains, Catherine is free.

Of course, in the end, Catherine and Archilde's hunting trip ends in tragedy with her son Louis murdered by the federal game warden. And though this scene is often read as a turning point for Archilde, initiating his demise, it is also a turning point for Catherine in the text. Her decision to kill the federal game warden in reaction to her own son's murder, sets her on a decolonial path that results in her own renaming (she drops Faithful from her name) and her final rejection of the church and state. Archilde

is also reluctantly led down this path, and the internal conflict this journey creates is the novel's ultimate focus. Archilde is from this point on torn between "doing the right thing" by turning himself over to authorities for his part in the game warden's murder or repudiating colonial authority in order to protect his family's and his own freedom. This moral conflict comes to represent the cultural war at stake. This cultural war is waged through questions of criminal law and authority, yet represent a far deeper conflict between the "moral" codes offered by colonial institutions, in particular church and state, and those offered by traditional Salish systems of law and governance (represented what Catherine refers to as an alternative system of justice or the "whip covers the fault").

Ultimately, Archilde is unable to completely repudiate colonial authority, but what makes this novel so important is the ways the Native women in the text insist on that repudiation. Although Catherine does not survive in the text, before she dies, she is able to reclaim not only her name, but a Salish perspective on law and religion. In the final chapter, once again it is a woman, Archilde's girlfriend Elise that raises the possibility of escaping colonial control as she leads him and his nephews to the surrounding mountains. While Elise is of a new generation who does not know the best methods of setting camp or cooking for that matter, she is quite savvy at eluding capture. When Archilde is in a stupor following his mother's death, it is Elise who takes him away into the mountains despite Archilde's plan to surrender to Agent Parker in the following days. Thus it is Elise who takes "the lead, going somewhere" tracking carefully back and forth to confuse authorities (285). Upon awakening from his stupor, Archilde is "alarmed" at the fact that Elise has led them so far out and insists he must return and fulfill his promise to the Indian Agent (286). In her attempt to convince him to continue to run, Elise tells him, "if you go and tell this story they'll do their god-damnedest—you see—to stick you for it . . . Look, no; now let me give you my idea. All you have to do is go away" (288).

Despite Elise's recognition of the way criminal law and authority actually works on the reservation, Archilde remains unconvinced and regains control over the group. Archilde mistakenly believes that criminal deviance is determined in a rational way that precludes racial bias. In some ways, Von Hentig's analysis of American Indian criminality mirrors Archilde's belief in the neutral application of law. For Archilde, his fate is "official business from now on" (289). Trusting in the Agent and colonial law, Archilde leads Elise "away from the crest of the ridge" to a "sheltered corner" to escape the wind (290). Elise had initially led them to the ridge where they held an advantage of sight yet could still remain hidden from the colonial gaze. On this ridge, they could "look down on miles of descending country, on a blind maze of canyons" (287), and where "if they had been watching from the crest of the hill, they would have seen a rider emerge from the dark canyon maze" (291). The rider of course is Sheriff Quigley. From this point on, Archilde's decision to take them away from a part of the "off reservation" space that gave them the advantage of full vision to a "sheltered" space of comfort, literally and figuratively leads to his and Elise's ultimate capture. Importantly, however, Mike and Narcisse remain "on the run" at novel's end leaving the possibility

open that part of this outlaw group of Salish youth may have escaped Archilde and Elise's capture.

Understandably, many literary critics have been uneasy with the ending's ambivalence, given the contemporary desire for resistance narratives in Native literature to conclude in fairly utopian ways. Most disturbing perhaps is the fact that the last words of dialogue in the novel are spoken by the once sympathetic Indian agent, Mr. Parker. Clearly dismayed by Archilde's "deviant" turn from assimilated boarding school success to criminal outlaw, Parker admonishes Archilde: "It's too damn bad you people never learn that you can't run away. It's pathetic" (297). As this quote shows, the Indian Agent, the ultimate signifier of colonial surveillance, is exasperated that his wards refuse to learn the supreme lesson of colonization—that there is *nowhere* to run—or, as the title of the novel suggests, Native peoples in the modern era are "surrounded" at every turn. In the end, for Archilde and his people, there is no literal or figurative "off-reservation" space free from the structure of colonial law and surveillance. Indeed, the declaration reveals to Archilde and his family that the settler state is essentially a prison camp for Native peoples (a tribal critique predating Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* by quite a few decades).

While I will not offer a more in-depth reading of McNickle's novel, *The Surrounded* certainly warrants additional critical attention regarding questions of gender and sexuality that are quite important parts of the novel's overall literary and political significance.[6] To be sure, Catherine and Elise's disdain for colonial authority in the novel emanates from a sense of urgency that being a Native woman engenders. A critical question is to what extent the novel illuminates this aspect of reservation life. Are these women's resolve merely meant to reflect the "irrational" love of mother or lover, or is McNickle's text more aware of how patriarchy and colonialism work together? While, I do not have the space to answer this question, I include an abridged discussion of McNickle's seminal novel, because it is one of the first creative works to emphasize the connection between multiple legal jurisdictions, colonial expectations, colonial violence and American Indian criminality. At the same time, the novel hints at the possibility of freedom in a space outside of the far-reaching gaze of colonialist agents, a space that I believe Native women writers such as Hale embrace while they also refigure the Native woman outlaw embodied by Catherine and Elise. Yet in these contemporary stories, Native women writers give the Native woman back control over the direction of her narrative.

Women on the Run: "Outlaw" Narratives in Janet Campbell Hale's Short Stories

Echoing Agent Parker's final dialogue in *The Surrounded* in the title to her own short story collection, Janet Campbell Hale chronicles the lives of six Native women "on the run." While the theme of imprisonment is common in Hale's fiction,[7] this collection takes up the theme of "escape" through the trope of the Native woman outlaw. For the purposes of this chapter, I chose to limit my focus to two stories: "Claire" and "Women on the Run." These two stories make up the bulk of her short story collection and highlight the important era of the 1960's and 70's which are often read through male

dominated histories of Red Power.[8] In the first story "Claire," McNickle's "off-reservation" space is revisited, only this time the off-reservation and reservation metaphor includes the urban setting of Oakland, California in the 1960's and the Coeur D'Alene reservation of the 1890's. In the collection's titular story, "Women on the Run," Hale implicates the contemporary Native fiction writer herself in a meta-critique of resistance histories of the 60's and 70's. Interestingly Hale's text indicts the Native woman writer Lena who, as the narrator, is unwilling to write a truthful story of a Salish woman leader and activist named Bobbi T, a recently captured fugitive and cause-célèbre for her association with Red Power era politics. In both stories, Hale's characters challenge gendered expectations of Native criminality and resistance and offer contemporary red feminist politics an important critique of anti-feminist arguments based on cultural uniqueness. In particular, these characters' stories refute those arguments that deny a need for contemporary Native feminisms or a gendered politics, because traditional values maintain Native woman's power and place in Native communities. Instead, these characters' demonstrate the power of patriarchy to transcend these boundaries, and therefore emphasize the need for a feminist politics in decolonial contemporary movements.

In "Claire," Hale opens her collection with one of the most recognizable stereotypes of Native women in fiction—the elderly Indian grandmother. However, in this story, Claire, is not the benign wise old woman, revered by family and community. She is the matter-of-fact Native woman who finds herself abandoned by her son (and presumably other children) at the height of one of the most devastating eras of federal Indian policy for Native families, relocation and termination.[9] Like McNickle's Catherine, Claire is faced with the impact of assimilationist federal policy on her own family, and in particular, on her relationship with her son Ozzie. However, unlike Archilde, Ozzie is not conflicted about his responsibility to his mother or his community; he has clearly chosen to turn away from his tribal roots and embrace assimilation's promise. And unlike McNickle's novel that begins with a son's homecoming to his rural reservation community in the 1910's, Hale's story opens with a mother's incarceration in the urban center of Oakland, California at the beginning of the 1960's.[10] However, despite these seemingly vast differences in setting, both eras and locales are characterized by a political climate hostile to Native peoples' cultural (if not physical) survival and self-determination.

In this urban setting, Claire's incarceration is not at the hands of the state or federal justice system, but at the hands of her eldest son Ozzie and the staff at the Loma Vista nursing home, both who stand-in for two assimilationist tactics: relocation and Western education. Claire is sent to Loma Vista by her son who insists she have "someone to look after" her despite her good health and capable mind, an allusion to surveillance as a key function of assimilationist programs such as relocation. When Claire requests to be sent back to her home on the Coeur D'Alene reservation, Ozzie refuses and invokes the threat of physical violence for widows who live alone on the reservation. He reminds her of the story of "poor Mrs. Olson" an elderly widow, killed in her own home by a gang of teenage girls, who like Ozzie represent the callous

disregard for an older generation (5). Manifesting an absence of moral empathy, the teenage girls decide to murder Mrs. Olson, "just to see what it felt like to kill someone" (4). Claire notes that the teens had originally decided to kill either a child or an older woman living alone as they would be easy victims. Ozzie is able to manipulate this spectacle of violence to insist on the necessity of surveillance and Claire's relocation for her own protection and survival. In a not so subtle detail, Claire remembers that the teen girls stabbed Mrs. Olson in the back, introducing another theme developed throughout the story—the betrayal of the older (and future) generations by contemporary generations who have turned their back on tribal kinship responsibilities and moral codes. The most obvious manifestation of this betrayal is Ozzie's decision to relocate his mother and rent out her reservation home to fund her imprisonment and his own bank account.

While the story never explicitly states that Ozzie participated in the federal Urban Indian Relocation Program himself, the two cities in which he has lived evoke that history. Claire notes his years in college at UCLA, and, of course his current home in Oakland, California—two of the largest relocation sites during this period. While the story reveals little about Ozzie's life, the few details given represent the promise and limits of assimilationist mandates. The promise of the relocation program had been incorporation into the American dream and access to the economic and educational opportunities of urban life. Ozzie attended UCLA, and was a businessman savvy enough to rent his mother's home and take control of her assets. However Claire wonders why Ozzie, who had been a promising high school and college athlete, had not married a girl from "back home" or one of his own classmates, instead of choosing to marry a poor white woman, now embittered by her marriage to a Native man. In another subtle detail, Ozzie has a grandson named Buddy but there is no mention of the child's parent, Ozzie's own son or daughter. This absence suggests some tragedy never explained in the story. It is these little details—the missing son or daughter, the star athlete ignored by his own classmates—which make visible the impact of colonialism and racism on Ozzie's life experience. Yet, while these details lend some sympathy to his character, for the most part he functions as the colonial insider not unlike McNickle's tribal police officer through whom the Indian Agent regulates the reservation. As a regulatory figure, Ozzie is also emboldened with patriarchal authority to make decisions for his mother and her property leaving her with no option but to move to Loma Vista.

Loma Vista itself metaphorically represents the state prison and the mission boarding school system, both essential reform institutions under assimilationist policy regimes. The text introduces the prison metaphor from the opening line: "A person has to watch her step when she is an inmate of an old people's home" (3). Claire's description of the nursing home is overt in its institutional comparison:

> Loma Vista, housed in a dingy grey concrete-block structure, loomed on a high hill, dominating the landscape. In its dark-grey ugliness it could have been a penitentiary . . . A house of detention for those who committed the crime of getting old. (21)

Loma Vista, as a building atop a knoll manifests its key function—surveillance. Like Elise's high ridge in *The Surrounded*, Loma Vista occupies a space above the urban landscape that affords its keepers' dominance through visual prominence. As a resident of Loma Vista where the "inmates were all on death row" (21), Claire is constantly under the surveillance of an often abusive and always neglectful staff from whom she has learned "to keep quiet and cause no stir" (6). The text also makes clear that this survival skill is a behavior Claire learns from another institution—the mission boarding school of her childhood. Indeed, several deaths at the home are depicted as the result of the same neglect and abuse Claire witnessed as a child at school.

The first two tragedies in the nursing home befall an older married couple who challenge the staff's authority. To silence the couple, staff members kidnap the husband in the middle of the night, reminiscent of the kidnappings of young children from their families by government agents. Distraught, the old man's wife Martha commits suicide by jumping off the rooftop at Loma Vista. Shortly after Martha's suicide, Claire wanders outside to visit the spot where her friend's body had left an impression in the earth. At this moment, she is reminded of the correlation between staff and mission school teachers. She is "grabbed roughly" by a nurse whose aggressiveness reminds Claire of the "nuns when she was a little girl . . . The nuns treated children like that, grabbing, manhandling, scolding" (12). Claire is dragged back inside the building/prison by the nurse who tells her, "You know good and well you're not allowed outside without supervision. I'm going to have to file a report on you now. . . Just about had me fooled but you're like all the rest. Can't trust a one of ya' damned coots" (12). In this scene, Claire first steps "outside" the boundaries of her metaphorical prison, but is quickly and violently reminded that the real transgression is going "off the reservation" out of "supervision" and control. Like McNickle's Agent Parker, the nurse is exasperated by Claire's breach of trust and the fact that she will "have to file a report" on Claire. After this interaction, Claire thinks to herself that "she never dreamed she would spend her old age in the same way she had spent most of her childhood, under lock and key . . . being rudely spoken to and physically abused" (12). It is the first time in the story she hears an inner voice tell her she has to escape. At this moment, she also asks herself a question similar to the one evoked by *The Surrounded's* ambiguous endng: "Did anyone ever succeed in running away?" (12).

After this confrontation, Claire recalls the second tragic death, that of her roommate Matilda. This memory moves her to begin life as a "fugitive." Claire watched Matilda die of fever after the nurses refused to help her or administer medication as retribution for Matilda's "demands" for good care. For some readers, Claire and Matilda's poignant interaction in this scene will resonate with the many stories of young Native children in boarding schools who left alone, attended and witnessed the deaths of close friends, children who died of disease and fever while at school. After this memory, Claire decides to try and escape; she realizes that "*She* was all she had" (17).

Significantly, Claire escapes from this "house of detention" by cross-dressing as a man and simply walking away from the home—an idea given in part by her eight-year-

old great-grandson Buddy on his last visit. Her *tupiya*, as she calls him, promises to help her escape when he is old enough. He tells her: "I'll bring a disguise of some kind. We'll walk right out the front door. Then we'll run away. They'll never find us" (16). Not to point out the obvious, but Buddy's name not only represents the bonds of friendship between the past and future generation in the story, Claire's insistence that Ozzie and others acknowledge Buddy as her *tupiya* is significant. *Tupiya* is the Salish word for both great-grandparent and great-grandchild, further emphasizing the kinship importance of their relationship. Ultimately, Claire does not walk out the front door; she escapes from an open window dressed in clothes she steals from another male inmate at Loma Vista. Before leaving Oakland, however, she makes an attempt to see Buddy on his way to school to say goodbye. She fears the one detail that might give her away in the city is her long braids, but upon seeing her, Buddy offers his baseball cap. This collaboration between great-grandson and great-grandmother is emphasized in one line: "The old woman now disguised as a man and her now bare-headed great grandson held hands as they walked briskly down the street" (22). As she walks Buddy to school she thinks to herself, "Something good and important had come out of the California fiasco" (22). As an allegory about relocation and the program's impact on Native families, this is an important line in the text. As a generational representation of policy history, Claire, born in the early 1880's, witnessed the first waves of assimilation policy first hand, only to be caught up in a new wave of assimilation in the early 1960's. Yet, Buddy, who will come of age in the late 60's and 70's will witness the passage of the Self Determination Act and perhaps participate in the radicalism of the Red Power movement in the Bay Area. To continue the comparison with McNickle's novel, Buddy, like Mike and Narcisse, represents a possible and radical future. However, Claire, a literary contemporary of Elise, also represents a Native women's resistant politics that spans all policy decades.

Claire's escape from the surveillance of the nursing home prison is successful because of her great-grandson's help and her decision to "pass" as a man. What's significant about this detail is the fact that her female gender coupled with Native status makes her more visible and therefore more vulnerable to being caught in such "off reservation" spaces. Indeed, when waiting for the bus to Portland at the San Francisco depot, Claire observes two policemen harass an older homeless woman who they escort out of the building but do not arrest. Claire wonders to herself how the homeless woman is allowed to live on her own when Claire is not. Of course, the homeless woman, without being racialized, is of no importance to the state agents in this scene; therefore, she is simply an aesthetic nuisance. Claire is relieved that the policemen ignore her altogether and that they "don't even give her a second look" in her old man disguise (24). Testing her "freedom" even more, she visits the men's bathroom without incident.

Significantly, in the men's room, she begins speaking Coeur D'Alene Salish again—a moment that symbolizes the undoing of relocation's assimilationist power as well as the power she gains in a male space. Claire's disguise affords her some of that power—she cloaks herself in patriarchal anonymity. In a sense, she has gone "off the

reservation" by confounding gender boundaries. When she contemplates the missing diamond ring on her hand that she pawned to buy her bus ticket, she thinks that "it showed something important was missing. Nobody looked at her. Nobody at all. It worked!" (26). While some might read the "missing" thing as a lament over her dead husband, the text is careful to note that she still has her wedding band. What seems to be "missing" then is the visibility of feminine markers that would limit her mobility "off the reservation"—a gendered commentary on the hypervisibility of Native women's bodies in a colonial and patriarchal society.

Given this new freedom, Claire arrives as a bus stop just outside of the Yakima valley. At this point in her journey, she decides to hike away from the town to spend a few evenings camped by a creek. This pivotal part of the story seems to make the most direct allusion to McNickle's canonical text. Like McNickle's Catherine, in this solitary landscape of hills and valleys, Claire feels reinvigorated. She notes that "At last she was truly, truly free" and that now "alone in her new freedom" she did not have to "watch her step or look over her shoulder for the first time since she left Idaho nearly four years before" (32). And like Catherine's fish, food tastes better here; Claire thinks to herself, "Never had a soda-pop tasted so fine" than in a space where she had "fresh, free air" (32). Walking freely in this landscape far from the highways of "civilization," Claire decides to remove her disguise and completely undress, bathing in the cold waters of the river. She also completely undoes her long braids, which until this point she had kept hidden under her grandson's baseball cap. Literally stripped down to her "real" self, Claire contemplates her freedom:

> She felt the sun and warm Chinook wind on her naked body and laughed a little to herself. This was so fine, this moment, so fine. All was perfect. Absolutely perfect . . . Despite everything, despite heartache and loss and meanness and unfairness . . . life is good and in these perfect moments we know the goodness. (33)

In this "perfect moment" Claire is not only able to be alone or without surveillance, she is also able to be a woman again—without her "old man" clothes and with her hair down. This moment of freedom "off the reservation" underscores the necessity of a space where Native peoples are free from the colonial gaze. At the same time, it underscores the necessity of that decolonial space for Native women in particular. However, the negative side of this point is the fact that such a space in this scene is completely isolated. Claire may be completely out of sight from the colonial gaze, but she is also alone, and her freedom depends on remaining hidden. Indeed being alone may be her downfall in the end. This loneliness perhaps is what reminds Claire of the time she escaped from the mission school with the help of her great-grandmother. As Claire lies on the warm rock by the river, she recalls the "summer of contentment" she shared with her own *tupiya,* only this time she is referring to her own great grandmother, not her great-grandson Buddy (42).

While surveillance, off-reservation spaces and freedom remain key themes in her recollection of her mission school escape, discipline is a major focus in the beginning of

Claire's memory. Recalling her mission school years, Claire thinks about the abuse she suffered at the hands of Catholic nuns and priests who punished her for practicing Salish cultural traditions such as speaking her language. Claire notes that the nuns at her mission school had "acted like jail keepers . . . acted much the way the attendants at Loma Vista acted towards those who were under their care and their mercy" (34). And like her escape from the jail keepers of Loma Vista, as a young girl, Claire simply walks away from the mission school when the nuns are distracted disciplining others. Once on the run, Claire thinks about certain classmates that would expose her; children who were the nun's "pets . . . put into positions of authority" and who "would have others at their mercy as they were at the mercy of the nuns" (33). The insidiousness of such insider surveillance, and the necessity of it for disciplinary regimes, recalls Ozzie's complicity as well as McNickle's tribal police officer in *The Surrounded*. Hale's text underscores such manipulations when Claire arrives at her village and another child tells her that the authorities "told us anybody hiding you would be put in jail" (36). Indeed when Claire runs to her great-grandmother's house (her own mother is dead and her father has "given himself over" to alcohol), her *tupiya* knows quite well the legal consequences of her actions: "They told me . . . if I hid you instead of returning you to them they would lock us up" (37). However, standing up for her great-granddaughter, Claire's *tupiya* tells her, "You know what? I'm not scared of them. Not scared of their jail either" (37).

Returning to the theme of surveillance, Claire's *tupiya* tells her that the authorities had been to her house before her and "looked around" (37). However, in this part of the scene, this theme is concerned with class and gender in addition to race and the colonial other. Claire's *tupiya* points out that the government men "were disgusted" because her great grandmother did not keep a "proper" house. She notes that their disgust was due to the fact that her great-grandmother did not own any "white people's hiding places: no closets, tables, beds'" (37). The confrontation is further gendered by the disturbance of the one piece of furniture Claire's *tupiya* does possess, a big trunk in which she stores her childrens' umbilical cords. As the authorities dig through the contents of the trunk, their actions evoke a history of violence against Salish women and their families. Claire's great-grandmother tells her they "Disturbed my private possessions . . . the umbilical cords of all my children, some of them long dead now like your grandmother. I hated them for doing that but I didn't let them know. Who knows what they might do to me if they knew?" (37). The disturbance of the umbilical cords is not only a violation specifically targeting motherhood, it is also an action in which the authorities assert control over the history held intact by Claire's great-grandmother. Yet, despite this demonstration of control and intimidation, Claire's great-grandmother decides to help Claire escape into the surrounding woods, at least for the summer. Like Archilde, Elise, Mike and Narcisse, Claire and her great-grandmother seek out safety in the reservation borderlands outside of the colonial gaze, or what I consider a metaphorical "off-reservation" space. Yet, unlike the fate of McNickle's characters, Claire and her great-grandmother are successful in their escape, refusing to give themselves over to the fear of colonial violence.

Indeed, their escape seems to reference two important scenes in McNickle's text: Archilde's attempt to "save" a mare and her young colt and Elise and Archilde's final confrontation with Sheriff Quigley. In the former scene, Archilde encounters an old skeletal mare and colt trying to survive in the desolate landscape of the "badlands" on the outskirts of the reservation. The horse was probably left there by an owner who felt she was of no more use. Although the colt is well-fed and healthy, Archilde finds the mare's appearance revolting and decides to try and at least trim her matted and tangled tail in an effort to ease her suffering. In order to do so, he has to place a rope around her neck, an act the mare refuses to allow resulting in an exhausting chase. At the end of this chase, Archilde's persistent efforts critically injure the old mare, which he has to shoot, which dooms the colt to a motherless death from starvation. Archilde literally kills them both with kindness. In the end, the mare's determination to remain free trumps Archilde's desire to groom or lead her with rope. McNickle's text makes clear that Archilde's actions are fueled more by his own obsession than by any good intentions that guided the pursuit. While the subtext of this scene is obvious to most critics, it is important to point out that the mare's fate is a representation of the choice given to Native peoples under assimilation—be free and starve or be fettered and live. In *The Surrounded*, the futility of such a "choice" is emphasized in order to effect political reform in favor of self-determination policy. In "Claire," Hale has the luxury of writing during a period of self-determination policy and can emphasize other aspects of this historic era, in particular the reasons behind those decisions to resist.

In Hale's story, a young Claire and her great-grandmother escape from government officials by taking "the old woman's gentle mare and a small young mule" into the surrounding woods (37). In McNickle's text, Archilde encounters a mare and her young colt in the surrounding badlands. In some ways, this mare and colt's relationship, pursuit and death represent Catherine and Archilde, or Catherine and Louis whose relationship is destroyed by the interventions of government agents' "good intentions" and/or obsession with making them conform to colonial expectations. In Hale's text, great-grandmother and great granddaughter, represented by the old gentle mare and the small young mule, lead themselves into the woods and no one dares to intervene. Like the old mare, Claire's *tupiya* flaunts her free will to the villagers already willing to be complicit in Claire's capture. Claire remembers, "how happy she felt when she and her Ya-ya rode out of the village that day, all the neighbors, the nosey woman next door, the crippled boy who wasn't made to attend mission school, even Claire's father . . . all stared at them but said nothing" (37). Her great-grandmother views the threat of their complicity as nominal, "Let them tell those men from the government" (37).

Claire's great-grandmother tells her that no one will find them and, in the end, she is right. They spend the rest of the summer camping in the woods, and during this time Claire's great-grandmother strengthens the bond between them. She tells Claire traditional stories as well as stories about her life before and after the coming of the white man. This "storytelling" episode underscores the diversity of narratives—cultural, political and historical—that Claire's great-grandmother shares with her.

Claire's *tupiya* notes that although whites had brought some beneficial technologies, in the end these did not make up for a stunning loss of freedom for the tribe. She tells Claire that during those earlier days, the people "didn't know what was coming . . . how they would come to be under the rule of the white man and have to do everything the white man wanted" (39). Claire's great-grandmother also tells her perhaps the most important part of Claire's own history—the original name Claire's mother had given her at birth, "She-is-free" (40). She tells her that, like Zitkala-Sa's prayer trees, this name "expressed the mother's hopes for her child" though, she notes, "we don't live that way anymore" (40). Instead, their lives on the reservation are characterized by that "loss of freedom;" however, Claire's tupiya reminds her that, "[p]eople should not have to live this way" (39).

In these woods, Claire and her great-grandmother, as the antithesis to the doomed mare and colt from McNickle's novel, restore and solidify a generational connection between women previously interrupted by the interventions of mission school nuns and government officials. In a related sense, their successful sojourn outside reservation boundaries partially rewrites Elise's fate at the end of McNickle's novel. Comparatively, Claire and Elise are contemporaries based on historical markers found in both texts. Set around 1914, Elise is a young woman in McNickle's novel. In Hale's story, Claire would have been 22 in 1914, making her the same age as Elise relatively. In addition, Catherine and Claire's *tupiya* also share similarities—both witnessed the invasion of white men to their respective Salish communities. Although somewhat of a literary stretch, it is interesting to think of Claire and her great-grandmother's journey into the woods as a contemporary refiguring of the key female characters from McNickle's novel. Like Elise and Catherine, Claire's great-grandmother has faith in their ability to survive such a journey and Claire has no fear attempting such an escape into the surrounding lands. Claire's *tupiya* tells her that "we'll be safe in the woods for as long as we wish" and Claire thinks "no matter what they did to her for running away, she knew it was the right thing to have done" (38). Yet in these woods, Claire's *tupiya* is in control of her actions; she is not led there by an indifferent son. Collapsing time, Claire and her *tupiya* have left their indifferent sons behind at this stage in order to protect their future generations.

However, this memory is not an overly idealistic one, and Claire remembers that her summer of freedom ends when the weather turns cold and her great grandmother becomes mildly sick. At this point, she decides to pack up their camp and tells Claire "I think it's time we went back in, don't you?" (42). She makes this statement sitting on a log "beside the fire drinking coffee from a tin" (42). This detail, though minor, is reminiscent of the ending of *The Surrounded*. In that scene, Archilde and Elise are caught off-guard by Sheriff Quigley's appearance: "Archilde, sitting cross-legged, with a tin cup of hot coffee in his hand, stared at the Sheriff. . . . Quigley [had always] made him feel that something would be wrong sometime, and that he would be there to demand settlement. And it was so. Archilde held the coffee cup in mid-air and stared" (291). Again, while this may seem a minor connection, the coffee is a key detail in this final scene as Elise uses this ritual to facilitate killing the Sheriff, using it as a distraction and

weapon when she decides to shoot him. In Hale's story, Claire's great-grandmother decides to go "back in" on her own, no one interrupting her morning coffee. Not entirely of her own choice, the weather and Claire's great- grandmother's new cough facilitates the decision; however, the summer remains, in Claire's memory "a fine interlude" (42).

The story of that summer represents the importance of Native women's knowledge to a resistance politics—a certain kind of knowledge of a tribal history before and outside of colonial surveillance that Claire's great-grandmother still holds. It also emphasizes the importance of kinship responsibilities, a key theme throughout the story. As Claire's memory closes the door on this memory, she turns to think about her current situation, "Ya-ya and she were fugitives that summer as she was a fugitive now" (43). This memory's emphasis on kinship is reinforced by Claire's dream the following night that offers her a destination—her nephew Joe's home. In addition, Joe has a young son whom Claire hopes to help raise. She even thinks perhaps "she could get Joe to take them all camping" where Claire can tell her nephew traditional stories like her own *tupiya* had years before.

Claire's journey continues after she breaks camp herself, redresses as a man and heads back to the depot where she catches a ride with a trucker to Couer D'Alene, Idaho. She spends much of the trip nursing her own cold, now a fever, and thinks of all the men in her life that have left her behind, either through death or, in her sons' cases, neglect. She reveals that her other son Ernie lives in San Francisco and never visited her at Loma Vista, sending flowers only on Mother's Day. The fact that Claire is alone at this moment in her life, reminds her of the loss of her only daughter, who Claire believes would have understood the importance of kinship responsibilities. She thinks to herself what may have been different if Clairice had lived—that "daughters don't allow their mothers to be put out" (51).

However with the loss of her great-grandmother and baby girl, her latest fugitive effort now depends on her nephew's cooperation and acceptance—an important detail that would reinstate a fractured relationship between a Native woman and her male kin. In the last leg of her journey, Claire hitchhikes a ride to her nephew's home, where she plans on helping him recover from alcohol and assist in the raising of his "motherless child." However, the driver warns her, "you shouldn't be hitchhiking sir . . . it's very dangerous. A woman's body was found in the woods just out of Coeur D'Alene" (52). These woods would be the same ones she had escaped to as a young girl with her great-grandmother. However, in this moment, these woods are the dumping grounds for Native woman's bodies, reminding Claire of the real threat of violence against women who dare cross these reservation boundaries. Claire thinks "she knew he was right and she would never hitch a ride again" (53). This final encounter on the outskirts of home, or the "off-reservation" borderlands emphasizes the dual nature of the space. At times it is a space where Native woman's knowledge of the landscape and history aid in successfully evading colonial authorities. However, it is also a space of hypervisibility for Native peoples, a hypervisibility that often results in violence in both McNickle's and Hale's stories.

In addition, in Hale's story, there are a lot of missing or dead women throughout the text, including Mrs. Olson, Matilda and Martha, and members of Claire's own family such as Clairice, Claire's mother, her nephew's wife, and perhaps Buddy's mother. As a part of the gendered critique offered by the story, women are victimized by unchecked physical violence and de facto incarceration. However, it is important to point out that the Native men in the text are also victimized in different ways. Men in Claire's life are victimized by the psychological impacts of such violence—widowers suffering from alcoholism, distant sons psychologically exiled by policy, racism and homophobia. Pointing out these differences depicted in the story is not to minimize the very real violence Native men face in contemporary society or the high level of incarceration rates for Native men, but these differences in the text underscore that violence is not always gendered in obvious ways. In mainstream consciousness, one could argue that incarceration and physical violence are associated moreso with men's experiences with racism while psychological violence is gendered female.

Both McNickle and Hale's texts challenge these expectations. However, McNickle's text does not represent the violence Native women experience in favor of focusing on the psychological impact of assimilationist expectations on Archilde. In Hale's story, Claire experiences are not antithetical to McNickle's story, but the other side of a gendered history of colonial violence. In addition, it is the other side of gendered resistance narratives as well, as Claire takes on the identity of female outlaw.

Indeed, Claire's journey as an outlaw ends when she arrives at her destination, her nephew's home on the reservation. While she successfully evades capture, like McNickle's last scene, her story is left ambiguous in the end. The reader is unsure if her nephew will welcome her or return her to authorities, or if her new fever will claim her life. However, despite the looming sense of doom that the fever evokes, Joe's actions seem to suggest he might not betray her. In the end scene, there are two important details. First, Joe is alerted by his three dogs that Claire is walking up the driveway. These three dogs, a small terrier, an "arthritic old lab" and the doberman that Claire had left in his care, demonstrate a willingness on Joe's part to take in and care for living beings others' might reject. The second detail contradicts the only thing the reader knows about Joe up until this point—that he is an alcoholic father. The text reveals that Joe is alerted by the dogs after he "had just returned from driving Billy to school" and while he "stood at the kitchen sink washing dishes" (54). Given the context of men in the story who have neglected kinship responsibilities, these "domestic" actions demonstrate an ethic of care for the next generation regardless of gendered expectations.

To be sure, the gendered assumptions made by Von Hentig about late 1930's American Indian crime statistics rely upon the expectations of assimilationist mandates at the turn of the 20th century. These assimilationist mandates that dominated policy between the 1880's and the 1930's will be revived in the 1950's and 60's—both eras that bookend Claire's life. In Von Hentig's analysis, Native criminality is an inherent racial characteristic that manifests itself differently depending on the gender of the criminal deviant. Von Hentig argues that Native men, especially mixed-blood men, are hard-wired to commit property crimes and violent acts because of their warrior" instincts.

Native women's deviant behavior, on the other hand, is the result of their savage passions—refusing to become proper domesticated women. In taking crime statistics out of historical context and without an understanding of colonialism's regulatory structures, Von Hentig can only rely on accepted assumptions of scientific racism, in this case, represented as primitive savagery. What Hale and McNickle's fiction offers is the historical context that underscores the social construction of criminal deviance for Native peoples in a colonial society. Implicated in both texts, is the social policy of assimilation as one of the most violent impositions of colonial control, because its success depends on the constant surveillance and control of every aspect of Native people's lives. In particular, Native families and traditional kinship structures are specifically targeted.

As such, the most effective regulatory structure becomes the reservation agency and law enforcement; institutions which police reservation boundaries and off-reservation spaces constantly, not to stop crime but to maintain colonial power. In addition, assimilation policy relies on imposing patriarchy in order to devalue Native women's knowledge of genealogical and political histories, traditional stories, and language and ensure such knowledge is deemed irrelevant in a contemporary society. While this critique is evident in McNickle's text, Hale's short story features the generational impact of federal Indian law and policy on Native women in particular. Adding to McNickle's emphasis on the hypervisibility and surveillance of Native people's off the reservation, Hale adds the crucial element of gender in complicating these themes. Thus, her story offers much to a red feminist literary analysis in terms of how to interpret the prevalence of Native women outlaws in contemporary fiction. In some ways, the "outlaw" character is not only able to move outside the law, she is also directly challenging gendered assumptions of Native criminal deviance and resistance histories at the same time. Building on the latter, Hale's short story "Women on the Run" challenges the ways Native writers and historians displace women in narratives about the most radical and activist decades, the 1960's and 70's.

The "Word According to Bobbi": On the Impossibilities of Native Women's Resistance History in Hale's short story "Women on the Run"

While "Claire" is set against the turmoil of the termination and relocation era, Hale's titular story, "Women on the Run" is set in the relatively recent past of the late 1980's, although its narrative looks back on the protest movements of the 1960's and 70's. These three decades would be marked by the development of an urban Indian population, resurgence in pan-Indian political protest, a literary renaissance and more notably, shifts in federal Indian policy from assimilation to self-determination. While histories of American Indian social movements of this era are still minimal in number, the majority of these historical narratives focus on the experiences and voices of Native men. Donna Hightower-Langston's article, "American Indian Women's Activism in the 1960's and 1970's" is one of the few pieces to examine women's activism in thee decades' major movements, in particular the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz, the 1960's fish-ins in Washington State and the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee. Cherokee scholar Susan Applegate Krause argues that of the very few books on this era, "most of these studies

have focused on the very visible, public figures of the Red Power movement, virtually all of whom have been men. Women's activism, while less visible, has been crucial to sustaining Indian communities, particularly in urban areas, and to maintaining the momentum begun in the heady days of the 1960s and 1970s" (533). Histories of these decades also tend to focus solely on the Red Power movement while no sustained treatment has been published of the Washington State fish-ins. Hightower-Langston notes that women were often the majority at the protests and were also the major leaders of this movement, particularly Tulalip activist Janet McCloud and 1971-78 Puyallap tribal chairwoman Ramona Bennett, co-founders of the Survival of the American Indians Association.[11] While I do not intend to write a historical overview of this movement, I mention this history (or the absence of it) briefly, because the story *not* told in "Women on the Run" becomes the most significant theme in the narrative.

Indeed, the story of the fish-in protests and the women who participated in them are an important backdrop to the most prominent character's life story. In this story, the narrative focuses on the life of Roberta Trumaine, or Bobbi T—a well-known fugitive whose notoriety stems from her activist past, her once-tremendous wealth, as well as the sensational rumors that link her to the Mafia among other things.[12] Most sensational however is the scandalous nature of the main criminal charge against Bobbi T—hiring a hit man to murder her ex-husband's lover. In telling Bobbi T's story, the text contrasts first person accounts of Bobbi T's life as a fugitive with the journal of the primary narrator Lena, a struggling Native novelist who is "desperate to write" searching for the next big idea and whose journal entries are often tedious and self-absorbed sketches of her next book project (72).

The story opens with a short first-person account from Bobbi T, which introduces another important theme carried over from the first story "Claire." This theme interrogates the state of "community" and kinship ethic in the wake of decades of forced assimilation policies and institutions. In this story, the setting is the late 80's, the first full decade under a new era of self-determination policy and a decade noted for its extravagance and celebration of self-interest. In this opening section, Bobbi T reveals she has been actively on the run for five years, stopping for a moment in Detroit, Michigan. In Detroit, someone has stolen her winter coat and she decides to "find an Indian bar" so she won't have to be alone on New Year's Eve (71). On her way to the bar, she encounters another Native man who is homeless and an alcoholic. Despite knowing that he's "been too busy drinking to think about eating," Bobbi T gives him her last bit of change: "I can spare nothing but I reach into my jeans pocket and find a quarter, a dime, and a nickel and give them to him. He smiles and thanks me. 'Happy New Year, Sister" (71). As a commentary on community connection, this exchange underscores a sense of kinship between Bobbi T and her Native "brother" however minor. Yet, ultimately this "kinship" is reduced to a reluctant exchange of money. Indeed, "community" in Bobbi T's monologue is reduced to the Indian bar and this anonymous encounter.

The writer Lena's opening section continues this theme of community disintegration revealing her own deep depression borne out of a life of rejection, most

notably from that of her own family. In her monologue, Lena details her latest novel idea which is clearly taken from her own experience. In this story, her main character is publicly shamed when her sister and niece pretend they don't know her in the local supermarket. This incident leads to the main character's decision to "run away from Seattle . . . She wants to go to a place where she will have to run into neither relatives or exes, will never have to hear anything about them. Indian communities are always so small" (79). Like Bobbi T., Lena's opening monologue focuses on the lack of meaningful connections between herself, her own family and the larger Native community. Lena's fictitious character, like Lena, exiles herself to Vancouver, British Columbia to start a new life away from the "smallness" of peoples' hearts.

In Vancouver, Lena is still depressed however, and she is quickly losing faith in her career as a writer. Despite the relative success of one of her earlier novels, she writes that her latest novel was highly criticized for being too "autobiographical" (79). The story thus opens with Lena's own writing ambition stalled with publishers no longer interested in her pitches—particularly one of short fiction, which publishers see as a successful possibility only for more well-known white authors. Disillusioned and depressed by the production process, Lena writes: "At its best, writing *is* a spiritual practice. Please don't let me see it as a deadend the way I came to see social work" (81). Fortunately for Lena, Bobbi T's arrest gives her an opportunity to revive her career. Lena quickly hones in on the sensational nature of Bobbi T's mainstream appeal, driven by her successful twenty year run as a fugitive from the FBI. For Lena, Bobbi T's arrest also ensures a hefty advance from publishers. She writes: "The news about Bobbi T. perked me up. *More*. Excited me. I saw possibilitie$ [sic]. Here she was this famous (or *infamous*) fugitive and I knew her all my life" (84). As a member of her former community, Lena sees a way to exploit that connection for her own profit and personal gain, something she tries hard to justify. In fact as she learns of Bobbi T's capture, she exclaims in her journal "maybe, just maybe, my days of poverty are coming to an end . . . Nothing wrong with making money. A writer, unlike a priest, takes no vow of poverty" (86).

What sets Bobbi T's monologues apart from Lena's journals is not simply the subject matter but the authenticity of Bobbi T's narrative versus the insecure and selfish ruminations in Lena's journal. Bobbi T's sections of the story are italicized inner monologues chronicling her isolated and mundane existence as a fugitive, the eventual betrayal of the Micmac family who had housed her, and most importantly the contours of her love with her secretary Alice which is not sexual but deeply intimate. All of Bobbi T's sections are italicized signaling an internal dialogue, but more certainly an unwritten narrative. In contrast, Lena's sections are clearly labeled as journal entries with full dates and standard text. In Bobbi T's narrative the reader learns that she agrees to meet with Lena, because "Lena will write a book that will set things right. Tell my version of the story. The word according to Bobbi" (95). For Bobbi T, "setting things right" will be telling a story that will not only exonerate her but also voice her critiques about the government and its motivations and the ways women are exploited.

It will also tell a story that will depict her love for her secretary Alice in a deeper way than for the titillation of the masses. In the longest section of Bobbi T's narrative, Bobbi T tells the story of Alice's childhood marked by sexual abuse and her mother's abandonment after Alice murders her stepfather and rapist. It is this abuse that makes Alice declare that "from that point on . . . she never desired to touch or be touched in an erotic way" (101). In these sections, Bobbi T expresses her desire to have her story told, not only accurately but as *word*—as testimony about the limits of justice for Native women.

Unfortunately, the limits of Lena's imagination are also buttressed by her publishing prospects which are wary of the kind of story Bobbi T wants written. Citing the case brought on by the FBI against Peter Matthiessen for his book *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, publishers pass on the nonfiction treatment Lena initially proposes. In this treatment, though it is never detailed in the story, one can assume Bobbi T's activist past and sharp criticisms of the federal government's criminal prosecution of her are at the forefront. Hale provides the reader with Bobbi T's and Lena's straightforward critiques of "the American government . . . persecuting [Bobbi T] because they just couldn't stand that a poor Indian and a *woman* Indian at that, made it big in the white man's world" (86). In fact, the reader learns that Bobbi T's short-lived casino business was seen as a direct attack on state jurisdiction and a clear assertion of Native power and legal sovereignty. Bobbi T is also granted political asylum by the Canadian government when she is caught; ironically the Canadian government is motivated by its anger over the US government's duplicity in the Leonard Peltier extradition case. In addition, as the "only woman among the Indians who made their living fishing the 'accustomed waters'" (91), Lena notes that Bobbi T received a lot of press and was singled out and featured often in the very public protests of the 60's fish-ins in Washington state. She remembers photographs of Bobbi T alongside Dick Gregory, Jane Fonda, Marlon Brando and other famous celebrities who supported the fishing rights cause, a detail that is a part of the actual history of this era. She also points out the Bobbi T had been at Wounded Knee and Alcatraz, naming all three of the pivotal events that Hightower-Langston discusses in her essay on Native women's activism during the 60's and 70's. It is important to note that this history is delivered by Lena in the story, because it reveals that she is very much aware of the "significant" details of Bobbi's life and identity.

In the end, Lena's inner self-doubt leads her to change creative directions. She decides to drop Bobbi T's story from her list of projects because of the initial wariness of publishing houses and the fact that Lena was not able to find out if Bobbi T "really" committed the crime—a reason that misses the point of Bobbi T's inner dialogues. In those dialogues, the reader is forced to acknowledge the various ways Bobbi T's own Native activist community has betrayed and abandoned her and her female companion Alice. Indeed it is the Micmac family, who initially offers Bobbi T refuge, which turns her over to Canadian authorities presumably for the large reward money offered by the FBI. This family also leads to Bobbi T's complete disavowal in the end by Canadian First Nations' communities who abandon her after the family falsely accuses Bobbi T of

molesting their child. Lena betrays Bobbi T as well by giving up on her story and moving on to develop Lena's next project, a murder mystery about a social worker who kills men guilty of various acts of abuse against women and children. While the social worker plot makes a notable gesture at critiquing male violence against women, the reader is left disappointed that Lena will not write the "Word according to Bobbi." Instead Lena posits writing either a money-making murder mystery or writing Bobbi T's story as a stock romance. In this new treatment, Lena plans to rewrite Bobbi T as a man in order to allow for the "consummation" of her relationship with Alice and so that the more sensational elements of Bobbi T's life can be the focus. She also recognizes that non-fiction is something most publishers are not interested in when it comes to Native writing.

While it can be argued this fictionalized treatment of Bobbi T's life makes a gesture towards representing some aspects of her story, I believe Hale's text raises the question as to what is representable and unrepresentable for Native women in mainstream narratives, whether fiction or non-fiction. Hale's meta-critique here gives us a Native author who is unwilling (and to be fair, unable) to write the political history surrounding Bobbi T's criminal persecution, because it will not turn an acceptable profit. Lena knows the general public, and therefore the publishing house, prefers to read only those crime dramas about women motivated by a psychotic righteousness or a subconscious rage. A Native woman "outlaw"—whose story critiques state institutions of power, challenges categories of acceptable love among women, and lays bare the failures of both Native and non-Native communities in protecting girl children from violence and sexual abuse—is not lucrative or sellable. What Lena is able to write is fiction instead of non-fiction, mythology instead of Word, and significantly, a man's story, not a woman's. In the end, Native women's activist or resistance history becomes the deviant subject, because it represents a woman's power and politics that is not properly domesticated.

For both Claire and Bobbi T, their "fugitive" status is in part due to their transgressions of assimilationist expectations of gender. For Claire, she commits the crime of independence from patriarchal and colonial authority—as a young woman and an eighty year old woman. Importantly, Claire's story links the assimilationist policies of the allotment era to the urban center in the period of termination and relocation. And while "assimilation" is the narrative thread for these historical periods, Claire's life story insists that such a history is marked by gendered violence. Such violence manifests itself in those moments she dares to escape colonial surveillance—going "off the reservation"—a space filled with the bodies of Native women. However, unlike Archilde, Claire is able to remain on the run from colonial authorities and other regulatory figures, because she understands how gender works in this hypervisible way. Indeed, women's bodies become "deviant" in modern society—symbolized by the disdain authorities have for her grandmother's collection of umbilical cords, by the missing and murdered women in the text and even by Claire's decision to cross-dress in order to be free in an "off reservation" space.

In "Women on the Run," a more overt connection is made between resistance and criminality, yet Bobbi T's story is not so hopeful. In both stories discussed here, Hale depicts the breakdown of kinship and community amongst tribal members who favor profit over family. As a story of the radical decades of the 60's and 70's, one claim stands out—that Native women leaders of this era were betrayed sometimes by members of their own community—though that betrayal is engendered by the long legacy of governmental control and manipulation. From a red feminist perspective, this story insists that Native women's resistance history and gendered politics *exist* despite contemporary silence on the subject. Perhaps, like Bobbi T. those stories can be found in those "criminal" spaces, in prisons or on the run.

In the end, Hale's short story collection contemplates that which sends Native women "on the run," the patriarchal and paternalistic legacy of violence and colonial law that Zitkala-Sa named decades earlier. In her writing she urges a return to a Native "moral code" that which Von Hentig saw as the root of Indian criminal deviance. While Hale's short story collection is unable to contemplate such a radical turn, her "outlaw" woman on the run seems determined to run in that direction. Both women's writings emphasize however the limitations of self-determination policy as the shift that would set things in order. For instance, the Indian Citizenship Act, or those assertions of "self-determination" that would follow it can never really legislate an end to federal guardianship; therefore, paternalism remains the plane on which the state negotiates its relationship with Native peoples. It is little wonder why incarceration rates of and violence against Native peoples exists in such disproportionate numbers in the contemporary moment. Such a devastating fact requires a truly radical rethinking of decolonial/indigenous/feminist politics. In order to contemplate such a radical departure from a focus on policy and status, I turn now to Linda Hogan's novel *Power*. In this novel, Hogan will focus her critique on the more philosophical foundations that lead to the criminalization of Native peoples and the violence against Native women. These foundations are the colonial discourses of Christian patriarchy and Native savagery which impact not only how a Native woman's resistance story is told, but also how it is interpreted by the next generation of Native women and youth.

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[1] States under the original PL280 act include Alaska, Nebraska, California, Minnesota, Oregon, and Wisconsin. "Optional-280" states include: Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Washington.

[2] Although current Department of Justice statistics fail to break down incarceration rates by gender, the impact of competing jurisdictions can be seen in the statistics of Indian prisoners when separated out between tribal, state and federal institutions. In 2008, the Department of Justice reported that a "total of 28,400 American Indians were in jail or prison at midyear 2008. More than half (14,264) were held in state prison, and about 1 in 10 was held in federal prison (2,989). The remaining 11,135 American Indians were confined in Indian country jails (2,135) and local jails (9,000)" ("Jails in Indian Country" 2). In other words, tribal institutions held authority over only 7.5% of all American Indians nationally. Of course, tribal institutions are barred from supervising any non-Indian prisoner. Moreover, the DOJ reports that in 2008, the "incarceration rate for American Indians was about 21% higher than the overall national incarceration rate" (2).

[3] Julie Abril found that "Native American women in particular are underrepresented in governmental statistics" based on her study of an Ohio prison. In their official records, they recorded only two incarcerated Native women. However when Abril, conducted a survey, 255 women self-identified that they were American Indian.

[4] For an example of the ways federal Indian case law reflects this attitude, see Bethany Berger's "After Pocahontas: Indian Women and the Law, 1830 to 1934." *Am. Ind. L. Rev.* 21.1 (1997): 1-60.

[5] Allotment came to the Flathead Indian Reservation in April of 1904. The novel opens "a decade" afterwards. In total the Flathead saw 664,372 acres alienated by 1934 according to the Indian Land Tenure website.

[6] Robert Dale Parker offers an important reading of masculinity and class in *The Surrounded* in his book *The Invention of Native American Literature*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2003.

[7] Hale's more widely read full-length novel *The Jailing of Cecelia Capture* chronicles the various kinds of imprisonment facing a contemporary urban Indian woman in Berkeley, California. See also Hale's personal memoir *Bloodlines, Odyssey of a Native Daughter*.

[8] The four other stories in this collection include: "Dora Lee in Love," "Alice Fay," "Deborah and her Snakes (A Cautionary Tale) and "Alma." While themes of abandonment, domestic abuse, and other interpersonal violence lead to the women in these stories "running away" for a moment, they are not quite as developed in terms of their critiques of colonial policy and are in some ways, simply poorly written. For these reasons, I do not include these stories as a part of this chapter's literary analysis.

[9] The federal Urban Indian Relocation Program began in 1948 and ended in 1980. Termination began as an act of Congress in 1953 (HR 108) and officially ended with the passage of the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. In popular histories however, Termination and Relocation is generally associated with the 1950's and 60's.

[10] While the date is never given in the story, Claire reads a newspaper referencing the political tensions rising between President Kennedy and the Soviet Union just before the Cuban Missile crisis of 1962.

[11] Langston-Hightower's article is poorly cited and I have found at least one error in cross-checking some of her claims. In this instance, I found many sources that credit McCloud and Bennett as founders. Some sources give credit to Hank Adams, who was president of the SAIA during the height of its activism.

[12] While I think there is quite a compelling connection between Bobbi T's name here and Bobbi Lee's name from Lee Maracle's autobiographical text *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel* (1975), the focus of this chapter really does not warrant a more overt comparative reading of these two texts. Certainly themes of activism and the setting of Vancouver, BC Canada are present in both texts and future comparative analyses of these two works might prove fruitful. *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel* is one of a few "movement" first-hand accounts but Maracle has written a follow-up to this text in order to reclaim the narrative she notes was moreso in the voice of Don Barnett who helped her produce the first edition. Maracle's story is more fully her own in the 1988 text *I am Woman: A Native Perspective on Sociology and Feminism*.

Chapter Five

"I will no longer be dissolved salt:"Uprooting Discourses of Disempowerment in Linda Hogan's novel *Power*

> Even if we no longer believe in the religious dimension of Genesis 2–3, this interpretation of its picture of the relative positions of men and women expresses what many believe to be innately true. It matters little whether that innate hierarchy is thought to originate with God or genetics—the point is that according to such points of view it is innate, and there is nothing that can be done about it.
>
> --Deborah Rooke, "Feminist Criticism of the Old Testament"

> After leaving I became their enemy. It was always this way for those who tried to escape. I will be their other side, the shadow they cast, invisible, dark, dangerous. . . . But I will no longer be dissolved salt.
>
> --Linda Hogan, *Power*

As the previous two chapters have shown, women's contemporary writing serves as an important critique of colonial violence, yet it is not enough to consider such violence only in terms of physical death or confinement; for many Native women, it is also experienced as an attack on the sacred. In considering the criminalization of Native peoples, it is clear that gender, class and race are not the only organizing social structures. As Von Hentig's analytical assumptions discussed in the previous chapter reveal, Native criminal deviance is based upon the colonial myth that Native peoples, at their core, are savage or, to the language of Christian imperialism, heathens. Further, Von Hentig argued, Native women's criminal deviance is fundamentally a function of a "deviant" sexuality that must be contained through imposing a patriarchal family order. A fundamental critique of many Native women intellectuals is the ways in which colonial agents reoriented Native women's socio-political status through the erasure of the feminine sacred in Native knowledge traditions or through the rearticulation of feminine sacred figures as primitive representations of their Christian counterparts.[1]

This erasure or rearticulation happens in the realm of discourse and is a part of the colonizer's "regime of truth," to borrow a phrase from Foucault.[2] It is a colonial regime that ultimately renders Native women's knowledge and power, which is often articulated through sacred narratives of Native oral traditions, as deviant and dangerous. Understanding how this regime of truth maintains itself and continues to impact Native women is a critical focus in Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan's third novel, *Power*.

In this novel, the narrative dilemma can be described as a crisis of faith and a politics of interpretation which disorients the novel's young protagonist, Omishto. While critics often read Hogan's novel as a "bildungsroman" in the sense that it is a "novel of formation," I would complicate the application of this label in terms of Omishto's story, precisely because the novel's overall critique leads her to uncover the disciplinary function of narrative itself. The importance of this formal distinction is important because if read only as a "novel of formation" the philosophical message of the novel is easily overlooked.

The contribution of post-colonial critics such as Maria Helena Lima is particularly useful to understand this point. In Lima's critique she explains that the "conventional bildungsroman . . . duplicates in literary form a cohesive set of cultural codes whose primary function is to govern social integration . . . For this integration to take place, . . . the novel must convey a social order that appears legitimate" (864). She notes that as such, the novel's "protagonist [must come to] know her limits and accept her place in the order of things" (864). In her reading of Jamaica Kincaid's novels, she argues that such a conventional model is unsatisfactory for writers who "reject the social order" of colonial society (864). What Kincaid's novels expose is the "impossibility of such a fictional harmony" for the colonial other (860). Lima argues, Kincaid's "novels of development" explain that impossibility specifically as a result of the protagonist's inability to connect with two elements of her origins: her mother and her homeland. As a result, the protagonist in her novels turns to writing as a way to "recover that [missing] something—the lost mother/stolen land—as a reaction to the homelessness imposed both by patriarchy and colonization" (862).

In *Power*, Omishto also faces a "homelessness" created by patriarchy and colonization and in a similar manner seeks to recover a sense of place. However, in this novel, unlike Kincaid's texts about the African diaspora, Omishto has available to her an alternative home and mother to connect with, both of which do not accept the "social order" of patriarchy and colonial dominance. However this "alternative" home and mother, represented by the Taiga elder's encampment above Kili swamp and her Aunt Ama, respectively, are presented to Omishto as the remnants of a primitive and deviant society by her biological mother, her white stepfather, the church pastor, her schoolmates among others. As opposed to Kincaid's dilemma then, the "solution" to the diasporic crisis is not the same here. In this text, Omishto seeks a way to uncover the "truths" about her indigenous homeland and her people out from under the disempowering discourses of colonial dominance. Indeed, Omishto's literal role in the novel is to be a "witness" and therefore a "testifying" subject to these other truths. Even her very name signifies this role for in the first chapter, we are told Omishto means the "One Who Watches" (4).

In the pages to follow, I argue that Omishto comes to see the disempowering ways three disciplinary institutions and their discursive counterparts—the church and the discourse of patriarchy, the school and the discourses of Western science and history, and the state and the discourse of law work together to produce the deviant Native woman. These discourses serve to "teach" Omishto that the only contemporary

choice for Native survival means rejecting her Aunt Ama, the Taiga elders at Kili Swamp and Taiga knowledge itself. As she learns to reject master narratives on which these discourses rely, she too must reject the traditional trajectory of a classic bildungsroman in favor of a different ending.

In the end, Omishto's psychic and physical safety become the catalyst for her final decision to leave the world of "war and fear . . . success and failure, owned things, rooms of the light that was once a river and is now reduced . . . the manners of living" (232). Before she can bring herself to make this decision, however, she takes the reader on a journey of "unlearning" the colonial "manners of living." In the section that follows, I examine the symbolic representation of the disciplinary power of Christian conceptions of gender and the social expectations of patriarchy. In particular, the novel begins by leaving the narrative conventions of realism and slips into mythic narrative to reorient and uproot the power of another myth of origins—the Patriarchal genealogy narrated in the Book of Genesis.

Old Testament Patriarchs in the New World

In her essay "Beginnings are Everything" Ellen Arnold argues that *Solar Storms*, Linda Hogan's much praised second novel, continues the author's earlier critiques of "Christian dominion theology" from her first novel *Mean Spirit*. Arnold argues that *Solar Storms*, offers "a new spiritual vision" found in the "intersections" of Native and Western spiritual traditions, a vision that ultimately "foregrounds Christianity's 'others'—women, animals, indigenous peoples, [and] the earth itself"(285-6). She also argues that *Solar Storms* offers important counter-narratives and revisions of traditional Christian dogma using a literary method that "layers indigenous stories with biblical and scientific stories of creation" allowing these seemingly competing narratives to "complement and correct each other" (295). One of the major corrections found in *Solar Storms*, Arnold notes, is that the young female protagonist Angel must come to accept that god "reconceptualized" exists in all living things, including her own person. Insodoing, Angel as a young woman is able to avoid being a "sacrifice" to the violence of colonial narratives of dominance. Arnold argues that this critical aspect of *Solar Storms* is part of an overall project of "rewriting the Bible" found in Hogan's novels (298). In this new version of that text, she contends, "Hogan merges the Judeo Christian God of omniscience and omnipotence with an indigenous spirituality, the 'God's-eye view' of objectivity with embodied knowledges" (301).

Literary scholar Michael Hardin offers a similar reading of *Power* which he argues tropes on Biblical stories; however, he focuses on Hogan's rejection of the narrative structure of Christian apocalypticism. He writes that the novel "critiques both the religious and secular elements of apocalyptic narratives" upon which Genesis and Western history relies (136). Apocalyptic narrative, in Hardin's words, is the "vernacular" that Americans "frame and interpret" historical as well as contemporary events. He sees this narrative structure as a "language of catyclysm" that is dependent upon rigid binaries such as good and evil (136). Such a language, he argues, serves a culture of Christian imperialism as it naturalizes the destruction of one world for the

"rebirth" of another. Indeed Hardin points out that much of mainstream American history frames American Indian experience in "apocalyptic terms" (137). He writes:

> The problems with apocalyptic language are that it moves culpability from the human to the supernatural and it moves events from the historic to the mythic; mythic and supernatural language allows Europeans and Euro-Americans to shirk responsibility. (137)

Hardin claims that Hogan's novel therefore avoids the dualism of such mythic narrative in order to subvert the imperatives of progress and the elision of human agency. He argues that Hogan appropriates the biblical figures of John the Revelator and Jesus Christ in order to rewrite the function of such icons shifting the representation of Christ as a figure of Good, to one which stands as an ambivalent figure and a "blurring of dualities" (148). According to Hardin's reading, the young narrator Omishto, like John the Revelator, is the reader's and the text's "witness" to the "unveiling" of a renewed world around her. As Christ figures, Hardin suggests Omishto and her Aunt Ama also serve as savior figures, and at different moments in the text, they both re-enact a key moment of Christ's life, his baptism and crucifixion in particular (148). Yet, for Hardin, the important difference is that Omishto does not have to experience a bodily death; therefore, in his assessment, she is "a Christ myth without the dualism" of apocalyptic myth.

I am indebted to both Hardin and Arnold for their insight on Hogan's critiques of Christian dogma and Western narratives of progress. However, I argue that *Power* moves beyond the somewhat syncretic model that Arnold identifies in *Solar Storms* and I respectfully suggest that, instead of a reformulation of a Christ myth, as Hardin proposes, *Power* actually asserts a wholly *indigenous* and woman-centered articulation of the sacred and actually reclaims the power of "mythic" narrative[3] for indigenous peoples, rather than reject the form. In this text, the Judeo-Christian God is not "merged" with indigenous spiritual knowledge; he is overthrown by an older and more powerful force. In order for Omishto to see this "truth;" however, she must accept that indigenous knowledge and its mythic counterpart (what some might call "oral tradition") holds that kind of power.

Indeed, by rejecting the patriarchal imperative of Christian fundamentalism, specifically the Biblical narratives of women's (and the natural world's) submission to a supreme Patriarch, Omishto is able to come to terms with the novel's overarching moral question about her Aunt Ama's sacrificial killing of an endangered panther. In the opening scene of the novel, Omishto, a member of a fictional Taiga tribe,[4] is confronted by the spiritual conflict between an indigenous conception of the sacred and the patriarchal symbols of Christian fundamentalism. The novel begins with an awakening Omishto who has just spent the night alone in her father's boat anchored in the middle of a lake. This opening image is a powerful one that signals the novel's focus on rebirth and a coming to knowledge: "It's as if I am curled inside an opening leaf in this boat covered with algae, as if I am just beginning to live" (1). At the same time, the landscape around her is ominous and she fears the darkness of the trees and the water's depths.

Significantly, as she carelessly puts her hand in the water, a "water snake, a moccasin" tries to climb in her boat (2). She thinks to herself, quickly recoiling at "this thin life" that is "too alive and quick" for her. She proclaims that "I am afraid of snakes. I push it away" (2). The snake's attempt to connect with Omishto evokes a visceral fear that seems odd for a young girl brave enough to sleep alone in a swamp. Yet this innate fear recalls the snake as a symbol of Christian evil.

Immediately following this fearful moment, however, Omishto feels a presence watching her from the shadows of the trees. In thinking about this presence, she remembers that this land is panther "territory;" the land of "the cat" who her Aunt Ama "believes in, . . . in the old way" (3). The Panther is explained in the novel as the Taiga's original kin and the first relative "to enter the world" in Taiga tradition, and who we learn later, also has a significant encounter with a human woman known as Panther Woman (15). Both animals, the snake and the Panther, will show up again and again in the novel to stand in for competing myths of spirituality—Christian versus Taiga—and women's place within that realm of sacred knowledge. These competing narratives represent two very different origin myths which depend on female agency—the Genesis story of Eve and the Taiga story of Panther Woman. In this opening scene, Ama is clearly aligned with the Taiga story as she is the one who believes in "the old way" or in the power of Taiga story/knowledge. Omishto's journey throughout the rest of the novel will involve reconciling that "old way" with the seemingly immoveable and irrefutable narratives of Christian fundamentalism and American imperial power.

In the second chapter, this conflict between these two belief systems is represented as a key element in light of Omishto's special significance as the narrator of the text. At birth she is given the name Omishto or the "One who Watches" because she "watch[es] everything and see[s] deep into what's around" (4). This role as "witness" Hardin points out is akin to the role of disciples in the Bible who become the writers of key texts. However, it should be noted Omishto's Christian mother identifies Omishto's ability as "trouble" underscoring the danger of crossing gendered and racialized boundaries of Christian power and place (4). A somewhat literal embodiment of feminist articulations of "epistemic privilege" Omishto's marginalized position as a woman and a Native person is perhaps part of what makes her "see deep into what's around" (4); however, in the beginning of the novel she does not necessarily understand the implications of such privilege. Instead, she is increasingly unsettled by the instability of certain Western myths and their symbols. In addition, she is troubled by the possibility that Taiga knowledge may not only be powerful but relevant.

Importantly, the first event that challenges Omishto to reconsider the dominance of Western Christianity is also one that threatens the "truth" of two American discourses: manifest destiny and patriarchal social order. It is also an event that links both of these discourses to its genealogical origin in the Book of Genesis and the story of Abraham, the biblical "father of nations" and three major religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the novel, the biblical Abraham is represented by the lesser man, Abraham Swallow, a Taiga man who Omishto and her sister Donna see and speak to moments before his death. Abraham Swallow is said to have been executed by Taiga

elders who live above Kili swamp who have chosen to live apart from the "modern" world in favor of maintaining indigenous knowledge and ways of life in an isolated part of Taiga land. As Omishto walks to Ama's house in the second chapter, she ponders Abraham's death and its unlikely cause—an execution carried out through a song sent by the Taiga elders at Kili. Unable to comprehend what she and her sister had been witness to, both Omishto and Donna choose to pretend that they "never watched Abraham Swallow, the dead man, run away from the wind" (13). However, Ama forces Omishto to explain what it is she saw, a year after that day—emphasizing how long Abraham's death has troubled Omishto.

Forced to give an explanation, Omishto argues that the death can be explained only within two interpretive frameworks: "Old man Swallow died either by magic or fear . . . I can't say which one I believe" (5). These categories reveal the interpretive crisis of the novel. Since "magic" stands in for Taiga knowledge, naming it "magic" underscores Omishto's inability to fully describe such a system of knowledge without demoting it to the realm of fantasy and the "unreal." Equally as interesting, dying of "fear" is the more rational explanation (he dies of a heart attack), but this interpretation associates rational thought with the power of the disembodied mind to stop the heart. In this early part of the novel, she rejects "magic" as illogical even though it actually fits best with what she has witnessed. On that day, she saw "a whirlwind of dust following behind him" and Abraham tells her to stay away, that "They have killed me" (11). The whirlwind of dust signifies the presence of Oni which is the Taiga spiritual deity associated with the wind. Oni is also "one of the turbulent Gods" the panther gives a name to (178), and as such would carry the elder's death sentence summoned by a song. Omishto is unable to believe in such an incomprehensible power; she argues, "who could believe there was such a song with the power to kill or hurt a person?" (14). This rhetorical question will prove ironic over the course of the novel as Omishto becomes all too familiar with the disciplinary power of certain forms of narrative.

In considering Abraham's cause of death, Omishto ultimately rejects the "Taiga stories" because she cannot "believe in magic" in the ways her Aunt Ama does (13). In this early section of the novel, Omishto explains that her understanding of the world is more sophisticated than Ama's:

> I don't believe because at school I learn there is a reason for everything. This is what separates me from Aunt Ama, that as smart as she is she never went to high school that even though she reads, she still swears by old time beliefs, and she believes in all the Taiga stories, that they are true, that they are real. (13)

While it is a cliché for writers to underscore the "power of stories," in this novel, the aim is to underscore how a story's power is shaped by knowledge claims and the "regime of truth" that can validate or invalidate its "truth" or classify such stories as "real" or "magic." As Foucault has pointed out, a "regime of truth" maintains its power through "the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth" (131). Ama

has not been properly educated in such techniques or procedures, or so Omishto claims, therefore she is duped by the fantastic power of false stories.

The story of Abraham in the novel is not only significant as representative of competing knowledge claims, it is also significant as a repudiation, indeed the death of, a prominent symbol of Christian nationalism. As Najat Rahman argues, the story of Abraham, father of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, is a story "that has translated to profane nationalist and fundamentalist configurations of identity" (301). She explains:

> The divine promises to Abraham of land and of paternity over many nations are the key moments in Genesis, a link that nationalism also makes. While the Bible is too heterogeneous to provide unambiguous demarcations of a 'nation' or a 'people', nonetheless it has been too often authorized as a 'manual for politics'. (301)

The significance of the figure of Abraham is related to two key moments in the bible's historical narrative: the casting out of his concubine and wife Sarah's Egyptian slave Hagar (and their son Ishmael), and the submission of Abraham to God the Father in his willingness to sacrifice his (and Sarah's) son Isaac. As Abraham is seen as the Father of Nations and three major religions, that those nations/religions were founded at the expense of a slave woman, and on the assertion of patriarchal authority (Isaac is Abraham's to sacrifice) is for many critics' the most damaging legacy for contemporary fundamentalist nationalisms. In terms of Christian nationalism, Abraham's story also served as early justification for colonization. As one historian notes, "advocates of colonization" often relied on the narrative of the Old Testament; in particular the stories found in Genesis, including the "calling of Abraham out of Ur to found a new nation (Gen. 12:1)" (Harrison 3). Of course, while Rahman and others have noted Abraham's story in relationship to contemporary nationalisms and as justification for continued colonization, this story is also noted as a model for social relations, particularly within families and along lines of gender. As Carol Delaney argues, the story of Abraham "exemplifies and legitimates a hierarchical structure of authority, a specific form of family, definitions of gender, and the value of obedience that are simultaneously the fountain-head of faith and the bedrock of society" (17-18). Delaney further notes the disciplinary power of this story is that "it has created an environment that has made it seem sacrilegious to question these issues" (18).

In fundamentalist Christianity, many look to Sarah's obedience (her willingness to offer her slave and her own son Issac), as the model of a "good wife." Religious leaders quote the Apostle Peter's reference to Sarah in his edict on the proper role of wives and the importance of their submission and obedience.[5] In Hogan's novel, Abraham Swallow is a "bent man" without "a kind bone in his body" who is known for his cruelty against woman and animals (5). While only small details about his life are offered in the text that would directly link him to the Genesis figure, his story is told in a chapter that is littered with Biblical references, and in particular, the Patriarchal genealogy of the Old Testament. Moreover his death sentence is punishment for violently asserting his authority over his wives and children through physical abuse, a

violence derivative of patriarchy that grants him dominion over his family and all living things. Omishto also reveals that Abraham's practice of "killing does out of season" is indicative of the same sickness that leads him to abuse women and children (15). In addition, his second wife, though the victim of abuse, defends him even in his death. Omishto notes that his wife "insisted on an investigation" for she "loved him in spite of his attacks on her"—her loyalty representative of the "good' wife who sacrifices her own body and that of her children's to her husband's authority (13).

In order to read Abraham Swallow as representative of the biblical Abraham, one has to pay attention to other references to Christian Patriarchy in this same chapter. Significantly, these patriarchal symbols are intermingled with other physical representations of Spanish and American colonialism. Omishto is reminded over and over again as she walks along the road to Ama's house about what she and her sister witnessed the afternoon Abraham was killed. Walking to her Aunt Ama's house, Omishto makes note of the site of Abraham's death: "the borrow pit" which she describes as more "stolen than borrowed" (5), which is now a canal filled with fish too polluted to eat. Near Abraham's death site is also the spring named Immortality, named in honor of the Spanish conquistador Ponce de Leon's failed search for the fountain of youth, which is a "joke because now it's polluted like all this land" (5). These three sites recall not only the impact of the colonial desire for resources but also a desire for absolution and "everlasting life." While these landmarks invoke a devastating history, they are also a "testament to how things used to be" before the Spanish came (5), underscoring the imposition of these symbols on a much older indigenous land and history. For example, Omishto describes the bones of mastodons and sabor tooths that lay beneath the surface which she says "are like us . . . down at the bottom of God's sky, only we're still surviving what history has laid down on us and not yet covered up" (6). Indeed, the road to Ama's house is called Fossil Road, a path of white fossilized material that "one ancient day . . . broke free of the earth and rose up" out of the swamp (6). As a symbol, Fossil Road as a path to Ama's house is obvious; however, in terms of textual references to Genesis, Omishto describes the road as special because it knew "the secret of how to fall the wrong direction" (6).

Next to Fossil Road is Methuselah, a tree planted by the Spanish surviving over 500 years. Omishto notes that the tree is "not from this continent . . . no one can figure out how it took hold in the shallow soil of this place" (6). The tree's improbable resiliency is indicative of its namesake, the biblical figure Methuselah, Abraham's patrilineal ancestor and oldest living Patriarch in the Old Testament. Thought to have died the year of the Great Flood, Methuselah is also the great grandfather of Noah. Therefore within a span of a few pages, the novel has directly and indirectly referenced four Patriarchs of Genesis, Adam (through references to the Garden and the Fall), Abraham (through the story of Abraham Swallow), Methuselah (the tree), and Noah (through Methuselah). The symbolic importance of these four patriarchs in particular is their inheritance as God's blessed: Adam, the father of mankind, Methuselah, the oldest father in the Bible, Noah, the patriarch of renewed world and Abraham as the father of nations. As one historian notes, the mythic patriarchs are often referenced in colonial

sermons as justification for colonizing the Americas; their covenants with God a biblical justification for the secular elements of the doctrine of discovery, and later its secular American counterpart manifest destiny (Harrison 10)[6]. As one historian notes: "Most importantly in the biblically inspired arguments for colonies was the injunction delivered in the first chapter of Genesis: 'Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it'" [7] (4). This injunction, originally delivered to Adam and Eve, is echoed in Noah and Abraham's covenant as well.[8]

These biblical Patriarchs, beyond offering divine justification for agents of colonization, also serve to justify patriarchal dominion over women and animals. In order to subvert such narratives, Hogan's novel offers an alternative set of stories derived from Taiga sacred knowledge. However, Omishto wrestles throughout the novel to believe that such indigenous myths can still have power in the contemporary world of the American Southeast. It is her Aunt Ama who becomes the center of Omishto's coming to believe in that power. More than just a "believer" of indigenous knowledge, I argue that Ama is an anti-Eve figure and more importantly, the mythic embodiment of Taiga sacred woman, the Panther Woman.

The Power of Oni and Uprooting the Patriarchs

One of the most important events Omishto witnesses is a hurricane, a scene that opens the first section of the book and creates the conditions which sets her Aunt Ama on a her journey to track and kill a Florida panther. Before the storm, Omishto not only describes the landscape surrounding her Aunt Ama's house with the landmarks of colonial and patriarchal legacies, but she also describes Ama herself as a counterpoint to these narratives. Ama's house symbolically is "at the very edge of our Taiga land" and just "in from [the tree] Methuselah" (6). Like the tree, Ama seems to have "dropped out of time" and her house sits in "a place of million-year-old rivers and sloughs and jagged limestone" (8). However, as a woman who chooses to live alone (literally on the "edge" of the government imposed border between the "modern" American town and Taiga land), Omishto notes that Ama is often the subject of public disdain and ridicule.

In particular, Omishto's mother is wary of the model of womanhood Ama represents to her young daughter. Omishto remembers how "her mama once called [Ama] a human ruin, but it's just that she doesn't fit Mama's idea of what a woman should be" (9). Her mother complains that Ama is "not tame enough to be a wife" (19) and "she thinks Ama Eaton believes like an old woman, in old things, and it's probably a sin, what she believes" (20). How or what Ama believes is not something that Omishto accepts but she is drawn to her fearlessness nonetheless. Unlike her own mother, Ama represents someone "who believes in herself" and rejects the disciplinary version of womanhood offered by the submissive ideal in Genesis. Her strength is also what makes the community afraid of her, despite their ridicule. Omishto notes that this strength is something Ama is said to have developed after disappearing for a short time at the age of twelve.[9] Although this period is probably when Ama lived with the old people above Kili swamp, Omishto's mother speculates that Ama's retreat into the swamps is symbolic of something more sinister. She wonders what Ama could

"possibly have eaten in all that time" as the swamps "were all full of poison," and she was "sure that no one remembered what wild things were good to eat (23). Omishto's mother's fear of what Ama *knows* linked to what she has eaten is highly evocative of Eve's sin—eating from the tree of knowledge. Indeed the overt link of Ama to Eve is made further obvious by her name A-m-a (E-v-e and "a mother") and her last name Eaton (eaten/Eden).

As for her mother, Omishto describes her as a woman who has submitted to Christian duty and the discourse of being a "good wife." However, there is some evidence that this had not always been so, and that she had been disciplined into such a role. The reader is told that Omishto's stepfather Herm once had her mother committed so he could have a relationship with another woman. Herm is the abusive stepfather who is also "suspicious" of Ama as a threat to his authority. Like Abraham Swallow, Herm's patriarchal authority is coupled with a misogynistic violence that he directs to both his wife and Omishto. Indeed, she spends much of her time at Ama's house to avoid the way her stepfather looks at her with "hungry" eyes. Ama tells her that "he's an attack waiting to happen" and to "stay out of his way" (18). Ama is therefore more than an alternative model of womanhood, she provides a safe space for Omishto from the threat of sexual violence.

Ama's opinion of snakes is also highly symbolic of womanhood outside the disciplinary narrative of Eve. While Omishto's afraid of the water moccasin in the opening scene of the novel, she tells the reader that Ama believes snakes "must be important creatures to have so many natural, god-given weapons" (23). The connection between Ama and snakes is made again during and after the storm. As "this world is turning into another one," in preparation for the coming storm, Omishto notices rattlesnakes making their way towards Ama's house. Ama tries to calm Omihsto's fears by telling her that the snakes "need shelter too" (32).

While the snakes seek shelter with Ama, Omishto significantly decides that she must secure her own shelter—her father's boat. She decides that the "safest" plan is to secure the boat to Methuselah—a tree she believes will surely survive the storm. After tying down the boat, however, she soon finds herself caught in the full force of the storm. She worries that she may be another "blood sacrifice" a fear that references Abraham's covenant (and near sacrifice of his son Isaac). In this moment, she turns back towards Methuselah for shelter: She thinks "I'll be safe if only I can get back to the roots of Methuselah . . . Please, I say to something, as if I believe in God and am wanting his help. Please. Maybe I say this to the wind" (34). In this passage, Omishto inability to name the force she seeks protection from underscores the divide between indigenous knowledge of the sacred and Christian dogma. It also reveals her ambivalence—she thinks that if she can get to the "roots" of Methuselah she will be safe. Of course, this assumption would also mean seeking safety from a patriarchal genealogy represented by the tree. Her prayer on the other hand is to "the wind" or the Taiga concept of Oni. In the following moment, Omishto sees Ama pinned against the house "like she is nailed there, crucified" with a snake thrown against her body, invoking the blood sacrifice of both Christ and Eve. In this moment, Ama's crucified body foreshadows her own

sacrifice in killing the panther as well as the attempts to both explain and condemn her actions—as the fallen woman who oversteps her place.

However, the storm also foreshadows the possibility that other ways of interpreting her actions might prove more powerful. As Omishto loses sight of Ama, she witnesses what she thought she would never see. Methuselah falls and "what has lasted this long is being taken down now as if it were nothing . . . This tree planted by the Spanish, conceived on another continent. . . lays there black and uprooted" (38). What the tree represents: an invasion, colonial history, Christian patriarchy--all seemingly intractable from the Americas has been taken down by the Taiga force of Oni. Of course, Omishto at this moment in the text is not able to understand the significance of such an event, but it is clear to her that something has shifted dramatically.

The imagery of Omishto's struggle through the mud and rain to reach safety is also an overt portrayal of childbirth. Omishto is faced with what all Christians are faced with at birth—original sin and its symbolic counterpart—the naked body. After struggling through the mud and surviving, a stunned Omishto wanders around and sees what she thinks is "a woman hanging in the tree" above her, yet another image of sacrifice, but more importantly, lynching. She quickly realizes, however, that it is only a dress—there is literally no body inside it. The dress is actually her own and she quickly realizes she is naked. In Hardin's analysis, he sees this moment as indicative of Omishto's crucifixion, linking both Ama and Omishto to Christ. While I agree in the merits of Hardin's analysis, I also read this scene as a clear reference to Eve's own awakening after eating from the "tree of knowledge" in Genesis. After eating the fruit of this tree, a new view of the world is revealed to Eve and she sees her nakedness. But, importantly, Omishto also witness to her own body stripped bare, is not ashamed. In fact, she thinks "But in the wake of the storm it doesn't matter that I am naked. Not to either of us" (39). In addition, as an image of lynching, the dress also evokes the disciplinary threat of misogynistic and racial violence that Omishto and Ama both face from white men later in the novel.

After the storm Omishto sees Ama at the top of her steps with snakes surrounding her. Again confronted with imagery associated with the biblical Eve and original sin, Omishto thinks to herself, "the preacher would say this is a bad sign, snakes at a woman's feet, but Ama doesn't believe in the preacher. She believes old Janie Soto and Annie Hide and the old women would say the snakes area a sign of God, . . . They *are* God" (40). In this revelatory moment, Omishto begins to more overtly critique the God of her mother's fundamentalist church. Overhead, she sees a bird with a fish in its mouth and thinks "this is how God receives us . . . He eats us, my mother's God. The preacher thinks the snake is the devil. The old ones think it is a God" (40). Moreover, she realizes that her mother's church "doesn't believe in what's on Earth or birds" and that earth is "a miserable place" the chosen will one day escape. The storm, and more importantly this meditation on snakes, makes Omishto come to the realization that she "used to believe in the preacher, but when it comes to this kind of thing I can't say what I believe anymore" (40). The world around her is so out of order, she simply notes: "Heaven has fallen" (46).

In this scene, Omishto reconsiders the Taiga concept of Oni. She thinks to herself: "It is a force. Oni is like God, it is everywhere, unseen. I think I heard this word spoken in the rush of weather. I'm sure of it" (41). However despite being "sure" of what she heard, she is still unsure of what is happening around her. Time becomes completely incomprehensible and Omishto notices the sun "is in the wrong side of the sky" (42). Indeed, Omishto thinks to herself that Ama suddenly reminds her of an "ancient peoples" the Calusas "who made mounds out of oyster shells and killed Ponce de Leon with a plant" (42). As the boundaries between the past, present and future collapse around her, the chapter closes with Omishto's declaration that she has "seen this before" in a dream or "in another time" (44). She tells Ama that she knows "what will happen" (44). Carrie Bowen-Mercer argues that much of the novel depends on "real time" collapsing "into [this] mythical, ceremonial time" (173), and it is the storm that marks this shift.

Moving into this alternative space and time, Ama sets out to enact the story of Panther woman, a story that centers on a woman restoring a world in environmental crisis. However, in order to do so and presumably set in motion its healing power, Ama must kill a panther, a crime in the state of Florida. As a witness to Ama's "crime,' Omishto will be called to testify in a state court as well as a tribal one. However, before she testifies, Omishto will be forced to confront the very definition of crime and sin as a product of colonial discourses of power and knowledge. In particular, in assessing the "truth" of what happened, Omishto begins to critique the value of certain interpretive technologies and frameworks, particular Western Science, History and Christian patriarchy. Her preparation for telling the "truth," ironically will be to "unlearn" what she has been taught are the only real paths to knowledge.

The Mis-Education of Omishto

In the novel, Taiga survival depends on the ability to reject "what history has laid down on us" and uncover that which American (or Western) history has "not yet covered up" (6). This form of history is a totalizing and devastating force that is materially represented in the landscape. Symbols of destruction and dominance include the invasive and non-indigenous kudzu vines that cover everything, the tree Methuselah, industrial oil rigs, drained swamps, polluted streams, endangered panther habitat, and starving deer. When Omishto angrily tells her mother that the deer are starving because their habitat has been diminished, not because they have overpopulated, her mother tells her the state-sanctioned mass killing that follows is "the small price you pay for progress" (27). Omishto, however, thinks "it's the way to kill a world" (27). History as a story of "progress" is a violent force; however, the power of this discourse, like the symbols of Christian patriarchy, is shaken by the storm and the power of Oni.

Against this discourse of history, the novel presents tribal "mythic" narrative as transformative and productive. As previously described, the storm uproots powerful symbols of Christian patriarchy from the landscape and pushes Omishto through to a different state of consciousness and into mythic time. As she witnesses the storm's

power, she describes seeing "this world turning into another one" (31), and she knows that "this is just the beginning" (33). She also reveals to the reader that this storm is parallel to the Taiga creation story: "This was how the world was created, Ama told me once, out of wind and lashing rain" (42). In the aftermath of the storm, other symbols of progress lie in its wake including oil rigs as well as "fences blown in as if they were nothing more than little sticks, not the keepers of order they were designed to be" (52). There is the Spanish horse from the farm down the road which lies dead in Ama's yard.

In addition to uprooting symbols of history as progress which justifies colonization, the storm sets the stage for Ama to initiate an alternative narrative power. For Omishto's Aunt Ama, the storm signals to her that the Panther Woman story can have force again. Panther woman is the Taiga figure who restores a world overrun by "rivers on fire and animals dying of sickness" by killing a panther (111). In the story, the panther offers herself to her friend, the Panther woman, advising her to sacrifice the panther so that all the animals may find their way back to the healthy world and "be whole" (111). Omishto's role as witness and accomplice to Ama's tracking of a panther in order to enact this older story is one she does not want initially. Sensing her doubt, Ama assures Omishto by saying "We have to. Letting it die the way it is dying is worse" (62). As Omishto and Ama track the panther, they are now fully within mythic time and space. However, Omishto notes how strange it is that they still cross a highway reminding her that the world around her is also real.

When they finally find the panther and Ama kills it, Omishto notes that the "world breaks apart" and "silence spreads over the place" (66). It is in this scene that we also come to know the complicated nature of Ama's act, one she feels must be done but also one that she laments. Omishto witnesses Ama's tears as she prepares the panther's carcass and offers the reader the following explanation:

> [Ama cries] Because once they were beautiful and powerful. Now it is just like her, like the woman who wears boy's old shoes because she's poor and they are cheaper, and it is also like me trying to think what kind of life I'll ever have, and it is like the cut-up land, too, and I see that this is what has become of us, of all three of us here. We are diminished and endangered. (69)

The connections made in this brief description link Ama, Omishto, the Taigas, and the land to the symbolic devastation of a once powerful animal by the impact of a shared history of colonization and genocide. In a legal sense, the panther's endangered status makes Ama's act a crime, but what Omishto names here in this quote is a larger crime against humanity and the earth. Using the rhetoric of American law—the diminished and endangered part—the quote emphasizes the hypocrisy of a world that values life only when it is on the brink of extinction—the paradox of "progress" and what Renato Rosaldo has called "imperialist nostalgia."[10]

After the killing, Ama tells Omistho that she must answer any questions others might have and to tell their story truthfully to anyone who asks. The one detail Ama

tells Omishto to keep secret however is the fact that the panther had been in such poor health. Feeling Omishto's judgment of her in this scene, Ama tells Omishto that before she judges her that she should "Look at history and say this is bloody or this is death. Look at time, then tell me, because it is true as the stories say that this is everything the world turns on" (72). For Ama, her act is not a crime; the crime of blood and death is one which belongs to another kind of history. Omishto notes that this "history is the place where the Spanish cut off the hands of my ancestors. The Spanish who laughed at our desperation and dying" (73). Omishto admits that this is a "history [that] still terrifies and haunts me [. . . yet] somehow, against their will I stole through" (73). In the novel, history is not only materially represented by the landscape—Methuselah, kudzu vines, polluted streams, etc, it is also a "place" with a ghostly and ghastly presence which continues to haunt Omishto's dreams.

This representation of history as a narrative of progress is powerfully represented by the dead Spanish horse that lies in Ama's yard after the storm. Omishto is preoccupied for much of the beginning half of the novel with burying the carcass as its presence is made uncanny by the fact that the horse seems to be merely sleeping and statue-like, rather than dead. As a symbol a history of conquest, burying the horse takes on special meaning. After the sheriff comes to arrest Ama, Omishto begins to notice that the kudzu fines are starting to take hold again and she sees her dress still suspended in a tree. Moreover, she sees a footprint in the ground near the house and she fears the boys who once threatened Ama, Omishto and the panther at gunpoint might return to harass her. All these symbols of misogynistic violence compel her to literally bury the past that gave impunity to such violence symbolized by the Spanish horse. Her only worry is that the horse once buried might "fall into water beneath limestone and . . . wash up somewhere" (81) and not stay buried. While she makes several attempts to bury the horse, the final attempt is the most significant. In this scene, Omishto spends all afternoon trying to dig a hole deep enough for the carcass that "has hardly started to decay" (96). Interestingly, she digs "down [past] centuries toward what is lost and covered up" repeating earlier language that Omishto used to describe that what history had sacrificed, lost and covered up—Taiga knowledge and history can be excavated. When Omishto finally manages to create a large enough opening, the horse unexpectedly shifts and both she and the horse fall in, the horse almost landing on top of her. At the last second, she manages to pull herself out barely making it out alive. She notes: "just then, the birds all come awake at once and they make such a clatter, a noise of life, that I, who have had trouble hearing since the storm, I hear them clear and sharp" (97).

The significance of this scene is as a critique of a certain kind of history—one that is top down, oppressive and written by the victors. Conversely, the Native woman digging around and under that history for that "which is not yet covered up" is representative of both a way of locating alternative history (and a method--excavation) and a way of thinking about history materially present beneath our feet—in the land itself. At the same time, this scene underscores the material and violent power of the colonizer's history as it's archival presence (the Spanish horse) literally threatens to bury

Omishto along with itself. Freeing herself from this oppressive history, Omishto experiences another "re-birth" since the storm but this time her ability to listen is restored more fully—she can now hear the birds' "songs descending to touch me" (97). Significantly, after escaping this near death by history, she goes inside Ama's house to "put on Ama's boots"—hers are lost under the horse carcass. This symbolic moment signals her shift to seeing and *being* in the world with a new perspective—one more in line with her Aunt Ama's knowledge and sense of self.

To clarify what is at stake here in the meaning of this scene, it is perhaps useful to turn to the work of Haitian historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Trouillot points out that History as it has been conceived since the 19th century in the West led to "the classification of all non-Westerners as fundamentally non-historical" and this classification was "tied to the assumption that history requires a linear and cumulative sense of time that allows the observer to isolate the past as a distinct entity" (7). Thus when confronted with alternative theories of time and space, or rather, when not able to discern a recognizable sense of chronological time in Indigenous knowledge systems and traditions, the West could dismiss entire groups of people (and their history-making) as primitive and thus "without history" and consequently more adequately within the realm of fiction or myth (7-8). Moreover, this led to the assumption that Native peoples did not have a way to determine which narratives were more "truthful" than others—they had not evaluative or interpretational sophistication as "primitive" peoples. Thus the terms of history (and its claims to truth/knowledge) which are offered Omishto by her Western education fundamentally relegate her people to a space which Western historiography must bury in order to maintain its own narrative power. This recognition is why Trouillot argues for an alternative conception of the "archive" outside of the colonial written record, seeking evidence in stories, buildings, places, etc as well as a methodology of history that considers how history works:

> For what history is changes with time and place, or better said, history reveals itself only through the production of specific narratives. What matters most are the process and conditions of production of such narratives. Only a focus on that process can uncover the ways in which the two sides of historicity [the material and the narratives constructed] intertwine in a particular context. (25)

Perhaps this is why Hogan's narratives often concern themselves with history-making and the relationship to power. In Barbara Cook's reading of *Solar Storms* and *Mean Spirit* she argues that Hogan attempts to not only address disempowering narratives of history but also attempts to legitimize Indigenous conceptions of where history is materially contained as well as which narratives are credible representations of Indigenous history. She argues that Hogan "sees fiction as 'a vertical descent . . . a drop into an event or into history or into the depths of some kind of meaning in order to understand humans, and to somehow decipher what history speaks, the story beneath the story'" (38). Thus what she sees as history is not a completely relativist "alternative" history or pure constructivism but the interplay between the material and the story—

locating power is an act of excavation, or put another way, not being buried underneath others' stories and material traces.

Following this experience with History (of the colonizer), Omishto is able to more fully form a critique of other disciplinary discourses, represented by two institutions--her mother's fundamentalist church and her school. The critique of her mother's church has multiple elements, but her critique of the politics of forgiveness is particularly compelling. In the opening paragraph of an aptly titled chapter "Judgment," Omishto's mother takes her to church for a special service in which she hopes to garner the community's forgiveness for her daughter's participation in Ama's crime. Omishto goes with her mother, because she is an "obedient" daughter, not because she "believe[s] in forgiveness" (99). To Omishto, forgiveness is a false act and an empty promise about the nature of sin:

> Forgiveness means that whatever the sin was, you will never do it again, and that others will stop judging you. It means you are pardoned by them and you know the error of your ways. It's a gift they offer you" (99).

As a false act, she knows it does not necessarily perform its said function: as an acceptance of discipline (one will never do the act again) and as an end to the process of discipline (an end to the process of judging). In this explanation of forgiveness Omishto also conflates the "gift" offered by the false act of forgiveness with its counterpart in the discourse of law—to be "pardoned"—further linking the logic of Christian nationalism with the nation state's more recognizable disciplinary institution—the criminal justice system. In the most abstract sense, freedom itself is a "gift" that only the colonial agent has the power to offer, underscoring the role of both institutions in maintaining colonial power. At the same time, for Omishto to accept the "gift" offered by the false act of forgiveness would be to be complicit in her own oppression; therefore, she "draw[s] back" from the women of the church and lies to her mother about "feeling better" after the service.[11]

Seeing through the false "gift" of forgiveness also leads to Omishto reassessing what the church has to offer women in this scene. Throughout the service, Omishto notices that the women of the church seek "a love of another kind than what they wish for at home" (100). They seek a self-love that, unlike the disappointments of romantic love, can bring them happiness. However, Omishto points out that the women have been "saved" by a "spare God, short on love, thin on compassion, strong on judgment" (102); it is a God that has already judged women as the world's first sinners. Having witnessed the false promises of both forgiveness and love offered by this "spare God," Omishto simply concludes: "Theirs is a fallen God, at least in my eyes" (102). Interestingly, after this "fall" Omishto returns to Ama's and notices the dead Spanish horse is gone, further evidence perhaps that she is free from such disciplinary forces. However, she still has to face the judgment of her classmates and teachers at school. Here is where the novel turns its critical eye to the "mis-education" of the oppressed by

colonial education and in particular, notions of Western science as the only rational path to truth or knowledge.

In another overt connection between the panther and the Taiga as a people, Omishto notes that her school "honor the idea of" the panther as their school mascot; yet the "animal itself is hated, unwanted"—another symbol of an imperialist nostalgia for the indigenous as long as it's dead or endangered (105). In addition, Omishto sees the school that had once been a "world" she had "been good at" has "like my mother's house, . . . grown smaller. There is no longer room in it for me" (105). Interestingly, she notes that her science classes teach that there is no "room in sky for my mother's heaven; there's no room at the center of the earth for hell, either" (106). Unlike her mother's church, she is being trained to seek knowledge not in the word of God but through dissecting life itself:

> This is the place we study the fetus of a pig. . . Where we number the stamen and pistil of plants on paper, cut them apart to look through a microscope and identify the miracles of small things. Here, now, I am the specimen and they are all looking at me, watching my every move. (106)

Omishto's critique of Western scientific method underscores the violence of such a method and how it is turned against Indigenous peoples as objects of study. With her "eyes open" she notices that this impulse to dissect and classify is also what creates the social conditions in the school whereby the "rich white girls are in one group, the dark, the black, the Indian in others" (108). She argues this is what leads the white boys to think that "the swinging walks" of the Cuban girls are indicative of a "loose and easy" sexuality the white boys can consume (108). She thinks "Maybe everything is that simple to misread" given the discourses of history, science and patriarchy Western education privileges. She notes too that the teachers are disappointed in her for rejecting the promise of such progress, for she was supposed to be a "new and shining model for the [other] Indian kids . . . [who were] indifferent to their school" (108). That "model" produced by liberal science and progress is no longer appealing to Omishto after what she has witnessed. She thinks "I've learned what I was supposed to learn, but now it comes to me that in doing so I've unlearned other things" (107). She is not sure, but she thinks "Ama found the way" out of the "shambles" produced by colonial discourses and it is "this I want to find" Omishto claims (107).

Seeking this other path to knowledge, Omishto contemplates the Panther Woman story but this time she recites the whole story. In terms of the formal structure of the novel, it is interesting this fuller account comes halfway through the text, rather than at the beginning when Ama actually sets out to kill the panther. However, this withholding of the more complete Panther woman story suggests the process of disowning the disciplinary power of these narratives was a necessary process. The story itself is given to the reader in the form of an "autobiographical essay" that Omishto is supposed to write for her English class. In doing so, Omishto directly addresses the reader of the novel, further establishing her role as witness rather than

narrator/protagonist. Even though she notes "I sit down and try to write" the next sentence reveals her method is testimony: "What I *say* is this" (my emphasis 109).

In the narrative that follows, she reveals that Ama's actions mirror the Panther Woman's efforts to restore a world she entered accidentally after a storm blew an opening between her world and this other one. However Omishto points out to her reader that while "you might not believe" this story, it is one that represents the special relationship the Taiga people have to the land. In this moment, she implicates the reader's responsibility to reject or accept the value of this alternative set of beliefs and the political implications of that choice. Importantly however, the novel marks a shift back to a more traditional narrative voice with a significant page break leading into a paragraph where Omishto reads the finished essay. She decides to "tear the paper into little pieces" refusing to allow the Panther Woman story to be enshrined as either "autobiography" or an artifact for her teachers' consumption. She notes: "I have always been a good, obedient girl, but tomorrow, for the first time, I will hand in no assignment" (112).

In this moment, Omishto further positions herself as outside and against the disciplinary narratives offered by the church and educational institutions that privilege progress as the drive of Western History and Science. This act of defiance is followed by her decision to forego school altogether. However, the school is not the only institution that the novel indicts. In the closing chapters, Omishto must testify before the state court which formally charges Ama with violating the Endangered Species Act. In this scene, Omishto sees an even greater divide between what she knows as the truth of Ama's actions and how that truth is distorted by legal institutions.

American Law

While there are many significant critiques in the state trial scene, the most important for Omishto's role as a witness is her realization that the law in this context is not about justice but about maintaining state power. Ironically, the very same disciplinary narratives that she has come to reject prior to this scene are the same ones Ama's lawyer uses to stage his defense. Omishto quickly realizes that "truth" in this context is not a matter of "fact" but a matter of which facts are considered the most useful to uphold the status quo. Indeed the trial is not really about assessing Ama's guilt; she has repeatedly admitted her guilt. Yet, as Omishto notes "Inside marble halls there's another kind of truth and it lies down over everything" (135), and this "kind of truth" is not interested in the reasons Ama would enact the Panther Woman story, and therefore break the law. Ama's truth exists outside the realm of "fact" in this context. Indeed, Omishto observes that in the court room, she "can't say the real truth; I can say only the facts" (127). The "facts" of interest to the court are part of an American "regime of truth" that is based on the fiction that law is impartial—that it is about justice. Instead, the lawyers battle over certain technicalities and points of fact that expose that law is not a path to freedom, but a discourse of dominance

The factual detail the state trial must determine is whether or not Ama killed the panther on "Indian land" in which case jurisdiction would be that of the tribal council's. What is interesting is that the critique here is not only directed at the state but also aimed at a contemporary Native politics which locates sovereignty through the colonial state's recognition of territory. In court, Omishto testifies that she knew they were on "Indian land" because she "recognized it"—a different kind of recognition which is experienced a connection to the space and its living environment (131). Such an answer, even though empirically based, is disregarded by the court as insufficient evidence of the truth. No official state authority can validate Omishto's account. Omishto also comes to see that this concept of jurisdiction and land as territory is invoked to absolve colonial responsibility to protect the panther at all. Omishto notes that "the cat never lived by [American] law and never kept to the boundary lines of mapmakers" (138); therefore, she wonders why Native protesters outside the courthouse see these ways of making the land known to the colonizer is also how they frame political power. Omishto understands that "the point they want to make is an argument for our rights" but she wants to tell them that "it's noone's right to take one of those god-damned poor animals, and who in this place will speak out for the panther" (138). The tribal chairman also testifies on Ama's behalf in order to protect such rights. Omishto points out that he "is speaking for himself, on principle, out of what will happen if she is found guilty, what will be broken" (132). She notes that he "has a stake in this; and this, too, is wrong even while it's right and just according to written law" (132). While the novel is careful not to undermine the value of treaties, its overall point is that such rights discourse, ultimately based on Native dispossession, upholds the fiction that colonial "written law" is meant to protect what is important to Native peoples survival. In this case, the panther represents many things—indigenous knowledge, the environment, the feminine sacred, and also Native women themselves. Therefore, Omishto's question to her own people, "who in this place will speak out for the panther?" invokes these as well.

The second point of fact the court reviews moves the focus from treaty rights to civil rights—whether or not Ama's "religion" impacts the case or not. However, what seems to be at first glance a defense of Ama's belief system as "religious freedom" quickly devolves into something much more cynical. What her lawyer ultimately argues is that Ama's stated beliefs expose a primitive mindset and therefore represent a diminished capacity to know right from wrong. Moreover, Omishto notes that, in the way he delivers this line of defense, Ama's lawyer indicts all tribal knowledge. She thinks: "I don't like the way the lawyer says 'Their world' . . . is different than 'ours' meaning the one he and others like him have been shaped by . . . He tries to make us different . . . crazy" (136). Of course, in order to assert such a claim, the lawyer consults anthropologists to explain Ama's actions, which he argues is based on a belief "in balance in the universe" (135). While there is an element of truth behind his argument, Omishto points out that "spoken in court, it sounds stupid and childlike, not at all what it really is" (135). What the lawyer is offering the "audience" is a way of seeing Ama's beliefs as at best, primitively naive and at worst, insane. Omishto notes that this "makes [Ama] want to be guilty, I see this on her face" (136).

Finally, the court turns to the most fundamental "fact" in determining if a crime had been committed: was the panther a "real" purebred cat? Clearly "purity" in this instance is alluding to blood quantum as a function of imperialist nostalgia which depends on the genocide of Native peoples. Omishto observes that if the cat is proven to be a hybrid species, "that would open up the laws, make a hole in the law that was to protect" (121). She points out that the biologist called to testify "can't say whether or not this panther might not have come from the union of a cougar or mountain lion . . . Who is to say? Anything could wander in" (121). Based on this testimony, the panther's life is only important if science can prove it has not been corrupted by others. Conversely, if it is corrupted, then the law cannot protect it from being killed. The implication of this logic is one which echoes Andrea Smith's argument about "impure bodies" and the violence allowed to be done to such bodies.

In the end, the state's case results in a mistrial as the court is unwilling to consider the implications of all these arguments, and Ama is unwilling to be saved by them. Omishto argues that if Ama had been convicted, the jurors and the judge would be entering "the place between laws" (143) where they would be forced to "feel the weight of their own sins through history, of their own prejudice, that they are racist" (136). Revealing this hypocrisy, the novel eviscerates finding "truth" as the function of the state court. Indeed, the trial is simply a stage from which to demonstrate state power, as Omishto observes:

> There's a cold power in this room . . . it is really made up of those who believe in secrets and twists of truth, but call for honesty. They believe in silences and omissions but want us to speak of things they don't believe in, to tell them stories they can't understand. . . . And it was in this very building of power that our land and lives were signed away not that long ago. . . (136)

Understanding the relationship between truth, the law and power in the scene, Omishto begins to consider where she might be safe from the violence protected and enacted by the legal fictions presented in the court. However, a troubling aspect of this novel is that the state court does not ultimately convict Ama; the tribal elders do. Even more confusing for Omishto, the elders seem to "banish" Ama from Taiga land and therefore enact the same punishment against her that was given to Eve by the patriarchal God of the Old Testament. In the end, in order to rescue Ama from such fate, Omishto must reconsider the power of the Panther Woman story and truly reject the power of the Christian narrative of patriarchy.

No Longer a Pillar of Dissolved Salt

Unlike the state trial, when Omishto arrives to speak to the elders at Kili, she knows that her "words will be important to them" (160). She also knows that "the old people know the laws of this place, this world, laws stronger and older than America" (160). In this setting she can testify as to what happened that day "in a different way than . . . in the courthouse" (16). She reasons that she can "tell it more true" adding details the state court would have found of no value, such as the way the storm

uprooted the Methuselah tree. However Omishto leaves out of her story the details of the panther's physical condition, a promise she made to Ama in the beginning. Omishto knows that if these details were revealed, some in the community "would no longer believe or have hope. They would lie down on the ground and never get up again"(167). She asks the reader, "If I told, would the trees bear fruit? Would the fish return? I think not" (167). Ironically, the testimony that could save Ama would also jeopardize the ceremony of renewal she set in motion by killing the panther. Importantly the novel shows that even some of the elders cannot escape the power of the discourses of dominance, particularly the violence of colonial History. She points out that the elder who seems the angriest with Ama, Joseph Post, believed in the same power of song and story—tribal knowledge—that Ama did. However, "sometimes he doubts . . . Not because he is a doubter or faithless, but because he has been made to feel small and impotent under the weight of history and the way other men have treated him" (186). His faith makes him believe Ama may be "like rain that is nourishing" but he also thinks, like rain, she has "to fall" (186). This reasoning leads to her banishment at the end of the tribal court scene.

Omishto's mother of course, thinks Ama is representative of another "fall" and that she "shows her [mother] what dark-hearted savages we are" (188). Unlike Joseph Post, she "is certain that the old gods could not be real. If they were they failed us" (187). Her doubt too is shaped by the colonial fiction that Native peoples and their knowledge systems were somehow unfit for the modern world. Omishto claims that her mother "doesn't love herself . . . she believes like they tell her in church, that it was our fate to be destroyed by those who were stronger and righter" (187). Ama on the other hand, believes that it is the "civilized world that has no soul" (189). She thinks that her actions "however desperate, however illegal . . . [will] restore this world . . . bring young people home from their empty days in school . . . [and] square lives familiar with all the killin devices ever imagined by men" (190). Importantly, Omishto notes that Ama believes that this "world" will "crumble away [and] . . . In that falling our lives will be revealed" (189).

It is these competing narratives of "the fall" that help illuminate why the focus on the references to woman and Genesis are so integral to the novel's meaning. In particular the stories of Abraham's wife Sarah, Adam's wife Eve, and Lot's wife Edith are invoked in this novel. In the end, I argue that Omishto must come to see Ama's actions on Ama's (and thus indigenous) terms in order to wrest her from the submissive fate of Eve, Sarah and Edith. In order to do so she will have to understand the Panther Woman's story as more than folk knowledge; she will have to accept is as "myth" in its most formal sacred form.

For Omishto, Ama's killing of an animal she so respected make her doubt Ama's sanity. But during the act, Omishto knows that there is a larger story working on Ama and herself. The original Panther Woman follows an opening in the sky—an opening Omishto sees in the eye of the hurricane and in the clouds parting after the storm. In the earlier story, this woman follows a Panther through the opening and finds a world of death and destruction: "the rivers on fire, animals dying of sickness, and foreign vines"

(110). A panther who is dying of sickness, tells the woman that she must sacrifice the cat (the "one she knows best") in order to blow back open the door to the woman's own world and to restore the animals in that dying world to health. When the woman completes the sacrifice, the panther returns to wholeness, and the woman returns to her own world but transforms herself into a panther as well. Here we learn from Omishto that for the Taiga, the word to sacrifice "means to send away"-- a distinction important in considering her banishment not on the same terms of Eve's banishment, but necessary to fulfill the Panther Woman's story (111).

In an important moment near the end, when Omishto is walking towards Kili, she thinks she feels Ama's presence. In reality, she sees a panther not like the sickly one Ama kills, but one that is "healthy [and] lean-muscled" (232). In the original story, Panther Woman not only restores the sick and dying world, she also transforms herself to the animal she loves the most, a panther whole and healthy. It is this moment that precedes Omishto's final decision to join the elders above Kili Swamp and leave behind the world that perpetuates colonial violence and provides a system of law that will not protect her. She decides to go to the place where "the people there remember how to heal" and where "they remember what they were born knowing" (231). It is a place unlike her mother's house or her school where Omishto is "a dissolved person, like salt in water"—a final reference to the wife of Lo turned to a pillar of salt for disobeying the God of Genesis. But Omishto refuses this fate in the end, and wrest's Ama's story from that patriarchal set of myths as well.

Before Omishto leaves for Kili, her mother visits her at Ama's house to try and convince her to come home. Her mother tries making amends with Omishto by telling her she knows Herm, Omishto's stepfather, has been physically (if not sexually) abusive. In doing so, she implies that things will be different if Omishto returns to the family. Yet Omishto's silence signals that she knows her mother will not be able to keep such a promise because she is still enmeshed in the discourses of dominance, particularly the one offered by her fundamentalist Christian church. Indeed, her mother warns her, "You've been eating from the tree of knowledge. . . Knowledge can be such a sad thing. You kick in with it and life is changed forever by what you know" (221). Yet Omishto's mother also reveals she once lived at Kili with the elders following being abandoned by her first husband. They had taken in both her and Omishto. However she tells Omishto she chose to leave out of fear of being hated by the outside world. For her the knowledge that the elders offered, at that moment, was a "sad thing;" however, this story means something altogether different to Omishto. She realizes that the knowledge the old people have is something that might be able to finally protect her. She notes, "I can't help thinking that its God Mama believes in, but it was the old people that saved us" (224).

By the time Omishto meets with her mother for the last time, she has already come to the conclusion that her mother's world will not save her. Indeed, when the sheriff arrives to question Omishto about Ama's disappearance, he remains silent when Omishto tells him that Herm hurts her. His silence, like her mother's, reveals the truth about violence for Native women in a patriarchal and colonial society. Omishto

concludes that "their law will not protect me and this knowledge falls like a stone inside" (205). Indeed, the law is on Herm's side affording him complete authority over Omishto's freedom. Omishto is told by both her mother and her sister that Herm is mobilizing legal authority to have Omishto committed to a hospital for psychiatric evaluation, the same disciplinary method he used on her mother many years ago. In the end, Herm arrives at Ama's house to bring Omishto home himself, violently if he has to. Omishto locks herself in Ama's chicken coop to stay out of his reach. She knows that "he would hit me if he could" yet after he leaves she worries that maybe she should be more kind to him. However she also recalls the abuse:

> For a moment I think maybe he's not so bad. But then it comes back to me, the time he made me strip naked and lean against a wall while he beat me with his belt and I tried to cover myself with my hands, cover my breasts, my private body, even though the buckle was breaking my skin, leaving its designs like snakeskin. . . (209)

This memory of literal "disciplinary" violence is also a scene of sexual violence. This collapsing of the patriarchal "discipline" with sexual violence is emphasized through Omishto's attempts to hide herself and protect her "private body." Furthermore, the novel links such acts of violence not only to a general patriarchy, but also links Herm's violence to the stories of Christian fundamentalism—Herm's lash leaves "designs like snakeskin" on Omishto's body, evoking snakes once again as a symbol of women's deviance and need to be controlled.

The novel ends with Omishto leaving this violent and disempowering world to join the women of Kili. As she joins the women in a dance in the novel's closing scene, she notes in the last line of the novel that "someone sings the song that says the world will go on living," (235). In the beginning of the novel, Omishto did not believe such a thing could exist in the "real" world. She had been taught to see that world from a particular hermeneutic perspective that would dismiss the power of song which conveys both Native knowledge and ways of being as a productive and life-giving narrative. In reclaiming the power of tribal knowledge, its sacred narratives and systems of interpretation, Omishto is also able to restore her Aunt Ama's story as one about Indigenous women's power not a story of exile (either as a sinner or as victim of primitive punishment). In the end, Ama is the Panther Woman who restores the Taiga world to Omishto and more importantly, leads to Omishto's escape from the discourses of dominance and American "regimes of truth." Such a powerful novel as this one is a fitting way to close the body of this dissertation, but not because it offers a utopian ending for this community of Native women. What Zitkala-Sa's work, Janet Campbell Hale's short fiction and even D'Arcy McNickle's *The Surrounded* have in common is a somewhat open-ended question directed at who will intervene in the injustices and continued violence that face Native women and peoples generally under colonialism. When placed against McNickle's closing line, the power of her story reveals itself. In *The Surrounded*, we are reminded by the Indian Agent that "It's too damn bad you people never learn that you can't run away" as Archilde offers his hands to be shackled (McNickle 297). What Hogan's novel leaves its readers with, is not that one can "run

away" from the contemporary world, but that one can inhabit a different space and knowledge tradition where someone can "sing the song that says the world will go on living" and it has real meaning and power. As in many of Hogan's other novels, that "different" space is one is guarded and understood by the women—not because of their inherent biology as women, but because they have had the most to lose under colonialism's disorienting and disempowering project of articulating its power through the gendered discourses of dominance and its many forms of violence.

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[1] See Paula Gunn Allen's *The Sacred Hoop*.

[2] From Foucault's *Power/Knowledge*: "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics of truth': that is the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (131).

[3] Perhaps it should be noted that I am using the term "myth" for its formal rather than common meaning. As a literary form, myth is a "sacred narrative" that explain a truth about origins and human relationships in the world (Dundes 1). It is not a folktale or legend but to be regarded as a representation of sacred knowledge believed to be true and relevant.

[4] The fictional tribe in the novel shares cultural connections to real Native nations in the area particularly the Seminole. Indeed, the novel is loosely based on the trial of Seminole tribal chairman James Billy. He was charged with violating the Endangered Species Act for killing a Florida Panther. He was later exonerated when the jury deadlocked. See "Jury is Tied in Killing of Panther" *New York Times*. 27 August 1987. http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B0DE0DC113BF934A1575BC0A961948260

[5] "like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master" (1 Pet 3:6 NIV).

[6] Peter Harrison's essay "Fill the Earth and Subdue it Biblical Warrants for Colonization in Seventeenth Century England" argues among other things that even secular ideas such as Locke's theory of private property were "inadvertently grounded in specific elements of the Judaeo-Christian tradition"23. He quotes from Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*: "God, when he gave the world in common to all mankind, commanded man also to labour, and the penury of his condition required it of him. God and his reason commanded him to subdue the earth"(18). Hence Harrison links the justification of taking land from indigenous peoples with the usurpation of the property rights that unravels the separation of the secular and religious thought in the colonization of the Americas.

[7] The full passage reads: "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'" (Gen 1:28). *New Revised Standard* (NRS).

[8] "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen 9:1) NRS. Also God to Abraham: "I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you" (Gen 17:6) NRS.

[9] This is also most likely a detail meant to be reminiscent of the last episode recorded in the Bible of Jesus' youth at age twelve. After this reference, Jesus' narrative begins with his life as an adult. The gap is often referred to as Jesus' missing years.

[10] Rosaldo, Renato. *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

[11] This critique of the politics of forgiveness also invokes contemporary critiques of "reconciliation" politics. For example see Jeff Corntassel and Cindy Holder, "Who's Sorry Now? Government Apologies, Truth Commissions, and Indigenous Self-Determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala, and Peru." *Human Rights Review*, 9.4 (2008): 465-89.

Conclusion

I began this dissertation with a brief history of contemporary Indigenous or Native feminist efforts since the 1970's. However, what I hope this dissertation impresses upon those that read it is the inherent red feminist critique and politics that can be found in the imaginative and activist writings of Native women probably since print culture was taken up by Native peoples writing in English. It is my hope that the subjects of violence, criminality, and the other gendered ideologies which continue to uphold patriarchal colonialism are further interrogated by cultural critics who seek an ethical approach to literary analysis of contemporary Native literatures. To this end, my second chapter argued that despite the critical voices of the 1990's which dismissed mainstream feminism's applicability for Native women's politics, the discourse which emerged among Native feminists in the 2000's offered important interventions in the nationalist turn in Native literary studies as well as in decolonial politics. What Indigenous feminists have since insisted upon is the inextricable link between colonialism's reordering of Native worlds not only through ideologies of race and culture but also through the impositions of gendered norms which pushed Native women to the margins of their own communities and left them exposed to the impunity of settler violence.

Chapter Three turned to the early twentieth century activist journalism of Zitkala-Sa in order to bring her writing into a discussion of violence as a result of such a reordering. While many literary critics choose to read her writing through the discourse of sentimentality in useful and politicized ways, I argue that her turn to an early articulation of human rights rhetoric offers a more appropriate framework to read her later work. First and foremost, this more human rights oriented discourse places her political writings of this period more in context with her political efforts following the SAI's disbanding and her more independent activist travels. In these later years her pamphlet writing and journalistic endeavors sought to expose the legacies of colonial paternalism that left Native peoples victims to greed and progress and especially exposed Native women to sexual violence given their status as wards without protection from any "sovereign"—Native or otherwise. Additionally, Zitkala-Sa's human rights rhetoric which preceded the contemporary human rights movement offers a moment for red feminist literary analysis to consider the ways in which Native women have sought the global community to engage in a conversation about gender justice and indigenous peoples human rights claims. Indeed the limitations in her articulations of such human rights efforts as dependent upon a global community's holding America accountable demonstrates both such a strategy's idealistic promise as it underscores its limitations.

My fourth chapter considered Janet Campbell Hale's short fiction in conversation with an earlier text, D'Arcy McNickle's canonical novel, *The Surrounded*, which underscores the connection between assimilation ideology and the criminalization of Native peoples. While McNickle's 1936 novel impressed upon its readers the ways in which Native people's cultural autonomy had been a source of freedom before the

imposition of assimilationist policies, Janet Campbell Hale's short fiction reveals how such cultural autonomy also offered Native women freedom in gender specific ways. In her short fiction, I argued that the criminal woman represents not only the marginalization of Native women in mainstream contexts but also the marginalization of Native women within their own families and communities through the mechanisms of internal colonialism. The "off-reservation" moments of freedom that McNickle first imagines outside the gaze of the colonizer is taken up again in Hale's own fiction, except that these spaces are shared by women in interesting and complicated ways. In the end, her work asks the question as to who is marginalized by our own histories of resistance and the stories that we tell about the past, even the most recent.

Finally, my last chapter turned to the novel *Power* by Linda Hogan and her imaginative and sophisticated articulation of a red feminist/decolonial politics that is at once rooted in Native epistemologies and yet not an overly simplified cultural nationalism that ignores the complex ways in which settler colonialism has set the terms of justice. Indeed I argue that Linda Hogan's work seeks to address the ways in which we limit ourselves in the theorizing decolonial politics by seeking to protect a limited state-granted sovereignty instead of protecting the relationships which have sustained Native worlds, peoples and knowledge systems. Her culturally ambiguous work is inherently outside of the "nationalist" paradigm and consistently emphasizes how Native women are often held accountable for exposing the inconsistencies of such politics in their insistence on considerations of all forms of justice, gender, environmental, or otherwise in tribal political efforts for freedom.

In all of these chapters, my analysis cannot do justice to the sophistication of these three author's articulations of Indigenous feminist critique. However, it is my hope that this dissertation offers a way into reading their work and other contemporary Native literature from a perspective that does not ignore the gendered nature of settler colonialism and its very real impacts on the lives of all Native peoples. More importantly however I hope that Indigenous feminisms as a theoretical discourse and political movement continue to pursue an end to the epidemics of violence and incarceration that continue to shape the lives of Native women throughout the world.

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