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Embodying the West: A Literary and Cultural History of Environment, Body, and Belief

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EMBODYING THE WEST: A LITERARY AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENT, BODY AND BELIEF

by

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DISSERTATION

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Dedication

To Thurna, whose love sustains me,
sense of humor inspires me,
and who reminds me why these ideas
are worth exploring.

To my ma and pa,
who gave me wings to explore the West,
roots to recognize my place in it,
and love to the moon and back.

To the friends, family, colleagues, and strangers
who believed in this project when I didn't
and shared their own stories.

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation challenges the dominant narrative identity about Western embodiment and opens the field of Western literary studies as it explores what the West looks like to women writers for whom it is not a space of regeneration through violence. I argue that women's writing reconceptualizes Western literature, creating a counter-narrative about American identity by shaping a space for and a discourse about the embodied experiences that have been marginalized, silenced, and ignored. Through examining discourses of health and embodiment in women's writing about the American West from the 1880s to the present day, my study brings together a diverse archive of narratives about bodies that have been excluded from cultural conceptions of the West: women with non-normative gender and sexual identities, American Indian women writers, atomic protestors and atomic beauty queens, and people with disabilities. My project drafts a new paradigm as it thinks of embodiment in the West, one that recognizes

the body as both a physical object and a political one, and argues that the physical body holds meaning for the republic and its values. I focus on the tactics of storytelling and community building to disrupt dominant narratives that limit perceptions and representations of Western embodiment and what meanings that holds in our culture. The chapters are organized around themes that drive different manifestations of embodiment: alternative models of gender and sexual expression in chapter one, how the negotiation of language creates new modes of belonging in the stories of American Indian women's embodied experiences in chapter two, the move from the West as a space of nuclear pageantry to one of protest in chapter three, and expressions of disability that push back against an ablest view of the West in chapter four. Chapters are not ordered chronologically; rather, they present different topics of embodiment and follow these threads through time to tease out the changing cultural landscape of Western embodiment. "Embodying the West" addresses a blind spot in Western literary and cultural history as it constructs an alternate genealogy of writers to make legible non-normative conceptions about the West and the bodies that inhabit it.

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Introduction

A word after a word after a word is power.
Margaret Atwood

Five years ago, I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. The neurologist dropped the words casually, along with a string of clinical terms unassimilable in that moment. The recommendation to keep my diagnosis a secret from my employer was the one thing that I readily understood. His instruction made sense, as it allowed me to continue identifying with the students in my department rather than the other patients who screamed through the night on the neurology ward. Even though I was blind in one eye, I still thought I could tough this out, a stoicism I inherited from growing up internalizing the bodily ideals that defined Western American culture. Yet in following his instructions, I failed to explore the ensuing changes in the way I inhabited the world. The distance between my subjective self and objective reality had shifted, but I had yet to realize that or to fully experience the repercussions. In remaining silent about what was happening in my body, I accepted a narrative identity about Western subjects that has become so naturalized it is often rendered invisible—that of the able-bodied subject moving freely through the environment, defined by independence and exerting control over their body.

As Richard Slotkin writes, "A people unaware of its myths is likely to continue living by them, though the world around that people may change and demand changes in their psychology, their worldview, their ethics, and their institutions." (4-5). Unaware of the bodily myths I internalized about the West, my psychology took time to catch up with my new bodily reality. My diagnosis not only affected my health, but also the way I

experienced the world and, in turn, my academic work. A prior interest in the shifting perception of women's bodies and sexuality throughout the twentieth century expanded to include authors with illness and disabilities not traditionally considered Western writers since their limited mobility leaves them overlooked in a field that values outdoors ability and rugged individualism. Growing up just north of Laramie, Wyoming, the site where Matthew Shepard was brutalized in 1998, I have long been aware of the ways discourses about Western embodiment violently inscribe themselves onto the bodies of those who do not conform, threatening members of the LGBTQ community. As Elizabeth Povinelli notes in *Empire of Love,* discourses "create attitudes of interest and disinterest, anxiety and dread, fault and innocence about certain lives, bodies, and voices and, in the process, form and deform lives, bodies, and voices" (35). I began to recognize the ways that Western literature and history created these attitudes about bodies based on more than my original interests in gender and sexuality. Povinelli starts her examination with a bodily sore, saying that it is "the means by which I can make visible the various levels, modes, and forms by which these discourses of autology and genealogy saturate social life, allowing some voices to be heard, others dismissed, and allowing some bodies to be treated or left untreated. On the other hand, the sore is a challenge to this and any study seeking to grasp discourse in its materiality" (36). My illness became the sore that forced me to examine other ways that discourses formed or deformed bodies in the West.

By challenging the narrative identity about Western embodiment that my illness forced me to examine, I open the field of Western studies to the experiences of those whose bodies have not been central to cultural conceptions of the West. My dissertation explores what the West looks like to women writers for whom it is not a space of

regeneration through violence, and it offers a corrective to Slotkin's claim that this is *the* myth of the West. My study draws on the phrase coined by second wave feminism, that the personal is political, or as Kimberlé Crenshaw notes, "recognizing as social and systemic what was formerly perceived as isolated and individual" (1241-1242). I also draw upon the notion of embodied experience, a phrase that describes the way people represent their experience in their bodies and holds that all experiences register in both the body and the mind.[1] As we experience events, they become real to us, shaped by our perception and by our bodily reality. The discourses about embodiment in the West serve as cultural conversations about bodily representations, whether we are aware of them or not, and shape who is marginalized, silenced, or ignored. The stories in this project create a space for and a discourse about the bodies whose experiences have not been central to cultural conceptions of the West. By expanding the narrative possibilities for embodied experience in the West to register those that contradict and resist normative boundaries, my project provides inroads for critics and Westerners alike to realize new perceptions of life in the West.

My analysis traces a literary and cultural history of the West that begins in the late 1800s, a period when Westward expansion was well underway and ideas about the mythic West as a space of regeneration through violence were circulating in national discourses. Discourses about the West have historically served to soothe anxieties about national character and reflect changes in cultural values as much as they portray the

[1] *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory* edited by Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury and *New Essays on Life Writing and the Body* edited by Christopher Stuart and Stephanie Todd were useful in thinking through embodiment for my project.

reality of the West. As Theodore Roosevelt states in *The Strenuous Life,* a speech he first delivered to the Hamilton Club in Chicago in 1899*:*

> The men who founded these communities showed practically by their life-work that it is indeed the spirit of adventure which is the maker of commonwealths. Their traits of daring and hardihood and iron endurance are not merely indispensable traits for pioneers; they are also traits which must go to the make-up of every mighty and successful people. You and your fathers who built up the West did more even than you thought; for you shaped thereby the destiny of the whole republic, and as a necessary corollary profoundly influenced the course of events throughout the world. More and more as the years go by this republic will find its guidance in the thought and action of the West, because the conditions of development in the West have steadily tended to accentuate the peculiarly American characteristic of its people. (252-253)

This passage demonstrates that the body also refers to the body politic in addition to the physical body, and that the physical body holds meaning for the republic and its values. The idea that the rugged West shaped the course of the nation was not new when Roosevelt valorized the region in 1899. By the middle of the nineteenth century, an aggressive model of masculinity replaced the antebellum American hero that valued reason, honesty, and hard work, and the West was the ideal proving ground for this new type of hero. As Henry Nash Smith documents in his foundational study of the American West, *Virgin Land*, a cultural shift occurred when Daniel Boone and the "sons of Leatherstocking" enter the scene and the idea of masculinity that the nation embraced shifted from valuing character traits like honesty and service to embracing physical

strength, vigor, and domination. The dominant mythology of the West that Slotkin references shifted emphasis from character to body, reflecting changing social regulations. The West offered the freedom for greenhorns, the novice outdoorsmen in the East, to admire characters like the Virginian as he rode, shot, and roped his way through the pages of Owen Wister's foundational Western narrative. American men eager to head West and prove their masculinity wanted to embody these traits; they believed in the myth about the region and its inhabitants.

When compiling the archive for this project, I focused on texts that gave complex representations of embodiment. While they span a period of 130 years, they share a preoccupation with representing bodily experiences in ways that unsettle the dominant story told of Western embodiment. The earliest texts in my study, Sarah Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* (1880) and Mariana Burgess's *Stiya* (1891), dispel central tenets of the regeneration myth as they highlight the violence between the settlers of the West and its original inhabitants, a reality elided in the photographs included of Annie Oakley (1880s-1910s). These photos, as well as Oakley's sharpshooting performances, instead bring to the foreground the tension between gender presentation and female athleticism unique to white women's experience. These tensions rose with the growth of women's sports and the popularization of the bicycle, which permitted greater freedom of movement, both socially and bodily, as seen in Willa Cather's "Tommy, the Unsentimental" (1896). Texts from the turn-of-the-century depict the changing socio-cultural environment of the West as new waves of settlement and industry moved into the region, producing the "sand and barrenness" in mining-era Butte that Mary MacLane decried as an "uncouth, warped Montana town" in *The Story of Mary MacLane* (1902),

while Zitkála-Šá's collection from the same time, *American Indian Stories* (1902-1904), lays bare the way discourses of hygiene and domesticity validated assimilation policies in place at Carlisle and other Indian schools as the US government turned from the Indian wars to new forms of "civilizing" American Indians.

After the turn-of-the-century texts, I turn from the West as a region defined by frontier violence against the land and the native inhabitants to examine the continuation of frontier rhetoric in nuclear culture, with 1950s Las Vegas as a site of voyeuristic gendered nuclear pageantry giving way to the resurgence of women's activism in the public sphere with the Women's Strike for Peace march at the Nevada Test Site in 1962. With new concerns came new discourses that shape modes of embodiment and forms of inhabiting the region. Ongoing nuclear protests further highlight the way discourses of embodiment circulating in and about the region were constantly in flux, as the emphasis of nuclear protests shifted from motherhood and domesticity with the Women Strike for Peace movement in the 1960s to illness and a polluted environment in the 1990s with Nancy Mairs's *Carnal Acts* (1996) and Terry Tempest Williams's *Refuge* (1991), which offer their own stories of political engagement. The project then moves to an examination of how Nancy Mairs's *Waist High in the World* (1996) and Lucia Perillo's *I've Heard the Vultures Singing* (2009) present their experiences of alienation from the dominant discourses that circulate about the region during the next turn-of-the-century moment due to their illness and disability. Their work seeks to expand the way the West thinks about its own embodied literary history, broadening the field to include writers with disabilities. Finally, Diane Glancy's *Designs of the Night Sky* (2011) presents a story of survivance that felt vital for me to include—as the project's most contemporary work, it also firmly

establishes the ongoing presence of American Indians within the scope of the project as well as in the region itself as its experimental form creates new modes of embodied belonging and highlights the beauty of postmodern literary possibilities.

The chapters are organized around themes that drive different manifestations of embodiment: alternative models of gender and sexual expression in chapter one, how the negotiation of language creates new modes of belonging in the stories of American Indian women's embodied experiences in chapter two, the move from the West as a space of nuclear pageantry to one of protest in chapter three, and expressions of disability that push back against an ablest view of the West in chapter four. Chapters are not ordered chronologically; rather, they present different topics of embodiment and follow these threads through time to tease out the changing cultural landscape of Western embodiment. Yet even the boundaries of these topics are porous, as seen by the cross-referencing of Nancy Mairs's *Carnal Acts* in chapter three. Not just a writer of disabilities, Mairs also highlighted her experience protesting nuclear weapons based on the principles of her faith, which in itself opens up another possible grouping, as both Mairs and Glancy have a keen focus on faith and the foundations it lays for other aspects of their identity. The topics of embodiment these chapters follow provide a measure of organization but are themselves insufficient to tell complete stories about the authors, texts, and cultural figures and movements included in my study.

"Embodying the West" promises to address a blind spot in Western literary and cultural history as it constructs an alternate genealogy of writers to make legible non-normative conceptions about the West and the bodies that inhabit it. I take the mythic West as a point of departure and build upon the framework of previous scholars of

Western literature and history. My project treats the mythic West as a product of the collective discourses that defined the region to both its own inhabitants and to the rest of the nation. As Richard Slotkin notes in *Regeneration Through Violence*:

> In American mythogenesis, the founding fathers were not those eighteenth-century gentlemen that composed a nation at Philadelphia. Rather, they were those who […] tore violently a nation from the implacable and opulent wilderness – the rogues, the adventurers, and land-boomers; the Indian-fighters, traders, missionaries, explorers, and hunters who killed and were killed until they had mastered the wilderness; the settlers who came after, suffering hardship and Indian warfare for the sake of a sacred mission or a simple desire for land; and the Indians themselves, both as they were and as they appeared to the settlers, to whom they were the special demonic personification of the American wilderness. Their concerns, their hopes, their terrors, their violence, and their justifications of themselves, as expressed in literature, are the foundation stones of the mythology that informs our history. (Slotkin 4)

As a product of the stories that defined it, the myth of the West conceals at the same time that it reveals ideologies of the culture that created it. My own work builds on the scholarship of Patricia Nelson Limerick and the New Western Historians, who look at the "continuous sweep of American history" instead of accepting Frederick Jackson Turner's ideas about the West as structured by the opening and closing of the frontier (*Legacy of Conquest* 25). Limerick changed the focus of Western history in 1988 when she shifted analysis of the region from an empty space awaiting settlement, as Henry Nash Smith's concept of the West as "virgin land" denotes, to an already populated place of conquest.

Limerick points out the historical denial of conquest that directly contributed to the proliferation of myths about the West. The exemplary myth of rugged individualism is foundational to the work of both Smith (*Virgin Land*, 1950) and Richard Slotkin, whose *Gunfighter Nation* (1992) expands Smith's idea of myth as "an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image" to show the continuing consequences and effect of this construction in American culture and politics (*Virgin Land* xi).

The critical work of Limerick and Annette Kolodny revised the narratives of rugged individualism and manifest destiny that structure early analyses of the West. Limerick's regional synthesis in *Legacy of Conquest* (1988) stresses continuity in Western history and includes the stories of Plains Indians, Chinese immigrants, Latinos, and African Americans in the narrative of the West, a move which expanded the dialogue about the region from the narrow perspective of Western history as the story of white settlers. Her move, which seems quite clear in hindsight, was a radical moment for Western studies. By placing the stories of a multitude of inhabitants of the West in conversation with the traditional narrative of history, Limerick paved the way for future scholars to theorize the West in alternative modes than were available through the lens of manifest destiny and the frontier. Narratives written by authors who occupy subject positions that are not white, male, and able-bodied gained recognition as Western literature extremely slowly; as Annette Kolodny writes, "The language of five hundred years of white male explorers, promotional writers, frontier heroes, and the authors of imaginative literature about the frontiers revealed repeated psycho-linguistic patterns that, at often unconscious levels, influenced real-world activity" ("Rethinking Frontier Literary History as the Stories of First Cultural Contact" 14). The language used in

discourses about the West helped create the myth of the West, which in turn structured the conception of what fit into the category of Western literature. Yet as Kolodny points out in her work on women's experiences in the West, "Women, however, never seemed comfortable within those metaphorical patterns" (14). Limerick's and Kolodny's scholarship serves as a methodological foundation for my own exploration of the discourses of embodiment in Western women's writing.

Cathryn Halverson's *Playing House in the American West: Western Women's Life Narratives, 1839-1987* and Victoria Lamont's *Westerns: A Women's History* provide another helpful point of departure for my own work. Halverson's study examines domesticity as a "platform for female autonomy, resistance, and imagination rather than sacrifice and obligation" (4). Her study provides a useful framework to analyze domesticity as an expression of individuality, particularly in writers like Mary MacLane, whom she claims expresses her individuality through detachment from home and family. Lamont's *Westerns: A Women's History* similarly provides a useful framework to understand the longstanding tradition of women writers in a genre traditionally associated with men and masculinity. While Halverson and Lamont provide forms of rethinking domesticity and gender in the Western, my own study touches on these issues as a means to analyze the forms of embodiment the authors included in my study express and how their representations challenge the assumptions of Western embodiment.

These scholars of Western literature and history provide an introductory framework for my exploration of the discourses of embodiment in the American West from 1880-present. While much scholarship has discussed the roles of gender, landscape, and race, the bodily assumptions about Western subjectivity remain largely unexamined.

As Nancy Mairs says in her autobiography *Waist High in the World: A Life Among the Nondisabled* (1996), "to be a western writer, as that term is conventionally understood, you gotta have legs. I mean working—hard working—ones" (190). With this statement, she exposes one of the bodily assumptions that have remained hidden in the narrative identity of the West, that the Western subject inhabits a highly functional body not only capable of a hard day's work, but one that thrives on it. The writers and cultural phenomena in my study challenge the way that a particular, and particularly restricting, form of Western embodiment has been imagined.

Susan Sontag's examination of cultural conceptions regarding illness in *Illness as Metaphor* (1978) illustrates the extent to which we build meaning by thinking metaphorically about bodies in our society. Her examination focuses on the way that "punitive or sentimental fantasies" that structure our thinking about illness have an effect on both the person who is ill and how they are perceived in society (3). In her examination of the discourses surrounding tuberculosis and cancer, Sontag argues that thinking about illness metaphorically builds structures like guilt and shame around the illness, which lead to further suffering than the disease itself. The healthiest way to be ill and the most truthful way to perceive illness, according to Sontag, is to resist metaphoric thinking. The use of military metaphors and the language of aggression puts people at war with their body, which becomes an object that they are fighting against. Terry Tempest Williams's *Refuge* contends with this metaphorical vision of illness and the way it militarizes and fights the body, recognizing that the metaphors that shape our thinking about illness are similar to the metaphors through which Americans had been conceptualizing the Western landscape that Annette Kolodny critiqued in *Lay of the*

Land. Metaphorical thinking can be extended to all of the "marked" bodies examined in my study, as the "mark" is less about the body that differs, whether through an alternative mode of gender construction, sexual desire, illness, disability, or race, and more about the cultural conceptions regarding portrayals of the body.

Along with Sontag's writing on metaphor, David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's work on disability informs my reading of these writers' representations of embodiment. In *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (2001), Mitchell and Snyder examine the meanings assigned to disability as a representational identity in literature. It was in their work that I encountered the concept of marked bodies, and their assessment of the way in which disability marks a subject differently than race, gender, and sexuality made clear the limited rhetorical identity available to describe disability. Mitchell and Snyder conceptualize how a disabled subject encounters disability as an identity and then molds it to fit their experience, a process they describe as "enter[ing] a representation that is waiting for us rather than the other way around. Disability is first thrust upon one from the outside as a deterministic identity rubric and then must be negotiated from the inside in order to create for oneself…room for maneuver" (Mitchell xiii). The authors in this study create this room for themselves in the cultural imaginary when their subjective experience does not align with the deterministic identity categories available at the time of their writing.

Finally, Gerald Vizenor's concept of survivance shapes the way I read, reflect on, and write about every literary and cultural narrative in this project. Vizenor's theory of survivance, the worldview and active sense of presence that refuses to engage in victimry, provides a lens through which to read narratives that contain elements of

societal violence and the trauma that comes from not only not seeing yourself reflected in the culture around you but also actively being rejected by that culture. Stories containing colonial violence, rape, gender frustration, sexual repression, and the difficulty of life with a disability can easily be read as narratives of victims, letting off the oppressor in these situations by placing focus on the tragedy of the victim.[2] Instead, I chose to read these narratives as stories of survivance, that "assert an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion" and refuse dominant paradigms about sentiments of tragedy (1). Vizenor states that "survivance is the continuance of stories," and these narratives firmly situate themselves as stories that challenge the dominant view of Western embodiment.

I use embodiment as a term to describe the way that people represent their experience in their bodies, and discourses of embodiment to mean the cultural conversations that shape these representations. In examining these discourses and the topic of embodiment, I am indebted to scholars in disability studies, queer theory and sexuality studies, Native American studies, and those who have theorized the construction of health and illness in our culture. These areas of study provide a useful framework through which to examine the narratives included in my project, as the topic of embodiment is still largely missing from the continuing discussion of Western literature and history. By expanding the way we think about embodied experience in the West to include those whose experiences are outside of the normative boundaries, we begin to see how limiting the discourse limits our own perceptions of our lived experience, no matter what our own embodied experience may be.

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[2] I am also indebted to Jesse Aléman for tirelessly combing my prose to eliminate the passive voice, instead structuring my writing to actively pinpoint the oppressor.

My research draws upon a three-tiered methodological approach. The primary methodological approach is close textual analysis of primary source materials, including memoirs, novels, essays, newspaper articles, photographs, advertisements, government documents, state records, and tourist relics. The literary establishment often ignored the texts in my study, or worse, forgot them altogether. Rectifying this literary amnesia, intentional or otherwise, is foundational to my project. I view these texts, both literary and historical, as important subjects of analysis in decoding the limits and possibilities of the West and the discourses of embodiment that shape it. In addition to textual analysis, I conduct archival research on cultural ephemera to historically contextualize the discourses of Western embodiment as a socio-cultural construct prevalent in popular, military, historic, medical, and political discourses that the authors in my study challenge. Finally, I use the theoretical frameworks of sexuality, disability, race, and gender studies to formulate my interpretation of these texts and create a theory of embodiment, building on Tobin Siebers's "theory of complex embodiment," which recognizes that "[i]dentity is not the structure that creates a person's pristine individuality or inner essence but the structure by which that person identifies and becomes identified with a set of social narratives, ideas, myths, values, and types of knowledge of varying reliability, usefulness, and verifiability. It represents the means by which the person, qua individual, comes to join a particular social body" (*Disabilities Studies Reader* 283-4). I examine the means by which the individuals included in my project become identified with a specifically Western set of social narratives, and what that means for the social body their work expands.

Chapter one, "Walking, Riding, Shooting their Way to Freedom: How Narratives of Western Women's Movement Advanced Gender and Sexual Liberation," explores the construction and representation of gender and sexual expression in the West, and the challenges provided to these representations in turn-of-the-century Western literature and culture. I draw on the performative mythology and photographic documentation of Annie Oakley's career in the traditionally masculine realm of sharpshooting from the 1880s to the 1900s, and examine the economic, geographic, and physical mobility her career afforded. Next, I turn to the rise of bicycle culture and its ensuing effect on women's mobility and the debates that ensued, which ranged from distaste over women's use of bloomers to horror at the possible sexual stimulation the bicycle seat might provide. The rise of bicycle culture set the stage for Willa Cather's short story "Tommy, the Unsentimental," which comments on the meanings the bicycle and female masculinity signaled in turn-of-the-century society. Finally, Mary MacLane's memoir *The Story of Mary MacLane* explores the way the West stifled gender and sexual expression, contrary to popular beliefs that the West was a space of greater freedom for women. MacLane's peripatetic philosophy counters this assumption as she develops her social critique on her walks in and around Butte, Montana. The authors and historical figures in chapter one both respond to and help shift definitions and ideas about gender and sexuality in late-nineteenth-century America, as debates over women's appearance, physical activity, and ability to move freely in locales previously reserved for men converged to challenge traditional modes of gender and sexual expression.

Chapter two, "Telling and Surviving History in American Indian Women's Writing," examines the way that discourses shape and regulate bodies in the colonial

system, and how American Indian women writers use their narratives to depict the effects of these discourses, a history of violence and loss, and an ongoing tribal presence in the West. The chapter complicates the act of written self-creation as a positive tool for expanding embodied representations as Sarah Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* explores the tension between oral and written culture that emerged after the introduction of print culture into Indian country. Her exploration of the violence written onto American Indian bodies and what Sarah Deer calls "the unspeakable trauma" of rape as a colonial tool sets the stage for the other writers in the chapter, as each illustrates the connection between written culture and violent colonial systems and the ways they used writing as a tool against the colonial powers. Diane Glancy explores the history of Cherokee removal and her family history of violence and silences in *Designs of the Night Sky*, and her poetic experimental novel shows how authorship in American Indian culture functions as an expression of community through her multi-vocal narration that relies on memory and seemingly disembodied voices to tell a communal story. Through its critique of the Indian school project and the way it utilized methods of disciplining bodies through both hygienic practices and book/written work, Zitkála-Šá's *American Indian Stories* exposes the propagandistic nature of Mariana Burgess's *Stiya*, which utilizes discourses of hygiene and domesticity to validate the assimilation policies in place at Carlisle and other Indian schools. The narratives in this chapter reveal how language produces bodies, and show how the bodily realities of political subjects reflect power struggles.

Chapter three, "From Pageantry to Protest: Women's Mark on the Atomic West," argues that the Manhattan Project incorporated language of the western frontier into its

attempts to conquer the atom, as the scientific military complex utilized sexual imagery and the language of Manifest Destiny in their project of developing and testing nuclear weapons. Frontier rhetoric set the stage for the atomic beauty pageants held in 1950s Las Vegas, as the gendered language and sexual innuendo of atomic technology lent itself to the voyeuristic association of the female body with the image of the mushroom cloud as a way to domesticate the nuclear bomb. The Miss Atomic Bomb pageants and the prevalence of atomic style in 1950s designs signaled the move of atomic weapons and the image of the mushroom cloud from the scientific military realm of the Manhattan Project into the sphere of popular culture in an attempt to sever the ties to the destruction the weapon was capable of. The Women's Strike for Peace (WSP) movement of the 1960s, which marked the resurgence of women's activism in the public sphere, emerged against the gendered rhetoric and patriarchal pageantry of atomic culture, as activists asserted their bodily agency to protest nuclearism rather than to be on display as objects of capitalist and militaristic desire. The WSP protests against the possible future use of atomic weapons led to Terry Tempest Williams's *Refuge*, which details the environmental and public health damage caused by the reality of previous atomic testing. Nancy Mairs's own tale of atomic protest rounds out the chapter and serves as a bridge to chapter four, as her experience at the Nevada Test Site hinges on the mobility provided by her wheelchair and the tension between the community of nuclear protestors she came to the Test Site with and the ways her difference as a cripple are continually highlighted through the difficulties she faces in her act of civil disobedience.

Chapter four, "Waist High in the West: Expanding Horizons through Inclusive Perspectives," examines one of the most pervasive and unexamined assumptions of the

embodied experience of the West—that of the able-bodied subject moving freely through the environment, in control of their own body and able to make it perform the arduous physical tasks associated with life in the West. But in Nancy Mairs's *Waist High in the World: A Life Among the Non-Disabled* and Lucia Perillo's *I've Heard the Vultures Singing: Field Notes on Poetry, Illness, and Nature*, the West looks and reads like a very different place. Their viewpoint of the West from "waist-high" in their wheelchairs shows a different perspective at the same time that it reveals what seemed so natural it escaped notice in the stories that came before: the able body that traverses the iconic Western landscape, riding, walking, and moving effortlessly through challenging environments that populate the pages of Western narratives. I situate Mairs and Perillo within the Western literary tradition to highlight how disability embodiment destabilizes the conventions upon which the Western genre relies: a sense of embodiment that values physical vigor, masculinity, and rugged individualism. These authors' depictions of non-normative embodiment challenge traditional Western conventions, as the physical positionality of meeting life and the landscape in a wheelchair structures both their writing and their experience of the West. The unique vantage point provides them with experiences that counter readers' expectations of rugged, masculine vigor. Instead of satisfying the themes of the stock Western, Perillo's and Mairs's physical embodiment opens the genre to new understandings of life in the West.

The literary and cultural texts in my dissertation examine how language produces bodies, and the ways in which the discourses that shape them reflect power struggles around issues of gender, sexuality, race, class, and ability. In other words, bodies are always already political. The storytellers included in this study have created space for

themselves when they find their subjective selves to be at odds with the world around them, engaging in the process of written self-creation that is particularly important for women, whose bodies have often been a site of conquest rather than autonomous border between subjective self and objective reality. The women writers included in *Embodying the West* take control of their narrative destiny and relate their embodied experiences in their own words to expose the boundaries and shortcomings of the myth of the West.

Chapter I

Walking, Riding, Shooting their Way to Freedom: How Narratives of Western Women's Movement Advanced Gender and Sexual Liberation

The authors and historical figures in this chapter respond to and help shift definitions and ideas about gender and sexuality in late-nineteenth-century America, as debates over women's dress lengths and general appearance, their physical activity, and their ability to participate in activities and move freely in locales previously reserved for men converged to challenge traditional modes of gender and sexual expression. My analysis starts with Annie Oakley's performances in the traditionally masculine sport of sharpshooting from the 1880s to the early 1900s and the economic, geographic, and physical mobility the sport afforded her. The popularity of the bicycle in the 1890s highlighted the increasing freedom women were seeking at the end of the nineteenth century, and Willa Cather's 1896 story "Tommy, the Unsentimental" provides commentary on how the public received the changes the bicycle brought as well as the ways in which it augmented the already evolving possibilities for gender and sexual expression available to women. The chapter finishes with an analysis of Mary MacLane and the social critique of sexual and gender roles laid out in the peripatetic philosophy she developed in her walks around Butte, Montana outlined in her 1902 memoir, *The Story of Mary MacLane*. In this chapter, I argue that the forms of mobility highlighted in the cases of these women put into motion the sexual, gender, and textual transgressions their stories enact; for these women, the physical mobility afforded by walking, biking, and riding was the key to their liberated gender and sexual identities.

The transitions in gender and sexual norms observed in the three case studies in this chapter are emblematic of larger shifts in American culture brewing since industrialization and urbanization in the antebellum era led to the growth of middle class America. These changes accelerated as the emerging middle class made up for their physically inactive work lives by increasingly engaging in sports and athletic activities. The move from physical labor to physical leisure activities was deeply connected to gender, and this first surfaced as anxieties about American masculinity coincided with rhetoric about the West as an antidote to the increasing effeminacy of American men. The West served as a space where men could enact new cultural values, which coalesced in the myth of rugged individualism examined by Henry Nash Smith in *Virgin Land*. Smith observes the cultural shift most prominently in James Fenimore Cooper's "sons of Leatherstocking" and other early nineteenth century literature such as Daniel Boone's autobiography. Yet ideas about physical vigor persist in post-Civil War discourses about bodily regulation, which held that exercise helped contain sexual energy and promote self-control in men. Discourses about bodily movement relating to restraint were highly gendered; activity was good for men but dangerous for women. As Susan Cahn notes:

> In an antebellum society destabilized by rapid commercialization and the first stages of industrial revolution, the emerging middle class took an inordinate interest in cultivating self-discipline and a strictly regulated body […] In both its rough and respectable forms, male sport cultivated an ideal of virile, athletic manhood. This ideal took deeper root after the Civil War, when industrialization, urban concentration, immigrant-community formation, and the expansion of education made sport accessible to a greater number and variety of men. (9-10)

The rise of sportsmen's, athletic, and country clubs throughout the nineteenth century, most prominently the YMCA in 1844 and Theodore Roosevelt's Boone and Crockett Club in 1887, coincided with the cultivation of a virile, athletic manhood through bodily discipline. Clubs advocating for an athletic and outdoorsman lifestyle helped circulate ideas about masculinity, the virtues of bodily movement, and the role of the rugged outdoors in cultivating the type of manhood deemed important both personally and nationally. Theodore Roosevelt in particular responded to fears that an effeminate America would lead to weak leadership, solidifying the connection between masculinity and physical endeavors. Medical and social discourses that discouraged the movement of women's bodies for both pseudo-scientific reasons and as a means of social control also applied to this gendered view of athletic activity.[3]

Women throughout America challenged ideas about gender roles and the limits of femininity in the nineteenth century, either through embracing traditionally masculine activities or through direct criticism of gender roles and compulsory heterosexuality.[4] As Patricia Marks notes, "The woman who put on divided skirts and took to the road on her 'safety' gained not only independence but also a measure of health and a sense of well-being that her neurasthenic sister of earlier decades might have envied" (174). Long

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[3] This dynamic can be seen in Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell's "rest cure," which advocated inactivity and bed rest for women suffering from neurasthenia, while men were recommended vigorous activity. Mitchell's treatment of Charlotte Perkins Gilman served as inspiration for "The Yellow Wallpaper," where the repressive and controlling aspects of this treatment on women is clear. The treatment for men called for fresh air and vigorous exercise, which led Owen Wister to Wyoming and formed the basis for the foundational cowboy novel *The Virginian*.

[4] Annette Kolodny's *Lay of the Land* and *The Land Before Her* and Krista Comer's *Landscapes of the New West: Gender and Geography in Contemporary Women's Writing*, Patricia Nelson Limerick's *Legacy of Conquest,* and Catheryn Halverson's *Playing House in the American West: Western Women's Life Narratives 1839-1987* all construct a different West than that delineated by Cooper, Wister, Smith, and Slotkin; as Annette Kolodny points out in her work on women's experiences in the West, "Women, however, never seemed comfortable within those metaphorical patterns" ("Rethinking Frontier Literary History as the Stories of First Cultural Contact" 14).

known as the "weaker sex," changes in women's dress and activities as early as the 1830s began to challenge the narrative that regulated women's movement, clothing, and bodies—shorter skirts, fewer petticoats, and more exercise all combined to improve women's health and wellbeing. According to Cahn, "Disturbed by evidence of female frailty, proponents of women's health had begun advocating moderate exercise for women as early as the 1830s. Antebellum advice columnists, educators, feminists, and health reformers called for improved female health through 'physical culture'" (12). Debates about gender roles and the ideal amount of physical movement of women's bodies are a longstanding tradition in American culture. Physicians began advocating for moderate physical exercise to strengthen women's supposedly weaker bodies, and the ever-increasing enrollment of women in higher education ironically increased the acceptance of women's physical activities through justification based on "vitalist" scientific ideas:

> As the number of women in college jumped from 11,000 in 1870 to 85,000 in 1900, educators had to counter widespread assertions that mental strain would cause nervous disorder and reproductive dysfunction in female students. Based on "vitalist" scientific theories, which posited that bodies had a finite amount of circulating energy that was drawn to different parts of the body by activity, conservatives warned that education presented a serious danger by pulling necessary energy from the female reproductive system to the brain. Educators found an antidote in the claim that physical education would prevent these potential traumas. (Cahn 13)

Concerns over the higher education of women went so far that at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, the Women's Building displayed pictures of the babies of women with advanced degrees to "dispel the argument about adverse genetic effects" of higher education (Marks 181). The pictures showed the babies of these educated women to be "cuddlesome, happy-looking, intelligent, and buxom" (Marks 182). The benefits of physical education proved to be a win-win situation for women, as acceptance of women's physical and mental activities and pursuits grew with the support of the science and medicine of the time, and movement of the body gained traction as an antidote to the supposed perils of women's education and participation in pursuits in the public sphere. However, these advances did not come without opposition, as writers, social theorists, and even doctors feared that women's intense physical activity would cause societal regress, fearing that "such progress was really regress to a more primitive state; the more activities and interests men and women shared, the less differentiated and less civilized they purportedly grew" (Marks 174). The realm of acceptable physical activity was limited to pastimes that did not violate the terms of feminine decorum through competition, anything more than moderate physical exertion, or displaying the female body as a spectacle on display.[5]

Little Sure Shot: Annie Oakley, Feminine Sharpshooter

[5] Controversies over dress reform and vitalism raged from the 1850s on. In 1851, suffragist and editor Amelia Bloomer published an article advocating for what became known as the "Bloomer costume," split pants under a shorter skirt with less constricting corsets and fewer petticoats. Patricia Marks's *Bicycles, Bangs, and Bloomers* and Catherine Smith and Cynthia Grieg's *Women in Pants: Manly Maidens, Cowgirls, and other Renegades* outline these debates, which centered around the threat that women's less feminine ways of dress posed to traditional gender roles, particularly to men's status as the dominant gender in the public sphere.

Amid these social changes, Annie Oakley rose to prominence as a woman sharpshooter, first in vaudeville acts and touring with circuses and then from 1885-1901 with Buffalo Bill's "Wild West Show." As a sharpshooter and a performer, Oakley challenged society's ideas about the boundaries of acceptable femininity, yet she meticulously maintained her image as a feminine, domestic, and virtuous woman and was accepted as such despite her lifelong participation in a profession dominated by men. Throughout her life and stage career, Oakley walked the boundary between socially sanctioned and transgressive gender presentation and activity. Her efforts paved the way for a new type of athletic woman, and her focus on developing skill as a sportswoman helped broaden the horizons for a generation of women eager to explore athletic activities. Additionally, as a businesswoman, she stands as an instructive example of a woman leveraging her abilities to rise to a position of prominence in society. Her work afforded her multiple types of mobility: social and economic mobility through the money and fame she earned from her sport, geographic mobility through her travels with the Wild West Show, and physical mobility while riding first a horse and later a bicycle during her performances. Oakley's multiple types of mobility set in motion her challenge to strict gender norms that dictated women belonged in the home, that their money belonged to their husband, and they should not be too active. However, her acclaim as a feminist forerunner stops there—short of advocating for suffrage or political participation, firmly against dress reform that would offer women more freedom of movement, not vocally challenging gender norms despite her lived experience opposing many Victorian ideals of true womanhood. The limits of her challenge to gender norms stem from Oakley's insistence on a cultivated femininity in mode of dress and gender

presentation; she consistently and thoughtfully performed femininity in her role as a sharpshooter to counterbalance the masculinity associated with her profession.

Born Phoebe Ann Moses in western Ohio in 1860, Oakley grew up so poor that after her father's death she was sent first to a county poor farm and then to work for a local farmer where she was physically and possibly sexually abused ("Annie Oakley"). The extent of her childhood abuse was so psychologically damaging that for the rest of her life she referred to the farmer and his wife who so mistreated her only as "he-wolf" and "she-wolf" (Vonada 131). She ran away at the age of fifteen, rejoining her mother and new step-father and augmenting the family's income through selling the small game she shot with her father's rifle. She quickly gained celebrity in local circles, and in 1875 she competed against and beat the touring sharpshooter Frank Butler; Butler and Oakley married soon after this meeting, and Oakley became Butler's business partner in addition to his romantic partner as they decided to tour together as a sharpshooting act. They performed in vaudeville, variety shows, and the circus before finally signing on to Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in 1885. Oakley clearly outperformed her husband, so when she joined the Wild West show, he quietly stepped out of the spotlight and into the role of her manager, a move that allowed Oakley's talent to be on display as the star, an arrangement that was both an unusual role and an unusual marital circumstance for a woman of the time.

After joining the Wild West Show, Oakley highlighted her athleticism as a top-billed sharpshooter while simultaneously using her femininity to assure audiences that she was not threatening to the social order. Oakley's talent attracted a greater audience than many of the other performers, and rumor indicates that she was perhaps even more

talented than William Cody himself ("Annie Oakley"). However, in the first few years that Oakley toured with the Wild West show, she was billed alongside another female sharpshooter, Lillian Smith. Smith openly expressed her competitive nature, saying she was the better shooter and would easily beat Oakley in a shooting contest (Cansler 163). Oakley did not engage in Smith's challenge to the gender norm that prohibited women from expressing a competitive drive; she preferred to let her performances speak for themselves. Her reluctance to participate in competitive talk reveals the double bind that Oakley so aptly maneuvered: as a female participant in a traditionally masculine sport, it was necessary for her to maintain her femininity to not appear threatening to the social order. Yet in order to gain recognition, her athletic skill had to be top-notch and highly practiced, a fact that she was unable to draw attention to without seeming competitive and therefore unfeminine. The double bind that trapped her in a gender performance explains the focus on her appearance and the ways that she performed a youthful and non-threatening femininity, as a means to offset her skill with her gun, itself a phallic symbol of masculine power. Additionally, her refusal to publicly engage in competitive banter like Smith and other female sharpshooters helped assure audiences that she was properly demure despite her dominance in a traditionally masculine profession.

Oakley's appearance was a crucial aspect of her performance that reassured audiences that she was not a threat to Victorian gender ideals, and a variety of social issues intersect to explain the focus both she and others placed on her clothing and appearance. Oakley's childhood poverty and the time Oakley and Butler spent performing in vaudeville and variety shows, often alongside acts starring women "of ill repute," both had a lifelong influence on Oakley's gender presentation ("Annie Oakley").

Oakley carefully curated her attire to distinguish herself from the racier performances in variety shows, to prove her status as a respectable middle-class woman, and to build a popular image of what a legendary Western woman would look like outside of popular fiction's depictions of Calamity Jane and others. Oakley's figure and dress are almost as remarked upon as her skill as an athlete, always in terms that make her seem demure, ladylike, and unthreatening: "pretty and petite," she "projected an image so feminine, ladylike, Victorian, and appealing that most people could see little harm in cowgirls," as she "skipped into the arena" with "her girl-like face, flowing hair, calf-length skirts, and demure behavior" (Vonada 131, Riley 33). The above descriptions of Oakley are closer to a helpless maiden than a woman earning her living as a sharpshooter who beat everyone who challenged her. Yet Oakley's non-threatening gender presentation made it "not only acceptable, but attractive and admirable, for women to ride and shoot before audiences" (Riley 33).

Annie Oakley Holding a Bouquet, 1912, MS006 William F. Cody Collection, Buffalo Bill Center of the West

The persona that Oakley cultivated is illustrated in the photo above, from William Cody's collection housed at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming. It shows Oakley seated at a table, dressed in a white gown and holding a bouquet of flowers. Rather than looking at the camera, her gaze rests on the flowers as she seems to pluck an upright stem out of the bouquet. Her hair, dress, and mannerisms are all artfully arranged to provide an image of the type of femininity typical of the 1880s. Nothing about her image here could be described as threatening, and the overall effect seems appropriately described as sweet—with all traces of the sharpshooter and businesswoman removed, a non-threatening and ladylike Oakley remains.

Oakley could not maintain thus high of a level of femininity during her actual performances since they required the archetypal masculine symbol of gun rather than flowers; however, her costume was always feminine and played up her slight build and youthfulness as well as her role as a Westerner. Oakley's position on the political significance of dress reform was clear: "I don't like bloomers or bloomer women, but I think that sport and healthful exercise make women better, healthier, and happier" (Smith and Greig 75).[6] With this statement, she demonstrated the heated debates about gender and women's sports and the way that the practical reality of women's bodily movement connected to greater political ideas about the role of women in the public sphere. Her costumes avoided referencing this debate through the careful choice of articles to accentuate her feminine features: belts show off her small waist, her long hair often worn down and flowing, her legs accentuated with the short skirts that allowed for greater

[6] The emphasis on "better" (first adjective) also taps into parallel compromises made by Susan B. Anthony and others as they deployed the argument that women's rights made women "better" mothers, wives, Christians, etc.

freedom of movement than traditional long skirts and layers of petticoats. However, these features avoided an overt sexuality by their emphasis on Oakley's youthfulness; short skirts and unbraided hair were typical of young girls' styles in the late-nineteenth-century. Women first put their hair up after a social debut in their teens, signaling readiness for marriage. Oakley's hairstyle signals prepubescence. and she maintained additional signs of modesty through covering her legs so no skin was showing even with the short skirts. Despite her statement that she didn't like the politics of bloomers, the outfits she wore in the Wild West show and during shooting competitions demonstrate that she found the freedom of movement offered by leg coverings under short skirts practical. After joining the Wild West show, her attire also portrayed the image of a thoroughly Western woman, perhaps to shore up her legitimacy as such despite her background in Ohio. Her clothes for the Wild West shows included fringe, leather, and Western hats, direct references to items audiences read as Western.[7]

The photo on the left below depicts Oakley as Glenda Riley describes her in her first season with the Wild West show: "western blouse and calf-length, fringed skirt of a material resembling buckskin. She topped off her outfit with a western hat with an upturned brim accented by a silver star" (34). She augments her outfit, which Riley claims shapes Oakley into the "archetypal western woman," with a box of medals she has won in sharpshooting contests at her feet, a rifle slung over her shoulder, reminding the viewer that she was skilled in shooting targets behind her, and if there is any doubt remaining about her prowess as a shooter, an additional rifle and two pistols are slung at her feet.

[7]Sarah Russell Cansler's article, "Annie Oakley, Gender, and Guns: The 'Champion Rifle Shot' and Gender Performance, 1860-1926," has an excellent background of Oakley's costume and gender performativity.

She is similarly attired on the photo on the right, with a Western hat with a star pin, a fringed buckskin dress, and long, free-flowing hair. Two rifles and a pistol decorate the photo beneath her likeness to point to the athleticism this image was celebrating, and her name, "Miss Annie Oakley," appears at the bottom of the card. This advertising card appeared circa 1880-1900 in Allen & Ginter's cigarettes, a company based out of

Annie Oakley with Medals, Vincent Mercaldo Collection, Buffalo Bill Center of the West

Allen & Ginter's cigarettes advertising card, 1880-1900 James Wojtowicz Collection, Buffalo Bill Center of the West

Richmond, Virgina. Oakley's image was one in a series of athletes, "The World Champions," that included baseball players, oarsmen, wrestlers, billiard players, pool players, pugilists, and rifle shooters. "Miss Annie Oakley" is the sole female name listed out of the fifty athletes depicted in the series, which were packed into the company's cigarette boxes to help stiffen the packaging and advertise the brand, which hoped that consumers would collect the entire series. The world champion series that featured

Oakley circulated widely across America, along with another popular Allen & Gintner collection, "Beauties," featuring actresses, film stars, and models. Oakley's appearance as the sole female in the world champion series spoke to her appeal to a wide audience as a female athlete rather than an athletic "beauty."

The focus on Oakley's appearance and dress and the negotiation between beauty and athleticism emphasizes the fraught position of female strength and movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century. As Cahn notes, there were a variety of responses to the way that women's sports challenged assumptions about gender. One strategy involved popular promoters of women's sports attempts to "feminize the athlete more than the activity" by emphasizing the "feminine and sexual charms of female competitors, making sporting events into combination beauty-athletic contests" (4). Individual athletes often took the route that Oakley did, and "made special efforts to demonstrate femininity through their dress, demeanor, and off-field interests" (5). In addition to her dress and demeanor, Oakley often conducted interviews in her tent while travelling with the Wild West show, where she served reporters tea to demonstrate her domesticity even while on tour as an athlete, circulating her image as feminine to a wide contemporary audience. The picture below demonstrates Oakley's cultivated domesticity, as she demurely sits in a rocking chair in front of a tent at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, where she appeared with the Wild West Show. She is attired in a high-necked, long dress, and sits in a rocking chair reading a book, a scene that fits the conventions of nineteenth century womanhood. The domestic scene behind her depicts the belongings she chose to carry with her on the road, which consist of an interesting mix of domestic objects (lamp, bed, dresser, floral rug, etc.) and images and objects that highlight her athleticism—posed

photos of her with her medals and guns, a photo of her on a rearing horse, and at the front of the tent, her rifle leaning against a bicycle and a chair covered by fabric embroidered with her last name, proclaiming her stardom. The mix of objects in this photo represent the two sides of Annie Oakley, her femininity that upheld gender stereotypes and her athleticism which defied them.

Annie Oakley in front of her tent at Chicago World's Fair, 1893. MS006 William F. Cody Collection, Buffalo Bill Center of the West

Oakley's negotiation of femininity differed from the experience of Native women who performed alongside her at the World's Fair and toured with her in the Wild West Show. While Oakley walked a line between athlete and feminine based on cultural conceptions of acceptable modes of white femininity, discourses of colonialism mapped different ideas onto American Indian women's bodies. Already viewed as a less civilized

race, athleticism and movement meant different things when connected to native bodies, as seen by the "Indian-ness" they performed in the Wild West show. Rather than shoring up their femininity by serving tea to reporters, the "show Indians" played up their traditional rituals and stereotyped as savage and exotic, a much different picture than the one presented of Annie Oakley's domestic space at the World's Fair.

The two competing sides of Oakley persist today. Although popular culture remembers her for her athleticism, it is inextricably intertwined with discussions about her femininity. The theme of femininity versus athleticism surfaces in the musical "Annie Get Your Gun," which ran on Broadway in 1946 and was turned into a movie in 1950. The Annie Oakley and Frank Butler characters compete with each other, as shown in the famous song "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better," and unlike the real Butler and Oakley, the fictional couple only happily comes together once Oakley decides to deliberately lose a match to Butler. As little girls dressed up as Annie Oakley and played cowgirl throughout the 1950s, Ann McGrath notes, "Strategies for femininity and lessons in being a modern white girl were implicitly part of the game" (McGrath 203). As the National Annie Oakley Center's website declares, "You may be surprised as you discover Annie's true personality. Unlike Hollywood's image of a wild west, rough-and-tumble tomboy, Annie was a petite woman who loved lace, silver, beautiful furnishings and elegant clothing who was blessed with physical athleticism" (National Annie Oakley Center). The vision of this Annie Oakley notes her first as feminine, loving lace and clothing, and then as "blessed" with athleticism, a quality bestowed upon her rather than one she worked for. This description shows the continued focus on her appearance despite her celebrity as an athlete.

Despite the focus on her appearance and costume to maintain the gender norms of her time, it is important to note that Oakley achieved her fame because of her skill as an athlete; not just as a female athlete, but as the best athlete in her sport, an excellence that drove her economic, social, and physical mobility. Oakley demonstrated her athletic ability not only through simple shooting. As other forms of sport and leisure activities became popular, she incorporated those into her act and her public persona. Damaine Vonada's description portrays the intensity of skill and strength that Oakley's athleticism required: "Annie was an athlete. She turned cartwheels and did handsprings; she stood on the back of a galloping horse and shot glass balls out of the air. When the nation fell in love with the bicycle, she mastered it, too, and gamely pedaled about as she discharged her weapons" (Vonada 131).

"Annie Oakley Rides the Sterling Bicycle," Advertisement ca. 1898

Vonada's statement definitively places Oakley in the ranks of athlete, a progressive and uncommon place for a woman of her time. The 1898 advertisement for Sterling pictured above uses Oakley's star power to advertise an already well-known company—Sterling provided Annie Kopchovsky her second bicycle for her well-documented 1894 "around the world" bicycle tour. Although the details of Kopchovsky's trip occluded the fact that she took steamships for most of her journey outside of the United States, the brand still became associated with athletic women. The Sterling ad utilizes Oakley's prowess as an athlete to sell the bicycle to American women who were eager to experience the same types of mobility that Oakley had so successfully maneuvered—those of physical, social, and gender expression. With her willingness to adapt her routine to the bicycling craze that swept up women across America, Oakley once again proved that her athleticism was unmatched as well as ahead of its time.

Bicycles, Freedom, Sexuality: Once Stimulated, Impossible to Control

The bicycle gained popularity throughout the nineteenth century, as improvements to the 1817 German "velocipede" led to the French "boneshaker" in the 1860s, and the "high-wheeler" or "ordinary" in the 1870s (*Wheels of Change*). Each of these versions of the bicycle featured improvements to comfort and safety, and as the models became more lightweight and easier to pedal, they grew more accessible to a wider ridership in Europe and America. Proponents of cycling touted its health benefits for both women and men, and its popularity fit into the emerging discourse of physical fitness and exercise for women that doctors and political figures alike advocated. Bicycling in America exponentially increased with the introduction of the English

"safety" model in 1887, with the annual production of bicycles in America jumping from an estimated 11,000 in 1885 to nearly 500,000 in 1895 and reaching one million in 1896,[8] the year that Willa Cather published "Tommy, the Unsentimental." Cather's story features its heroine, Tommy, riding a bicycle across the plains to prevent a failure of the bank managed by the man she loves. To fully appreciate the way that Cather comments on cultural conversations about gender roles and non-normative sexuality through her depiction of Tommy's use of the bicycle, further explanation of the cultural significance of bicycles in late-nineteenth-century America is necessary.

As the bicycle gained popularity in the 1880s and early 1890s, it coincided with the increasing interest in women's physical fitness. As was the case with women's participation in other physical activities, some considered bicycling an excellent way for women to get exercise and improve their physical health while others viewed it as a surefire way to degrade the morals of a generation of young women. As Charlotte Smith wrote in an 1896 Women's Rescue League resolution, "The bicycle is the devil's advance agent morally and physically in thousands of instances" (Macy 29). Not everyone shared Smith's view, however, and much of the medical discourse surrounding the effects of bicycling described the positive effect it had on most women's lives and physical wellbeing. Doctors advocated for moderate exercise with the bicycle, promoting its use for improving or curing a variety of illnesses, including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and tuberculosis. Benefits were so well-known to the medical community that the *British Medical Journal*'s 1896 "Report on Cycling in Health and Disease," declared that "with hardly any exception there is a consensus of opinion that the exercise of wheeling,

[8] Bicycle production statistics come from Sue Macy's *Wheels of Change: How Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom*

properly regulated and indulged in at proper times and seasons, is of great benefit to all sound women and girls" (35).

The caveat that bicycling's benefits come only with proper regulations echoes similar concerns about femininity and athleticism that Annie Oakley experienced. The same "Report on Cycling in Health and Disease" that extolled the great benefit of cycling to women also declared that "anything in the way of racing or speed competition on cycles must be injurious to any woman […] and should never be allowed" (Macy 35). The way the medical journal's report advocates for moderate exercise but sternly denounces more vigorous exercise or competition aligns with the moral apprehension about women's participation in competitive sports and the risk that these activities would corrupt the fairer sex.

Anxieties about women becoming masculinized through sports abounded at the turn-of-the-century and generally focused on two issues: the unleashing of women's sexuality through physical activity, which once stimulated would be impossible to control, and the politicization of women once they experienced the freedom that sports in general and the bicycle in particular afforded them. Fears that cycling would lead women to wear men's clothes, gamble, and frequent music halls saturated turn-of-the-century discourses, in addition to arguments circulating in some medical circles that too much body heat would turn women into men (Marks 178). By 1912, the concern was so great that the *Ladies Home Journal* published an article directly questioning the connection between sport and female masculinity. "Are Athletics Making Girls Masculine?" and its author, Dudley Sargent, explored how female athleticism would turn women into "masculine facsimiles of the 'opposite' sex" (Cahn 3). Sargent and others' anxieties

about the masculinization of women through sports shows the porousness of the Victorian public/private spheres, and women's increasing participation in sporting activities threatened turn-of-the-century ideas about gender and sexuality. Anxieties about gender transformation accurately capture the nature of the concern about women's cycling: people grew increasingly worried that the shape of the bicycle seat could "damage or overstimulate a woman's pelvis," leading to sexual stimulation that, along with the taste of freedom from watchful parental eyes, would make women embody typically masculine traits, including sexual aggression (Macy 35). The "medical" concerns eventually led to changes in the structure of bicycles, including raised handlebars and a smaller seat. Fears about the sexual stimulation of women cyclists were placated through changing the design of the machines; however, anxiety about the freedom that bicycles gave young women was harder to address. As Marks observes, "the woman on a bicycle represents both activity and options. The woman on wheels may decide where she wishes to go and what she plans to do when she gets there, regardless of a male companion, or lack of one […] no longer confined to the home or hoping to escape the vicissitudes of earning a living, she actively seeks new experience and intends to have some impact on the world around her" (175).

As bicycling became increasingly popular among young women, articles aimed specifically at women cyclists became more prevalent. These articles laid out advice to young women experiencing an exhilarating sense of freedom through their use of bicycles for exercise, transportation, and travel. Bicycles allowed women to cover distances in a day that were unthinkable while walking, opening up a larger world to those who learned to ride. The question of what to wear became paramount, as long

skirts, corsets, and layers of petticoats that could weigh up to twenty-five pounds became dangerous due to their likelihood of getting caught in the chain or impeding women from inhaling the full amount of oxygen necessary for vigorous exercise (*Wheels of Change* 45). Despite the impracticality of long skirts, they were so intertwined with femininity and womanhood that even many enthusiastic women's health and exercise advocates decried the more sensible bloomers. Maria Ward's 1896 publication, *Bicycling for Ladies,* included detailed advice about appropriate dress in its almost 200 pages filled with information on the art and science of bicycling. Ward's comprehensive manual included chapters on tools, tires, mechanics of cycling, and training, so exerting influence or control over women's dress and behavior was not its primary intent. Rather, it aimed to offer helpful tips on all aspects of cycling to women eager to try the sport. Ward's chapter on dress advises:

> The skirt should not reach more than half way below the knee, and the hem and all seams should be finished on the outside; then there will be nothing to catch or pull. The width around the bottom may be a matter of choice, but the skirt need not fall behind the pedal when furthest back, and should be cut full enough in the front to permit the knees to work easily. The top of the skirt should take the place of a waistband, following the curves of the figure, made to flare at the top of the waist, and fitted snugly over the hips and hanging from them […] A corset, if one is worn, should not extend below the waist-line, and should have elastic side-lacing. (97-8)

Ward describes in detail the proper length of skirts and the construction of the corset to allow for range of movement, yet no mention of bloomers is present. Bloomers, the

loose-fitting pants introduced in America in the 1850s by women's suffrage advocates Amelia Bloomer and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were a controversial matter in the debates over whether cycling would make women healthier or lead them down a path of sin and gender non-conformance (*Wheels of Change* 46). Many people advocated for bloomers as a sensible cycling outfit, while others felt that women wearing any type of split leg garments would masculinize them—like the legs of the garment itself, women's sports advocates were split on the suitability of women in pants. Part of the problem detractors of dress reform saw in the split pants advocated by New Women, whether they were aware of it or not, was the signal split pants sent: "rather than an expression of female frivolity, [bloomers were] a representation of the ideas she stood for. The outfit that announced subliminally that a man was in control carried the same message when a woman wore it" (Marks 148). The debate, then, was less about health and more about woman's place and sphere. Additionally, they signaled a regional divide: San Francisco women often preferred bloomers as their wheeling outfit due to the windy nature of the city causing too many exposures of ladies' intimate underclothes, while bloomers were still seen as unladylike and masculine in the East (*Wheels of Change* 52).

LGB(icycle)T

Cultural discourses about shifting gender norms and concerns about women's sexuality serve as the backdrop to Willa Cather's "Tommy, the Unsentimental," a story that is very much aware of and commenting on such conversations. Cather wrote "Tommy" after graduating from the University of Nebraska in 1895 and moving home to Pittsburgh in 1896, and the story reflects elements of Cather's youth and early college

life, when she went by the name "William" and her classmates in Red Cloud recalled her as "mannish" in both dress and in demeanor and knew her by the nick-name "Billy." As Sharon O'Brien writes, "Cather's desire to be 'just plain Billy' arose from her worship of the power and force considered masculine in her society" (120). "Tommy" first appeared in the August 1896 edition of the family magazine *Home Monthly*, where Cather worked as an editor in her first job after graduating from college. Located in Pittsburgh, the job came with a move to a new city and the opportunity to remake herself. It was here that she moved away from some of her more rebellious forms of gender presentation and toward more conventional forms of appearance (O'Brien 224-227). Despite this personal shift, "Tommy" mocks the domestic and moral mission of the magazine in which it appears; as O'Brian notes:

> "Tommy, the Unsentimental" (1896) mocks the Victorian ideal of womanhood to which the *Home Monthly* was supposedly dedicated. The heroine is the boyish Tommy, not the clinging, dependent Miss Jessica, and Tommy's favorite pastimes, as Cather must have known, were a particular challenge to Presbyteria: playing whist and mixing cocktails were not the feminine skills Axtell wanted to recommend to his teetotaling readers. In subverting Victorian conventions of gender and genre, Cather goes even further by substituting a male plot for a female one, paying tribute to the narrative the author—not her readers—was living. (229)

Cather portrays Tommy, the namesake heroine of the narrative, as markedly gender non-conforming, so much so that the narrative declares just a few lines into the story that "Needless to say, Tommy was not a boy" (473). Yet this fact does seem to need

saying, a detail made even more poignant by the description that follows: "her keen gray eyes and wide forehead were scarcely girlish, and she had the lank figure of an active half grown lad. Her real name was Theodosia, but during Thomas Shirley's frequent absences from the bank she had attended to his business and correspondence signing herself 'T. Shirley,' until everyone in Southdown called her 'Tommy'" (473). Her facial features, her figure, and her name all point to her boyishness, making clear from the very beginning of the story that gender inscrutability is central to the story and already connected to the mobility the bicycle permitted young women in the late-nineteenth-century. Tommy's masculine gender presentation is associated with the "power and force" she attributed to masculinity during her early years, as is seen by the contrast between Tommy and the other main characters.

Tommy's masculinity contrasts with the effeminacy of the subject of her unrequited love, Jay Ellington Harper. Tommy's discussion about Jay opens the story, and he represents a type of subversive manhood as much as Tommy portrays nineteenth century fears about masculine women. Tommy calls him a "baby in business" and declares that he's "good for nothing on earth but to keep his hair parted straight and wear that white carnation in his buttonhole" (473). Despite her assessment of his business acumen, sartorial choices, and general worth, Tommy's fondness for Jay is clear. However, the hints Cather's narrator drops about his gender presentation and sexual leanings seem to challenge others to feel as generous. Tommy makes a scathing statement about his manhood by describing Jay as a baby, a pronouncement that seems particularly cutting when used to describe his skill as businessman. The imagery of an infantilized man combined with the white carnation he wears points to his effeminate gender

presentation crossing over into the realm of homosexuality. Oscar Wilde popularized the symbol of a green carnation as a marker of homosexuality in his 1892 play *Lady Windermere's Fan*. The carnation was so intertwined with Wilde and his homosexuality that *The Green Carnation* was the title of an anonymously published 1894 satire about Wilde that lawyers used as evidence in Wilde's sodomy and indecency trials in 1895. Cather picked up on the carnation as a symbol of homosexuality, using a red carnation to symbolize Paul's homosexuality in her 1905 story "Paul's Case."[9] In "Tommy," the color of the carnation has changed, but its meaning is still clear as a signal of deviant sexuality.

The descriptive imagery about the main characters sets the stage for the narrative, and the actions that unfold reinforce their non-normative gender and sexual identities. Jay worked as a cashier in Tommy's father's bank because of the friendship between their families, but Tommy did much of the work in order to keep him out of trouble, roles that subvert ideas about women not belonging in business or the public sphere. A series of narrative markers further shores up gender reversals: Tommy is close to a gang of seven "Old Boys," her father's old business friends, and the narrator describes her as "just one of them." Similarly, the narrator compares Tommy to "active young business men and sturdy ranchers" who are romantically uninteresting because "they were practical and sensible and thoroughly of her own kind" (475). The Old Boys do not share similar kind feelings for Jay as they have for Tommy, and the narrator makes clear that not only is he not "one of them," but they disapprove of Tommy's affection for him. Their disdain is

[9] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes in "Across Gender, Across Sexuality" how virulently Cather excoriated Wilde for his insincere art in the two columns she published on Wilde, but she also notes how "At the same time, though, distinguishing however slightly and invidiously the one crime from the other ('The sins of the body are very small compared with that') she also holds open a small shy gap of nonidentification between the two in which some nascent germ of gay-affirmative detachment, of critique, or even of outlaw love might shelter to await her own less terroristic or terrorized season" (63).

evident when Tommy decides to leave the West and go East for college. They are relieved that she will be out of his circle, clearly thinking that in this case absence would not make the heart grow fonder. Yet there is a dark side to Tommy's leaving as well; her willingness to leave the rugged West and attend school in the East showed them her "inclination to experiment with another kind of life, Jay Ellington Harper's kind" (475).

Tommy's time in the East does not take up much narrative space in the story, but it reveals much about her and about the regional differences between East and West through what comes of her time away. The narrator sums up Tommy's school life in the East in the space of a sentence, indicating the relative unimportance of that region in the mind of the characters—the real action happens in Wyoming. We learn that she "conducted herself in a seemly manner," which meant that she no longer participated in drinking and playing billiards, both activities that she participated in with the Old Boys. Additionally, she "distinguished herself in athletics, which in Southdown counted for vastly more than erudition" (476). Though she gave up the masculine activities of drinking and gambling, Tommy channeled her masculine energy into something considered equally masculine at the time: sports. The fact that Cather's narrator remarks about how athletic ability was more valued in Southdown shows the regional differences about gender expectations and roles available; Cather portrays Tommy's success in athletics as more valuable than her success in academics, upending the dominant gender narratives of the time but revealing Cather's opinion regarding gender discourses. Tommy had no need to distinguish herself in school, as she had already proven herself to be an astute businesswoman through her work in the bank. Her success in athletics in

school sets readers up for the climax of the story, her twenty-five-mile bicycle ride to save Jay from a run on his bank.

The Old Boys' intuitions about Tommy's inclination toward same-sex desire seem to be correct, as her friend Miss Jessica accompanies Tommy home from school, a fact the narrator describes as "The only unsatisfactory thing about Tommy's return" (476). Miss Jessica, referred to by the subtle narrator as "a girl she had grown fond of," is seemingly the opposite of Tommy; every description points to Miss Jessica being feminine in socially expected ways that Tommy either cannot or does not care to embody: "a dainty, white languid bit of a thing, who used violet perfumes and carried a sunshade" (476). Miss Jessica's femininity contrasts to Tommy's rough-and-tumble image, and their dissimilarities seem to present them as a late-nineteenth-century version of femme and butch that alarms the Old Boys, who recognize the sexual attraction Tommy feels. "The Old Boys said it was a bad sign when a rebellious girl like Tommy took to being sweet and gentle to one of her own sex, the worst sign in the world" (476). Miss Jessica is harder to read, as is shown by their conversation about Jay Ellington Harper that opens the story. After Miss Jessica agrees that Jay is a likeable fellow, Tommy scrutinizes her reaction, seemingly trying to read the situation between the two and determine Miss Jessica's feelings about Jay, "Tommy watched her closely and then turned away with a baffled expression" (473). Miss Jessica is unreadable to Tommy, perhaps because her overt femininity precludes her from displaying her sexual desires and attractions.

The pivotal moment in deciphering the love triangle comes when Tommy receives a telegram from Jay that there is a run on his bank and he needs assistance

before noon. As the one train had already left, Tommy decides her only option to save Jay from ruin is to "wheel for it" (477). Miss Jessica, finally revealing her feelings in the romance of the adventure, insists on coming along, even though Tommy does her best to dissuade her from making the 25-mile uphill journey that the narrator describes as "rough, hilly and climbs from the river bottoms up to the big Divide by a steady up grade, running white and hot through the scorched corn fields and grazing lands where the long-horned Texan cattle browse about in the old buffalo wallows" (477). Cather's description of the rough road aligned with the discourses that critiqued women's sports in general for inspiring women to push themselves physically and bicycling in particular for providing women the mobility to traverse long distances outside the watchful eyes of society.

While Tommy thrives on adventures, Miss Jessica responds to the journey outside the bounds of gender norms less positively and is reduced to tears after the ride proved to be much more physically demanding than romantic. Cather uses Miss Jessica as a foil in these scenes to drive home Tommy's atypical gender presentation:

> Miss Jessica began to feel that unless she could stop and get some water she was not much longer for this vale of tears. She suggested this possibility to Tommy, but Tommy only shook her head, "Take too much time," and bent over her handle bars, never lifting her eyes from the road in front of her. It flashed upon Miss Jessica that Tommy was not only very unkind, but that she sat very badly on her wheel and looked aggressively masculine and professional when she bent her shoulders and pumped like that. (477)

Despite the urgency motivating Tommy to reach Jay's bank, the narrator describes Miss Jessica's reaction to Tommy's athletic endeavor as a realization that she was "unkind,"

"aggressively masculine" and "professional," all insults to typical notions of femininity. Tommy has a realization of her own as she pedals over the hill and looks back to see Miss Jessica in tears; as she cycles away she is finally able to decipher the emotions that previously seemed inscrutable.

Tommy's athleticism enables her to reach Jay's bank in time to save him, but her action comes at a great price to her both financially and personally. After Tommy settles the accounts, she instructs Jay to get on his wheel, find Miss Jessica, and "marry her and be done with it" so that she can rid herself of the emotions she feels for both of them (479). Tommy's realism about the romantic situation contrasts with Jay and Miss Jessica's romanticism and reflects the difference between her and Jay, who had previously been aligned with Tommy in their gender non-conformity. Although Jay attempts to keep the kinship between himself and Tommy, Tommy rebukes him, saying that Miss Jessica is more of his kind. Jay responds: "You have been very good to me, I didn't believe any woman could be at once so kind and clever. You almost made a man of even me" (479). As he leaves Tommy to ride out into the prairie to find Miss Jessica, Tommy is left to muse to herself that she did not succeed in that endeavor, and Cather leaves her readers with Tommy picking up Jay's white carnation which he dropped on the floor. He leaves the symbol of his gender and sexual non-conformity behind, but the unsentimental Tommy tosses it aside and focuses instead on the bank books in front of her, her own symbol of gender inscrutability along with the bicycle that freed her from any romantic ending. Cather's story about the unsentimental Tommy ends with the title character's focus returning to her business, a shift that Tommy's athletic journey enables.

Much like Oakley's challenge to gender ideals was centered in her sharpshooting career and athletic abilities, and more importantly, the mobility they afforded her, Cather's story shows the importance of the bicycle in providing Tommy the freedom from romantic schemas and allowing her to participate in the business life where her skills are valued. With both Cather's "Tommy" and Annie Oakley's life narrative, the story of mobility also tells the story of their social critique. The case studies provided in this chapter progress from Oakley's sharpshooting character who displayed limited and conditional transgressiveness, to Cather's depictions of a more transgressive character in "Tommy," to the final example of Mary MacLane as a groundbreaking feminist who was fully aware of her gender and sexual identity and the ways that society did not allow her full expression of these identities.

Mary MacLane's Peripatetic Social Critique

Mary MacLane was born in 1881 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the third child in a family of four. MacLane's father moved the family to Minnesota when Mary was four, and her mother moved them to Butte four years later after the death of her father. Despite the comfortable life her family provided, MacLane claims they had little influence on her early years, and she was eager to leave both them and Butte behind for Stanford University after her high school graduation. However, a reversal of family fortune after a failed mining venture frustrated her plans to attend college and get out of Butte. Although disappointed about her changed circumstances, they proved to be an opportune turn of events for MacLane, since it was after this setback that she composed the memoir that propelled her into the public eye and out of Butte, Montana. MacLane scandalized Butte

and the rest of the nation with her unabashed rebuke of gender and sexual conventions articulated in *The Story of Mary MacLane*, her 1902 memoir that chronicled the renegade sense of self she developed on her rambling walks in the "sand and barrenness" surrounding Butte, Montana. Her memoir articulates same-sex desire, expressing a longing that "is not the ordinary woman-love. It is something that burns with a vivid fire of its own," embraces masculine agency, saying that she has "the personality, the nature, of a Napoleon," and rejects gender norms, "The more I see of conventionality, it seems, the more I am odd" (129, 9, 99). The loneliness that MacLane depicts throughout her memoir represent more than a youthful desire to escape "drag[ging] out my life in obscurity in this uncouth, warped Montana town" (10). Her feelings of isolation also signify the result of restrictive social norms regarding same-sex desire and gender propriety. The rise to fame that MacLane experienced after this memoir's publication led to her escape from small-town life, but she found the restrictions placed on her by society harder to shake, as did the young women to whom she represented an example of increasing opportunities for mobility within strict gender and sexual roles. Her literary career made evident her frustration with society's moral absolutes, the limited realm of expression available for female sexuality, and the conflicted sense of same-sex desire on which she meditated during her walks in the mountains surrounding Butte.

MacLane composed *The Story of Mary MacLane* over a period of four months in early 1901, and despite her claim that it exists as "frank a portrayal as I am able of myself," the book quite consciously constructs MacLane's literary self (1). It begins with a series of declarations to the reader:

> I am distinctly original innately and in development. I have in me a quite unusual intensity of life. I can feel. I have a marvelous capacity for misery and for happiness. I am broad-minded. I am a genius. I am a philosopher of my own good peripatetic school. I care neither for right nor for wrong—my conscience is nil. My brain is a conglomeration of aggressive versatility…I know myself, oh, very well. (1)

MacLane's construction of a literary "I" is important in that it forcefully announces to her readers a unique subject assured of her own self-worth. Keeping a diary always involves a sense that one's experience is worth recording, yet MacLane's portrayal represents more than the chronicling of a diarist; it is the presentation of a thoroughly analyzed and thoughtfully selected subjectivity.[10] Here she participates in the project taken up by many New Women of writing their life stories, and in doing so, they "not only brought attention to their physical bodies, but also explicitly name and predicted the ways that their bodies could and would be publicly used as agents of intellectual change and emancipation" (Collins 90). In creating the written self in her memoir, MacLane is stating that female subjectivity is worthy of such a study and a woman such as herself is sufficiently complex to be the sole subject of a literary text.

In the process of "written self-creation," MacLane participates in the same project as philosophers such as Michel de Montaigne in his *Essays* and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his *Confessions*; all build up increasingly elaborate self-portrayals emphasizing not the facts of external history but the paradoxical truth of interior experience. I want to

[10]Margo Culley explores the changing function of women's diaries in "'I Look at Me': Self as Subject in The Diaries of American Women", *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 3/4, Women's Nontraditional Literature, (Fall - Winter, 1989): 15-22.

emphasize the written construction of selfhood not only because of the turn it signifies in women's writing, but also for the connection to Rousseau, who marks the beginning of the Western tradition of walking as a conscious cultural act rather than a means to an end. Rebecca Solnit, who explores the history and significance of walking in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, points to Rousseau as the originator of walking as a conscious action and locates the development of the association between walking and contemplation in the romanticism of the late eighteenth century.

As Rousseau remarked in his *Confessions*, "I can only meditate when I am walking. When I stop, I cease to think; my mind only works with my legs."[11] He further develops the connection between walking and deep thought in his *Discourses*, where he also laid out his opinions regarding the corruption of society and the ideal state of nature. It is in *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality* that Rousseau develops his philosophy about the natural condition of man, and the ways in which society has distorted his condition. In Rousseau's ideology, walking functions as an emblem of the simple man and as, when the walk is solitary and rural, a means of being in nature and outside of society. The idea of a solitary walk that places one outside of society is the foundation of the peripatetic tradition that Rousseau established and that MacLane builds upon in *The Story of Mary MacLane*. It allowed Rousseau, and later MacLane, both the mental and physical space to formulate their critiques of society, focusing on the "paradoxical truth of interior experience" through which they built their respective self-portrayals. MacLane expands on Rousseau's theories about society's distortions of the natural condition through her focus on the gendered and sexual restrictions placed on

[11] Again, I am indebted to Rebecca Solnit for this quote and its implications, *Wanderlust* 14.

women. MacLane's ability to walk in the landscape surrounding Butte allows her the freedom to form and express her radical sense of self in *The Story of Mary MacLane*, as the "sand and barrenness" provided a space outside the society of turn-of-the-century America in which MacLane could shape her sense of self in ways which challenged the dominant gender and sexual hierarchies which limited female expression during this time.

Like Rousseau, MacLane develops her social critique through her daily escape into what she describes as the "sand and barrenness" of the country surrounding Butte. When recounting her daily routine, MacLane places great importance on two things: these walks and her writing.[12] After describing how she has nothing out of the ordinary to occupy her in day-to-day life, she states:

> …mostly I take walks far away in the open country. Butte and its immediate vicinity present as ugly an outlook as one could wish to see. It is so ugly indeed that it is near the perfection of ugliness. And anything perfect, or nearly so, is not to be despised. I have reached some astonishing subtleties of conception as I have walked for miles over the sand and barrenness among the little hills and gulches. Their utter desolateness is an inspiration to the long, long thoughts and to the nameless wanting. (7)

[12] MacLane recounts her daily routine repeatedly, giving readers details about how she washes floors, the number and placement of toothbrushes in the bathroom, and a detailed description of her eating an olive. Her repetitive descriptions of household and bodily routines align with Jennifer Fleissner's reading of the "compulsion" of the naturalist project, that "the case of the modern young woman, is marked neither by the steep arc of decline nor that of triumph, but rather by an ongoing, nonlinear, repetitive motion—back and forth, around and around, on and on—that has the distinctive effect of seeming also like a stuckness in place […] we can understand this stuckness in repetitive motion, and its relation to agency and history, if we replace the notion of naturalist determinism with the more nuanced concept of *compulsion*" (9). Fleissner's assessment of the compulsive tendency that gives meaning to everyday rituals regarding the fact of embodiment accurately describes much of MacLane's narrative.

MacLane's first description of where and why she walks lays the groundwork for the social critique developed throughout her work. Already we can see her similarity to Rousseau and other philosophers of the peripatetic school, as the miles of walking out in the country is what helps her to reach "astonishing subtleties of conception." She describes the open country, the setting for her walks, and connects its "utter desolateness" to the "nameless wanting," both intricately intertwined with the limitations she experienced as a young woman in turn-of-the-century society. These limitations and the "wanting" they cause are evident as she moves directly from the description of her daily routine to the ways in which she would be living a different life if she was a man: "I have the personality, the nature, of a Napoleon, albeit a feminine translation. And therefore I do not conquer; I do not even fight, I manage only to exist…Had I been born a man I would by now have made a deep impression of myself on the world" (9). Her lament speaks volumes about the restrictions MacLane felt as a young woman in early twentieth century America.

MacLane did, however, make a deep impression on the world at the time she wrote *The Story of Mary MacLane*. Her memoir was an instantaneous hit (despite the critical reviews), and it sold 100,000 copies in the first few months after its publication. She also re-popularized walking as a form of social critique, and by 1910 writers referred to suffragists as "modern peripatetic philosophers" as they took to the streets to express their social critiques, as seen in the following New York Times Sunday Magazine article from May 29, 1910, "Peripatetic Philosophers of this Many-Sided Town."

PERIPATETIC PHILOSOPHERS OF THIS MANY-SIDED TOWN

Modern Street Philosophers and the Philosophical Athenians Would Meet on a Common Footing.

Neighborhoods Where the Curbstone Lecturer Holds Sway and an Ancient Athenian Would Feel at Home in a Moment.

THERE is Scriptural authority for the statement that the ancient Athenians were never content unless discussing some new thing. New York, all Parthenon-less as it is, is in this respect the legitimate successor of the glory that was Greece. It is the talkiest city in the world. There are more new ideas set forth to the benighted universe in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx (the Bronx especially must not be omitted) than in any area of similar size on the globe.

Not only does this town of ours follow in the gests of the philosophical Athenians, but they have a method of doing it which is taken straight from ancient history. We all know the Greek person who taught his disciples as they walked to and fro in a garden—if there were a classical dictionary handy we would all know where to look him up, so never mind the name.

It was undoubtedly the best way of teaching that had ever been invented. The moment the lecturer became tiresome there was escape at hand, and this promised not only greater care on the part of the speaker to preserve the interest, but did away with the feeling of hopelessness which dampens the ardor of an audience that is chained to a bench during the pleasure of some irrepressible person. It was a pity the method was ever abandoned, but fortunately it was merely sleeping, not dead, and it has been revived here in New York with most signal success.

The peripatetic philosopher comes to New York with the flowers that bloom in the Spring. You find him, or her, in all the poorer parts of the city, more or less, but especially in those or four neighborhoods. Little groups of them line the sidewalk all Summer long, strolling up and down, discussing art, literature, drama, Socialism, Anarchy, woman's suffrage, child labor, the horrors of evil, pragmatism, restricted immigration, Milwaukee politics, and any number of other subjects to the number of seventy times seven.

A few years ago the peripatetic philosophers were Russians only, and their one "garden" was East Broadway. East Broadway used to be called the Novsky Prospect of America for that reason. But now the custom of strolling about and discussing things in the streets has spread elsewhere.

The philosophers of East Broadway have gone northward to Harlem and the Bronx, and even to Brooklyn, while the custom has not been abandoned by their successors on the "Novsky Prospect," and other nationalities are acquiring the habit. Fifth avenue around 110th street is even more than East Broadway the happy hunting ground of the peripatetics. From that point down to the Park all philosophers know that the school will meet every fine day in Summer. Another school used last year to walk along Seventh Avenue north from 125th Street.

The Woman Suffrage and Women's Trades Union League people have done much to encourage this custom. The woman and her soap box opened the way for others with ideas on things in general. When the women first began to speak outside of the lower east side, which is pre-eminently the place where everybody minds his own business and you do as you choose, the right of free speech was so far from being a popular ideal that peripatetics had to seek the aid of the police when they wanted to philosophize.

The woman suffrage people tell a tale of a young speaker who was prepared to address the populace for the space of fifteen minutes, and so did, but at the end of the allotted time the crowd was getting ugly and there were no police in sight. She paused, but a tug at her skirt emphasized a distracted whisper from her companion that she had better keep right on and try to prevent an outburst.

She continued, her ideas evaporating as her throat grew husky. Half an hour and the orator passed again de-

The Boy of Twelve Patronizes a Woman Philosopher.

spairingly. Another tug and another distracted whisper. "For heaven's sake," muttered the speaker between gestures, "run for the police as I can't stop!" At the end of forty-five minutes help appeared and she rested from her labors.

So fully has the idea of using the streets for discussion been accepted by the people in general that the last meat strike on the east side was auditioned entirely from the sidewalks. There was not one meeting in a hall all through the women's campaign against the increase in the price of meat. Mrs. Anna Pastor, the mother of Rose Pastor Stokes, organized the strike in the Bronx, and on the lower east side the United Jewish Socialist districts managed the affair, doing everything by songs of walking up and down with the woman they sought to interest.

The Women's Trades Union League uses much the same methods. Their enthusiasts station themselves in the w y of a stream of girls pouring out of some great factory. It is a tremendously picturesque sight, the army of girls, coming wearily, worn with work, or running gayly to their playtime, stopping here and there to listen to the plea for union and deigning to walk up and down and discuss.

Once, in such a peripatetic school, a dramatic incident occurred. The leader people had been speaking with a group of women, among them a gaunt creature of 40 years or more who listened with amazed eagerness when some one talked of the worker's right to happiness.

She followed the speaker's argument with shining eyes, and at the end began to talk in turn. Never, she said, had she heard one speak what had been burning in her heart for twenty years. She was a widow with three children and she earned $6 a week. What was life to her but work all day and every day while she was well and charity when she was sick? It was not right; it must be changed—and forthwith the torrent of twenty years' bitterness flowed forth.

Those who heard her say it was wonderful, as if the prophet's adze had touched her lips with his coal of fire. She spoke for nearly twenty minutes to a growing group of listeners, and then stopped, appalled at what she had been able to do.

Street discussion like this is comparatively rare, but all the peripatetics speak of the wayfarer's instinct for sincerity, his acute questioning, his responsiveness to idealistic appeals. Sometimes there is humor, as when a boy of 12 struck up to a woman philosopher with his hands in his pockets and called:

"Say, when we give you the vote what are you going to do about municipal ownership?"

The peripatetics all agree that the first question from a passer by who joins their group is always "What are you going to do about"—something. The working man or woman always has a pet idea to spring at once. They have to think for themselves since the chance of any one's thinking for them is so very remote.

Peripatetic philosophy among the working people, carried on without any idea of making proselytes is especially a Jewish institution. It is not confined to that race, but it flourishes among them.

Any Jew has to struggle hard to keep from being a philosopher, and for a Russian Jew the effort is impossible. So the Jews talk and walk in their several districts, discussing different matters in different places, and passers by may listen or not as they may choose.

If you know what you want to hear talked just tell any Russian intellectual and he will direct you to the exact block where you will find what you want. The Socialists are prominent in Harlem, the Bronx, and Borough Park, Brooklyn. The peripatetics in those sections, for example, are discussing whether or not the Milwaukee experiment is a success or not. You will hear that it is a fine thing for the cause. You will hear that it is not. "Fabian"—and Fabian is in some quarters the last word of damnation. How can we advance when we compromise at every step? says the Bronx. And how can we advance unless we pick and choose our way? retorts Harlem.

Again, how about Briand in France? they want to know. Is he a statesman or a Judas? And kindly prove it, whatever you say.

Why did they forbid the first of May demonstration in Paris? Anybody can answer that, comrade, the last Parisy demonstration frightened the bourgeois half to death. Thousands of workmen, organized, disciplined, orderly, singing the songs of revolution—of course it could not be permitted again.

The Anarchists are always interesting. None need be bored in their company. Their talk runs to such abstruse questions as they affect—the Anarchists are pre-eminently the dreamers among the peripatetics, and the topics they discuss are all remote from prosaic day life.

They have quaint ways of putting things, too. It was at a peripatetic Anarchist meeting that a young man remarked the other day to a woman that he wished he were not a man—a woman merely as a woman was a sufficient asset in the world, "but we men have to be perpetually seeking ideas to justify our existence."

Not all peripatetics are revolutionary. Down on East Broadway the talk turns frequently on art, literature, and the drama.

Do you know Shalom Ash, reader? If you do not you had better acquaint yourself with him before attempting to walk up and down East Broadway with the philosophers. Ash wrote "The God of Vengeance," and he is a great question of dispute on the east side.

And Chaim Zhitlowsky, do you know him? He has an interesting theory about the Hebrew language, and it is discussed these Spring evenings all up and down the sidewalks of that queer country east of the Bowery.

Nor is the Bowery itself without its occasional philosopher. It was not long since that the present scribe walked back and forth before the ten, fifteen, and twenty-five cent lodging houses until after midnight with a few peripatetics who were holding forth on the nature of evil. It would be edifying to repeat what was said on that occasion, but to be quite truthful most of the talk was above the head of the scribe. There was a lot about Goethe, anyway, and he penned the case of the young man who worked in a sweatshop.

Moreover, can you be a Socialist and a Territorialist? That's a question to settle. Most people are not, but a good many are coming now to say yes, which is queer, because it was only six years ago that a Socialist said: "Oh, what is a Territorialist? Why, a Jew who believes that his people must have a land of their own somewhere soon—a follower of Israel Zangwill." This is a weighty question for East Broadway to discuss on dinner nights, and indeed some day the world may have to stop and listen to what East Broadway has said about it.

There is no need to dwell on the peripatetics who are absorbed in the struggle between the Hebrew literary maledictional and the literary drama. Their name is legion on the east side. They not only philosophize, but they gather and disperse all important news, such as whether or not Sir Hiumgarten, the Hebrew poet, is writing a play and whether Mrs. Kalvisky will come over. There is a group interested in such matters that peripatets in Division street.

So, you see, you need only to have an enthusiasm and know some one in these circles and you will find your school of philosophy awaiting you on the sidewalk. Considering how the habit has grown in the last two years, together with the fact that the custom is in a high degree practical, there is no reasonable doubt that it will spread.

For who cares, after a hard day's work, to sit in a close room and listen to a discourse, however edifying? And what is more charming than to stroll about in the open air and think high thoughts in good company?

The rich man has his clubs in which he may discuss Wall Street and such phases of present-day problems as interest him. The children poor man has the streets wherein to talk of wages and that sort of the social structure which concerns him and his.

The rich man has a pretty price for his privilege, and in the Winter he has the best of it.

Whether the talk is more intelligent in the club or on the street it would be indiscreet to say. Only, if you want to put your wager on the peripatetics, and will choose an impartial jury, some folk who know both sides say you will have a pretty good chance for your money.

A Torrent of Twenty Years' Bitterness Flowed Forth.

New York Times Sunday Magazine article from May 29, 1910
"A Boy of Twelve Patronizes a Woman Philosopher," "A Torrent of Twenty Years' Bitterness Flowed Forth"

The overwhelming success of MacLane's memoir speaks to the interest of the public in envisioning the boundaries of femininity in a different way. MacLane openly articulated desire for another woman and spoke of her frustrations with the gender and sexual restrictions she experienced at a time when society mostly categorized women as either simply "good" or "bad," with little room for variation from strict ideas about femininity and public versus private spheres. She speaks openly of her same-sex desire for her high school English teacher, Fannie Corbin, throughout her memoir, a desire that

begs for a more nuanced reading than that of a "school-girl crush on this teacher," as one MacLane scholar put it in 1977.[13]

MacLane referred to Corbin as "the anemone lady," and with this nickname she fuses a metaphoric representation of female sexuality—that of the flower—with a real connection to the landscape in which she shapes her peripatetic philosophy—the sand and barrenness. For it is when she is walking that she feels free to meditate on her feelings for Fannie: "But I love Fannie Corbin with a peculiar and vivid intensity, and with all the sincerity and passion that is in me. Often I think of her as I walk over the sand in my nothingness, all day long" (28). But the freedom of thought she experiences out in the sand and barrenness cannot be sustained in the society of her day, and MacLane depicts her fantasies of life with a woman lover in a space separate from society: "Often I think, if only I could have my anemone lady and go and live with her in some little out-of-the-world place high up on the side of a mountain for the rest of my life—what more would I desire?" (30).

What she might desire is a world that would accept her same-sex romantic longings. However, the world did not offer that acceptance to MacLane, who did not have the vocabulary to express her feelings for Fannie in anything other than hetero-normative terms in the frameworks for understanding sexuality that existed in 1902—when she thinks of her desire for another woman, she equates it to a "masculine element" present in herself and wishes that she was a man to give Fannie an "absolutely perfect love":

[13] Leslie Wheeler, "Montana's Shocking 'Lit'ry Lady'" 22.

> My life is a desert—a desert, but the thin, clinging perfume of the anemone reaches to its utter confines. And nothing in the desert is the same because of that perfume…I feel in the anemone lady a strange attraction of sex. There is in me a masculine element that, when I am thinking of her, arises and overshadows all the others. "Why am I not a man," I say to the sand and barrenness with a certain strained, tense passion…it is not the woman love, but the man love, set in the mysterious sensibilities of my woman nature. It brings me pain and pleasure mingled in that odd, odd fashion. Do you think a man is the only creature with whom one may fall in love? (130-131)

Elsewhere in her memoir MacLane expresses her love for the Devil and for Napoleon. It's clear her sexuality was conflicted at best, yet Fannie remains the only real, living person for whom MacLane expresses feelings, and the language she uses to express her feelings is significant: she uses words like "desert," "sand," and "barrenness" to depict a landscape that is inhospitable to vegetation and growth. MacLane symbolizes Fannie as a flower (the "anemone lady"), and flowers have a hard time growing in barren ground. Yet "the thin, clinging perfume of the anemone reaches to [the] utter confines. And nothing in the desert is the same because of that perfume." The way she expresses her view of the surrounding landscape and the possibilities—or lack thereof—that it offers reflect the social restrictions she feels.

Unlike many of the Romantic philosophers, she does not idealize the nature she traverses. To MacLane, Butte's environs "present as ugly an outlook as one could wish to see." Her perception of the landscape is partly due to the environmental effect of years of mining and partly due to her own outlook, shaped by the chafe of social restrictions.

Mining of what was known as the "richest hill on earth" had taken its toll on the landscape, leaving "the ground without a weed, without a grass-blade even in their season—for they have years ago been killed by the sulphur smoke from the smelters. So this sand and barrenness forms the setting for the personality of me" (12-13). MacLane rarely focuses on the cause of the barrenness (mining operations); her attention instead focuses on the effect the landscape has on her formation of self. The landscape shapes or structures her character ("so this sand and barrenness forms the setting for the personality of me") but she recognizes that the reverse is also true, and her outlook structures the way she views the landscape: "Think, oh, *think*, of being happy for a year—for a day! How brilliantly blue the sky would be; how swiftly and joyously would the green rivers run; how madly, merrily triumphant the four winds of heaven would sweep round the corners of the fair earth!" (18).

Neither the desires MacLane has for another woman nor the way she wants to express her femininity conform to traditional gender and sexual norms of her time. Her ideas on marriage provide an example of her non-traditional views. She opens the passage on her critique of marriage with a specific and quite critical reference to Butte: "I sit at my window and look out at the housetops and chimneys of Butte. As I look I have a weary, disgusted feeling. People are abominable creatures" (52). She goes from a view specific to Butte to a more general critique of humanity and the failings of human social structures:

MacLane's non-traditional view of marriage, Library of Congress photo

> Under each of the roofs live a man and woman joined together by that very slender thread, the marriage ceremony. How many of them love each other? Not two in a hundred, I warrant. The marriage ceremony is their one miserable, petty, paltry excuse for living together. This marriage rite, it appears, is often used as a cloak to cover a world of rather shameful things […] When a man and a woman love one another that is enough. That is marriage. A religious rite is superfluous. And if the man and woman live together without the love, no ceremony in the world can make it marriage. (52-53)

MacLane's scathing denunciation of the institution of marriage as "a cloak to cover a world of rather shameful things" alludes to what she likely saw as she sat at her window and looked down into the streets of Butte: prostitution, which was rampant in turn-of-the-century Butte and many other mining towns in the West. MacLane, who desired a life

with the woman she loved, was understandably dismayed by the sight of men going from their family home to the red light district; not because of the sexual nature of these outings, but because it made the life they lived in the open a farce. MacLane decided to move east after the publication of her memoir afforded her the opportunity, hoping that the social restrictions and pretenses that chafed her in Butte were merely the result of what she saw as the "provincial" nature of the town. However, despite her move to the East, MacLane did not escape the things that chafed her in the provincial town of Butte.

MacLane spent time in Chicago after the publication of her memoir and then settled in Boston for a year to write her next book. In this move to cities of the East, MacLane was an early participant in a phenomenon that Jack Halberstam calls metronormativity, a "story of migration from 'country' to 'town'" (36). In Halberstam's view, a spatial narrative of the queer community reads that one moves to the city, a place of tolerance, from the country, a space where the expression or suspicion of non-normative sexual desires or identity results in persecution (37). Scott Herring, in his studies of Southern regional identity, critiques the dominant narrative of the city as the only place where a non-normative sexual identity can be expressed, and MacLane certainly seemed to find it even more difficult to articulate much less live out her same-sex desires after she moved to Boston.

My Friend, Annabel Lee, MacLane's second book published in 1903, is the story of MacLane's life in Boston. The title, with its clear connection to Edgar Allen Poe's poem of the same name, is the first signal of the barely coded allusions to the unfulfilled love which structures the entire narrative. Catheryn Halverson reads this as the projection of MacLane's same-sex desires onto the title character, a ceramic figurine of a Japanese

woman that she brings to life in the story—by the second chapter, Annabel Lee is no longer just a figurine sitting on a shelf; she is talking and interacting as if she is a real woman, and in a sense, MacLane is acting out her desires by playing house with her. A series of conversations with Annabel Lee moves the narrative forward, with the only other characters appearing in MacLane's reminiscences about her life in Butte which she relates to Annabel Lee, and similarly, in the few stories Annabel Lee shares with MacLane about her life in Japan. The narrative style of *Annabel Lee* was less popular than MacLane's passionate inner revelations that made *The Story of Mary MacLane* such a success, and the reminiscences she shares with Annabel Lee makes one wonder if MacLane misses the Butte she so longed to escape. As Halverson states, "The forceful, vivid renditions of life in Butte that animate MacLane's first book, born of long familiarity and a frantic desire to escape, are replaced by vague accolades to Boston" ("Typical Tokio Smile" 61).

In *My Friend, Annabel Lee,* MacLane codes the same-sex desire that she openly expresses for Fannie Corbin in *The Story of Mary MacLane*. First, MacLane mentions her desire to live in the country with an unnamed "friend of my heart" during conversation with Annabel Lee (31). Her hope of an alternate life recalls the desire MacLane expressed in her memoir to "have my anemone lady and go and live with her in some little out-of-the-world place high up on the side of a mountain" (30). Second, she projects the feelings she expressed in *The Story of Mary MacLane* for Fannie Corbin, onto the ceramic figurine of Annabel Lee. It is through the relationship with a figurine that MacLane represents life with another woman. As Halverson states, "Having disavowed conventional family life in *The Story of Mary MacLane,* she now proposes an alternative

model" (61). Her representation of life with Annabel Lee, however, seems less meaningful than the expressions of desire in her memoir. For in the end, Annabel Lee remains a ceramic figurine, while her memoir expressed same-sex desire for another real woman.

After *My Friend, Annabel Lee* failed to bring the accolades and revenue that her first book had produced, MacLane visited New York, gambled her way through the resorts of St. Augustine, and spent time in Chicago trying to collect money from her bankrupt publisher. She visited Butte in 1910, a trip that landed her there, wittingly or unwittingly, for seven years after she was struck with scarlet fever and became seriously ill.

MacLane dropped out of the public eye until the 1917 publication of her second memoir, *I, Mary MacLane: A Diary of Human Days*. In *A Diary of Human Days*, MacLane returns to the style of interior expression that brought her such success in 1902, yet unlike her previous writing, her later memoir expresses feelings of guilt for how she has not fit into traditional gender roles or lived up to social expectations. There is an increasing focus on normative social themes such as religion and marriage in addition to a sense of regret about her life. References to "wasted" strength and opportunities pepper her bodily representations, standing in stark contrast to bodily representations in her earlier work. For example, she invites the reader of *The Story of Mary MacLane* to:

> …gaze at and admire the picture in the front of this book. It is the picture of a genius—a genius with a good, strong, young woman's body,—and inside the pictured body is a liver, a MacLane liver, of admirable perfectness. Other young women and older women and men of all ages have good bodies also, I doubt not

> […] but few recognize the value of their bodies; few have grasped the possibilities, the artistic graceful perfection, the poetry of human flesh in its health. (21)

Her celebration of her healthy female body in her early work differs drastically from her lament in *A Diary of Human Days*: "There is also the accusation, now against my body; for tissues and strength wasted, for useless fires meant to warm human seeds to life, meant to make me fruitful, meant to make me bear dear race-burdens: accusation for the cosmic waste of hot, objectless desire, for the subtle guilt of a Lesbian tendency, for an unleashed, over-positive, sex-fancy" (50). Here, MacLane is not actively inviting the reader to look at and admire her body as she did in *The Story of Mary MacLane*. Instead, she relates to her reader the societal accusation she has felt in her later years because of her unconventional ideas and desires that led to her "wasted" reproductive capability. The rebellious attitude and unabashed social critique developed in her early writing did not withstand the years spent on the East Coast, and MacLane expresses her frustration with social restrictions through bodily representations: the "tissues and strength wasted" on an "unleashed, over-positive, sex-fancy" depicting the assertions that society had leveled against her unconventional expression of same-sex desire and her earlier celebration of "the poetry of human flesh in its health."

In addition to the differences in physical representations and the accusations against her "wasted" body, MacLane's later memoir also contains a sense of despondency about her resistance to normative social values. Early in the narrative, she meditates on how she is separated from "New York, from London, – the Spain castles – the Pyramids – the Isle of Lesbos" by the mountains that surround Butte (6). With her

portrayal of being cut off from cultural centers, including the island which is meant to represent a cultural origin of the same-sex desires she felt, MacLane here depicts the same landscape that used to provide the space for her to develop her own philosophy as separating her from the supposed cultural origins of the subject of her philosophies. What was once viewed as an opportunity is now viewed as a loss. At the same time that a sense of guilt and more normative social values are present in her later work, the walks where she developed her peripatetic philosophy are more absent. The connection seems undeniable, as MacLane's personal struggles with living out the radical ideas she formed in her youth coincide with the deterioration of her health after a bout of scarlet fever, from which she never fully recovered. Her deteriorating health made the long, rambling walks on which she developed her peripatetic philosophy harder for her, and the geographic and psychological space which helped her articulate a social critique was mostly absent from her later life. As she states in *Diary of Human Days*:

> I am tranquil for today I had a walk that made me feel Sincere and Safe. It is a comforting feeling; it is like a beef sandwich. It was a long walk south-east of Butte along an outskirting road where I used often to walk when I was sixteen—a broad gray desert. It was the same sand and barrenness […] But the same feet which once readily bore me seven miles along that road ache now at three. All of me ached as I walked along. (19)

In the same way that her body was no longer able to carry her as easily on her walks through the sand and barrenness she made famous in *The Story of Mary MacLane*, her philosophical ideas about same-sex desire and gender conventions were no longer able to sustain her psychologically in the face of restrictive social mores.

The freedom of movement of women's bodies directly connects to the changing gender norms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as women increasingly demanded access to and autonomy in the male-dominated public sphere and in political, professional, and leisure activities. Freedom of movement was hard fought in the public sphere, and women sought equality in political life as well as in social and leisure activities; women's ability to move through public spaces unescorted provided a social mobility previously unafforded to many, whether walking, riding bicycles, or participating in sports and business life. Echoes of the emphasis on physical health and activity central to the women's rights movement of their period occur in the stories of Annie Oakley, "Tommy, the Unsentimental," and Mary MacLane, who serve as examples of the literary and cultural history of the West that document the shifts that occurred in gender roles and identities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Previous studies of women in the West credit the region as the factor that allowed greater freedom of gender expression; however, my own argument centers the freedoms that these three examples exhibit as tied to the mobility they created in their lives. Rather than the open landscape and sparse population providing relief from restrictive gender norms, these examples show that gender transgression occurred with the efforts of women to increase their professional, social, and physical mobility. Aspects of this mobility and its connection to increased freedom, although liberatory in this context of gender and sexual expression, has its own biases and naturalized ideologies, a point of contention that chapter two explores in the narratives of American Indian women writers who negotiate bodily and political sovereignty in their work.

Chapter II

Telling and Surviving History in American Indian Women's Writing

Chapter two complicates the act of written self-creation that expanded the representations of gender and sexual identity in chapter one, as American Indian writers negotiate self-creation through written English, a language often limited when expressing concepts and cultures based on oral tradition. Additionally, authorship in American Indian culture is not solely an act of self-creation but also functions as an expression of community that depicts a sense of ongoing tribal traditions and presence and has historically been mediated through collaboration with white editors to create a bicultural composition that reflects not only individual and tribal identity, but also shows the cultural exchange that happens at the literary intersection of American Indian and white culture. This chapter traces the contemporary work of Diane Glancy, which examines notions of tribal identity and place-based embodiment as conceptions of tribal and personal sovereignty, back through Sarah Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* (1880) and Mariana Burgess's *Stiya* (1891), which highlight the tension between the settlers of the West and its original inhabitants and through Zitkála-Šá's collection *American Indian Stories* (1902-1904), which lays bare the propagandistic nature of how *Stiya* utilizes discourses of hygiene and domesticity to validate the assimilation policies in place at Carlisle and other Indian schools. The didactic and moralizing portrayal of native life in *Stiya* makes clear the importance of agency in American Indians telling their own stories through self-representation and rhetorical embodiment that accurately depicts their lived experience and bodily reality. The texts included in the chapter demonstrate that the body

is always a constellation of political principles; language produces bodies, and therefore bodies reflect the power struggles of the political subject based on race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability. The significance and practice of self writing through a communal perspective that Glancy employs are possible through the groundwork that Winnemucca and Zitkála-Šá laid to understand the links between disciplining hygienic bodies, sexual violence, tribal sovereignty, and colonial power structures.

One Voice is Not Enough to Tell a Story: Writing as Community Creation

Diane Glancy's 2002 *Designs of the Night Sky* stands as an example of storying made possible by the cadre of American Indian women who wrote, composed, and collaborated on written works during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The experimental novel centers around Ada Ronner, a roller-skating librarian, whose meditative observations about language and the move from oral to written tradition parallel both the history of Cherokee removal and her own family's struggles with violence and connectedness. Rather than telling the story through a linear narrative, Glancy reveals information primarily through memory, poetry, dreams, and Ada's inner ruminations. Ada focuses on language in much the same way that legal scholar Sarah Deer insists on the importance of words: "I am interested in the words we choose, what they mean, and the effects they have on the way we conceive of patriarchal power and control. […] I use the term *sovereignty* in two senses, referring to both political sovereignty and personal sovereignty. I conceive of sovereignty as a description of self-determination" (Deer xv). Ada's poetic explorations delve into the effect words have on conceptions of power, control, the process of history making, and her connection to the

archival material written about her tribe stored in the rare books section of the library where she works emphasizes the importance of telling your own story to recover personal and political self-determination.

Glancy's work incorporates aspects of oral tradition and storying to express community, futurity, and continuity with tribal knowledge and traditions at the same time that it reveals the struggles of identity that are a common part of the postmodern condition. The balance between relating singular experiences and representing an ongoing tribal presence exists in the construction and form of the narrative itself, as well as in the ways that stories are narrated and voices represented. *Designs of the Night Sky* stands as an example of both the importance of form and the tension that exists between oral and written expression, continuing a tradition of American Indian women writers that demonstrates how bodies are shaped, molded, and disciplined through language and therefore a result of power struggles over identity and self-determination. Glancy's use of fiction to deal with historical traumas and ongoing questions about identity signal a freedom not available to the American Indian women who came before her, whose published works were autobiographical or presented as ethnographic stories in order to maintain a sense of veracity with a reading public that questioned their rhetorical authority. Glancy's poetic fiction builds on the works that came before, while also finding the freedom to experiment with genre, form, and narrative structure.

Glancy's narrative consists of small chapters that range from a single paragraph to just over two pages. In the preface, she calls these chapters "named spaces." Glancy draws upon Karl Kroeber's *Artistry of Native American Myths* to explain the significance of her narrative structure, as Kroeber states that, "Indian myths are often constituted of

distinct narrative units that may be told separately or in differing combinations" (xi). The narrative's structure makes use of this concept in both form and content, and what Kroeber calls "modular form" or "narrative modularity" are important concepts for understanding *Designs of the Night Sky* (xi). Glancy's own description of the narrative structure calls attention to the way that through the telling of the story, she is engaging with larger questions of American Indian oral tradition and authorship and in her written words (the "named spaces") she is maintaining a connection to origin stories, creation myths, and a sense of place-based storytelling. The text's insistence on named *spaces*, which would normally become places once they are given names, points to a desire to demonstrate structurally the in-flux, instability, and motion of language. As Crystal Alberts makes clear, Glancy's use of the term "space" signifies the motion and interchangeable nature of the text: "Place implies stability, one specific spot in one set position. Space shifts; it is constantly in motion and cannot be relegated to one exact, permanent location. Space is also that which is in between two places. […] as an academic, Glancy recognizes that there is no way to recover an absolute whole, especially in words" (115). The modular form allows Glancy to play with expression in an experimental, poetic manner, and her understanding of the irretrievability of "an absolute whole" allows her fictional narrative the space to work through concepts and questions that haunt American Indian literature with a different sort of freedom than her precursors whose work was autobiographical. The short chapters present the recurring themes of oral versus written, Cherokee removal, and family history to readers in a repetitive, almost meditative fashion. The chapters can be read from beginning to end, or approached at random. She approaches the same themes again and again, accessed from

different angles and worked smooth: what starts as harsh and jagged becomes if not polished then at least more comfortable throughout the course of the narrative.

Designs of the Night Sky opens with a meditation on the move from the oral to the written, a topic the main character Ada Ronner struggles with throughout the narrative. In the first chapter, "The Library," the spoken word is in a struggle with the written word, and Ada's perspective at this point is clear from her description:

> The books have voices. I hear them in the library…I know the voices are from the books. Yet I know the old stories do not like books. Do not like the written words. Do not like libraries. The old stories carry all the voices of those who have told them. When a story is spoken, all those voices are in the voice of the narrator. But writing the words of a story kills the voices that gather in the sound of the storytelling. The story is singular then. (5)

Ada wastes no time pointing out the discrepancies in housing "the old stories," the myths and oral tradition of her tribe, in the written form. In the oral tradition, stories are shaped by a multitude of voices, as each storyteller will tell a story in their own particular manner, adding meaning through tone and inflection. Storytelling in oral tradition, as Ada states, "carries the voices of those who have told" the stories over generations. Oral tradition relies on a sense of community for its very survival. In oral tradition you cannot take language for granted, as the stories are always only one generation away from being forgotten; with this structure, things like community and family are essential to keep the stories alive. The move from oral to written takes a tradition that relies on many voices and shifts it to the singular act of a lone author.

Yet the first chapter presents the move from oral to written in a negative way, as Ada says: "Maybe the voices camp in the library because the written words hold them there. Maybe they are captives with no place else to go" (5). Her description of the voices of the past as captives sets the scene for another important theme of the text: the journey of removal from the Cherokee homeland in the southeastern United States to Tahlequah, Oklahoma, Ada's home and the setting of *Designs of the Night Sky*. The narrative intermixes ruminations on oral and written stories with the history of removal to highlight an important point about the written form that American Indian and women writers have long been aware of: the authority to tell the stories that are official, recognized, and believed often lies with those who have power in society. Here Glancy deals with the issue of agency that haunts the narratives of the American Indian writers featured in this chapter. Glancy approaches the issue of agency in the same poetic fashion as the other themes of the narrative: giving her readers ideas to mull over in the space of a short chapter, only to introduce them again later, approaching them from another angle as the narrative progresses.

Ada introduces Cherokee history in two ways: through Ada's narrative and the inclusion of military journal entries that stand in stark contrast to the meditative and thoughtful narrative that Ada weaves throughout the pages. In the chapter titled "America," Ada unmasks the simplification of American history, telling readers that "They called it the New World, but it was the Old World they came to without knowing. America has multiple histories, multiple heritages. There's a lot about a lot it doesn't know. The Indian languages are the history of the continent, if language shapes. Which it does" (72). The frustration with the official version of American history is apparent here,

and the line "there's a lot about a lot it doesn't know" reveals the narrative's frustration with historical authority and the narrowing of stories down to a singular narrative, the way that schools and the popular imagination often frame history. The historical accounts of the Cherokee removal are not nearly as self-aware as the narrative Ada weaves. The accounts, which Glancy records from a document titled "Cherokee Emigration" C-553 "Special File 249," are housed at the National Archives Office of Indian Affairs in Washington DC, and they unselfconsciously record a series of facts that construct a gruesome picture despite the objective reporting. The first documents record the journey of 250 Cherokee Indians being removed by Lieutenant Edward Deas of the US Army from Waterloo, Alabama to Indian territory on a boat named "The Smelter," which Deas comments is "well adapted to the business of removal of Indians" (11). The image provoked with this description is that of a vessel used to smelt metal, a process that uses heat to burn off the unwanted substances, a grisly parallel to the governmental process of Indian removal. The thought provoking story Ada presents stands in stark contrast with Deas's journal entries interspersed throughout the narrative.

The entries that document the second route of emigration, from east Tennessee to Fort Coffee, Arkansas, record the time the boat set out in the morning, the weather, the food on board, and other details deemed noteworthy enough for official documentation, and the number of deaths since the last record punctuates the end of the entry. The presentation of impartial facts, death being one of them, looks stark upon the pages that stand between the narrative Ada weaves, and Lieutenant R.H.K. Whetily's record of "Two deaths (children)," "one death (a child)," "Between two & three hundred sick & four & five deaths daily," "some days as high as six or seven," feels like a verbal assault

(81-3). At the end of his two-month long journal, he records that 602 Indians were present and officially documents 70 deaths along the journey, although this number seems low according to his own previous estimates of four to five and as high as six or seven deaths daily.

The way that this authorized narrative places importance and validity in just one man's words (which, in the case of these journal entries, takes a record of weather and mileage and places them on par with the loss of human life) essentially takes a subjective experience and calls it objective truth, a process that Ada decries in her own construction of family and tribal history. She struggles with this defined notion of truth, saying "I believe in truth, which would become a possible truth, which would become the possibilities of truth, which would become the truth of possibilities. Anything to shift the truth from what it is. The history of loss and silence about the loss. I want to open it to shiftings, driftings. I want to fragment the solid block of it" (57). Fragmenting the solid block of history, loss, and silence means opening language up to possibilities instead of using it to close off and limit what can be said and what voices will be heard.

The story behind these records can be read between the lines, or in the spaces, which Ada seems intent on doing—she creates a narrative out of words meant to elide the consequences of removal and diminish the history of her community. Ada's declaration that, "…they named us, knowing story is the first act" (73) stands in contrast to Whetily's record that, "The Indians express a great aversion to the water route, and want neither to take anything or give up their names" (81). Ada's description emphasizes the importance of story, while Whetily's structure places importance on the Cherokees' aversion to the task at hand, while the way that he tacks on the phrase "give up their names" to the end of

the sentence serves to hide the significance of what lies behind the words: renaming, new identities, colonial control. The book emphasizes the process of naming and uncovering origins, as Ada muses on the origins of her community and on the origin and importance of the written word. The metaphors she creates seem to both laugh at and heal the divisions between oral and written that frame many of the struggles throughout the text. In "Creation Myths for the Written Word," she describes a multitude of possibilities for the origin of writing. A few of her possibilities: "The voice kept telling stories, faster and faster, louder, louder, until the voice caught fire. After the blaze (which raged for days, some say) (or months, according to others), people touched the ashes with their fingers and made the first written words. Now stories can be told without combustion" (138). And, "Once a Buick drove up, emptied its ashtrays: the butts were the first letters of the alphabet" (138). The articulation of writing's place in cosmology explains the significance of the title, *Designs of the Night Sky*: "Yes. The stars are alphabet. That's where the idea for writing came from: the stars. They are written words; their constellations moving the way books in the library circulate. Written words are the lesser lights. Yes. The greater light is still the sun, the voice" (140).

Ada embodies the themes of the text and the stories of her community, its history, and creation myths; she hears the voices of the past in the archives and when engaged in her favorite activity: roller skating. Ada uses the circular motion she experiences in the rink to echo the motion implied in the narrative modularity; the themes of the text, which are also the themes of her life, manifest during the moments when she is engaged in her work or her leisure activity. Ada's bodily motion in these circumstances expresses ideas of space, and Ada's circles around the roller rink emphasize movement that she compares

to her brother's long distance truck driving—the only time he can find peace. These connections to motion and movement echo the history of Cherokee removal and the way it is still felt in her family:

> At the Dust Bowl, Tahlequah's roller rink, my skates are the wheels of a plane. I feel them under me. Where do I go when I take off? The wooded hills and rolling land of northeastern Oklahoma. The post oaks and blackjacks, the corner posts in fields. When I skate at the rink, I am the written word let loose in spoken story. I hear the other voices with which mine can be known. Other voices by which mine will not be alone. […] My story is the eight small wheels under my feet in the roller rink. A circle within a square, though the building is more of a rectangle, and the rink more of an oval. The roller rink is a trickster hiding its magic, its floor of maple strips, waxed, polished, waiting. I hear the sound of wheels on the floor as I lace the skates on my feet. I hear the old Cherokee voices as I skate. They're from the library also. Maybe Manuscripts and Rare Books is a skating rink for the spirit world. I know the voices talk while they skate. I know I skate with the ancestors. (15-16)

Ada and her brother embody the history of removal through their need for motion, carrying the tribal memories in their bodies and enacting the history in their movements. This embodied history exists and lives on in a way that the official documents of history cannot; even though the Cherokee version of the boat journey was not written and is lost to history, it lives on in the Ronners' bodily interactions with their environment. The embodied sense of history can also be seen in a communal setting, at the "Truthettes" bible study meetings that Ada holds. As Alberts notes, "Maintaining the connection

between history, language, space, and place, at the close of the Truthettes first meeting, Ada envisions that the ancient ones and their recorded voices are no longer confined to the bound book, but move freely down a road, which again echoes the constant theme of movement and restlessness that permeates the text" (129). The movement of the ancient voices from the pages of a book to freely traversing a road happens here in the communal setting, further enforcing the sense of embodied history and community narrative.

Ada Ronner seeks to construct a sense of self that is consistent with her modern existence as a librarian of Manuscripts and Rare Books that also honors the many voices she hears in the stories from her tribe's past housed in her department of the library. The negotiation of many voices narrowed to a singular perspective haunts Ada throughout the narrative, as she struggles to understand and relate her own family's story while honoring the stories that carry the voices from her tribe's past into her present day world. Her ruminations on the move from an oral to a written culture show Ada's own imagination, as she shares her creation myths for the written word and the multiple possibilities available in the written form. Ada's lived experience is not singular, but rather influenced by the stories of her tribe that call to her from the pages of the books in the library, and contains the history and memory of the Cherokee removal, her family's connection to the land they were resettled on in Tahlequah, and her own experiences as an archival librarian. The multiplicity of influences that create Ada's lived experience demonstrates the way that language constructs bodies as well; embodiment is always already political, with bodily realities reflecting ideologies about race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability.

The combination of experiences that Glancy depicts in Ada's narration shows the complicated mixture of personal, familial, tribal, and historically authorized experiences

that create a sense of narrative community in her writing. The multiplicity of voices Glancy presents through memory, flashback, historical documents, poetic non-linear lines, tribal stories, and lists of tribal and historical information combine to create a historically informed vision of Ada's present that is empathetic to the way these histories are embodied in the narrator and her family. The way that Glancy's novel depicts Ada's struggle with the multitude of voices clamoring to be heard stands as a contemporary example of difficulties earlier American Indian authors faced when writing and publishing in a culture where they were denied rhetorical authority and both their individual and tribal stories required corroboration from outside sources. Glancy's narrative style contains echoes of the authors who came before her, and these earlier examples of American Indian writing like Sarah Winnemucca and Zitkála-Šá made possible the narrative devices Glancy poetically deploys throughout *Designs of the Night Sky*.

Winnemucca's Rag Friend: Representing the Frontier

Sarah Winnemucca seized the opportunities provided by the written form in her memoir, *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims*. Published in 1883, Winnemucca's autobiographical text documents the early interactions between her tribe and the "white brothers" that were early settlers in Nevada and California, but her use of the written form extends beyond the anthropological documentation of Paiute culture and native/white interaction. Through sophisticated rhetorical maneuvering, Winnemucca portrays the violence that many native women faced from white settlers in addition to the mistreatment the entire tribe experienced from settlers and government agents.

Winnemucca's narrative shows how the written word was a source of conflict through the treaties that were signed without being read, but also a form of power as evidenced in the "rag friend" her grandfather got from the first settlers and her own ability to communicate with people in power, both locally and nationally. Writing was also a source of conflict outside of the bounds of the text, as critics have debated the level of mediation provided by Mary Peabody Mann, Winnemucca's friend and the editor of *Life Among the Piutes*. Despite debates about collaboration/co-creation with Mann, Winnemucca's memoir stands as an early example of the challenges and possibilities that writing provides to American Indian women authors, and her expressions of indigenous feminism through her use of storytelling to nurture and build community stand as an early example of the type of community building American Indian women participate in through their writing.

Winnemucca's collaboration with Mann to produce her autobiography provides another level of rhetorical savvy to the text when considering the cultural circumstances of American Indian women when it was published in 1883. Winnemucca's text exists as a "bicultural document," produced through collaboration between Indian autobiographer and Anglo editor in a process of oral autobiographical storytelling (Brumble 11). The collaborative process and the lack of traditional autobiographical markers may be frustrating to a reader looking for an unmediated American Indian autobiography depicting pre-contact life and values. However, consideration of the context that Winnemucca found herself in as a lecturer during the 1880s helps to explain the expediency of including Mann in the composition process; as Tish Twomey explains, "if a piece of writing does not seem to *be* an autobiography, what needs to be known to understand the piece *as it is*, is not how it differs from things that *do* seem to be

autobiographies but what rhetorical context called it into being, and what purpose was served by the rhetorical action the written product represents" (Twomey 24, emphasis original). The rhetorical context in which *Life Among the Piutes* was produced included an ill-disposed reading public whose assumptions about American Indians bordered on hostility, particularly to Winnemucca with her "complicated sexual history" that was described at best as "extensive and diversified matrimonial experience, the number of her white husbands being variously estimated at from three to seven" (121). The respectability and powerful connections that Mann had to offer the project helped mitigate the questions raised about Winnemucca's character. Mann's connections included her husband, well-known educator Horace Mann; her brother, a publisher and author; brother-in-law Nathaniel Hawthorne; and herself, as an author in her own right (121). Thus, Mann offers a level of respectability to the project that was necessary if it was to have the impact that Winnemucca hoped. What Twomey calls a project of "recuperation and validation" was standard for American Indian autobiographies of this period, as the collaboration between white editor and native author make the final product something acceptable for its target audience: white women passionate about reform movements (123). The process of collaboration benefitted Mann as well as Winnemucca, as is evidenced by Mann's later novel *Juanita: A Romance of Real Life in Cuba Fifty Years Ago*, which echoed the literary ethnography and calls for women to lead reform movements featured in *Life Among the Piutes*. Both Winnemucca and Mann saw the political exigency for this book, and the collaboration proved beneficial to both parties, for which credit is due to Winnemucca and her rhetorical savvy in reaching the largest audience possible through collaboration with Mann.

Life Among the Piutes documents interactions between the Paiutes and American settlers and soldiers, who Winnemucca says "came in like a lion, yes, like a roaring lion, and have continued so ever since" (5). Winnemucca, born around 1844, was a young girl when the frontier first crept into Paiute territory, and as the granddaughter of the chief of the Paiute Nation, she occupied a privileged position to witness and document the effects of Westward expansion. Her grandfather, Chief Truckee, was excited about the first party of whites her tribe encountered, as a tribal legend documented how the world began with four siblings, two dark and two white, who quarreled as children and were separated by their parents. Believing that their tribe descended from the dark children, Chief Truckee was eager to reunite with the race descended from his long lost white brother and sister.

The third year after the white emigrants began to appear, Truckee befriended Captain Fremont and traveled with him to California to fight in the U.S.-Mexico war. Upon his return, he carried the document that he cherished as one of his most prized possessions: the letter of commendation from Captain Fremont that he nicknamed his "rag friend." Its appearance marks the first mention of writing in the narrative, and the position of the "rag friend" in Winnemucca's text shows the power that imbued the written form in Truckee's imagination, as he introduced the document by praising the mystical power it contained:

> He then showed us a more wonderful thing than all the others that he had brought. It was a paper, which he said could talk to him. He took it out, and he would talk to it, and talk with it. He said, 'This can talk to all our white brothers, and our white sisters, and their children…He also said the paper can travel like the wind,

> and it can go and talk with their fathers and brothers and sisters, and come back to tell what they are doing, and whether they are well or sick. (19)

The "rag friend" had the power not only to communicate with those who read it, but also with Truckee. Throughout the text the rag friend embodies the power of multiple forms of communication: letter, telegraph, diagnostic tool. This example of the written form shows how writing was first incorporated into Paiute culture; Truckee imbues the rag friend with mystical traits as its value and purpose change depending on the scenario. Here the written word functions like oral tradition, where the story fluctuates depending on the storyteller and the circumstances which lead to its telling, a literary device which shows how the story shifted to best address the audience at hand. Winnemucca's detailed descriptions of the first instance of the written word and the way its function aligned with oral tradition give agency to Truckee and the Paiutes in the interaction of oral and written culture, as the written word does not occlude or supersede oral tradition but rather takes on its characteristics, showing the resiliency of oral culture in the face of change.

Other members of the tribe recognize the power of the rag friend, and it becomes a symbol of communication that assures safety in navigating the non-native world. Winnemucca's mother references how it allows them to travel safely when Sarah and her family go to California; on the way the power of the rag friend was clear as Winnemucca explains how the rag friend functioned in encounters with other travelers:

> Grandfather said, I am going to show them my rag friend... I saw him take out the paper which he called his rag friend and give it to one of the men who stood looking at it; then he looked up and came toward him and held out his hand to my grandfather, and then the rest of the white men did the same all round…the next

> morning I could not eat, and said to my mother—'let us go back to father—let us not go with grandpa, for he is bad.' My poor mother said, 'we can't go alone; we would all be killed if we go, for we have no rag friend as father has.' (26)

In this construction, the rag friend mirrors Winnemucca's own writing, which Rosalyn Collings Eves argues shapes the parameters of the spaces in which she writes. Eves's view that the disciplinary spaces where Winnemucca often produced her work (military fort and reservation) influenced her work and are at play here, as the rag friend has different rhetorical functions in different places. Places are experienced as concrete sites influenced by cultural factors that shape our interpretations, and "these places and landscapes in turn influence the social behaviors of the individuals situated with them" (Eves 2). As such, place is "not separable from the embodied individuals who experience it," and individuals experience places differently depending on their intersection of unique embodiments, including race, gender, and sexual orientation (3). With this in mind, Eves argues that Winnemucca's writing searches for a "shared rhetorical space," either a physical or cultural place that allows her audience to identify with her situation, and therefore makes her argument on behalf of her people persuasive (2). This dynamic can be seen in the way that the rag friend functions in the text: it provides security when they are in places where misunderstanding can occur, functioning in a way that creates a shared rhetorical space and allows communication. However, without the rag friend, Winnemucca and her mother experience California quite differently than her grandfather due to their gender. Winnemucca and her mother are unable to return to Nevada, for without the protection offered by the rag friend, they have no way to communicate with settlers and the potential for attack makes the journey too dangerous to risk. It soon

becomes clear in the text that the danger the Paiute women face encompasses more than just a lack of communication.

They winter near the San Juaquin River, where the Paiute women felt the threat of sexual violence acutely. As Winnemucca narrates their situation, she flips Turner's paradigm of the frontier as a meeting point between savagery and civilization, portraying her own civilization being threatened by white savagery. Her assesment aligns with legal scholar Sarah Deer's description of the omnipresence of rape in Indian Country in *The Beginning and End of Rape*. Deer critiques the use of "epidemic" to describe the horrific amount of sexual violence, preferring instead to pin the blame on the criminal offender, which in addition to the actual perpetrator is also the US colonial system and governmental structures which uphold racist ideologies. As Deer notes, "Using the word *epidemic* to talk about violence in Indian Country is to depoliticize rape. It is a fundamental misstatement of the problem […] rape is a fundamental result of colonialism, a history of violence reaching back centuries. An epidemic is a contagious disease, rape is a crime against humanity" and "rape can be employed as a metaphor for the entire concept of colonialism. The damage to self and spirit that rapists cause has some of the same features that colonial governments perpetrate against entire nations" (Deer x, xvii). Deer's concept of rape as a metaphor for the concept of colonialism is similar to Winnemucca's use of brotherhood to critique its lack in the white settlers: "The men whom my grandpa called his brothers would come into our camp and ask my mother to give our sister to them. They would come in at night, and we would all scream and cry; but that would not stop them" (34). The first whisper of sexual violence in the text, this passage and the continued implication of violation and rape speak volumes about

Winnemucca and her audience. Deer calls rape "the unspeakable trauma," and rather than being directly stated, Winnemucca's word choices and rhetorical strategies here and throughout the remainder of the text imply the act of rape rather than directly state it (Deer xi).

Winnemucca uses the rhetoric of the time which could signal the violence that Westward expansion brought to the women of her tribe without explicitly naming it and alienating her audience. As Margo Lukens states, Winnemucca showed how the Paiutes suffered under the abuse of the reservation system and Westward expansion: "By means of detailed stories of human interest and pathos, she sought to move her readers to take the steps to change their government's policy that the Paiutes were powerless to take on their own behalf" (95). With this political aim in mind, alienating her readers would be foolish. The target audience for *Life Among the Piutes*, middle to upper class white women in the East, were well versed in the imagery of domesticity, and Winnemucca utilizes the power of domestic imagery and rhetoric to introduce the threat of sexual violence in the text with her descriptions of the experiences her family has in settlers' homes. Her construction critiques not only Westward expansion but also the ideology of separate spheres which kept American women in the private sphere; the text mobilizes and relies on the ideology of separate spheres, channeling domesticity as a source of protection against violence. However, this protection is only afforded to the white women readers, as Winnemucca and the other Paiute women experience domesticity as a threat rather than a source of safety.

The first depiction of rape occurs early in the text, as in the first chapter Winnemucca narrates an incident that happened one night in their tent before they had the

chance to go away and hide as she says they did every night to avoid the white men. Winnemucca sets a scene in which two white men enter their tent. She then leaves a space in the narrative, next relating that when she awoke they were in a boarding house and she wonders if they had killed her sister. The narrative blank speaks volumes about what cannot be said. When they all head downstairs, the violence perpetrated on her sister is alluded to again. Their mother says they will go out, but her sister responds: "There is no outlet to the house. We can't get out" (35). Her sister's knowledge that the house traps them indicates the terror of confinement and rape that her sister experienced as it highlights the cultural differences regarding the position of women in American and Paiute culture. The depiction of the house as a trap sets the stage for her critique of the violence of settler colonialism as well as the regressive gender restrictions of separate spheres in American society which clash with Paiute culture, where women are not confined to the domestic sphere and the domestic reality portrayed by Winnemucca contrasts with the restrictive and violent image of American domesticity.

The violence the Paiute women experienced in the domestic space of the settlers is juxtaposed with the domestic practices of the Paiute culture in the next chapter, "Domestic and Social Moralities," which begins with the declaration that "Our children are very carefully taught to be good. Their parents tell them stories, traditions of old times, even of the first mother of the human race; and love stories […] We are taught to love everybody" (45). Winnemucca contrasts the values that she describes about the Paiute culture (goodness, love) with the violence experienced in the domestic spaces of the settlers. Like Zitkála-Šá, she paints a different image of American Indian life than what the American cultural imagination pictured at the time. Winnemucca's description

of domestic life includes details of the Festival of Flowers, descriptions of marriage ceremonies, and a discussion of the way the council tent was open to women, unlike American politics. The passage Winnemucca constructs about the tribal council demonstrates to her audience that her culture is advanced and peaceful, an idea she contrasts with the American settlers and government:

> 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. I can't tell about all Indians; but I know my own people are kind to everybody that does not do them harm; but they will not be imposed upon, and when people are too bad they rise up and resist them. (53-54)

Here, Winnemucca presents her tribal traditions as egalitarian, fair, and open to women. The image of the American Congress where women are not welcome contrasts to Piute traditions, a point that would resonate with her audience of Eastern white women, many of whom were concerned with the suffrage and abolition movements. And again, the kindness of her people contrasts with the image of Indians as bloodthirsty savages in popular culture. Winnemucca's collaboration with Mann is here seen at work to advance the projects of interest to them and their readers: women in the public sphere and that of the "Indian question."

The imagery of sexual violence in the home returns later in the text, as Winnemucca weaves together her grandfather's death, the War of 1860, and the legend of a cannibalistic tribe to portray her feelings about Westward expansion and the barbarism

of white settlers. The scene of her grandfather's death depicts the emotional turmoil that Winnemucca and her family experience while showing his staunch belief in the written word and the possibility of peace with his white brothers. His final words show that his attachment to the rag friend has not waned, as he asks that his son "place it on my breast when you bury me" (69). After the readers understand that the tribe will no longer have the rag friend to aid in their relations with settlers, the narrative jumps to the War of 1860. The move from the burial of Chief Truckee to the start of a war is significant, and signals to readers that relations between the Paiutes and the whites no longer reflect the ideal of brotherhood that Truckee hoped for.

Winnemucca contends that the War of 1860 began with the disappearance of two young girls. In their search for them, the tribe confronts two traders who live not far from where the girls disappeared. They examine the men's house, and find nothing until the Paiute men refuse to trade their horse and the white men set their dog loose to attack them. When childrens' voices answer their cries after being bitten, they knew the girls must be hidden nearby. Tensions rose, and eventually one of the traders opened a trap door to reveal the girls "lying on a little bed with their mouths tied up with rags" (71). Winnemucca's word choice is significant here, as this is the first use of the word "rag" since Chief Truckee was buried with his rag friend. Here, rags were used by the white traders to stifle communication rather than to foster it, but Winnemucca does not allow their abuses to go unnoted in her narrative. Her description of them "lying on a little bed" calls on sexual and domestic imagery to allude to the sexual violence they endured. Although she does not directly name the violence, she says that: "When my people saw their condition, they at once killed both brothers and set fire to the house" (71). The

horrors the men subject the two young girls to compelled the tribe to kill the men and burn the house, eliminating not only the men who perpetrated the violence but also the symbol of their settlement and the ideologies of misogyny they brought with them. This incident caused retaliation for the death of the "hard-working, kind-hearted, industrious settlers" at the hands of the "bloodthirsty savages," and the War of 1860 commenced (71-72).

Winnemucca spends little time narrating the war; it starts and ends in the space of a page. The actions leading up to and after it after are what signifies the most in the narrative, for through them she can express what was not allowed to be said during her time. As Lukens observes, Winnemucca's strategy of narrating abuses her tribe experienced at the hands of white settlers and government agents could not alienate her audience and still achieve her political ends. Through the emphasis on the house, the bed, and the condition of the girls, she tells her readers (without having to state it directly, violating the social norms of the day) of the violence that Indian women experienced at the hands of white men, and the war seems not a start to but a continuation of the violence. Winnemucca mentions the war ended with a treaty that created Pyramid Lake reservation. Again, this detail is brief, as she notes only that the treaty stated: "we were to get large supplies as long as we were peaceful; but though there were 13 agents there in the course of 23 years, I never knew of any issue after that first year" (73). The rag friend, buried with her grandfather, gives way to girls' mouths tied with rags, which in turn leads to a piece of paper that has never lived up to its promise. The promise of brotherhood that the rag friend signified has not held in this trajectory; instead, it now signifies violence and broken promises. Yet Winnemucca uses her writing not to reiterate

abuses, but to incorporate aspects of oral tradition into the written form to show the destructive nature of Westward expansion.

Winnemucca weaves a story of oratory into her written narrative in a manner that highlights the significance of oral tradition. The description of the start of the War of 1860 precedes a story about a cannibalistic tribe of barbarians that lived along the Humboldt River hundreds of years ago. Her people eventually conquered the tribe, and the legend of their cannibalism resonates with the first settlers the Paiutes encountered. Although Truckee attempted to take his "white brothers" into his family, hoping to reunite the white and dark brothers and sisters, many of the early settlers acted aggressively. The Paiutes also told stories about the Donner party, whose actions made their way into tribal lore. References to this are scattered throughout the text: "There was a fearful story they told us children. Our mothers told us that the whites were killing everybody and eating them" (11). "Surely they don't eat people? Yes, they do eat people, because they ate each other up in the mountains last winter" (15). Further connections between the legend of "people-eaters" and present-day frontier interactions exist, as Winnemucca narrates the destruction of the cannibalistic tribe, whom they killed by trapping them in a cave, piling wood in front of the entrance, and setting the cave and in turn the people-eaters on fire. Similar to the War of 1860, the Paiutes dealt with an irredeemably savage people through burning their home and their bodies.

The chapter ends with Winnemucca telling readers that she has some hair from the conquered tribe that was handed down through the generations of her family. "I have a dress which has been in our family a great many years, trimmed with this reddish hair. I am going to wear it some time when I lecture. It is called the mourning dress" (75). The

dress "mourns" for the time when her people were the conquerors, which stands in sharp contrast to their position as confined to the reservation and not in control of their own destiny and resources. That Winnemucca writes she will wear the dress while lecturing indicates the extent that she has interwoven the power of the written form with oral traditions of her tribe, infusing the chapter with pathos regarding the current situation of her tribe and reminding readers of the method she will use to honor their traditions. Leah Sneider believes that Winnemucca's choice of dress and that she often changed her attire halfway through her speech serve as signals to her audience:

> Winnemucca portrayed herself as a 'civilized Indian woman,' dressed in supposedly traditional costume that seemingly reinforces stereotypes of the 'other.' However, she would complicate such stereotypes by changing into modern American female attire in the second part of her act. Winnemucca's performances negotiate 'popular discourses of womanhood' and the 'Indian princess' by 'position[ing] and reposition[ing] herself as both *apart from* and *a part of* Euro-American and Paiute discourse. (258)

The costuming signals to the audience of Winnemucca's orations in a similar manner to her descriptions of Paiute domestic and social moralities, and indeed her very act of writing: she is embodying the modes of dress and methods of communication of the Euro-American culture, but her own cultural traditions remain and infuse the text, the outfit, and the speeches. With this act of conscious costuming, Winnemucca negotiates and revises nineteenth century notions of domesticity, drawing upon the unspoken understanding her audiences had of what these different types of dress meant—and what culture they signaled she was a part of.

Winnemucca is a controversial figure, accused by her own tribe of selling them to government agents by signing papers whose promises were not kept. The introduction of writing into Paiute culture cannot be separated from these wounds of broken treaties. However, *Life Among the Piutes* shows that the written word was not merely a destructive force in Paiute culture, but also a way of mediating the world brought by Westward expansion and white settlers. Just as in Glancy's narrative, Winnemucca infused aspects of oral tradition into her use of writing, merging the two modes of communication to relate aspects of tribal culture that cannot be captured solely in a written text. Winnemucca's narrative expresses the ways that the written word honored oral traditions, tribal history, and related a sense of community and tribal presence that many assumed were vanishing during the end of the nineteenth century. The importance of self-expression becomes even more apparent when contrasted with Mariana Burgess's 1891 novella *Stiya: A Carlisle Indian Girl at Home*, which presents a Carlisle Indian Industrial School administrator's didactic narrative as a text written by an Acoma girl returning home after her time at boarding school.

Fictional Autobiography and the "Represented Indian"

As the Indian Wars came to an end during the nineteenth century, the US Government began experimenting with new methods of "civilizing" Native Americans. One of the strategies employed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the off-reservation boarding school, with Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania as the epitome of the move toward education and assimilation. At the same time the Indian boarding school was rising to prominence, discourses about hygiene and

illness in relation to a subject's environment were circulating throughout the dominant American culture. In the nineteenth century, proper conditions of the body, the soul, and the surrounding environment converged to produce health; and people who lived in unsanitary conditions were thought to put their bodies out of equilibrium, exposing themselves to illness and disease. Nancy Tomes describes how the "zymotic theory of disease" prevalent before 1880 believed that disease was caused by "chemical ferments produced by decaying filth" (27). The role of a sanitary home, already a part of the nation-building project tied to the cult of true womanhood, helped articulate the aims of assimilation policy through the domestic ideal. These discourses of hygiene and methods of assimilation converge in Marianna Burgess' 1891 novel, *Stiya: A Carlisle Indian Girl at Home*, a barely coded piece of propaganda for the Indian school project. Burgess, an administrator at Carlisle and a manager of the school's weekly publication, *The Indian Helper*, presented the story of Stiya as coming from the interwoven experiences of several Pueblo girls, writing from the position of an Indian author and presenting the material as if it originated from the experience of a Pueblo girl returning from boarding school. The novella expresses the correct way for native students to behave when they returned to their homes in a shockingly didactic and moralizing manner; however, the paternalistic focus on cleanliness and domesticity reveals how discourses of health and femininity overlapped with the national mythology of Native Americans as an unclean and savage race, all working to create a model citizenry.

Stiya: A Carlisle Girl at Home was first published in 1889 as a serial story in the Carlisle school newspaper with the title, "How An Indian Girl Might Tell Her Own Story If She Had The Chance." In this early version that appeared in *The Indian Helper*,

Burgess created a voice that ventriloquized the ideals Carlisle strove to instill in their students, a common occurrence in the pages of a newspaper meant to establish and reinforce the proper modes of articulating Indian identity for Carlisle students. "The Man on the Bandstand," a persona invented by the school's founder Richard Pratt and the paper's editor Marianna Burgess, created the newspaper. "The Man on the Bandstand" served as a metaphor for the school's disciplinary power, exercising a Foucauldian model of surveillance over the students; the ever-present, panoptic authority was meant to be internalized by the students, who would then reproduce these ideologies after leaving Carlisle. Foucault describes this type of power when relating how European society monitored prisoners and plague-stricken individuals, with a goal similar to the project of assimilation espoused at Carlisle, "to arrange things so that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; […] in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers" (201). The idea of ongoing surveillance, internalized and reproduced by the monitored subjects, accurately describes the educational philosophy of Carlisle, which hoped to teach students to embrace assimilation into the dominant culture through the rejection of tribal modes of existence, including the eradication of tribal languages, religions, clothing, and gender roles. Additionally, Carlisle embraced rhetorical surveillance with their school newspaper, which planted seeds of surveillance in the students' psyches.

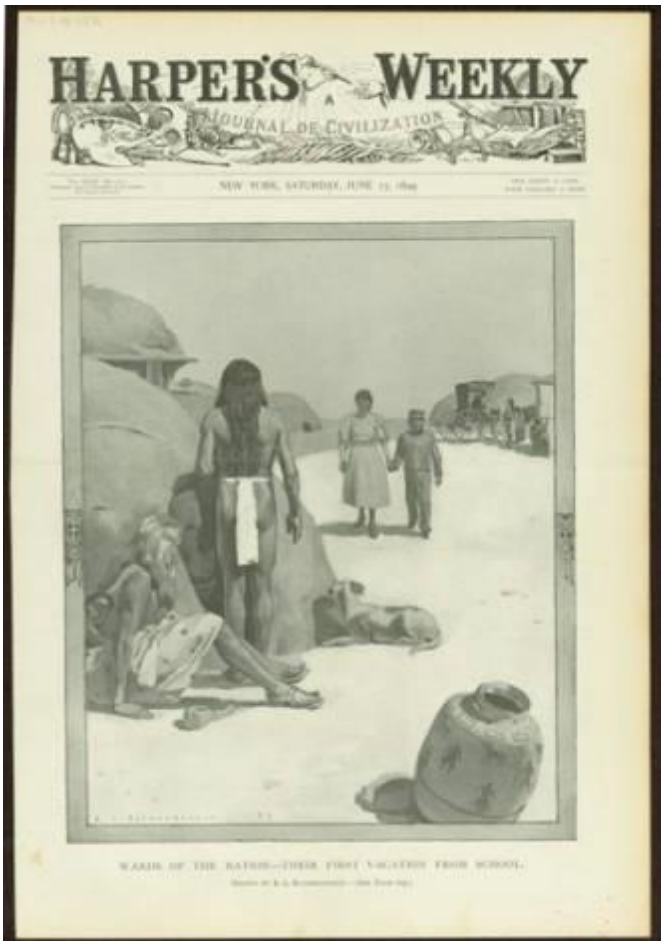
Amelia V. Katanski claims that *Indian Helper* was an essential part of this project, as it "acted as a rhetorical panopticon, encouraging student self-colonization through writing" (16). With stories like "How An Indian Girl Might Tell Her Own Story

If She Had The Chance," Burgess exercised a disciplinary power that sought to normalize an assimilation ideology through the construction of what Katanski calls a "represented Indian," a narrative voice claiming to represent an Indian subject. Rather than giving "an Indian girl" the chance to tell her own story, Burgess ventriloquized a native voice in order to maintain control over the boundaries of Indianness she wished her students to embody. In the story's move from the pages of *Indian Helper* to its publication as the novella *Stiya,* Burgess took the idea of the representative narrative voice even further; by publishing the story under the pen name "Embe," Burgess presented the work as that of a native author. "Embe" was essentially the nativized version of Burgess's initials (MB), and this method of obscuring her identity allowed her to present the novella as the work of a Native American writing from personal experience. Although the novella contains a preface that admits "The story of Stiya and her trials is woven out of the experiences of girls at various times members of the Indian Industrial School at Carlisle, Pa.," the reader is never meant to question the veracity of the story or the narrator's subject position (*Stiya* n.p.). In fact, directly after admitting the story is a compilation of experiences that are not the narrator's own, the preface states that, "The fundamental facts, therefore, are true" (*Stiya* n.p.). With this statement, the novella functions as a fictional autobiography, presenting itself as a story of a life actually lived, further showing how the disciplinary power of the school functions in literary representations as it remains in the students' psyche long after their time at Carlisle has passed. The politics of representation are important and become even more so when addressing the material presented in *Stiya*.

The novella opens with Stiya excited to return home after five years at Carlisle, although the chapter's title, "Disappointment," is soon explained when she reaches her

destination in New Mexico. After her reunion with her parents, Stiya admits to being "shocked and surprised" at their appearance, while her inner thoughts explain that she "had forgotten that home Indians had such grimy faces" (2-3). The first image of Pueblo life involves a judgment of its hygienic practices; Stiya's Carlisle-educated sensibilities are so offended by her parents' "grimy faces" and hair that "looked as though it had never seen a comb" that she disavows her connection to them and "rushed frantically into the arms of my *school*-mother" (3 emphasis original). This passage reveals the extent to which Burgess hoped the Carlisle assimilation ideology would permeate the students' psyches. Not only is Stiya shocked and appalled at the hygiene of her uneducated family, but she also turns to her teacher as the person with whom she identifies, having replaced familial and tribal bonds with those formed at Carlisle. Stiya decides to stay after reassurance from the "school-mother" that she will adjust to Pueblo life and people, as she "knew nothing else than to obey my school-mother" (4). The first scene signals the novella's investment in hygienic practices and disciplining bodies.

The assimilation ideology that taught Carlisle students to conform to Western modes of dress and hygiene circulated in American culture not only through texts like *Indian Helper* and *Stiya*. Images from an 1899 cover of *Harper's Weekly* seen below also shore up the difference in dress (and therefore, school administrators hoped, social mores) that occurred after American Indian children spent time in a boarding school. This example of visual culture depicts with remarkable clarity what Burgess tried to impart with the opening scene of *Stiya,* that discourses "create attitudes of interest and disinterest, anxiety and dread, fault and innocence about certain lives, bodies, and voices and, in the process, form and deform lives, bodies, and voices" (Povinelli 35). The



"Wards of the Nation—Their First Vacation From School," *Harpers Weekly*, 1899. Fray Angelico Chavez History Library, New Mexico History Museum

picture shows a young man and woman, covered head to toe in the respectable clothing they would have been forced to wear at school: hat, pants, and button up shirt for the boy and a long-sleeve, long-skirted dress for the girl. They walk hand in hand, suggesting a familial relationship or at the very least a kinship borne out of their time in school. Their attire is appropriately gendered and respectable, conveying the sense that they are upstanding students. The caption to the cover image reads "Wards of the Nation—Their First Vacation From School," which reveals the underlying ideology that American Indians were not citizens, much less upstanding ones. "Wards of the Nation" signals their

status as state-controlled people, despite the efforts taken to assimilate them with modes of dress and conduct. With this caption, we see the troubled place these children and all of Indian Country occupied within the narrative of national belonging and progress.

The *Harper's Weekly* cover mirrors the opening scene of *Stiya* as they reveal psychological underpinnings of Carlisle's assimilation ideology and its role in larger questions about Native Americans and national belonging. Stiya's disgust at her parents' lax hygiene demonstrates more than just the values Burgess hoped Carlisle students would carry with them upon their return to reservations, it also revealed the Native American's troubled place within the national progress narrative. Stiya admits that "it was hard for me to realize that they had been going backward while I had been going forward for five years" (5). The progression of the daughter in the story of improvement, while the parents fall further away from civilization, reverses the order that nineteenth century Americans saw as natural and proper both in terms of national progress and in discourses about heredity and disease. Heidi Rimke and Alan Hunt explore the medicalization of morality during this period, particularly in connection with the link between personal character and the potential for social harm and disorder. They trace health discourses throughout the nineteenth century, and examine the link between health practices and hereditary traits in the British discussion of national progress. Although their study is focused on nineteenth century Britain, they contend that "there is a ready transatlantic parallel [with] an analogous group of moral regulation movements…active in early nineteenth century America" (83).

Their study is helpful in examining the way in which familial health habits linked to social discussions of progress, and how the ensuing connection of religion and

morality to medical issues and public health acted as a disciplinary force in regulating conceptions of belonging and identity. Rimke and Hunt contend that physicians and social theorists in the nineteenth century argued that the link between habit and heredity "involved powerful physiological factors that were key to preventing or accelerating degeneration both individually and nationally. The ability to form virtuous habits, and the power of transmitting to offspring the tendencies produced by good habits such as personal chastity, promoted not only personal health, but also the moral health of the nation" (78). This argument aligns with the racialization of certain diseases that aligned with the nineteenth century symotic theory of disease that linked disease to hygienic practices. As Cari Carpenter documents, there was a cultural tendency to read diseases that were perceived to be related to poor hygienic practices "particularly those of reservations and boarding schools—…as markers of Indianness" (147). Burgess draws upon these discourses of individual and national health in order to demonstrate the necessity of boarding schools such as Carlisle in civilizing Native Americans both for their own good and the good of the nation.

Throughout the novella, Burgess emphasizes that the lessons Stiya learned at Carlisle were not limited to the scholastic realm. More importantly, she "learned better ways" that she cannot unlearn, even upon her return to the Pueblo (18). On her first night home, Stiya reflects on how schools, particularly those that take students far away from their home, are invaluable to Native American children. "I never in the world would have learned to be disgusted at this way of living, had I not been taken clear away from it, where I could not see it, nor hear anything about it for years" (19). Her disgust for Pueblo life could only be learned through her removal from it, as removal enabled the educators

at Carlisle to stand in as substitutes for her familial and tribal connections. In this way, the hereditary degeneration that boarding school advocates believed was the plight of Native Americans could be broken, as the "school-mother" would replace the students' actual mothers, and transmit to children the tendencies produced by good habits and hygiene. Stiya mimics the national dialogues regarding boarding versus day schools, saying that "They think we ought to stay near to this filth, this dirt. I suppose they think it is good enough for us. Thank God, however, there are some people who think we should have as good a chance as children of other races" (19). Burgess uses Stiya as a mouthpiece to express the Carlisle ideology that through their removal from their homes and families, Native children would be given a chance to learn proper values and hygiene from middle-class white Americans, which would in turn enable them to progress into individuals suitable for incorporation into the American republic.

The use of domesticity as a sign of Stiya's progress into civilized society furthers Carlisle's ideology. The narrator obsesses with how she will cleanse and exhibit both the domestic space and her own body upon her return home. Time and again, Stiya faces choices about returning to traditional Pueblo methods of housekeeping and dress, yet the values she internalized at Carlisle keep her from "regressing" back to traditional ways. Burgess creates schemas in which Stiya at times considers the possible advantages of traditional ways, which would signal to students the dilemma they were likely to face after leaving Carlisle, yet upon further reflection Stiya continually chooses the side of civilization, hygiene, and progress. For example, a few days after her return Stiya and her parents travel to the store to purchase goods with the money she had saved from her domestic service during summers at Carlisle. Stiya's mother let her know the store had

Moqui dresses for sale, a sturdier style than the dress Stiya brought home from school. Stiya admits they are superior in quality, saying "I think it is wonderful how the Moqui Indians make such strong goods. They beat the white people. Some cloth made by white manufacturers is so tender it does not wear a year" (38). Additionally, Stiya "could not help feeling that Indian clothes were more comfortable than the kind I had on. My mother did her washing at the water-hole much easier than I did in this tight dress. My mother had no trouble in getting up and down the ladder, in her short dress. She had no shoe-heels to catch on the rounds and nearly throw her off, as mine served me several times" (40-41). Yet these advantages do not sway Stiya; instead of returning to a traditional style of dress, she becomes determined to change her domestic environment into a space in which the clothes and domestic practices she brought home from Carlisle function, a determination that mirrors the *Harper's* illustration discussed previously.

In Jane E. Simonsen's analysis of domesticity as an agent of assimilation, she examines how Stiya reproduces Carlisle's architectural and behavioral model, essentially changing her environment in New Mexico into a space that encouraged the spread of civilization. Simonsen argues that "middle class white women drew upon already potent beliefs in the power of a well-ordered home to influence individuals' moral character," which can certainly be seen in Burgess's portrayals of domesticity in *Stiya*, as well as in the broader educational philosophies of the Carlisle school (77). The "already potent beliefs" themselves draw upon the same types of discourses that were used in the developing connection of religion and morality to illness and public health during the nineteenth century, as both discourses of domesticity and those of illness connected a proper sense of order and cleanliness to an individual's character. Although Simonsen

limits her analysis to the process of home building and decorating, I believe these ideologies are also at work in the methods Burgess uses to depict issues of public health and hygiene in the narrative.

A few days after she returned to the Pueblo, Stiya relates her experience of helping her mother do the family's laundry. She describes how the women of Acoma Pueblo would take the laundry to one of the hollow places in the rock upon which their village was built, which filled with water during the rainy season. The traditional method of laundering clothes disturbs Stiya, and she attributes the outbreaks of disease that ravaged Native American communities to the practice. "Sometimes the water in them gets stagnant and foul and covered with a green scum, but it is never considered too dirty to wash clothes in, and the Indians often drink from these slimy pools. Is it much wonder that they get fevers and diphtheria and other horrible diseases that visit unclean communities of people? Is it any wonder that they die off by the hundred, as was the case this last year, in my own village?" (33). With the inner monologue, Burgess has Stiya narrate a psychological justification for the assimilation project that also diminishes the role of American settler colonialism in the spread of disease in tribal communities. Despite the fact that there was no known cause of diphtheria in the 1890s, Burgess links the spread of "fevers and diphtheria and other horrible diseases" to "unclean communities." In this passage, the link between health, hygiene, and moral character is painfully clear. Stiya vows to improve the situation by introducing the domestic devices she used at Carlisle and during her domestic service, a washtub and washboard, the first items she sought out at the store. By acquiring these tools, she would not only be

modifying her environment to make it more suitable for the clothes she brought home from Carlisle, but also bringing a domestic form of civilization into her mother's life.

Discourses of health and hygiene were circulating not only in Burgess's narrative, but also in the visual culture of the time, most famously with Jacob Riis's photographs of life in the tenements of New York, where he captured the living conditions of ethnic neighborhoods which depict the dominant ideology about race and hygiene. As Dana Berthold states, "In the early US, cleanliness was associated explicitly with civility, high class, and whiteness. Whiteness, as it has come down to us, is conceived in part as a sort of physical hygiene—the lack of a mark of pollution. The lack of a mark physically has symbolized the lack of a mark morally, and this, in turn, has helped bolster a dominant identity" (2). As seen with the 1899 cover of *Harper*'s magazine, photos of American Indian life that depict the opposite of whiteness, instead signaling a mark of pollution, circulated throughout nineteenth and early twentieth century America. In the photo below, an Acoma woman washes laundry in the way that so horrified Stiya when she returned to the Pueblo, utilizing the rocky environment and the rainwater that could be collected on the mesa rather than trying to collect water elsewhere from the limited desert supply. The traditional method of utilizing the landscape and environment went against the principles of proper hygiene and domesticity that, while easy to practice in the water rich East and Midwestern US, worked against the surroundings and reality of life in the West. The background of the photo shows the desert landscape surrounding Acoma Pueblo, with a dirt road running through an expanse of sagebrush and piñon, with an Acoma Pueblo woman kneeling in the foreground laundering dresses in water that collected in the rock formation of the mesa. The physical markers of the photo point to

discourses of cleanliness and hygiene, as the woman depicted is "marked" by her traditional laundry practices, even though they suit the physical environment.

The passage about the traditional Pueblo method of doing laundry reveals the extent to which Stiya internalized Carlisle's disciplinary methods in addition to its ideas about domesticity and disease. After the discussion of how the Pueblo method of laundering clothes was unsanitary, Stiya moves on to discuss how it was inefficient as well. Without the proper tools, Stiya finds laundry to be hard labor rather than efficient domestic duty. "How can you stand this, mother? It makes me fairly dizzy, and nearly breaks my back" (34). When relating the differences of using a washboard and tub, she moves into the measurement of productivity and clocked time: "I can wash a whole half day, and do a big family wash, and not get half so tired as I feel this minute after only an hour's work. Of course my mother did not know anything about 'an hour.' She measures time by the sun" (34-35). Here Stiya expresses another method of discipline outlined by Foucault, the control of activity through the time-table and a mastery of discipline through a temporal regulation of regular activities. The regulation of clocked time became refined not only through military and monastic professions, but also through the educational system: "In the elementary schools, the division of time became increasingly minute; activities were governed in detail by orders that had to be obeyed immediately" (150). In addition to the regulation of the quantity of time spent on certain tasks, quality was monitored as well; the productivity and usefulness of time was as important as its regulation. These modes of disciplinary power were in use at Carlisle, which Pratt based upon his experience with prisoners at Fort Marion, Florida. Stiya's emphasis on calculated and useful time reflects yet another example of Burgess projecting Carlisle's

"Pueblo Women Wash Laundry Atop Mesa, Probably Acoma Pueblo," ca. 1920, Palace of the Governors Photo Archives Collection, New Mexico History Museum

assimilation policies onto the returned yet still ventriloquized, "represented Indian." In order to incorporate American Indians into the fabric of an increasingly industrialized nation, Carlisle educators considered it critical to instill the importance of productivity and a sense of regulated time, and in this way the disciplinarian assimilation policy was carried home with Stiya.

The disciplinary function of Carlisle arises in the sole appearance that writing makes in the narrative. In a text written by a Carlisle employee but presented as originating from an Indian experience, writing unsurprisingly appears as a force that reminds Stiya of the values inculcated by Carlisle and how they have been incorporated into her identity, now inextricable even when she returns to the Pueblo. After Stiya refused to put on an Indian dress and attend the ceremonial dance, the Governor visits her

house to insist on her participation. When even the ultimate authority of the Pueblo cannot sway her, he leaves to deliberate on her and her family's punishment. While Stiya waited for the decision about her punishment for refusing to abandon the white values and modes of dress after returning to the pueblo, she takes her back issues of *The Indian Helper* out of her trunk. Having carefully tucked away each week's issue after reading it, these newspapers fortify her and help her stand firm in her resolve not to return to the clothing, dances, and cultural values of her home community. She views the papers as a symbolic representation of Carlisle and her teachers, viewing them as a comforting presence in the midst of the chaotic pueblo house. "'I *thought* I would be glad to have you in my home,' said I, talking to them as though they were a person. 'And now I *am* glad.' I really believe I kissed the papers, I was so pleased to have them at that lonely hour of the night. I sat down by the fire, and for an hour lost myself reading over what we had done at Carlisle in years gone by" (108, emphasis original). Stiya's interaction with the papers as if they were a person with the ability to comfort her in trying times shows the extent Burgess hoped the students would incorporate the values of Carlisle into their core identity and refer back to them when necessary. Unlike the positive power of agency writing provides in the literature of this study, writing here serves as a disciplinary force, used to limit the possibilities of subjective experience of Carlisle students by representing the proper way to be a student returning home. The disciplinary forces used on campus followed students home and emerged from their own consciousness in this scenario. Writing here turns American Indian students into an "other," as the representation comes not from their own subject experience, demonstrating the importance of self-representation and the agency that it provides to people in presenting their experiences as

subjects rather than objects. The transformative power of representation of both the visual culture that circulated about American Indian life in the nineteenth century and the literary representation presented in *Stiya* becomes dangerous when used by people like Burgess.

Boarding School Representations with Agency

Carlisle's assimilation policies ultimately triumph in *Stiya: A Carlisle Indian Girl At Home*. Unsurprisingly, Burgess's narrative positions the returned Carlisle student as a successful civilizing force; Stiya not only retains the lessons she learned at Carlisle, but also convinces her parents to give up traditional ways and adopt the domestic accoutrements, hygienic practices, and occupational routines of dominant American culture: "My father continued to work and save his money until he had earned enough to build a comfortable adobe house with three rooms. He adopted the civilized dress, with the exception of wearing short hair. Although my mother never would change her Indian dress for one like mine, she was pleased to work as I did, and kept her house and the dishes nice and clean. I worked with the trader's family until I had enough money saved to buy necessary furnishings for the house" (113-114). Although her parents maintained certain parts of their Indian identity, for the most part they successfully incorporated the markers of "civilized" society. Burgess intended *Stiya* to be read by students returning home from Carlisle in order to have a manual regarding the best practices to follow when faced with the challenges of returning to tribal communities; despite the claim that "the fundamental facts" related in *Stiya* were true, her depictions of tribal life and the uncritical acceptance of assimilation values was not representative of how most Native

Americans thought of their home communities or boarding school experiences. The distinctions between the "representative Indian" voice and the views articulated by Native writers like Zitkála-Šá lay bare the propagandistic nature of *Stiya* and the ways in which it utilizes discourses of hygiene and domesticity to validate the assimilation policies in place at Carlisle and other boarding schools.

Many of the stories collected in *American Indian Stories* originally appeared in *Harper's* magazine from 1900 to 1902, but the 1921 collection, which begins by relating her mother's anger about the deaths of her sister, uncle, and father and ends with the essay "America's Indian Problem," traces her development from childhood to teacher to activist. The story collection, which acts as a manifesto in its structured presentation of Zitkála-Šá's life progression, presents a markedly different version of traditional American Indian life and the boarding school experience. Unlike Burgess's representation of disease and death in American Indian communities as caused by unsanitary hygienic practices, the deaths of Zitkála-Šá's family are directly attributed to "the paleface." Her mother relates a tale that stands in opposition to the progress narrative represented in *Stiya*: "We were once very happy. But the paleface has stolen our lands and driven us hither. Having defrauded us of our land, the paleface forced us away. Well, it happened on the day we moved camp that your sister and uncle were both very sick […] We traveled many days and nights; not in the grand, happy way that we moved camp when I was a little girl, but we were driven, my child, driven like a herd of buffalo" (69). Here, the representation of illness is vastly different than that portrayed in *Stiya*. Rather than traditional practices causing illness and epidemic disease (washing clothes in standing water), the change from traditional ways causes illness, and in turn causes the

loss of land due to America's westward expansion: "the paleface has stolen our lands and driven us hither." The forced journey aggravates Zitkála-Šá's sister's illness, and "with every step, your sister […] grew more and more feverish" (70). The opening story sets the tone for the rest of *Impressions of an Indian Childhood*, which presents scenes of tribal life that dispute the disparaging views depicted in *Stiya* twenty years prior to the publication of Zitkála-Šá's work.

After the opening representation of the destructive shift caused by westward expansion, Zitkála-Šá moves on to reminisce about her childhood memories of traditional tribal life, including the domestic practices of gathering and preparing food. Zitkála-Šá relates her role in the production of the winter's food, which included gathering and drying corn, pumpkins, and wild fruit: "From a field in the fertile river bottom my mother and aunt gathered an abundant supply of corn. Near our tepee they spread a large canvas upon the grass, and dried their sweet corn in it. I was left to watch the corn, that nothing should disturb it. I played around it with dolls made of ears of corn. I braided their soft fine silk for hair, and gave them blankets as various as the scraps I found in my mother's workbag" (82). The description of food preparation conveys both the intergenerational roles in the process and the attention paid to hygienic matters: "they spread a large canvas upon the grass" and "I was left to watch […] that nothing should disturb it." The focus on passing on the skills to gather and preserve food shows that Native Americans recognized the importance that Rimke and Hunt stress in their study of the medicalization of morality in the nineteenth century, of the "ability to form virtuous habits, and the power of transmitting to offspring the tendencies produced by good habits [to promote] not only personal health, but also the moral health of the nation" (78). However, the "habits" of

Zitkála-Šá's family do not fit into the dominant discourse about the progress of the nation, which contributed to the belief that boarding school education was the most effective method of eliminating traditional homemaking methods and substituting Western domestic practices, to present "the dominant culture through housekeeping courses and home decorating guides; they would Americanize by design, sanitize through the arts and crafts" (Simonsen 83).

Zitkála-Šá describes a very different boarding school experience than Burgess alludes to in *Stiya*. Unlike the tale Stiya relates of the kind treatment she received during her time at Carlisle, the narrator in *The School Days of an Indian Girl* expresses both pain and anger about her school experiences. She does not internalize the disciplinary methods of boarding school's assimilation policies, and her rebelliousness against the methods used at these schools reveals a reluctance to accept Western modes of discipline and health practices. The narrator of *The School Days of an Indian Girl* recalls the introduction to regulated time with a sense of anger, describing the process in Chapter V, "Iron Routine": "A loud-clamoring bell awakened us at half-past six in the cold winter mornings. From happy dreams of Western rolling lands and unlassoed freedom we tumbled out upon chilly bare floors back again into a paleface day" (95-96). This description shows the transition from the unlassoed freedom of the girl's dreams to the bell that signaled the structured time. The narrative moves readers from happy dreams of home to the chilly bare floors of school, showing that unlike Stiya, this narrator has not replaced familial and tribal ties with those of the school-mother and school-home. As P. Jane Hafen states, "Despite the adaptations and modulations of voice, despite her migrations and interactions with various peoples, despite even 'playing Indian' at times,

she remained firmly committed to her tribal sovereignty" (31). Throughout all her writing, even when she "adopts the oppressor's language" by using the style and structure of sentimental literature, her commitment remains steady—she is advocating for justice for her tribe and all of Indian country (32).

The joy that Stiya connects to learning the functions and processes of clocked time is absent in *The School Days of an Indian Girl*. While Stiya expresses the benefits of productivity she experienced due to her introduction to regulated time, Zitkála-Šá's narrator has a very different view of the control of activity through the time-table and temporal regulation of activities. Her description of the start of the school day reveals not only the dehumanization of this process, but also how it contributes to ill health:

> Relentlessly her pencil black-marked our daily records if we were not present to respond to our names, and no chum of ours had done it successfully for us. No matter if a dull headache or the painful cough of slow consumption had delayed the absentee, there was only time enough to mark the tardiness. It was next to impossible to leave the iron routine after the civilizing machine had once begun its day's buzzing; and as it was inbred in me to suffer in silence rather than to appeal to the ears of one whose open eyes could not see my pain, I have many times trudged in the day's harness heavy-footed, like a dumb sick brute. (96)

Her account of the disciplinary modes utilized in boarding schools emphasizes the dehumanizing aspects of the routine and how the "civilizing machine" could easily lead to ill health, despite the emphasis boarding schools placed on teaching "proper" hygienic practices. The passage places the teacher's focus on the action of marking off names rather than ensuring the healthy presence of students, as "there was only time enough to

mark the tardiness," not to notice the "headache or…painful cough of slow consumption," which was the cause of the student's tardiness.

Her description of how the disciplinary modes of boarding school easily led to sickness continues to condemn the regulatory policies and the often tragic outcome: death. The narrator moves from the modes of the "civilizing machine" to the loss of a classmate to describe the process:

> Once I lost a dear classmate. I remember well how she used to mope along at my side, until one morning she could not raise her head from her pillow […] I grew bitter, and censured the woman for cruel neglect of our physical ills. I despised the pencils that moved automatically, and the one teaspoon which dealt out, from a large bottle, healing to a row of variously ailing Indian children. I blamed the hard-working, well-meaning ignorant woman who was inculcating in our hearts her superstitious ideas. (96-97)

Her depiction of the "cruel neglect of our physical ills" is dramatically different than the image of boarding schools as compassionate institutions serving the best interests of Native Americans that Burgess attempted to portray in *Stiya* and *The Indian Helper*. Zitkála-Šá, aware of the discourses surrounding Indian savagery and Western civilization, subverts the dominant paradigm through the portrayal of the boarding school educator as the ignorant and superstitious purveyor of ineffective medical treatments. Her hatred for the pencils that moved automatically also signals the trouble Zitkála-Šá sees in emphasizing literacy education in cultures based on oral tradition.

The uneasy relationship between literacy and oral culture surfaces in the final chapter of *School Days of an Indian Girl*. Titled "Incurring My Mother's Displeasure,"

the chapter rounds out the narrator's experience as a student; in the space of three short pages, the narrator finds herself "the proud owner of my first diploma" and subsequently a college student without her mother's approval or consent (101). The narrator explains that "I had written for her approval, but in her reply I found no encouragement," yet she ignores her mother's wishes that she return home and enters college without her approval, beginning the experience "homeless and heavy-hearted" after deliberately disobeying her mother's wishes (101). The guilt that she suffers for her defiance of her mother's wishes sets the stage for her redemptive moment, which combines her longing for sympathy and recognition in the school setting with her desire to honor her culture and make her mother proud. The description of her preparation for this moment reveals the desire for respect in both worlds: "My mother had not yet forgiven my rudeness to her, and I had no moment for letter-writing. By daylight and lamplight, I spun with reeds and thistles, until my hands were tired from their weaving, the magic design which promised me the white man's respect" (101). The set-up reveals the importance placed on traditional cultural practices and materials (reeds, thistles, weaving) used to gain the respect of the white man, combining the two worlds in which the narrator existed. The method of achieving this—the "magic design" that she worked so hard to weave—was her participation in an oratorical contest. The competition contrasts with the depiction of pencils that moved automatically in the earlier story and with the letters written to her mother. Those instances of writing, both depicted in a negative light, contrast with the Western narrative of the importance of literacy in education and as a means to success.

The previous texts in this chapter demonstrate that oral traditions and the written word are not mutually exclusive, and American Indian writers often embrace the tools of

dominant culture in order to critique its oppressive ideologies (Hafen 31-32). Zitkála-Šá also embraces this model by writing about how she achieved recognition through oratory, a form of communication more in line with the traditions of her culture. She wins the contest at her college, and the outpouring of congratulatory well-wishes, the large bouquet of roses, and the offers of company on her way home shock her. After winning the competition, she went on to represent her college in the state level event. The spirit of comaraderie that she experienced at her own college was missing here, as the narrator relates that "[t]he slurs against the Indian that stained the lips of our opponents were already burning like a dry fever within my breast" (102). Despite the racism that she experiences from other college students, she was one of the two prize-winning orators in the competition. This moment reads as a final scene of redemption in the Eastern boarding-school education system before turning to the next cycle of stories, *An Indian Teacher Among Indians*. Its oral nature represents the connection that Zitkála-Šá wanted her readers to make between American Indian cultural practices and the opportunities they provided for success in the white world; rather than school success hinging on an exam or report, her shining moment comes when practicing the oral tradition so important in her community.

Zitkála-Šá's narrative becomes a site of resistance to the disciplinary regime and her response to the assimilation project exposes the way that justification for often harmful assimilation policies uses the rhetoric of health and domesticity. The domestic ideals of the cult of true womanhood helped articulate the aims of assimilation policy while discrediting traditional American Indian practices and ways of life, however *Impressions of an Indian Girlhood* and *The School Days of an Indian Girl* contest

negative depictions of native home life and critique the idea that boarding school improved the lives of American Indian children. The power struggles involved in the way that language produces bodies are evident in her work as she negotiates new modes of belonging for herself and her people. As a former boarding school student, Zitkála-Šá undermines the progress narrative that Burgess creates in *Stiya*, and questions the larger vision of national progress through her portrayals of the native view of boarding school assimilation policies. Her narrative demonstrates how texts written from the subject position being represented express a dramatically different reality than the depictions in the nation's cultural imagination.

The texts in this chapter demonstrate the way that discourses shape and regulate bodies in the colonial system, and how American Indian women writers use their narratives to depict the effects of these discourses, an ongoing tribal presence, and a history of violence and loss. Juxtaposing *Stiya* with narratives penned by American Indian women themselves demonstrates the importance of agency in storytelling and history making: the texts being written by people whose subject position is the subject of the text read entirely differently than those written about a group by people in positions of power. Narratives like Burgess's fictional autobiography contribute to the problem that the authors in this chapter are writing against: their subjective experience is at odds with the view the world has of them. Winnemucca's, Zitkála-Šá's, and Glancy's texts all dispute this narrative identity that Burgess tries to force upon American Indian women in *Stiya*, and the texts by these three women both survive and tell the story and history of themselves and their communities.

Glancy's investment in *Designs of the Night Sky* centers on oral/written expression and community creation, Winnemucca advances discussions of domesticity and sexual violence in *Life Among the Piutes*, while *Stiya* and *American Indian Stories* zero in on hygiene and the cleanliness/work ethic of American Indian bodies. What all these texts have in common is how they reveal the way that language produces bodies and the power struggles contained in language and written onto the embodied citizenry. As Elizabeth Povinelli articulates, discourses are "continually shaping and directing bodies and voices in settler colonies such that some appear as coherent and others incoherent and such that the source of this coherence and incoherence seems to reside inside these various subjects and their social formations" (Povinelli 35-36). Discourses shape the modes of embodiment and national belonging of the American Indian subject, and each text in this chapter recognizes and participates in that negotiation.

Chapter III

From Pageantry to Protest: Women's Mark on the Atomic West

Introduction: Frontier Rhetoric Revisited and Protested

The inaugural protests of Women Strike for Peace, a women's peace and anti-nuclear movement started in 1961, surprised both the organizers, who put out a call for a demonstration just five weeks earlier, and the press, who couldn't figure out how or why a group of housewives and mothers planned a large-scale nationwide protest without the structure of a political party or ideological group. On November 1, 1961, tens of thousands of women marched in sixty cities around the US to "express their deep anxiety and indignation concerning the pollution of the atmosphere by radioactive isotopes released by nuclear explosions" (Swerdlow 15).[14] They framed their concerns through the rhetoric of domesticity and motherhood, in part because of their lived experience, and in part as a response to the already gendered language that surrounded the development and testing of atomic weapons in New Mexico in the 1940s and Nevada in the 1950s and 60s. The group's main concern was the danger that nuclear weapons caused to the planet and to their children following the resumption of above-ground testing in mid-September 1961, and their frustration with the failure of men in government to do anything besides conduct more and larger nuclear tests inspired them to act. The group organized in Dagmar Wilson's living room on September 21, 1961, and the very next day, with a call for the first action sent across the nation, Women's Strike for Peace was born.

[14] The number of women attending these protests is most often estimated at 50,000, but in her extensive research Amy Swerdlow notes that her estimate stands at around 12,000 (Swerdlow 247).

The launch of Women's Strike for Peace (WSP) in a living room aligned with the movement's framing of nuclear opposition as women's domestic responsibility, as Wilson and the founding members utilized overtly gendered language to call upon women to strike from their labor as wives and mother while also exploiting the rhetorical power of those positions in the anti-Communist McCarthy era. Their call for action urged women to "suspend their regular routine of home, family, and jobs for one day, in order to 'Appeal to All Governments to End the Arms Race—Not the Human Race'" and declared that "We strike against death desolation, destruction and on behalf of life and liberty. . . . Husbands or babysitters take over the home front. Bosses or substitutes take over our jobs!" (Swerdlow 18). Organizers positioned women as the caretakers of life and liberty in their role as homemakers and mothers, a framing that worked well for their movement during an era where any political protest was subject to scrutiny as un-American. Suspicion of communist activity permeated American culture at the time the WSP organized, so much so that Eleanor Roosevelt responded harshly to organizers' request that she speak at a pre-strike rally: "I am sorry to say that I cannot be with you on October 25, and I do not plan to do anything to help unless you have consulted the President and the Secretary of State and have their consent," adding several days later that "I do not approve of this kind of action. It seems meaningless to me" (20-21). On the one hand, the language of women's moral authority to act on the nuclear issue when leaders like the President and Secretary of State refused leant the movement political credibility and saved its members from scrutiny as sympathetic to Communism or as anti-American. Yet the framework of home and family also echoed nineteenth century ideas about true womanhood and the cult of domesticity at a time when there was increasing

unease about the post-war return to these values. WSP leaders' role as housewives and mothers positioned them as sympathetic in a way that radical or left-leaning activists were not, but also resonated with rhetoric the US deployed in the nineteenth century as ideas about Manifest Destiny helped the military and settlers to advance Westward. As one of the group's founders asserts: "The struggle WSP conducted in the name of motherhood to rein in the power of the Pentagon demonstrated to its participants, even if they did not yet have the vocabulary to make the point themselves, that the familial and personal are political and that the public and private spheres are one" (Swerdlow 13).

This chapter argues that the women's anti-nuclear movement, which marked the resurgence of women's activism in the public sphere, emerged against the gendered rhetoric and patriarchal pageantry of atomic culture and the environmental damage of nuclear testing that more generally characterizes the atomic era and the way women in the West protested against it. The violence Sarah Winnemucca and Zitkála-Šá document with the Westward expansion of the US military and settlers echoes throughout the history of atomic testing in the southwest decades after the publication of *Life Among the Piutes* and *The School Days of an Indian Girl,* extending the logic of Manifest Destiny from one century to the next. As William L. Lawrence notes in the September 7, 1940 edition of the *Saturday Evening Post*, when faced with the possibility of splitting the atom, atomic scientist Lise Meitner experienced "sensations that must have been akin to those of Columbus when he first sighted land, without knowing exactly what the land was" (13). The article continues to frame atomic science in the rhetoric of discovery, furthering the connection to Columbus by describing Meitner's calculations as "accidentally stumbl[ing] upon one of the greatest discoveries of the age. They had come

upon the trail of what might lead to the shores of the Promised Land of Atomic Energy" (13, 60). From its inception, the Manhattan Project incorporated language of a colonial imaginary of the western frontier into its attempts to conquer the atom, as atomic scientists utilized rhetoric already embedded in discourses about the West. The imagery of discovery is pervasive, as seen in the coded exchange between physicists who compare the first successful fission chain reaction to the European discovery of America: "The Italian Navigator has landed in the New World. / How did he find the natives? / Very friendly" (Masco 113). The nuclear scientists and military elites who built the first atomic bomb believed they were embarking on a scientific journey of discovery on par with Columbus's accidental "discovery" of the Americas. The atomic particles are the modern equivalent of friendly natives in this frontier imagery, friendly in this scenario because of the success of the physicists' experiments. This remarkable exchange documenting the beginning of the atomic age reveals the cultural baggage carried from the old world of manifest destiny to the new world of the Atomic Southwest.

Along with the cultural history of manifest destiny, sexual innuendos and images of domesticity permeate discourses about the destructive/regenerative power of nuclear technology. It isn't surprising that atomic scientists picked up on this language to frame scientific advances in splitting the atom, as the language of the frontier and of the land as feminine is meant to seem inherent in discourses about the West. Westward expansion, by way of technology and ideology, generated gendered discourses that the atomic age inherits and adopts to a different frontier. The metaphor of land as woman explored by Annette Kolodny in *The Lay of the Land* resurfaces in atomic discourse, as do the fantasies concerned with power and mastery over nature, in this case the natural state and

order of atomic particles. The rhetoric of domestication and creation used by defense intellectuals when discussing nuclear weapons sanitizes the destructive power of nuclear technology; scientists and military elites who developed nuclear technology often dealt in abstractions to distance themselves from what the reality of nuclear war would mean.[15] When viewed in the abstract, nuclear technology fulfills a project initiated in the nineteenth century: the domestication and domination of nature. In the nineteenth century, the domesticating force of technology tamed the natural world; the plow, the railroad, and other developments controlled the wilderness and made it productive. In the nuclear formation of this dynamic, the object harnessed was the atom itself, with the goal of destruction of nature rather than the cultivation of its potential productivity.

The sense of domestication nuclear technicians imagined differs from the nineteenth century project to cultivate the land through settlement and homesteading; however, the imagery used to describe the process similarly relies on images and terms describing productivity and creation. Helen Caldicott discusses the psychological underpinnings of the rhetoric used in nuclear naming practices:

> Interestingly, the language of the scientists reflects the imagery of birth and new life, denoting more profound psychological dynamics. The first nuclear bomb ever tested in 1945, code-named Trinity . . . was called "Oppenheimer's baby" in honor of the scientific director of the Manhattan Project. The telegram Edward Teller sent to Los Alamos after the first successful A-bomb test in 1945 read "it's a boy." The bomb gets "married" to the diagnostic canister, and as it explodes it

[15] Carol Cohn explores the sexual innuendo in detail in "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," which chronicles the year she spent with nuclear strategic analysts in 1984.

> "couples" with the ground, making "daughter fission products" that pass through "generations." (15-16)

These images of domesticity (birth, marriage, coupling, generations) serve to tame and control the power of nuclear weaponry by connecting it to household and marital scenes, which explain the world of nuclear technology in terms which those who are not familiar with the technical language of nuclear physics can identify. In addition to the domestication of the nuclear, these images also evoke the idea of male creation. The power of nuclear technology here surpasses the ultimate power of a "feminine" nature: the power to create new life. When discussing the potential success of the first atomic test, technicians further reveal the gendered conceptions underpinning their rational world. "The major topic of conversation was whether the bomb would be effective, or, as the scientists referred to it in their discussions, whether it would be a 'boy' or a 'girl'" (Titus 12). This equation codes success as masculine and failure as feminine; when nuclear scientists use metaphors of male creation of a male progeny, they manipulate the power of words to create an image of a world where nuclear weapons symbolize hope and renewal rather than destruction and despair.

Discussions that center on the appropriation of female procreative power inevitably lead to a discussion of "nuclear virginity." Due to the longevity of nuclear waste, initiation into the world of nuclear production (a world which, once entered, cannot be easily renounced) is not to be taken lightly:

> [V]irginity made frequent, arresting appearances in nuclear discourse. One professor spoke of India's explosion of a nuclear bomb as 'losing her virginity;' the question of how the United States should react was posed as 'whether we

> should throw her away.' Initiation into the nuclear world involves being deflowered, losing one's innocence, knowing sin. (Cohn 37)

The sexual imagery employed here is a display of the connections between masculine sexuality and the Cold War arms race, as well as a way of minimizing the deadly consequences of nuclear weapons. The atomic era extends the Westward expansionist discourse of virgin land that characterizes American exceptionalism navigated so thoroughly by scholars of Western literature and history like Henry Nash Smith, Richard Slotkin, and Patricia Nelson Limerick. In *Gunfighter Nation*, Slotkin details how Kennedy used campaign rhetoric of a new frontier effectively in the 1960 election, using a well-worn tactic that exchanged "an old, domestic, agrarian frontier with a new frontier of world power and industrial development," as the nuclear technicians did a decade before him, following in the footsteps of Frederick Jackson Turner's famous 1893 frontier thesis that "asserted that the contemporary crisis of American development had arisen from the closing of the 'old frontier' and the delay in finding a new one" (3). The frontier imaginary extends and transforms with each generation, as the rhetoric of sexual imagery, domestication, and colonial conquest remain in circulation because these structuring myths and symbols of the West remain "intelligible to the widest possible audience" (Slotkin 2). With the extension of these discourses by the nuclear scientists in the 1940s and 1950s, the race to develop nuclear weapons moves to the realm of sexual exploits and "losing one's innocence" in the sexual sense rather than "knowing sin" through the reality of nuclear weapons: death and destruction. This background of the rhetoric of sexual innuendo surrounding the production and use of atomic weapons helps

explain the ensuing history of atomic beauty contests and the use of atomic imagery in advertising throughout the 1950s.

Patriarchal Pageantry and Miss Atomic Bomb

Within a few short years of the development and deployment of the atomic bomb, the visual aftereffect of its detonation—the mushroom cloud—became so ingrained in the consciousness of 1950s America that it shifted from an image symbolic of the destructive power of techno-scientific progress and US military might to a pop culture icon used to advertise everything from dish-soap to Las Vegas casinos. The move from the realm of military force to that of everyday culture was partially a result of the repetition of the image itself within culture; a repetition that led to society becoming inured to the catastrophic history that the image represented. In *Beclouded Visions: Hiroshima-Nagasaki and the Art of Witness*, Kyo Maclear explains this process as one where "sheer ubiquity…has allowed an archetypal image of dread and anguish to be domesticated as a commodity symbol" (Maclear 7).

The shift of the mushroom cloud from an image of "dread and anguish" to a "commodity symbol" happened quickly after the end of WWII and has been continually reinforced by the repetition of the image in pop culture. The representation of the mushroom cloud, devoid of political or historical meaning, took many forms in the twentieth century, including as a symbol to promote tourism in Las Vegas during the 1950s when above-ground testing was underway at the nearby Nevada Proving Grounds, later known as the Nevada Test Site. Perhaps the most unique manifestations of the mushroom cloud as symbol were the "Miss Atomic Bomb" contests that crowned

showgirls as Atomic beauty queens and the "atomic viewing parties" held at Las Vegas hotels and casinos where tourists could act as voyeurs of both the atomic blasts being held at the Nevada Proving Grounds and of the female body as "Miss Atomic Bomb" performed with other showgirls during the revelry. Both of these manifestations acted as tourist attractions designed to promote Las Vegas, a city built on image and entertainment, which easily leant itself to both the mushroom cloud's domestication as a commodity symbol and its ensuing connection with tourism and the female body.

The mushroom cloud came to signify American technological prowess after the end of WWII. Yet even that became an empty signification; as the image itself became ubiquitous, its true significance became situated in its entertainment value rather than any connection to historical or scientific origins. The lack of historical connection makes sense when viewed through the lens of Guy Debord's concept of "spectacle." "The spectacle, whose function it is *to bury history in culture*, presses the pseudo-novelty of its modernist means into the service of a strategy that defines it in the profoundest sense" (Debord 137, emphasis original). The process of burying history in culture is meant to "restructure society without community" (137). A society structured without community is descriptive of the Las Vegas whose economy is based upon attracting tourist dollars. Economic dependence on tourism results in the proliferation of empty "attractions" and the use of cultural symbols devoid of their historical significance in advertisements meant to lure consumers to these attractions. Rather than being built for a community of citizens as a place to live, Las Vegas was created as a place to visit, spend money, and then leave. As such, it was a model city for a society restructured around spectacle rather than community.

Las Vegas seized upon the mushroom cloud as a symbol of its status as the "Atomic City." Atomic testing at the Nevada Proving Grounds, just 65 miles away, provided an opportunity to capitalize on the country's new obsession with all things nuclear after the first nationally televised test in the spring of 1952. An erasure of historical significance is evident in the way the entrance of atomic testing into the national consciousness sparked a craze in consumer culture. Designers soon picked up on "atomic style," which incorporated "rays and spheres simulating the path of electrons around the nucleus of an atom" (DOE factsheet). "Atomic style" soon became the new trend in pop culture, and the use of this style in everything from clocks to lamps to hairdos brings to mind Ranciere's theory of design laid out in *The Future of the Image*. His discussion of design in the twentieth century theorizes the way in which, "by drawing lines, arranging words, or distributing surfaces, one also designs divisions of communal space" (Ranciere 91). He contends that through the design of forms within art, one not only assembles art itself, but also "certain configurations of what can be seen and what can be thought, certain forms of inhabiting the material world" (91). Through the use of "atomic style" in so many cultural forms, designers of the 1950s were shaping the cultural consciousness of their time in addition to the art and consumer objects they designed. However, the "form of inhabiting the material world" being shaped was without historical and political reference, as the division of communal space was occurring in a culture that lacked historical specificity.

Las Vegas's embrace of the mushroom cloud and atomic testing as tourist attractions epitomized the divorce of atomic style from the historical and political reality that produced the image. Las Vegas was perfectly situated to profit from the atomic

testing occurring at the Nevada Proving Grounds, not only geographically, as the city closest to the test site, but also culturally, as a city that has always marketed itself as a place to witness and participate in the unusual. Soon after the detonations became regularized, with a test scheduled for every three weeks, Las Vegas hotels and casinos began hosting viewing parties where showgirls, gambling, and atomic cocktails entertained guests as they awaited the ultimate spectacle, the atomic blast. These parties capitalized on both the atomic craze that had inundated pop culture and the military influence that pervaded the region. The viewing parties entertained soldiers stationed nearby in addition to tourists who were drawn by a sense of voyeurism to witness the atomic blasts, and demonstrated the degree to which the mushroom cloud moved from the realm of military weapon to that of pop cultural icon.

The Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce promoted atomic blasts as a cultural experience from the very beginning of the above-ground testing at the Nevada Proving Grounds. It issued a calendar that listed the times atomic detonations were supposed to occur and suggestions for the best places to view the blasts, giving a boost to local businesses hosting the viewing parties. Feeling the need to attract even more tourists, they publicized another local practice in connection to the atomic blasts, that of the showgirl beauty pageant. There is documentation of at least four different women crowned with titles that were variations of "Miss Atomic Bomb" from 1952 to 1957.

The first atomic pin-up girl, Las Vegas actress and dancer Candyce King, appeared as "Miss Atomic Blast" in photographs that accompanied a newspaper story on atomic testing as a Las Vegas tourist attraction in the Dixon, Illinois *Evening Telegraph* and the Statesville, North Carolina *Daily Record* on May 9, 1952 (DOE Factsheet). That

newspapers in Illinois and North Carolina ran this story proves that the Las Vegas tourism machine was working, and the rest of the country was fascinated with the city's configuration of what could be seen and thought about atomic testing. The caption that accompanied the picture of Miss Atomic Blast read, "radiating loveliness instead of deadly atomic particles, Candyce King, actress appearing at Last Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, dazzled U.S. Marines who participated in recent atomic maneuvers at Yucca Flats. They bestowed on her the title of 'Miss Atomic Blast,' finding her as awe-inspiring in another way, as was the 'Big Bang'" (DOE Factsheet). The language used in this caption reveals the national attitude not only about the aesthetics of atomic testing, but also about those connected to the female body. The female body is in the beginning distanced from the atomic detonation, as it radiates loveliness instead of deadly atomic particles. However, the interactions that the atomic bomb and Candyce King have with the marines, who are dazzled by both, connects the beauty queen and the bomb. In the end, the body of Miss Atomic Blast inspires awe, as does the "Big Bang," and both are viewed voyeuristically by a culture that consumes feminine beauty as a commodity symbol in much in the same way as the atomic bomb.

An annual beauty contest held in North Las Vegas forms the next connection between the female body and the atomic bomb. The 1953 winner of the pageant, Paula Harris, was nicknamed "Miss A-Bomb" after appearing in a motion picture-themed parade atop a Chamber of Commerce float depicting the spy movie *The Atomic City*. The Chamber's float declared North Las Vegas to be "as new and modern as the A-Bomb" and linked the beauty queen with this celebration of the modern, both of which were supposed to attract potential visitors to Las Vegas (DOE Factsheet). The fact that the

movie was set in Los Alamos, New Mexico was irrelevant; as a cultural symbol of modern techno-power, *The Atomic City* could just as easily be linked to Las Vegas as Los Alamos, as in fact it was when Las Vegas declared that exact title as its nickname. The nickname of "The Atomic City" replaced its designation as "Gateway to the Boulder Dam" after the Boulder Dam lost its cultural relevancy as tourist attraction.

The two final representations of Miss Atomic Bomb are shockingly symbolic of how commodity culture deprives the female body of its historical specificity through its use as a commodity symbol. "Mis-Cue," the third woman associated with atomic beauty pageants, got her title after weather caused numerous delays to the "Operation Cue" test scheduled for late April 1955. During one of the delays, military personnel journeyed to Las Vegas to spend their down time and an impromptu beauty contest at the Sands hotel ensued. The contest winner's name, "Mis-Cue," signified the misfiring of Operation Cue and wore her mushroom cloud crown with a smile. The depiction of the mushroom cloud as adornment on the woman's body and additional marker of her role as atomic beauty queen are just part of what makes "Mis-Cue" significant. In addition, the winner of the title remains an "un-named Copa Girl," her only identification being the connection to the Sands Hotel where she presumably worked (DOE factsheet).

"Miss Cue," photo courtesy of University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections

The photograph of Miss Cue, unidentified Copa girl, released by the Sands Hotel in May 1955, depicts the crowning ceremony, with a woman in a swimsuit and high heels surrounded by six smiling military men placing the mushroom cloud crown on her head. This photograph and the photo of the iconic fourth "Miss Atomic Bomb" are examples of photography's voyeuristic relationship between verification of reality and reality itself that Susan Sontag documents in *On Photography*. "The omnipresence of cameras persuasively suggests that time exists of interesting events, events worth photographing. […] After the event has ended, the picture will still exist, conferring on the event a kind of immortality (and importance) it would never otherwise have enjoyed" (Sontag 11). Photographic documentation preserves the crowning of Miss Cue, and the event benefits

from the immortality that the picture bestows. However, the individuality of the woman being crowned is not preserved in the same way as the event itself, showing the insignificance of the woman as a person compared to her role as atomic beauty queen.

The final Miss Atomic Bomb, depicted in a 1957 publicity photo for the Sands Hotel, is also the most iconic of the atomic beauty queens. Her name is Lee Merlin, a fact missing from most of the history of the iconic photo. The photo depicts Merlin in the Nevada desert, dressed only in the requisite high heels and swimsuit; however, a mushroom cloud composed of cotton balls adorns her swimsuit. With the mushroom cloud covering her torso and most of her nude-colored swimsuit, it appears to provide decency to her body which is otherwise fully on display. The camera angle, in addition to her outstretched arms, provides a larger-than-life perspective. Merlin is posed in front of a stretch of the Nevada desert, with the telephone wires and mountains in the background dwarfed by both Merlin and the mushroom cloud which covers her. Her wide-mouthed grin, closed eyes, and arms thrown above her head lend the photo an exuberant quality that gives the viewer a sense that Merlin is exuberant about the nuclear future. "She's 'truly a piece of our popular culture,' said Robert Friedrichs, a physical scientist with the National Nuclear Security Administration who has spent the past six months sleuthing to uncover the identity of Miss Atomic Bomb" (Rosenblatt 1). The photo is representative of 1950s pop culture, and Merlin was swept along as a nameless idol of the atomic era. The photo represents just how completely the mushroom cloud had been domesticated through its ubiquity. No longer signifying dread or anguish, the mushroom cloud that covered Merlin's swimsuit, created by photographer Don English, served as a way to distinguish his photo from the multitude of other depictions of the image. "We were

shooting so many atom bombs, we tried to do anything that was a little bit different" (Rosenblatt 2). By superimposing the mushroom cloud over Merlin's body, English not only created a memorable photo that became a pop culture icon, but also made clear that the mushroom cloud had been fully distanced from its origins as an image of destruction.

"Miss Atomic Bomb," 1957 photo by Don English

In the twelve years between the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the time that English took the photo, the cultural significance of the mushroom cloud changed completely. Sheer repetition tamed the image. "'Everyone loves Miss Atomic Bomb,' Titus said. 'You take something that was frightening (the bomb); you make it more

mundane or comical – you make it something you can deal with,' she says of the photo" (Rosenblatt 2). The dissemination of images like Miss Atomic Bomb erases the historical significance of nuclear weapons. The idea of making the atomic bomb "something you can deal with" expresses the need that Americans felt to reconcile the negative aspects of the atomic age, and the sanitization of the mushroom cloud image through Las Vegas publicity photos provided an outlet to accomplish this.

Photos like the one of Miss Atomic Bomb demonstrate the way in which "[p]hotography expresses the American impatience with reality" (Sontag 65). Rather than dealing with the mushroom cloud in a way that asks viewers to consider the cultural consequences of the image, pop culture images such as English's photo de-historicize the mushroom cloud from the reality it originally depicted. In addition to the use of the mushroom cloud as pop culture icon in the photo, the fact that Lee Merlin's identity as the woman depicted as Miss Atomic Bomb was forgotten for almost fifty years signals the success of the spectacle's project of burying history in culture. The society that produced this image is "entranced by Daguerre's 'cheap method of disseminating a loathing for history'" (Sontag 69). However, the "loathing for history" is not the only method of dealing with the past, as evidenced by the move to uncover the identity of Miss Atomic Bomb before the opening of the Atomic Testing Museum in Las Vegas in 2005. The countless depictions of the mushroom cloud over the past sixty years express the transformations society experiences when dealing both with history and with culture. As Kyo Maclear articulates in *Beclouded Visions*, "The Mushroom Cloud swells with each new interpretation. […] Interpretations of the Mushroom Cloud, such a nodal image in postwar consciousness, should alert us to the fact that meanings are not uniform.

Images evoke competing memories, informed in part by shifting social and political requirements" (Maclear 7). The "shifting social and political requirements" that frame the perception of the mushroom cloud are still in flux, and the memories and meanings the image and the weapon it represents are drastically different when the Women's Strike for Peace anti-nuclear movement rocked American culture in 1961 than those evoked during its heyday as a pop culture icon in the 1950s.

Mothers Against the Bomb: Women Strike for Peace

The de-personalized, woman-as-object Miss Atomic Bomb beauty contests in the 1950s epitomized the cultural discourses that Women's Strike for Peace (WSP) rejected in the 1960s. While Miss Atomic Blast dazzled marines like the "big bang" and Miss Atomic Bomb domesticated the mushroom cloud with her cotton ball imagery, WSP women countered the patriarchal pageantry of atomic testing and asserted their bodily agency to protest nuclearism rather than to be on display as objects of capitalist and militaristic desire. While WSP explicitly framed their movement in gendered terms, the move functioned more as a reclamation than an alignment with either normative gendered atomic discourse or previous iterations of nationalistic domestic motherhood. Their slogan, "end the arms race, not the human race," came with six demands: "(1) a ban on all atomic weapons testing; (2) negotiations to put all atomic weapons under international control; (3) concrete steps to be taken at once toward worldwide disarmament; (4) immediate allocation of as much of the national budget to preparation for peace as was being spent in preparation for war; (5) an immediate moratorium on name-calling on both sides; and (6) the strengthening of the United Nations" (Swerdlow 20).

Women Strike for Peace entering the Nevada Test Site, July 1962, Harvey Richards Media Archive

The protest signs women carried in many WSP demonstrations echoed these demands, including those documented at a protest on the Nevada Test Site in Mercury, Nevada in July 1962. The image above captures a scene at the test site, where women march with the WSP banner and a sign that declares "We oppose nuclear testing by any nation," asserting the movement's third demand for worldwide disarmament while at the same time critiquing America's deployment of atomic weapons at the site of the demonstration.

The video below, with a script written by Alice Richards and narrated by Frances Herring, co-founders of WSP, further demonstrates the movement's utilization of the imagery and rhetoric of domesticity as a tool to protest the evils of war. The collection of clips filmed by Harvey Richards during the Nevada protest in 1962 shows the well-dressed, middle class women who founded the movement that spread through what Swerdlow calls "informal female networks"—word of mouth, chain letters, Christmas

card lists, PTA directories, church and temple groups, and women's clubs (18). The video shows the original call that circulated amongst these groups preceding the 1961 strike asking women to join their "friends and neighbors" in protest, aligning the movement with the neighborhood, religious, and service groups where the flier circulated, and asks women to "arouse their communities to the great danger of nuclear disaster and what they could do to avert it" (Richards). With this description of the inaugural call to action, WSP took nuclear weapons out of the realm of the theoretical where scientists had attached gendered and colonial rhetoric to them and popular culture had further distanced the bomb from its destructive nature through its association with feminine beauty in the atomic beauty pageants. No longer just an abstract possibility, WSP's call to strike frames the issue as one where women have agency to awaken their communities to the very real danger of nuclear weapons and prevent nuclear disaster. The video then turns from rhetoric of agency and community to a demonstrable example of the danger of nuclear testing: babies in hot spots that were exposed to "60 times the permissible amount of radioactive iodine in milk" after the last atmospheric tests in Nevada (Richards).

"Women for Peace" film, Harvey Richards Media Archive

The video also uses testimony of an unnamed mother of five who, after reading *Atom Bomb Children* about children who survived the bombings in Japan, felt an obligation to "do something more forceful than just stay at home in a kitchen" and joined the WSP action at the Nevada Test Site (Richards). Her statement shows how WSP advanced ideas about traditional motherhood and women's role in the political realm, rhetoric reminiscent of the nineteenth-century women's suffrage movement, as the woman expresses that "just" staying home in a kitchen is no longer an option. Her role as a caring mother compels her to take political action about the danger her children face—fusing the two realms, public and private, through the exigency caused by nuclear weapons. Being a caring mother now means being a political mother, just as the suffrage movement suggested that women would make politics more caring in nineteenth-century political fight for suffrage. Shots of women marching in the Nevada desert coincide with the testimony, and these images contrast with the photo of Miss Atomic Bomb depicted

in the same space. In "Women for Peace," Richards films well dressed women marching with "STOP" signs and pushing empty strollers, signifying both the babies these women left at home and the danger to future children born with radioactive fallout still present in the atmosphere. The WSP protestors have agency in the use of their bodies, and they use them to walk in protest of the worldview that nuclear scientists and the US military advanced throughout the 1950s. Rather than still shots of nameless women adorned with mushroom clouds, the women who marched with WSP use their bodies in an act of political protest rather than as an object of desire. The act of walking connects them to their lineage of feminist political protests, as the video ends with these second wave nuclear protestors walking a nine-mile perimeter in San Francisco that represented the area destroyed by the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The peripatetic social critique is reminiscent of WSP's first wave foremothers, who the New York Times called modern peripatetic philosophers in 1910, and a tactic that many women use as they carry on the ideals and vision introduced by WSP in the 1960s. WSP's focus on the body politic rather than the objectified body marks a crucial turn for feminist activism.

Atomic Nightmare Becomes Atomic Reality

The fear of WSP protesters turned into Terry Tempest Williams's reality two decades later. Williams's *Refuge* relates the personal tragedy of her mother's cancer diagnosis alongside community concerns about how the rising levels of the Great Salt Lake threaten the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. The text deals with the consequences of atomic testing in the Southwest and combines the personal with the political in a narrative that strives to find the human place in nature's design despite the

West's history of environmental degradation, including atomic testing. While Cold War-era America feared an all-out nuclear war, the reality of nuclear weapons proved quite different, as anxieties about the possibility of nuclear war and the Cold War policy of deterrence led to the atmospheric atomic tests that were conducted in the Nevada desert during the 1950s and 1960s. The fallout from these tests became the Cold War reality of "downwinders," the name for residents of Nevada and Utah who were in a direct line of exposure to the radiation from these tests, and the consequences have been devastating to the health of Utahans like Williams's family.

In *Refuge,* Williams portrays a sense of indeterminacy through the shifting of natural rhythms in the landscape surrounding the Great Salt Lake, a vision that contrasts with the images of Miss Atomic Bomb popular forty years earlier. The Prologue begins by describing the Great Salt Lake as "a landscape so surreal one can never know what it is for certain" (Williams 3). Williams's description of the lake's surreality contrasts with the vision of Las Vegas that aligns with Sontag's idea of Americans as impatient with reality. Williams's writing, in contrast, displays remarkable patience and a determination to understand and make comprehensible her reality, and as the changes in the landscape become a metaphor for the changes in her family when her mother and other female family members are diagnosed with cancer, it becomes clear that the uncertain nature of the land and water surrounding her give Williams comfort as she searches for a sense of understanding about why this is happening. The uncertainties and shifts of nature provide a way for Williams to comprehend the tragedy her family faces, and the narrative structure reflects the way the natural world provides a frame through which she can put her personal difficulties into perspective.

Chapter titles derive from birds that Williams sees at the Great Bear Migratory Bird Refuge, a place that becomes as much a refuge for her as for the birds she watches there. Williams also records the level of the Great Salt Lake at the beginning of each chapter, and the record provides readers a concrete way to understand the amount of change this landscape undergoes. The narrative structure emphasizes both the importance of nature and the way it is in constant change, an emphasis that seems necessary for both Williams and her mother Diane when confronted with cancer for the second time in her life. Both mother and daughter turn to nature in order to understand and accept the sickness. After finding a mass in her abdomen, Diane takes a river trip down the Grand Canyon before she visits her doctor, saying that "the Grand Canyon is a perfect place to heal" and "I needed time to live with it, to think about it—and more than anything else, I wanted to float down the Colorado River" (Williams 23). The comfort she finds in nature, and the desire to be out in it, surpasses even the caretaking of her body. When faced with chemotherapy, Diane asks Williams to "help me visualize a river—I can imagine the chemotherapy to be a river running through me, flushing the cancer cells out" (39).

When processing her mother's illness, Williams attempts to rethink the metaphors associated with illness in our society, preferring to think of the process of cell division that eventually leads to a cancerous tumor as similar to the creative process. She resists thinking of illness as something to conquer and refuses to accept the way in which "medical language is loaded, this time with military metaphors: the fight, the battle, enemy infiltration, and defense strategies" (43). For someone whose main source of comfort is the natural world, these military metaphors provide little comfort, and her meditations on the subject lead her to wonder if "aggression waged against our own

bodies is counterproductive to healing? Can we be at war with ourselves and still find peace?" (43). Her critique of the way that we think of disease in our culture takes on added meaning when considering the likely cause of her cancer, atomic fallout, as these questions themselves can be read as metaphors for how nuclear testing was being conducted in the desert Williams loves. By testing nuclear weapons in an area where its own citizens were at risk, the United States participated in an act of aggression against its own body politic. One could see this phenomenon as Americans being at war with themselves, as Rebecca Solnit does when she asserts that "[n]uclear war, whether you are for it or against it, is supposed to be a terrible thing that might happen someday, not something that has been going on all along" (Solnit 5).

Solnit examines a myriad of issues surrounding the Nevada Test Site, from the land battles with the Western Shoshone and local ranchers to the ideologies of manifest destiny and American exceptionalism that led to the selection of the Test Site in an area that was "a blank on many maps, a forgotten landscape" (7). Her conception of the atomic testing that occurred at the Nevada Test Site asserts the reality of nuclear war waged in a very different way than the literature of the Cold War era anticipated. Solnit rejects even the word "test," instead asserting that the physicists and military personnel were "rehearsing the end of the world…over and over again" (5). Both Solnit and Williams are intensely concerned with landscape and politics of place, and the military aggression waged against the Nevada desert hits too close to home for Williams to engage in the use of military metaphors to describe her mother's illness.

The tests themselves exist at the periphery of the narrative, even though underground testing still happened at the time Williams wrote *Refuge*. Williams does not

approach the issue until midway through the text, but when she finally addresses the nuclear tests, we see how it has played a part in Diane's feelings about her illness all along. After cancelling their planned hike in the Mojave Desert because "another nuclear bomb was being detonated underground at the Nevada Test Site," Williams, her mother, and her grandparents "seek quiet" in St. George, Utah when they encounter a group of protesters (Williams 134). The "another" of her comment reveals that this is a process that has occurred throughout the course of the narrative, despite the silence about the issue. They are all moved by the procession of protesters, whom Williams describes as "a slow-moving river, hundreds of people walking on behalf of nuclear disarmament. The Great Peace March" (134). The description of the protesters as a river is significant, as Diane had previously envisioned the chemotherapy that she hoped would cure her cancer as a river running through her, eliminating the cancer cells and healing her body. The use of the river metaphor to describe the protesters reveals her opinion on the issue of nuclear testing, placing the protesters as the river that will heal the desert from the "cancer" of the atomic detonations. The scene continues to affect them, particularly Diane, who sees the connections between her situation and the reasons behind the march: "'I could join them,' Mother said under her breath as we clapped for them. A song rose up from the activists: *We are a gentle, loving people and we are walking, walking for our lives*—We walked with them. It was the first time I had ever heard Mother and Mimi sing outside of church" (134). Diane's views on how to accept illness and end-of-life issues complicate her relationship to the song about "walking for our lives," yet the shared moment of protest remains a pivotal point in the text.

The issue of survival focuses upon finding pleasure in day-to-day life experiences rather than trying to prolong the time available. This perspective, easy for Diane to see from her vantage point, is hard for those around her to accept. Williams and the other family members continue to hope that she will "get better" throughout much of the narrative, an outlook which leaves Diane frustrated: "'You still don't understand, do you?' Mother said to me. 'It doesn't matter how much time I have left. All we have is now. I wish you could all accept that and let go of your projections. Just let me live so I can die'" (161). Her statement describes how she might relate to the line "walking for our lives" sung by the protesters during the anti-nuclear march. Rather than viewing the march as a means to ensure future life, Diane likely viewed the walk as a part of her life, an event she participated in and enjoyed because it connected her both to the desert that she loved and to the like-minded individuals that surrounded her.

The philosophy that Diane draws upon, that there is no retreat from or extension to life, and that "all we have is now," is often lost in the focus on prolonging the time available. Diane's desire to "live so I can die" is a departure from how both illness and dying are generally approached in the United States. Yet, just as she rejects the military metaphors of battling her disease and fighting her own body, she also rejects her family's hopes that she can beat her cancer. For those around her, this rejection is hard to accept. However, Diane's terminal diagnosis does not prevent her from living fully, even when that means embracing the process of dying. Throughout her illness, Diane declines to let the dominant American culture or the Mormon church dictate how she will relate to her own decaying body and approaching death. When asked by her daughter about what she

believes, she replies that "I believe in me," reminding Williams that she refuses to define herself through anyone else's terms (137).

Like the rest of the narratives in this dissertation, *Refuge* is concerned with the power of stories; the idea that stories shape our lives and systems of belief structures the text. The text helps form what Lawrence Buell calls "toxic discourse," a genre of nature writing that brings to light environmental toxicity and the havoc it wreaks. Williams's narrative contributes to "the sociological evidence of the emergence of toxicity as a widely shared paradigm" (Buell 665). As Buell demonstrates, evidence suggests that "the sheer eloquence—the affect—of testimony of ordinary citizens' anxiety about environmental degradation can have substantial influence" both on public policy and public opinion (665). Williams participates in building this toxic discourse, commenting on how her story contributes to the story of atomic testing and its effects on the downwinders. Williams bookends the narrative with the way that stories have influenced her relationship, both to herself and to the world around her. She sets up the dynamic in the prologue, writing that "Perhaps, I am telling this story in an attempt to heal myself, to confront what I do not know, to create a path for myself with the idea that 'memory is the only way home.' I have been in retreat. This story is my return" (4). The narrative expands on the process of confronting the unknown, as the entire memoir centers on the theme of how to find refuge in the changes occurring in the natural world and in her family life. In the epilogue, "The Clan of One-Breasted Women," both she and the readers realize the larger implications of how stories inform our view of the events around us. Williams therefore comes to understand "the deceit I had been living under" about the reality of nuclear testing and how it affected her life (283).

Her realization occurs when she shares a recurring dream about a flash of light in the desert, a dream her father reveals to be true:

> 'You did see it,' he said. 'Saw what?' 'The bomb. The cloud […] It was an hour or so before dawn, when this explosion went off. We not only heard it, but felt it. I thought the oil tanker in front of us had blown up. We pulled over and suddenly, rising from the desert floor, we saw it, clearly, this golden-stemmed cloud, the mushroom. The sky seemed to vibrate with an eerie pink glow. Within a few minutes, a light ash was raining on the car.' I stared at my father. 'I thought you knew that,' he said. 'It was a common occurrence in the fifties.' (283)

The way that her father's story reveals how atomic testing was an unknown presence in her life leads Williams to question how American society processes the issue of atomic testing and what stories circulate about what and why and how this has occurred, questions which lead her to reject the official narrative of the US government: "It has been found that the tests may be conducted with adequate assurance of safety" (284). Although she cannot prove that the radioactive fallout caused the cancer in her mother, her grandmothers, and her aunts, she also cannot prove that it did not, and what that leaves her with is more questions: "The more I learn about what it means to be a 'downwinder,' the more questions I drown in" (286). The endless questioning reinforces the resistance of the narrative and the issues it raises about nuclear testing, akin to a coming-to-consciousness for Williams of the ways nuclear testing shaped her life. Her political awakening and ensuing activism are akin to the activism that WSP launched two decades earlier, and Williams's memory of seeing the blast signals her entry into the realm of nuclear protest that WSP initiated.

These questions ultimately remain unresolved. Williams realizes that everything must be questioned, as "[t]olerating blind obedience in the name of patriotism or religion ultimately takes our lives" (286). She ends the narrative with a story that reflects the way she hopes to live after realizing the deceit about how nuclear issues are handled in our society. She shares with her readers a dream about a group of women protesting the contamination in the desert. In the course of the story, she moves from speaking of "the women" to "we" to "I" as her dream, like the earlier one that revealed the hidden presence of nuclear testing in her life, proves to be true. The text leaves readers with the image of her crossing the line onto the Nevada Test Site in an act of civil disobedience, getting arrested, and then transported out into the desert, a joke on the part of the officers who think they leave the women stranded when in fact they are already home.

The Personal is Political: A Disability Protest Story

Nancy Mairs writes about her own participation in the same act of civil disobedience in *Carnal Acts*, her 1996 collection of essays with such a strongly experiential focus on the body that Mairs considered the essays themselves as carnal acts. Mairs's intense focus on the body stems from her own extraordinary circumstances. Mairs had MS, which forced her to adjust her life to the circumstances of her body rather than relying on it to take her through life unimpeded. While Mairs adjusts her life based on the day-to-day conditions her body experiences due to her disease, as a feminist she refuses to adjust her writing based on discrimination she faces in writing workshops and from publishers regarding how men perceive stories about her lived experience as boring

and unimportant. She credits the women's movement for her resolute conviction to tell her bodily reality:

> But suppose that a woman—thanks indeed to the women's movement—does not stop or swerve? What then can she best do? I would say that she can tell the truth about her body (by which Woolf meant, I'm sure, not just an agglomeration of head and arms and legs and vagina but the embodied self) and its passions, an act which will force her to transgress the boundaries of polite—that is, conventional—discourse giving tongue to her own delight and desire. (60)

Her literary transgression of polite boundaries mirrors her bodily transgressions—Mairs's body is a political body because her disability situates her outside of the norm, and, as the WSP movement made clear, "the familial and personal are political and […] the public and private spheres are one" (13). Concerned mothers became political when faced with radiation's threat to their children, and Mairs's public and private spheres intertwine due to her illness and disability. To her, writing about her bodily reality is a political act, a literary equivalent of the journey she and countless women before her take into the Nevada desert as an act of protest.

Mairs frames her participation in the nuclear protest using the language and imagery popularized by WSP in the 1960s and 1970s, the same time she began her activism. As she processes her emotions about her first political arrest, she ruminates in a way that is clearly influenced by WSP rhetoric and tactics:

> Why, I find myself wondering in the first elated rush at being safely on the other side, have we postponed for so long crossing the line between peaceful protest and nonviolent direct action? For me, the progression first from apathy to protest

> and now from protest to civil disobedience seems hooked somehow to the lives of my children. I crossed that first line in the autumn of 1969, about six months after the birth of my second child, Mathhew, when I spotted a full-page advertisement in the *Boston Sunday Globe* protesting the war in Vietnam. Something jolted me then, as it never had before, like a sudden electrical connection: perhaps it was the presence of a small squalling draftable boy whom I was supposed to raise to kill for his country. (69)

The birth of her son provided Mairs with the exigency for protesting, while having him safely grown and out of the house provided the next push for her to progress to direct action. Her delayed entry into direct action differentiates her from WSP protestors, even though the movement clearly influences her political consciousness and actions. The differentiation despite similarities exemplifies Mairs's situation, as her bodily reality requires constant negotiation to navigate situations that others easily take on.

Despite two decades engaged in social activism, the first time Mairs stepped into the realm of civil disobedience occurred during her protest of the Nevada Test Site, described in "Faith and Loving in Las Vegas." Of course, stepping into the world of civil disobedience is a metaphor for Mairs, as she more accurately rolled there, a feat not easily accomplished with a wheelchair in the desert: "Lorenzo is holding my left hand, and Jim is holding my right. Behind me, George holds hands with Jack and Mimi, the three together nudging the wheelchair forward […] A plywood platform has been laid across the wide bars of the cattle guard. The wheelchair bumps up onto the plywood and rolls forward. We have crossed the line" (65). Rolling rather than walking into her first protest at the Nevada test site, Mairs wants the same treatment as her fellow protestors as

they commit their act of civil disobedience, an act that both excites and frightens her at the same time. Although she is part of a group of protesters that all committed the same act of civil disobedience, Mairs's different situation becomes clear when she must ask to be arrested. While deputies handcuff the other protesters, they bypass Mairs. She requests to be cuffed, and does not take no for an answer even though the officers prefer not to arrest her due to the difficulty of transporting her wheelchair. Mairs insists she receive the same treatment as the rest of her group, but again her concern over her mobility device highlights her difference: '"My wheelchair,' I say. 'You will take care of it for me? You won't let anything happen to it, will you?' I haven't for an instant felt afraid of mistreatment by these somber uniformed men, but suddenly I'm scared they might punish me through my wheelchair" (68). Her anxiety regarding the safety of her wheelchair far outweighs her anxiety about her own or her husband's and fellow protesters' safety, a point that emphasizes how essential the assistive device is to her functioning. While she can walk a little without her chair, she is largely immobilized if the officers damage it. Her safety in the protest cannot be known until she is reconnected with her chair; while the other protesters must only keep track of their bodies, Mairs also worries about the machine that enables her body to move through the world.

The tension between Mairs's identity as an activist and her identity as someone with bodily limitations returns throughout the chapter and serves as a guiding principle for her first experience protesting nuclear weapons. Her involvement is similar to but ultimately different from her fellow activists', and the reality she faces surfaces throughout her account of the day. The first difference occurs when she asks the officer to arrest her, and then again asks him to handcuff her. Having to ask for the same treatment

as others shows the subtle forms discrimination against people with disabilities takes. Although it might seem like preferable treatment to leave her uncuffed, she *wants* to experience the protest in the same way as her fellow activists. As the day continues, the differences in Mairs's reality continue to surface: her difficulty climbing onto the bus used to transport those arrested, "even holding onto railings on either side, with people in front and back of me for support, I can barely haul myself up. I will be sore for days"; the bus driver's whisper that eighty percent of the testing done at the Nevada Test Site is to "test drugs to help people like you," his attempt to reach out and connect with her; the reaction of her fellow protestors as she climbs the steps into a trailer, "Those in the pen cheer me as I walk away, and I shrink inwardly in embarrassment. People with whole bodies sometimes mistake cripples for heroes. They forget that I'm doing just what they're doing, only more clumsily" (69, 71, 72). These examples of how Mairs's experience is different also demonstrate a crucial point: during the moments she experiences the protest differently, she is still surrounded by people trying to form community. The reaching out of the bus driver and the verbal and literal support she receives to assist her mobility are both attempts at connection and gestures to indicate that despite bodily or even ideological differences, as humans we are "in it" together.

Her difficulties climbing in and out of the bus used to transport people arrested highlights the efficacy of the direct action and connects Mairs both to her disability community, to the community of activists she spent the day with in Nevada, and to the WSP community of protestors that paved the way for future women activists. The reaction of her fellow protesters helps shape Mairs's consciousness about her role as an activist with a disability; she comes to terms with her own position in the line of women

who protested before her when she turns inward because of the way the world outwardly perceives her:

> …my reality is skewed from the others'. I want to be treated exactly like them. In truth, though, I'm not exactly like them. I'm getting more and more different from them almost by the day. I can't divorce myself, morally or otherwise, from my failing body. I am she. And I have, as a consequence, some responsibilities they can't even grasp […] All I know is that my crossing the line bears another kind of weight from theirs. It is not a straightforward individual act of civil disobedience. Like it or not, I cross not foremost as a private citizen but as a representative of those people who, despite their disparities, get lumped as the result of their physical disabilities into a single class. Poor people! They haven't asked me to represent them. Most of them would probably shudder at the very idea. But, in a sense, here we all are on a Sunday morning out in the middle of the Nevada desert. (73)

The lack of specificity here bears a different meaning than the anonymity of the atomic beauty pageants in 1950s Las Vegas. While the atomic beauty pageants objectified women for their bodies and their beauty, Mairs has agency as the reluctant representative of the disability community. Her action as a political protestor intertwines with her bodily experience, and she recognizes that when she crosses the protest line it is not an individual act; she acts on behalf of people with disabilities whether she wants to or they want her to. I explore this sense of community and shared identity further in chapter four through a discussion of disability writing and its place in Western literature; however, Mairs's realization that her protest is not an individual action but rather representative of

her community is also reminiscent of the women's anti-nuclear movement and the WSP realization that the "familial and personal is political and the public and private spheres are one."

The snapshots of the atomic West discussed in chapter three, from the gendered and colonial rhetoric of the frontier during nuclear development to the resurgence of women's activism in the public sphere with the Women Strike for Peace movement to the patriarchal pageantry of Las Vegas atomic culture to the environmental damage of nuclear testing, show the range of issues that are tied up with the atomic bomb. The language of Westward expansion that ushered in the atomic era in the 1940s extended the rhetorical framework of masculine dominance over a feminine nature, a worldview that led to the women-as-object atomic pageantry in the 1950s. The resurgence of women's activism with Women's Strike for Peace nuclear protests returned agency to women in atomic culture. Unlike the often-unnamed women in atomic beauty pageants, women in WSP chose to remain nameless in the initial planning of the movement, emphasizing instead the grassroots and community aspects of the movement. A sense of community continues with the life writing of Terry Tempest Williams and Nancy Mairs in the 1990s, as both find comfort in the community of protestors despite their complicated embodied experiences. Community creation is also central to the narratives discussed in the next chapter, as Nancy Mairs continues to counter traditional views of the West and expand the field to include writers who experience the West "waist high" in their wheelchairs. In chapter four, she is joined by Lucia Perillo, whose focus on expanding conceptions of nature and wild spaces through knowledge games offers a look at an alternate view of the West that resists the ableism that has long gone unnoticed in the genre.

Chapter IV

Waist High in the West: Expanding Horizons through Inclusive Perspectives

Introduction: Disabling the Mythic West

One of the most pervasive and unexamined assumptions of the embodied experience of the West is that of an able-bodied subject moving freely through the environment, in control of her own body and able to make it perform the arduous physical tasks associated with life in the West. Ideals and images depicting independent physical ability permeates Western literature, and able-bodied self-reliance is an undeniable aspect of the genre. Take, for example, Teddy Roosevelt's 1902 valorization of the nation's frontier past and the rough-and-tumble Western individualism so important to American identity in *The Strenuous Life*: "In the last analysis a healthy state can only exist when the men and women who make it up lead clean, vigorous, healthy lives; when the children are so trained that they shall endeavor, not to shirk difficulties, but to overcome them; not to seek ease, but to know how to wrest triumph from toil and risk" (3). Wresting triumph from toil and risk, in Roosevelt's eyes, defined the character of the nation as well as its people, and the West embodied these characteristics. But for those who write about life in the West from the vantage point of a wheelchair, it looks and reads like a very different place. The viewpoint of the West from "waist-high" shows a different perspective while it reveals the universal assumption of the able body that traverses the iconic Western landscape, riding, walking, and moving seemingly effortlessly through challenging environments that populate the pages of archetypal Western narratives. As G. Thomas Couser explains, "The moments in which we are

perhaps most aware of our embodiment, then, may be those times when our bodies ail or fail, when they deviate from some more-or-less comfortable stasis or some norm that allows us to take them for granted, to put them out of mind" (10). The disabled bodies that Nancy Mairs and Lucia Perillo write into contemporary readers' consciousness highlight the able body taken for granted and put out of mind throughout the history of Western literature.

Lucia Perillo and Nancy Mairs challenge the archetypal embodied experience of the Western literary tradition and follow in the footsteps of women writers and writers of color whose narratives have been a subject of study for Western scholars and literary scholars alike. Narratives written by authors who occupy subject positions that are not white, male, and able-bodied were slow to be recognized as Western literature; as Annette Kolodny writes, "The language of five hundred years of white male explorers, promotional writers, frontier heroes, and the authors of imaginative literature about the frontiers revealed repeated psycho-linguistic patterns that, at often unconscious levels, influenced real-world activity" ("Rethinking Frontier Literary History as the Stories of First Cultural Contact" 14). The language used in discourses about the West helped create the myth of the West, which in turn structured the conception of what fit into the category of Western literature. Yet as Kolodny points out in her work on women's experiences in the West, "Women, however, never seemed comfortable within those metaphorical patterns" (14). Mairs and Perillo are authors that refuse to restrict themselves within any metaphorical patterns that limit the expression of their positionality. In doing so they join a community of Western women writers who challenge the parameters of the discipline.

I situate Perillo and Mairs within the Western literary tradition to highlight how disability embodiment destabilizes the conventions upon which the Western genre relies: a sense of embodiment that values physical vigor, masculinity, and rugged individualism. These two authors' depictions of non-normative embodiment challenge these conventions, as both their writing and experience of the West are structured by their physical positionality of meeting life and the landscape in a wheelchair. This unique vantagepoint provides them with experiences that counter readers expectations of rugged, masculine vigor. Instead of satisfying the themes of the stock Western, Mairs's and Perillo's physical embodiment allows for a materially-based rhetorical positionality throughout. The work provides glimpses into a type of Western writing that destabilizes the "repeated psycho-linguistic patterns" that influence typical Westerns; through depictions of their life in the West, they create a community-oriented space that opens the genre to new understandings of life in the West.

Writers who live in the West with physical disabilities often choose not to define themselves as Western writers, even though they deal with the tropes and themes that are common in Western literature. The two writers in this chapter, Nancy Mairs and Lucia Perillo, provide a glimpse into the able-bodied assumptions that underlie the history of Western literature and culture. Their writing re-spatializes the West, reaching out to identify and build community when they do not find it within the lineage of other female Western writers. The embodiment they depict through their writing acts as a metaphorical version of horizontal identity, shaping Western literature into a more expansive field through depictions of their embodied reality and the social location that forms their complex embodiment. Through depictions of the embodied reality of life with multiple

sclerosis, their writing does not merely act as a counter to Western writing, rather as a complex embodiment of a new Western writing from a different perspective.

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, the civil rights of disabled people were officially recognized by law and people with disabilities had legal recourse against discrimination in employment, housing, and participation in public life. Yet social perception and representation has been slow to catch up with the legal system, which is itself a sluggish and resistant actor in the move toward disability rights. As Couser notes, disabilities have been overrepresented in one aspect given that crippled and mad characters are common throughout literary history. However, those characters have not been historically in control of telling their own story, as Kenny Fries notes: "Throughout history, those with disabilities have been defined by the gaze and the needs of the non-disabled world" (1). Representations of disability have not traditionally come from the position of disabled subjects themselves.[16] The importance of the recent publishing boom in life writing in disability and illness life writing and its correlation with disability civil rights movements becomes clear when the issue of representation is brought to the forefront:

> Disability memoir should be seen, therefore, not as spontaneous self-expression, but as a response—indeed a retort—to the traditional misrepresentation of disability in Western culture generally. One can see why autosomatography is a particularly important form of life writing about disability: written from inside the experience in question, it involves *self*-representation by definition and thus offers

[16] This has been discussed at length by scholars of disability studies, including Lennard J. Davis in "Crips Strike Back: The Rise of Disability Studies" (1999) and Kenny Fries in *Staring Back: The Disability Experience from the Inside Out* (1997).

> an opportunity for personal revaluation of that condition. Disability autobiographers typically begin from a position of marginalization, belatedness, and pre-inscription. Long the objects of others' classification and examination, disabled people counter their historical objectification (or even abjection) by occupying the subject position. The representation of disability in such narratives is thus a political as well as a mimetic act—a matter of speaking *for* as well as speaking *about*. (Couser 7)

Disability autobiographies unify the literary and cultural narratives examined throughout my project.[17] Writing from inside the non-normative bodily experience effectively allows the disabled writer to represent a unique embodied experience and to resist classification that often feels limiting or prescriptive. This is the project I see the writers in chapter four invoking—asking readers to confront non-normative embodied experiences in the West, a space that has been particularly pre-inscribed with a certain type of able-bodied mentality and physicality.

In addition to the way that disability life writing allows disabled writers to counter historical objectification by occupying a devalued embodied subject position, these narratives also create a sense of community among disability audiences. Unlike racial, ethnic, and religious identity, often disability is not held in common among family members, which means that disabled persons' life experiences differ remarkably from the people that surround them. This situation also cuts them off from familial lines of

[17] Julie Rak explores the memoir boom from a different yet also useful perspective: Americans readers now tend to gather information about and understand major events through personal tales, looking to stories of individual experience to explain larger cultural ideas. Through her analysis of memoir as cultural product, she explains the proliferation of memoirs in the 1990s and 2000s as articulating the way that public and private intertwined to connect ideas about citizenship and community belonging.

transmission about ways of being disabled. Andrew Solomon describes vertical identities as the familial and intergenerational identities that create a network of people who have similar cultural experiences, which allows for an identity held in common by members of the same family and serves as a source of support when they exist outside the norm or constitute a minority group in society (2). Like sexual orientation and gender identity, disability is often a horizontal identity, one in which family members experience the world in a fundamentally different way. The way that LGBT and disabled people experience an often-discriminatory world is different than the way their family members move through the world, and the experience of otherness and minority status of horizontal identity groups make finding a community that shares these situations important for emotional and psychological well-being. Horizontal identities in these cases are formed by participation in extra-familial subcultures, as disabled and queer individuals learn modes of expression and acceptance from people whose embodied experience in the world aligns with their own.

A sense of community has been shown to influence the way that people with illness and disabilities handle their experience regarding the limitations they encounter. If they view their embodied state as isolating and negative, their views on life will reflect that attitude. As Tobin Siebers states, "people with disabilities have a better chance of future happiness and health if they accept their disability as a positive identity and benefit from the knowledge embodied in it" (27). The incorporation of their disability or illness in a positive way affects the mental health of people with disabilities, and positive identity formation becomes easier when there are examples of other people living with the same type of illness and struggling with the same physical barriers. In essence, this

positive identity requires a social narrative that values people with disabilities, as Siebers recognizes with his examination of identity:

> Identity is not the structure that creates a person's pristine individuality or inner essence but the structure by which that person identifies and becomes identified with a set of social narratives, ideas, myths, values, and types of knowledge of varying reliability, usefulness, and verifiability. It represents the means by which the person, qua individual, comes to join a particular social body (283-4).

This definition of identity in Siebers's "theory of complex embodiment" recognizes the interaction of both embodied reality and social forces in the lives of people with disabilities. This theory corrects the shortcomings of the medical model of disability, which locates disability in the body as a defect and pathologizes the embodied experience while ignoring the social factors which contribute to making life difficult for people whose bodies fall outside the norm. It also disputes the way that the social model of disabilities defines disability as a social construction which marks some physical characteristics as disabilities without accounting for the impairment which makes up a very real part of the person's embodied experience. The theory of complex embodiment bridges these two approaches, arguing that disability is "constructed partly through societal reactions to differently abled bodies and partly through the real, physical pain and/or impairment that disabled bodies suffer" (30). I take the theory of complex embodiment as my model, recognizing that the embodied experience cannot be separated from the social reality of the writers included in this chapter.

In parallel to Solomon's notion of veritical identities, disability studies theorist Alison Kafer calls for "critical maps of the practices and ideologies that effectively cast

disabled people out of time and out of our futures" in her book *Feminist Queer Crip* (33). She argues that this temporal sense of "the future" shores up the cultural overvaluation of compulsory able-bodiedness and often casts disabled people as obstacles to more eugenicist progress narratives. Such an analysis builds on the notion of queer futurity highlighted in the work of Jack Halberstam and Lee Edelmen. Kafer's concept of disability futurity challenges the sense of a limited and unimaginable future where "disability too often serves as the agreed upon limit of our projected futures" (27). While Solomon focuses on community formation and horizontal identity groups and Kafer places more importance on examining notions of temporality and reimagining the future in order to see the present differently, the writers I discuss in this chapter combine these tactics to produce a vision of Western literature that is inclusive and welcoming to those whose abilities don't align with the riding and roping readers have come to expect from the Westerns that celebrate the mythic West.

Intersectional Identities or An Identity Subsumed

Perillo and Mairs are not just writers of disability. Their work, which includes poetry as well as prose, also addresses the body through gender, although their views on the topic provide divergent perspectives. Perillo's attention to her body is evident throughout her work, but the focus shifted after her diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. Her first collection of poetry, *Dangerous Life* (1989), published before her diagnosis, attends to the violence that pervades our culture and surfaces in body, soul, and environment. As a poetic meditation on victimization, the collection deals with the violence women face in society. As Perillo says in an interview with Maria McLeod, "I think "oppression of

women" sounds like a catchphrase, but that was part of the landscape as well. I think young women now don't realize how it was…It was really pretty awful trying to go into a field that was predominantly male" (McLeod). Her first book documents the difficulties faced by women during the era of second wave feminism, focusing on workplace discrimination and sexuality. Perillo's desire to write an autobiographical poem about these experiences faded once her embodied experience and identity shifted from centering on gender to a focus on illness.

> But I will say that I became less interested in women's issues when my identity as a woman was subsumed by my identity as a person who was sick. It was in '88 that I was diagnosed with MS [multiple sclerosis]. Then that identity overtook these earlier concerns because they paled. My earlier feminist concerns, my feelings of discrimination, were small potatoes compared to what I was up against subsequent to that. I acquired a new identity. Now, you know, I don't even *feel* like a woman anymore. I don't feel that's my primary identity (McLeod interview).

Her second book, *The Body Mutinies* (1996), documents the shift in identity where she abandons the "myth of the female outlaw or female victim" that she cultivated in her earlier work and fashions an identity as "an afflicted person" (McLeod interview). This change shows how the identity depicted in writing reflects the embodied reality of the writer. Perillo's MS subsumed her identity as a woman as the embodied experience and social reality of a woman with a progressive neurological illness overwhelmed her struggles as a woman. Rather than taking an intersectional approach, Perillo identifies as

a person with a disability rather than as a woman, as to her the identity of disabled overtook the worries she had as a woman.

Mairs takes a different approach to gender and illness, integrating these two aspects in her writing about the body. For her gender and illness both inform and shape her identity, intersecting to create her embodied reality. Unlike Perillo's experience, illness does not displace the gendered experience, and Mairs has written about both her bodily experiences with MS and depression and her gendered experience as a woman since her second book, *Plaintext*, was published in 1992. She recognizes that gender, faith, activism, and disability are all aspects that influence her writing about the body; as we saw in chapter three, political activism is central to her beliefs about herself and her place in the world. For her, gender, activism, and illness all inform and shape her identity, intersecting to create her embodied reality. Her illness does not displace the gendered or political experiences she has in the world, and Mairs has written about both her bodily experiences with MS and depression, her gendered experiences as a woman, and how these both shape her politics and activism. These topics intertwine in *Carnal Acts* (1996), the collection of essays where she meditates on the progressive deterioration of her body at the same time that she explores what it means to live with the expectations she feels as a wife, mother, and crippled but still sexual woman. As Merri Lisa Johnson explains:

> This movement from embodied speech and sensual self-reclamation to the fact of her body as deteriorating from multiple sclerosis creates a fortuitous and pivotal passage from Mairs's place in the intellectual histories of writing the body and apprehending the personal as political to a more recent turn in feminist theory toward writing the disabled body in order to reveal this supposed niche interest as

> one that, in fact, implicates all women, all bodies. ("On Feminist Intellectual History" 12)

For Mairs, feminist discourse shapes the structure, tone, and subject matter of her writing throughout the progression of her disease, and her embodied experience emphasizes the importance of the body and the personal. As the example of her nuclear protest shows in chapter three, the personal is political and for Mairs that includes her faith, activism, and gender in addition to MS.

Lucia Perillo: Knowledge Games, Naming, and Expanding Nature Writing

In *I've Heard the Vultures Singing: Field Notes on Poetry, Illness, and Nature*, Lucia Perillo grapples with the expectations of writing about her chosen subject of life in Oregon and her own changing relationship to the natural world and ultimately to her own slowly deteriorating body. A former park ranger diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in her thirties, Perillo writes about the loss of her ability to hike the Cascades or ski Mount Rainier, activities that before her diagnosis had been a crucial part of her identity. Before her diagnosis, Perillo lived a life that many people who reside in the West can relate to: she loved the region for its natural beauty and relished her time spent in activities outdoors. *I've Heard the Vultures Singing,* however, documents an experience that has been relegated to the margins and the villians in Western literature: life as a cripple. In this collection of essays, Perillo seeks a new way of connecting with nature that will accommodate the physical challenges brought on by her disease and a new way of thinking about what constitutes a good life in the West. Her writing expands the way we

think about Western literature, presenting readers with the idea of horizontal identity as metaphor for the complex embodiment of her life in the West.

Through the process, Perillo taps into a larger social debate about the value of accessible nature that has grown in the past three decades with the increasing awareness brought to issues of access by disability studies and the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. Her writing does not fit neatly into either disability studies or the Western genre, and I believe that the troubled position she occupies is the reason her writing has such potential to make an impact, both on the implicit narratives of able-bodied self-reliance that permeate writing about nature and the West as well as the absence of the personal experience of impairment in the dominant narratives of the social model of disability studies. While Perillo does not provide easy answers to the problems of these fields, her meditative observations of wildlife and the outdoors challenge assumptions that nature necessitates a point of view that is remote and not easily accessed and that it takes a healthy, fully-functioning body to enjoy nature and the great outdoors.

Perillo grew up in the suburbs of New York City in the 1960s and graduated from McGill University in Montreal in 1979 with a degree in Wildlife Management. She valued the outdoor experiences her degree opened up to her and eagerly pursued a career with the park service: "As a young woman, I worked as a ranger in a variety of wildernesses, and I was vain about having a body that could paddle me across the sea or climb me to the top of mountains without complaint except sometimes a little twinkling in the balls of my feet" (1). Not just a weekend warrior, Perillo lived and worked in nature and valued the body that was able to take her places beyond the reach of the average person. Her use of the word *vain* to describe her feelings about her pre-illness

body describes an attitude she deals with throughout the text; the sense of nostalgia about what her body could formerly do is palpable, yet in looking back on those days she also recognizes the hubris involved in her formulation. A sense of judgment becomes apparent when Perillo talks about her former attitude when she was a park ranger in the days before her illness: she privileged the remote wildernesses in which she worked and the healthy body which took her there over the beauty of everyday nature and looked down upon the people who use the comforts of civilization to mitigate their interaction with nature.

"A Cripple in the Wilderness," the chapter in which Perillo documents a trip she and two friends make to Mount Rainier, a place where old ghosts from her days as a park ranger haunt her, makes the attitude she had in her young and healthy days clear. The challenges presented by the differences between the life she lived when she was a ranger at Rainier and the life she lives now are substantial, as she can no longer get to Mount Rainier on her own, much less ascend the trails as she was once accustomed to doing. The distinction between her pre-illness independence and her current reliance on friends as caretakers becomes evident when discussing the Paradise Inn, "a place where I rarely set foot back when I was a ranger, meeting its comforts with my disdain, intended as they were for tourists, a word I always uttered—like the other rangers—with derision" (79). The young Perillo and the other park rangers consider their connection to nature superior to the average person's, a stance she has since been forced to rethink. She and her friends stop at the inn to warm up and eat lunch after reaching the park, yet even though Perillo has lost her former abilities, some of her attitude still remains. Her friends buy lunch at the snack bar, yet she "sticks to the cheese I've brought and a mealy apple from my own

tree. I can at least be a climber in this regard—eating bad, cold food" (79). Here she pokes fun at the narratives of self-reliance she used to subscribe to as an avid outdoorswoman, yet her reluctance to give up this identity is evident in the way that she continues to enact the one aspect that she still can of the climber persona.

Self-reliance is one of the most important aspects of this identity that she took for granted during her healthy years that her illness forced her to abandon. Perillo could still reach Mount Rainier by herself, in her modified van, but in order to make it past the tourist traps and onto a trail that would satisfy her desire to be in nature, she required the assistance and watchful eye of her friends who push her wheelchair free when the wheels get stuck and promise to catch her if she rolls too fast on the way back down the mountain. The need for assistance conflicts with her self-reliant identity. On one hand, she is now used to requiring the help of others, and takes this in stride. As she says, "Becoming handicapped has meant becoming a little more congenial, in that my accessing wilderness now requires collaboration" (70). On the other hand, her congeniality only extends so far, and the need for collaboration also at times interferes with the nature experience she hopes to have. "I would prefer that noone talk, a remnant from those days when I traveled alone, but how do you say to your friends, *Please do not speak?*" (80). The experience she hopes to have is affected not only by her diminished physical capacity, but also by the way that, in order to have this experience at all, she must rely on others.

Perillo's trouble with relinquishing the self-reliance that was an essential aspect of her outdoorswoman identity does not come only from a sense of pride. The idea of the able-bodied self experiencing solitude in nature is part of a long tradition in Western

writing towards which Perillo understands she has a complicated position. She directly references this tradition and Thoreau's *Walden* in her chapter "On Solitude," where she takes a solo trip to a national wildlife refuge close to Olympia.[18] Her trip causes her to reflect on the freedom she feels she has lost since her illness, "the freedom of not having a companion [who'd tell me] whether I'd succeeded in becoming what I'd hoped to be (a lone body conquering the wilderness—was that it? a body that transcended its gender?) or whether I had failed" (177). Solitude offers no judgment, which is a crucial point to a woman who is never able to escape the encouraging smiles and enthusiastic nods of people she encounters when she visits the wild areas she is able to access. The wildlife refuge is one of those places, with its boardwalk making it a safe place to take her wheelchair. Here she engages with two of the American Transcendentalists whose writing shapes her own views about solitude: Emerson and Thoreau. Perillo writes:

> I'm thinking about Emerson and Thoreau…the two craftsmen of our national mental template when it comes to both individualism and nature. "The great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with the independence of solitude" says Emerson in his famous screed, "Self-Reliance," which gives justification to just about any psychopath who feels he is possessed by genius. Thoreau, famous for his solitary stay at Walden Pond…similarly describes the kind of solitary life that is contingent on good health…Builder of cabins, sower of beans, Thoreau's body is the primary instrument he used in his experiment with living in relative isolation in nature. *Walden* is, at rock-bottom, the chronicle of Thoreau's body's trajectory through the woods. (154-55, 180)

[18] Perillo's hat tip to Thoreau comes from her use of his chapter from Walden, "Solitude," as a reference in her own chapter title.

The progression of her disease and ensuing disability fundamentally altered Perillo's own body's trajectory, which leads to her troubled relationship with the "national mental template" about nature and individualism. The idea put forth in Emerson's essay on "Nature," that "nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving my eyes,) which nature cannot repair" does not hold true for Perillo (35). She acutely feels the way that her body cannot provide her the experiences that Emerson and Thoreau advocate. Nature has *not* repaired her body, and she is aware of its calamity and the changes it has brought every time she rolls herself into the wilderness. Her body is no longer fully able, yet Perillo continues to desire the benefits that Thoreau and Emerson describe from time spent in nature. In order to achieve this, she reconsiders some of her previous prejudices about what type of nature experience is valuable, a process which leads her to the wildlife refuge outside Olympia. Her disability forces her to see nature more broadly, and her revision of the kinds of nature and ways of accessing it that she considers valuable is part of the process she undergoes in fashioning a horizontal identity for herself and others who share her embodied experience. Through examining and resituating her own prejudices, she expands Western literature and nature writing, creating an expansiveness of thought within and about these genres that so often rely on expansiveness as a subject but have not transferred that into a consideration of their own representative limitations.

The safety of the wildlife refuge she visits is paradoxical; although the boardwalk makes it accessible, it also makes it less exciting than the wildernesses she experienced when she was healthy. Its tameness offends her. The inaccessibility of the refuge's meadowland, with the boardwalks built around the edge so people can view the animals

through binoculars and leave them undisturbed, appeals to Perillo. Rather than being constructed to provide access for people, especially people like her, the refuge was designed to provide solitude to the birds that flock there. They have the experience Perillo cannot. This interests Perillo, who is ambivalent about accessibility and the accommodations she now requires. "When the legs become unreliable, one loses a large portion of the world. I get tired of the word *accessible*, the idea that the world must be reworked for my benefit" (180). Here Perillo reveals her troubled relationship with the disability movement, which has focused on increasing access for people with disabilities and transforming society into a more accommodating place. The social model of disability draws the distinction between *impairment*, which is centered in the body, and *disability*, the result of a discriminatory and unaccommodating society. Her fatigue regarding accessibility reveals that most of the world is set up for the benefit of the able-bodied and fighting to change this is often met with resistance. Yet the goal of accessibility can conflict with some of the reasons Perillo and others value nature; the beauty of a place which causes people to want it set aside as a park or refuge is often linked to the lack of human intervention in the environment. She recognizes the paradox involved in her desire to have experiences in nature and the effects these experiences have, reflecting that: "My presence at Kennedy Creek requires a hundred pounds of plastic and metal and toxic chemicals, a battery-powered juggernaut that can roll only across terrain that has already been cleared. I know I am only one small woman trammeling the wilderness. Still, it grieves me that I do trammel. What I would embrace, I crush" (207). Rather than continue to crush the wilderness, she instead decides to

redefine the types of nature experiences that she values, focusing her attention on the nature that surrounds her home in Olympia, Washington.

Perillo's solution to the environmental damage her desire for solitude in nature causes consists of two parts: redefining the idea of wilderness and constructing what she calls "knowledge games" that can be conducted in these new versions of wilderness. She compares her redefinition of wilderness to the political idea of gerrymandering, writing that: "…now that I can't walk, I can't be too picky about what incarnation of nature I'll accept. I've been forced to gerrymander my definition of the wilderness, if I'm to have any wilderness at all" (6). Her reconsideration plays an important role in how Perillo challenges the national mental template about nature. Other writers and environmental thinkers discuss the problems inherent in valuing and defining wilderness outside of the realm of human society, but Perillo still maintains her appreciation for the wildernesses she spent time in during her youth because of their remoteness and the lack of human occupation. Her project does not change this appreciation; rather it attempts to cultivate enjoyment of the nature that surrounds her in everyday life: the ravine below her driveway, the wildlife she sees from her window, and the parks in and around Olympia. The shifting of perspective engages with a core principle of disability studies: she stops considering herself diminished or compromised by being unable to access remote areas. One tactic Perillo uses to develop her appreciation for the nature she sees on a daily basis is playing what she calls "knowledge games," which help her recognize how much we do not know about the nature that surrounds us.

There are three chapters devoted to knowledge games: Bats, Gulls, and Birdsong. In them, Perillo records a series of field notes, meditations on the animals she sees, hears,

and smells in her urban wildernesses. She is determined to learn all she can about them and in the process develop her enjoyment of the everyday nature around her. These mental exercises are the meditative practice she uses to replace hiking, swimming, and other physical activities. "I play knowledge games that substitute for the physical ones I've lost. I play my games to trick myself into believing that the simple act of walking isn't what I miss most of all…The point of these knowledge games is to be outdoors, focused on something that lies outside my own body, which happens to be not walking but wheeling along" (7-8). These games enact the same type of process she experienced walking in the wildernesses of her youth; in the act of being engaged in the world around her she forgets her disability and has an embodied experience in nature. She is there, experiencing the sights and sounds that surround her. Placing her focus on the gulls, bats, and birds turns it away from her painful legs, her wheelchair, and her deteriorating health. In this way, the knowledge games turn into a self-improvement program to train herself to focus not on her health and the things that it prevents her from experiencing, but on the common parts of nature that are within everyone's power to experience. "*Why does the rare thing arouse more interest? Why doesn't a gull compel anybody like an eagle would?* One answer could be that this phenomenon is a by-product of the tendency toward procrastination that is inherent in human nature. We assume the common things will always be here, so we tell ourselves we'll deal with them another day" (9). Perillo, who suffers from a chronic illness, knows that her time is not unlimited and the danger in putting off knowing and appreciating the common aspects of nature is that she may not appreciate them at all.

The knowledge games are meant to focus her attention on everyday aspects of life around her, which she accomplishes through gathering as much information as she can about their subjects, expanding her knowledge about bats, gulls, and birdsong beyond generalizations and assumptions. The information gathering is particularly difficult in the game on Gulls, as the differences among species of gull are nearly impossible to identify. Perillo goes through an elaborate process in attempting to differentiate among the many varieties of gulls based on minor distinctive details. The importance she places on properly identifying and naming is not limited to the gulls; it is also a process she also goes through when diagnosed with MS. She reflects on her illness in "Definition of Terms," a chapter that seems as much a knowledge game about her disease as the others are about the wildlife around her. In this chapter, she discusses the various terms to identify the damage done to her body: handicapped, crippled, invalid, gimp. MS is an auto-immune disease of the central nervous system, often progressive, which damages the nerves' ability to make connections, leading to tremors, pain, and loss of mobility. What started out for Perillo as a "twinkling" in the balls of her feet when she was an avid hiker eventually led to the loss of her ability to walk. The progressive nature of her disease connects to the importance she places on naming it:

> Earlier in my disease [my family] were probably as stunned and stymied as I was—and in those days it seemed possible to evade the body if we simply did not speak of it. This was a proven tactic, which had served us well in regard to sex. Now, when backed into a corner, my family calls me *disabled*, the static electricity clumping into quotation marks around the word…My dislike for disabled comes from its being cobbled together from negation: *not*-able, like *in*-

> valid. I cling to the fantasy that I could do anything with the right technology (27).

She chooses instead to call herself crippled, a term she approves of because of its aggressive nature. The negation she associates with the word disabled irks her as she struggles to find her position within the able-bodied, self-reliant tradition of nature writing. Her writing is fully embodied, and the nature of her disease forces her to pay closer attention to her body than do most people on an everyday basis.

The attention she pays to the details of her own body and of the nature around her challenge the conventions of what we expect of writing about nature. Perhaps this is why she chooses Emily Dickinson as an author with whom she identifies, because "she too, lived under circumstances that limited what parts of nature she could access. And though the location of her fieldwork was restricted…she chose to retain nature for subject matter, instead of turning away from it, which would have been the easier course of action" (10-11). Perillo also refuses to turn away from nature, and she finds a new way of connecting with the landscape and wildlife of the West that will accommodate the physical challenges brought on by her disease. Through her depictions of nature experienced through a physically disabled body, Perillo provides a representation of embodiment and mobility to counter the ways we currently view both wilderness and disability in our culture.

Waist High and Knee Deep in Nancy Mairs's West

In *Waist High in the World: A Life Among the Non-Disabled,* Nancy Mairs contemplates the meaning and impact of her life in Tucson, confronting the way Western

literature excludes her experiences rolling through the streets of Tucson in her Quickie P-100. Rather than serving as merely a vehicle of transport, the power wheelchair incorporates itself into her identity and shapes her view of the West. Mairs does not feel limited by the device; it has become a part of her. She does not feel restricted by the places it cannot take her, but rather by the attitudes people have about her experience of life in the West from the viewpoint of being, as her unique phrasing captures the material particularity of her vantage point, "waist high in the world." Her focus in the collection of essays is on expanding people's knowledge about what it is like to live with a disability and relating her embodied experiences to her audience. In this way, her writing shapes a horizontal identity through expanding the field of Western literature to include the embodied experience of disabled writers and readers. In the chapter titled "Writing West: A Reclamation Project," she directly confronts how the unexamined assumptions of the Western literary tradition seem to exclude her own experience of life in Tucson. Although her confrontation is only directly addressed in one chapter, the questions Mairs poses for Western literature and whether it will open itself to those with non-normative embodied experiences echo throughout her collection of essays.

Mairs opens her collection by commenting on the difficulty of starting a writing project, immediately connecting herself to a community of writers and students through the shared experience of shaping the jumble of ideas in the brain into something coherent on the page. She situates herself in the middle of a common problem—how to connect herself to a particular community—then immediately makes her difference clear with a metaphor of why she is dragging her heels at the project she has undertaken in particular, a book on disability. Throughout *Waist High* Mairs uses wordplay to introduce her topic

and makes clear that dragging her heels is merely a "metaphorical cliché" when "even the jaws of the Hound of Hell haven't any force" that could make her walk again (3). She uses this metaphor to highlight the way her life differs from the norm, and to draw a new connection to the community of people with whom she identifies: those living with a disability. The way that Mairs approaches her audience, first connecting with readers about the difficulty of writing and then distancing herself from them by highlighting her disability to demonstrate she is different from them draws readers into her story and emotionally connects them to her subject matter in a way that couldn't be achieved through simply stating her topic. The rhetorical construction Mairs uses highlights the purpose of her narrative, which she sees as a guidebook to make the experiences of disabled life less foreign and to correct the misconceptions that make it frightening to those outside of her specific form of non-normative embodiment.

The way that Mairs sets up her subject makes clear that building a community of people who have a positive identity regarding their illness or disability is important to her. Community building becomes rhetorically obvious as her thoughts on the embodied metaphor are interrupted by a phone call from Jennifer, a young woman who has read her essay "On Being a Cripple" and wants to discuss her own MS symptoms. Mairs takes the call and listens to the woman tell her own story and relate worries she has regarding the diagnosis that she isn't sure she's gotten or isn't yet able to accept. The act of listening seems a simple way of providing mentorship to the young woman, but the complexities of Mairs's act become clear when one considers the importance that Siebers and other disability theorists place on the act of telling one's own story. Mairs allows Jennifer to relate her story, fears and all, without questions or judgment, and by the end of the

evening the conversation has made Mairs's own project clear: her writing is a way of providing service to the community of people struggling with both disability and the stories that shape cultural conceptions of it. She cannot spend an evening on the phone with each and every one of them, but she can offer her words to this community.

> What I'm supposed to do about Jennifer, of course, is to write a book: one in which she can recognize and accept and even celebrate her circumstances, but also one that reveals to those that care about her what needs and feelings those circumstances may engender in her. Not a text about MS in particular and disability in general, because plenty of those exist…More like a Baedeker for a country to which no one travels willingly: the observations and responses of a single wayfarer who hopes, in sketching her own experiences, to make the terrain seem less alien, less perilous, and far more amusing than the myths and legends about it would suggest. (6)

The anecdote about Jennifer provides Mairs an opportunity to show the importance of her writing in countering negative stereotypes about the lives of those with disabilities. Mairs demonstrates the dynamic between the solitary act of writing and how it contributes to forming a group identity here; the singular voice of the narrative opens up a space where others can see their own experiences. As Hayley Mitchell Haugen states, "[T]he singular voice of her work has interesting implications for those disability scholars who remain unconvinced of the political power of the disabled autobiographer. Mairs does not eschew the power of community action, but her work reminds us that communities are made up of individuals with unique needs and experiences. Begin to see the individual, her work suggests, and "we will begin to embrace the whole" (26). Her writing places her

individual self at the center of the narrative and in doing so creates narrative space for others who share her embodied experience.

When Mairs refers to her writing as a "Baedeker to a country to which no one travels willingly," she positions herself as narrator of an exploration into unknown territory (6). In this way she embarks on a journey into uncharted lands, an activity which aligns with the expectations created by Western travel writing that positions physical movement through the landscape as a metaphor for the internal journey that takes precedence over the physical. Rather than riding, roping, or hiking her way through a harsh or wild landscape, Mairs explores the terrain of her own life with MS, completing the metaphorical journey more important to these texts. With this she aligns her work with previous generations of Western women writers. Her descriptions of disability as a non-metaphorical contemplation of uncharted territorial mobilization links her to previous works that describe manifest destiny and colonialism in the terms of exploration, such as Susan Shelby Magoffin's *Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico*. Magoffin's memoir, an example of Western women's travel writing that portrays colonial expansion and manifest destiny through a woman's eyes, shows both a sense of adventure at the journey into foreign territory but also reveals concerns unique to women's embodied experience: pregnancy, miscarriage, threat of sexual violence.

While previous Western women writers like Magoffin pen their narratives with a sense of adventure bursting from the lines, Mairs's journey is not a tale of a selfless narrator traversing uncharted territory of her own free will, as she describes life with MS as a place where "no one travels willingly." She has been forced there, a citizen of a country that non-native inhabitants have been taught to fear. Her fear stems from the way

the world is not set up to accommodate the needs of crip lives, the discrimination that people with disabilities face, and the fact that, unlike other minority groups, anyone could be forced into this situation at any point. As Lennard J. Davis states in "Crips Strike Back," "the category of disability is permeable—anyone can become disabled, and in fact, most people will develop impairments with age (according to a recent report between 40 and 80 percent of people 65 and older are disabled" (502). Michael Berubé calls this the "politics of disavowal," which pinpoints the psychological distance people put between themselves and people with disabilities as a form of assurance that they are able-bodied and will stay that way (Berubé 85). The knowledge that you could face the same journey that Mairs describes either through illness or accident creates a fear that is unique to this type of identity group, and accounts in part for the history of institutionalization and shutting away of people with disabilities, to keep out of sight the reminder of our bodies' vulnerability. It is this sort of history that Mairs points to as the reason she gives for writing her guidebook. Through recording her own experiences, she hopes to help destigmatize disabled life; her text becomes "the observations and responses of a single wayfarer who hopes, in sketching her own experiences, to make the terrain seem less alien, less perilous, and far more amusing than the myths and legends would suggest" (6). The "myths and legends" refer to the pre-inscription that disabled subjects have objected to in narratives in which they are objects of classification and examination rather than the subjects controlling the story. In Mairs's countering of these myths, she embarks on a journey in the typical fashion of a Western travel narrative, breaking ground for those who come after her in their own travels.

In writing the guidebook, Mairs positions herself in line with Tobin Siebers's theory of complex embodiment. She introduces this idea to her readers by requesting that they consider her perspective; not merely her line of thought, but her entire view of life as a woman who has not been able to stand for years. Literary notions of perspective, view, and place are essential to understanding Mairs's narrative. Mairs imagines herself in her readers' perspective in order to warm them up to the idea of them imagining themselves in hers:

> Unless you've got a bad back, you're probably reading this sitting down. Look up from the page. Look around. Imagine that this is your angle of vision not just until you decide to get up and walk to the kitchen for a cup of coffee but forever. It's not a bad angle of vision, mind you…but it is a definite one, and the world you see from it is definitely different from the one you see when you're standing. This is my perpetual view, from the height of an erect adult's waist. And the difference has consequences. This is a book about such consequences. (16)

The attention to angle, view, and perspective allows an audience to imagine the embodied differences that determine the way Mairs views the world. The passage works both literally, as she is perpetually seated and her mobility is mostly limited to one arm, which limits her range of vision to what is at eye level from her wheelchair, and on the level of metaphor, as illness and disability shape Mairs's worldview. The world she sees is different than the one non-disabled people encounter, both in that she is seeing people's fallibility as humans in their treatment of her as often as she sees their literal side or waist in front of her. The double meaning of her perspective encompasses the way that complex embodiment locates disability in a different manner than either the medical or

the social model, as it allows for the mutual interaction of the body and its social circumstances.

Mairs connects the limitations of her body with how it shapes her view of the world, taking into account both her embodied reality due to her medical condition and the social effect that existing at waist height has on her life. She describes the effects of the limitations that physical disability places on her life in two ways: permissions and obligations.

> In writing a series of essays in which I explore the spatial and temporal exigencies of a life shaped by severe physical disability—a life bound by permissions (I have to weigh every act in terms of whether I can or cannot perform it) and obligations (I must overcome inertia to do the least thing)—I hope to discover what physical, emotional, moral, and spiritual elements shape the 'differences' founded by disability. (16)

This blending of the body's materiality with the social effects aligns with Siebers's description of complex embodiment as an understanding that "…disability is not a pathological condition, only analyzable via individual psychology, but a social location complexly embodied" ("Disability and the Theory of Complex Embodiment" 283). When describing how disability both literally and metaphorically shapes her worldview, Mairs reminds her readers of the social location ("the difference has consequences") and the complex embodiment ("imagine that this is your angle of vision…forever") that interact to shape her perspective.

Mairs also uses the issue of perspective to undermine readers' ideas about the construction of disability and the arbitrary nature of how society decides what is "other."

She critiques the limitations of binary thinking that leads society into constructing categories, admitting that while it provides comfort to categorize the world, this method of thinking does not align with reality. When one starts to closely examine how "disabled" is constructed in opposition to "able," the limitations become clear. Society considers people disabled when they cannot perform a variety of physical tasks that may or may not be relevant to that individual's life. While this may serve doctors as a way to quantify ability, it does not suffice when considering the abilities that are necessary for individuals to succeed in their chosen career or life path. Mairs uses the example of Monica Seles, comparing herself to the tennis player and saying that she was so uncoordinated that even without MS she wouldn't have been able to play tennis. Yet Monica Seles, she guesses, couldn't "write her way out of a paper bag," and as writing is the skill from which Mairs makes a living, her writing ability is important to her in the same way that Seles' tennis ability is essential to her life and success as an athlete (14).

In Mairs's version, her ability matches her life, a quantification that echoes Lisa Diedrich's descriptions of disability as a prosthetic relation to able-bodiedness. In her examination of the uniqueness of the experience of disability in three case studies, Diedrich questions the meaning of "being *disabled* in order to describe the ways in which the experience of disability anticipates a philosophy, specifically the philosophy of phenomenology" ("Breaking Down" 209). Her articulation of this philosophy of phenomenology explores the way that Mairs's experiences of disability "defamiliarizes and denaturalizes not only the experience of the body-in-the-world, but also the experience of language itself" (210). For Diedrich, Mairs's experiences of disability cause her to question the meaning of being in a way that the non-disabled are not forced

to reckon, similar to the way that Couser observes that the moments in which we are most aware of our embodiment are the times when our bodies deviate from a norm that allows us to take them for granted. Diedrich's interest in Mairs's perspective from waist high is really in the phenomenological perspective that it affords; as Mairs says, "waist-high" resonates with "knee-deep," a state of being that structures not only her view of the world, but also her view of her place in it.

Perspective matters and the view of ability and disability shifts depending on the skills that are necessary to function in each individual's life: "'I' am disabled, then, only from 'your' point of view (and 'you' from 'mine'). Whoever gets to define ability puts everyone else in place, which (human nature tending to define one's own as the proper place) then becomes other, outside: a cheerless and chilly spot" (14). Mairs struggles to find the proper terms to adequately articulate this concept, changing her terminology depending on her audience and the particularities of the subject. She prefers the term "cripple," as it brings a feeling of self-determination to her situation, something that disability theorists have proven is essential in a positive identity formation. However, when talking about more than just her own self, the situation becomes complicated. "When I have occasion to refer to a class with a broader spectrum of impairments, I use the more conventional 'people with disabilities,' or 'the disabled' for short; and people who lack them I call 'the nondisabled,' since in relation to me, they are the deficient ones" (14). Her rhetorical construction of people without disabilities as "nondisabled" rather than able-bodied decenters the paradigm that others people with disabilities. Instead of people with disabilities relegated to the cold and chilly spot of outsider, she situates people with disabilities as the center and those without disabilities outside; from

her perspective, "they are the deficient ones." This decentering and shifting of perspective is meant to help readers view the world from her perspective and recognize their own implicit biases in the way they rhetorically construct an in-group and its outsiders.

Mairs's decentering of perspective often focuses on language as a way of nudging her readers to recognize the irony that exists in the way unnoticed embodiment structures our language. As someone who is quite able with her use of language and remarkably aware of her body, Mairs brings to light the use of dead metaphors and hidden structures in language that emphasize embodiment, similar to theorists in the feminist movement who unpacked the gendered qualities that structure our language. Her list is revealing in its length and in the amount of "dead" metaphors it contains—metaphors so thoroughly integrated into our language structure that their origins are overlooked. Physical ability linguistically equates with positive qualities: chin up = courage, keep your eyes open = alertness, stand on your own two feet = independence, stand tall = pride, run rings around = superiority. Conversely, physical debility equates to negative qualities: sit on your ass = laziness, take it lying down = weakness, without a leg to stand on = weak argument (56-7). The partial list reveals the extent to which embodied metaphors haunt our language structure, and as Mairs's writing is her way of providing service to her community, she recognizes the power that is locked in words. The way that embodiment is constructed as more than physical characteristics in language, standing instead for moral and ethical qualities of an individual, implicitly devalues those whose bodies embody the metaphors. The moral and ethical functions attached to embodiment further marginalizes her community, and as she makes clear, marginalization itself is a metaphor which means

more to her than it does to social theorists: "it is never taken to mean that those on the margin occupy a physical space literally outside the field of vision of those in the center…It is no metaphor for the power relations between one group of human beings and another but a literal description of where I stand (figuratively speaking): over here, on the edge, out of bounds, beneath your notice" (59).

Yet, Mairs does not stop with making the problematic structure of language clear. She sees her work as inserting herself into the dialogue in an attempt to transform both herself and the world. Rather than turning away from the world, she turns toward it. This idea of reshaping correlates to the way that Perillo rethinks her views of nature in the knowledge game chapters of *I've Heard the Vultures Singing*, changing the terms of engagement to push back against the discriminatory ideological structure as it currently exists. Just as Perillo's knowledge games challenge her own conceptions, so does Mairs's engagement, as she tries to reconcile herself with the world and it to her, recognizing that in order to create a world that wants her in it, she has a moral responsibility both to herself and to her community not to withdraw from it.

One way Mairs enacts her engagement is to challenge the Western code of self-reliance. She redefines what autonomy means; for example, she is thrilled when scheduling errors give her a day where she is able to be self-reliant by the standards of society's definition. The slippage between her re-definition and her joy when managing a morning without the help of caretakers reveals one of the greatest difficulties of a progressive illness: one is constantly re-adjusting to changing circumstances and mourning the loss of activities that once came naturally while at the same time learning to live life with the new conditions it presents. In the way that Mairs must cope with the

changing circumstances of her life, she demonstrates some of the attributes that characterize the valued trait of self-reliance, as "[v]irtually every activity, no matter how automatically most people would carry it out, has necessitated for me this sort of attention, resourcefulness, and adaptability" (33-34). The progression of her disease requires an increasing amount of care that she learns to accept despite her penchant for solitude. The lesson of acceptance becomes a part of her redefinition of self-sufficient, as "The mark of self-reliance, for me, is not whether or not I open a door for myself but whether I accept the burden of my limitations" (105). Her construction of self-reliance involves accepting the reality of her circumstances on the physical level; she is a danger to herself when not cared for. This "burden of limitations" becomes the way she shows her moral fortitude; rather than succumbing to the narrative that she must accomplish tasks independently, her form of independence comes from being able to rely on herself in the sense that she is honest about what she can do and can trust her character to accept these limitations.

Despite living in and writing about Arizona, she does not call herself a Western writer, a topic she directly engages in the chapter titled "Writing West: A Reclamation Project." To gain access to that status, as she says:

> you gotta have legs. I mean working--hard working--ones. I have a pair, which are cosmetically serviceable, I suppose, but they're not good for much else. Certainly not for gripping the flanks of a horse as I ride through a spring blizzard to check on newborn calves, nor for tramping the margins of the Great Salt Lake as it inundates the habitat of coots and curlews, not even for standing beneath a

> clothesline, bending and sorting and pinning my laundry in the sweetening sun and wind. (175)

The examples she gives highlight how the activities that shape Western literature all require a vigorous level of physical activity that she cannot attain. Mairs's troubled position within this lineage of writing shaped by vigorous activities leads her to reflect on why she writes about the West and what her writing means to Western literature. "Why would I want to lay claim to a reductive label suggesting that I write books about rootless rugged individuals tearing through (and up) a landscape fit only for cattle and rattlesnakes and an occasional shoot out at some good enough corral?" (179). But she challenges this narrow definition of what constitutes Western writing, recognizing that it has grown in recent years to embrace women, people of color, gays and lesbians, and other groups whose identities went unrecognized for far too long. Mairs hopes her embodied experience will be added to that list:

> If that interpretation really reflected what a western writer is, I wouldn't want to be one. I don't want to confine myself to a parochial category, especially one that bears no discernable relation to my real work. I want to expand that category to its fullest possible extent. Attribute this, if you will, to a westerner's predilection for wide open spaces. (179)

The Western predilection for wide open spaces shapes her writing, as she seeks to expand not only the category of western literature, but also the minds of her readers as she describes her experience of life with a disability and the effort it takes to choose to view life with joy rather than grief. Yet despite her fondness for open space, she fears the landscape is "too large," and only getting larger as her physical condition deteriorates.

She ends her reflection on her relationship to Western literature where Perillo begins, with a trip into the parks accessible to her while camping in New Mexico and Arizona. While on this trip, she discusses how paved paths now wind from parking lots into gentle terrain in many state and national parks, a development toward making nature accessible that she views as better than no access at all. Here she engages in a long-standing Western debate about the value of wild spaces versus the necessity of providing access to them. Edward Abbey, one of the most vocal Western writers/activists, stands on the opposite side of this debate, firmly believing that wild spaces should be kept as wild as possible. To Abbey, this means limiting the presence of paved roads and paths, a position he laid out in detail in his 1968 publication *Desert Solitaire*. From his perspective, Americans would be better off getting out of their cars and hiking into the parks; the roughness and physical exertion are essential to the experience of Western nature. Mairs, however, is not one of the lazy Americans that Abbey railed against in his writing. Rather, her experience of the parks and the wild nature valued by so many Western writers is limited to the paved paths, as even unpaved yet maintained trails are often not maneuverable for power wheelchairs like her Quickie P-100.

For Mairs, then, increasing access makes trips such as the one she takes in Arizona and New Mexico possible. Even with an improved trail system, the paths are short and she must still "always stop and look out into a landscape closed to me absolutely and forever. This is the quintessential Western posture--gaze ever longing into the beyond--stripped of its attendant capacity to act out the eyes' desire" (178). Mairs's humor seems to mitigate her lack of the qualities that she sees as characteristic of the Western experience (rootlessness, mobility, and rugged individualism). Even though she

sometimes thinks she will die of grief over her loss to move on and into the landscapes she now can only view from afar, this grief is only visible in her writing for brief moments before she cuts the tension with well-placed irony that lessens the pain both she and the reader feel. The ironic humor that shapes her work provides an imaginative way of deflecting her pain and is the source of what ultimately helps her position herself as a Western writer; she recognizes that the West has always been shaped by imagination as much as reality, which she has in abundance. She leaves her readers with this image: "though instead of loping on Old Paint across the lone prairie, I may be heading my Quickie P100 down the alley and out to Bentley's for an iced cappuccino, it's an honest to god Western adventure I'm having here" (189).

I chose to engage in this chapter with two collections of essays, *I've Heard the Vultures Singing* and *Waist High in the World*, as these texts demonstrate the ways that the embodied assumptions prevalent in Western writing excluded voices such as these. The embodiment Perillo and Mairs depict acts as a material version of horizontal identity, expanding Western literature through their complex embodiment of a new Western writing from a different perspective. Perillo's and Mairs's non-normative embodiment re-spatializes readers' expectations and view of the West, which allows them to counter expectations of rugged, masculine, active embodiment that are ingrained in the genre. The focus on community-building, expanding people's knowledge about what it is like to live with a disability, and relating their embodied experiences help to shape a horizontal identity by expanding the field of Western literature to include disabled writers like them. The rhetorical positionality shape her and her readers' view of the West in a way that carries on the imaginative perspective that is present in the Western genre while creating

a more inclusive view of the West. As the final chapter in my study, it also offers a perspective on an issue that remains unaddressed in Western literary studies. Mairs and Perillo challenge the view of the West as one that requires a rugged individualism to be identified as a Westerner, and their disability narratives provide a corrective to ideas about the importance of ability in both life in and the pages about the West.

Afterward

Continued Mobility, Continued Protest: Putting Our Bodies in the Streets

The literary and cultural texts in my study reveal richer and more varied expressions of Western embodiment than those presented by dominant discourses about the mythic West. The examples in the four chapters can be read as a critique of the mythic West and the embodied ideals that are implicit in its construction, but a more productive reading views them as undermining the fable of the mythic West as they construct a Western experience outside of the space of regeneration through violence and rugged individualism, a move that sheds light on the ideologies involved in its construction. Writing helped produce the mythic West, and this project has gathered an alternative set of literary and cultural texts that not only documents but creates a new understanding of Western embodiment. Despite the West's reputation for individualism—which is also the nation's reputation for individualism—the tactics of storytelling and community building to disrupt dominant narratives and collective bodily movement in public spaces are exactly the foundation of the current resistance movement building after the election of 2016, amplifying the significance of my project for American literary studies and showing that the body and the body politic are still intimately intertwined in our country's discourses.

"Embodying the West" contributes not only to a new understanding of Western literary history, but also engages directly with broader conversations about how we conceptualize and value embodied experiences, and what types of embodiment we celebrate and what bodily experiences we silence. The issues at stake in my project—

gender equity, space for and acceptance of a range of sexualities, sovereignty and maintenance of cultural identity for American Indians, dignity and inclusion for people with disabilities—are concerns that echo throughout the broader public. As a scholar engaged in the humanities, I strive to foster greater understanding of these issues through my scholarship, reaching across disciplines to create dialogue that leads to a greater acceptance of embodied difference.

My work on discourses of embodiment has much to offer not only the scholarship of Western literature, but also campus and community groups that deal with the lived reality of how discourses map anxiety, dread, fault, and innocence onto lives and bodies. In the process of writing this dissertation, my work took me outside the English department to places like the LGBTQ Center, Women's Resource Center, Spatial Humanities Working Group, Student Health and Counseling Center, and Albuquerque Veteran's Readjustment Center. My academic work was enhanced by engaging in service work and dialogue with these groups about issues that affect our community and stand as barriers to equity and quality of life: sexual assault and rape culture, depression and suicidality, creating safe spaces for LGBT students, managing stress and PTSD. In my work with these groups, I advocated for campus resources to be devoted to preventing rape, assault, revenge porn, and harassment, especially in the wake of the investigation into Title IX violations at UNM. I actively sought resources to increase my skills to provide mentorship, and participated in trainings through the LGBT Center on creating Safe Zones for LGBT students and the "Question, Persuade, Refer" (QPR) gatekeeper training for suicide prevention. Additionally, the process of working through fatigue and anxiety related to my own illness led me to volunteer with others experiencing similar

symptoms, teaching meditation and mindfulness based stress reduction techniques at the Albuquerque Veteran's Readjustment Center.

My involvement in these communities helped clarify not only the ways that discourses affect the communities I write about in my dissertation, but also the stakes involved in the issues we face. The issues of rape, gender discrimination, LGBT inequality, and too often the complete disregard of issues of disability became not just theoretical, but all too real in my work with these communities. At the same time, it gave me the chance to guide students and community members who are gender non-conforming, have mental health issues, and who have dealt with trauma through different perceptions of their embodied experience. I value the opportunities I had to engage the central questions of my project to expand dialogue about embodiment and share this humanistic perspective with the broader public.

The issues examined in the space of these pages are very much alive in today's culture. A 2012 study of rural gender roles and lesbianism found that domesticity remains central in the construction of rural femininity, and "[s]ome suggest that heterosexuality and domesticity are so central to constructions of rural femininity, in part, to combat the fact that some practices commonly performed by rural women, such as being outdoorsy or doing farmwork, are masculinizing. In this way, whereas 'rural men equal real men,' the opposite is true for rural women" (Kazyak 830). Gender stereotypes are still rampant in rural areas throughout the West, and the social constructions of heterosexuality and domesticity that chafed Mary MacLane in 1902 still linger today. The political landscape of 2016 proved this to be painfully true, as Hillary Clinton, the first female Presidential candidate from a major political party—whose slogan "I'm With Her" highlighted the

historic gender aspect of the race—powered through a campaign filled with "Trump that Bitch" t-shirts at Republican rallies, gaslighting and interrupting during the debates, and a stream of constant misogyny to win the popular vote but still lose the presidency. As Rebecca Solnit remarked days after the election:

> It's impossible to disconnect the seething, irrational emotionality from misogyny, and the misogyny continues. Since election night, I've been hearing too many men of the left go on and on about how Clinton was a weak candidate. I've wondered about that word *weak*, not only because it is so often associated with women, but because what they're calling her weakness was their refusal to support her. It's as if they're saying, "They sent a pink lifeboat and we sent it back, because we wanted a blue lifeboat, and now we are very upset that people are drowning." ("Don't call Clinton a weak candidate")

The misogyny that marked the 2016 election was joined by heightened racism, xenophobia, and ableism, long implicit in American politics and policies but now ugly and exposed in the national dialogue with Donald Trump's calls for a Muslim ban, his mocking of disabled reporter Serge Kovaleski, calling Senator Elizabeth Warren "Pocahontas," and referring to Mexicans as rapists and "bad hombres." Discourses of regeneration through violence and rugged individualism resurged with a vengeance in 2016.

2016 was also the year that two of the writers included in this dissertation died, Lucia Perillo in October and Nancy Mairs in December. Hearing this news, I felt like I lost friends I had not yet met. The opportunity to meet them is now denied to me, but they serve as inspirations to continue my work, as did the Women's March on January 21,

2017, the largest political protest in American history. Stunned by the election of a man who bragged about grabbing women by the pussy (among all the other offenses listed above), women around the country organized protest marches the day after the inauguration, with an estimated 500,000 to two million women gathering in Washington, D.C. As inspired as I was by attending the march in the nation's capital with my partner, I also wish I could have joined the 24,250 people that gathered across New Mexico, in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Deming, El Morro, Gila, Las Cruces, Las Vegas, Portales, Roswell, Silver City, Taos, and Truth or Consequences; or the 10,000 in Helena, Montana, including my parents who drove eight hours roundtrip to participate in their first ever political march, or the 50 that showed up last minute in tiny Miles City, Montana when the weather proved too hazardous to make the twelve-hour round trip drive to the Montana gathering in Helena. Marches across the West, including those in rural areas deep in the heart of Republican territory, showed a powerful resistance to the ideologies of sexism, racism, ableism, and homophobia that marked the 2016 political landscape.

Thurna Lucero and Julie Williams, Women's March on Washington, D.C., January 21, 2017

The march also revealed social tensions that remain unresolved, such as the way that women's movement registers differently for white women than women of color, an issue briefly touched on in chapter one with the discussion of women's athletics and how turn-of-the-century women's bodily movement meant different things to white women than to women of color. This issue also registered with the second wave feminist movement with the criticism that the movement centered the problems of middle to upper class white women, taking them as a universal representative of all women. The Combahee River Collective statement of 1977 centered racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression as interlocking modes of oppression in its critique of the limited focus of the mainstream feminist movement, yet the lessons from the Black feminist movement of the 1970s have still not sunk in; while protestors at the Women's March carried signs declaring "Black Lives Matter" and "Water is Life," the critique of the movement as one that still centered white women is all too familiar. The organizers took steps to remedy the organizational structure of the march, bringing on women of color activists Linda Sarsour, Carmen Perez, and Tamika Mallory as leaders of the organization; however the issue of bodily safety for minority marchers proved harder to address.

A relatively new critique involved the inclusion of disability rights as more than a health care issue. Despite the march's billing as the largest gathering of people with disabilities in America's history, disability activist Emily Ladau had to push organizers to include disability rights as an issue outside of caregiving, an industry that disproportionally falls on the shoulders of women of color. As originally written, the statement of principles framed Ladau's existence as a disabled woman as a burden on other women rather than a woman deserving of inclusion in the statement of principles

which claimed to speak to intersecting identities. Following the publication of Ladau's article, "Disability Rights Are Conspicuously Absent From The Women's March Platform," the march's organizers made changes to their statement of principles to reflect disability inclusion, and an online Disability March for people unable to attend in person shared the stories of 3,014 virtual marchers to highlight issues of disability and serve as a model for future marches.[19]

Part of the appeal of the march recalls Rousseau's remarks about the meditative aspect of the act of walking, that the mind works best when walking. The mind-body connection that Mary MacLane utilized in forming her peripatetic social critique of gender and sexual conventions is carried forward into the twenty-first century with this statement by Cheryl Strayed, author of *Wild*, about the election and the march:

> I just cried and cried, and I've never had that experience before. I've been pissed off, but this was different. I was like, 'What are we going to do?' Keep going. It sounds trite, but it's absolutely true. That's why walking is so healing. You're doing with your body what you need to do with your spirit. […] Women have to register our protests with our bodies. We are here with our bodies since our bodies are being threatened in so many different ways. ("Cheryl Strayed on the power of walking at the Women's March on Washington)

Women in 2017 continue to register their resistance to the tired discourses seeking to control their bodies through telling their own stories, building community, and by putting their bodies in motion, whether in the streets or online, to disrupt narratives of rugged individualism and regeneration through violence. As Rebecca Solnit states in her 2014

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[19] The Disability March and the stories people shared are archived at https://disabilitymarch.com/

book “Men Explain Things to Me,” “Every woman who appears wrestles with the forces that would have her disappear. She struggles with the forces that would tell her story for her, or write her out of the story, the genealogy, the rights of man, the rule of law. The ability to tell your own story, in words or images, is already a victory, already a revolt.” (78). This dissertation celebrates those women and their act of revolt.

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