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Decolonizing Gender: Indigenous Feminism and Native American Literature

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DECOLONIZING GENDER: INDIGENOUS FEMINISM AND NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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DEDICATION

To my maternal grandparents,
Rose and Varkes Tavtigian,
who have taught me so much about
the meaning of love and family.

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ABSTRACT

An Indigenous feminist approach to Native literature reveals the ways in which Native authors attempt to build balanced relationships and conversations across cultures, nations, and histories. I explore ways that Native authors depict gender violence and male characters who, like Native women, negotiate colonization and assert sovereignty. Doing so offers a new way of reading Native literature that seeks to also decolonize our analytical approaches for similar use across academic disciplines and for practical applications within and outside of academia.

I define Indigenous Feminism as the responsibility for the nurturance and growth of Native communities through storytelling as a communal process and action reflecting personal sovereign power. I focus on how these authors adapt traditional knowledge of social balance through ideological subversion. I read literary conventions as creating complementary and reciprocal relationships in order to develop critical awareness thus enacting an Indigenous feminist ideology. An author's rhetorical and literary use of these

principles attempts to create a balanced relationship between reader and author that simultaneously decolonizes readers' minds. Reading constructions of masculinities in connection with complementarity and reciprocity discloses and helps to understand colonial gender violence thus asserting an Indigenous feminist decolonizing process that seeks to remove colonial ideological shackles. Thus, I read Native texts for a balanced distribution of power across relationships, specifically gender-based relationships and systems of power.

This exploration of complementary and reciprocal relationships enables us to read literature as critical responses to gender violence and its effects on *both* Native men *and* women. These texts and their authors offer a way of seeing gender identity on a continuum based on *both* individual *and* communal needs. Furthermore, such an analysis allows for balanced dialogue needed to uncover a new understanding of shared experiences to effect social change. Therefore, a more inclusive Indigenous feminist perspective presents a new way of recognizing literature and storytelling as social activism, or attempting to affect social justice within the imaginations and ideologies of its readers.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this study, I deploy Indigenous feminist theory in order to explore concepts of national identity, tribal histories, and gender ideologies expressed in a variety of Native-authored texts. As Sandy Grande explains, "for indigenous women, the central dominating force is colonization, not patriarchy; and the definitive political project is decolonization, not feminism" (152). Decolonization requires stripping away colonial ideologies that have become imbedded in tribal identities and, as Linda Smith elucidates, "left a permanent wound on the societies and communities who occupied the lands named and claimed under imperialism" (21). Indigenous feminist theory helps to contextualize the history of colonization and opens "a space to plan, to strategize, to take greater control" over the decolonization process (38). More to the point, it advances the process of decolonization through the recovery of Native stories and histories. Writing and reading texts from this perspective is also, I believe, a form of social activism. Native stories may assist in decolonization by challenging a reader's assumptions about ideological and social positioning in relationship to gender performances. In my analyses of John Rollin Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaqúin Murieta: The Celebrated California Bandit* (1854), Sarah Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* (1883), Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977), and Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007), I explore literary attempts at decolonizing gender. An Indigenous feminist approach to Native literature reveals the ways in which Native authors attempt to build balanced relationships and conversations across cultures, nations, and histories.

Recent Indigenous feminist and literary scholars have given voice to Native histories and women's stories in particular. For instance, Andrea Smith's account of Native women's

experience with gender violence reveals the varied forms and consequences related with sexual assault, forced sterilization, and other institutionalized forms of race-based gender violence. Betty Bell explains that "'the story' of Native women and their relation to power and authority is often told, or lived, between conflicting 'traditions': on the one hand, the precolonial or 'traditional' status of women; on the other, the postcolonial advance of patriarchy into tribal nations" (307). Restoring Native women's identities and traditional roles as caregivers and storytellers thus requires them to decolonize themselves and combat racist and sexist ideologies. Because the focus of Indigenous feminism remains on Native women, however, it neglects stories and histories by and about Native men. Such neglect perpetuates gender division as a tool of oppression. This project redresses this neglect in order to more completely understand the effects of colonial gender violence on Native communities. Thus some of the questions I address in this dissertation are as follows: How were/are Native men subjected to colonial gender violence? How do Native authors attempt to maintain balanced relationships and thus promote decolonization through their constructions of masculinity? What role do Native men play in the process of decolonization? And how can this focus on Native men contribute to Indigenous feminism? In short, I explore ways that Native authors depict gender violence and male characters who, like Native women, negotiate colonization and assert sovereignty. Doing so offers a new way of reading Native literature that seeks to also decolonize our analytical approaches. Finally, my analysis attempts to develop and concretize literary applications of Indigenous feminism for similar use across academic disciplines and for practical applications within and outside of academia.

Literature Review: Indigenous Feminism

My study has been shaped by a variety of historical and theoretical texts, most of which unfortunately neglect the topic of sexual and gender violence against men. That is, my project is groundbreaking insofar as I seek to apply critical Indigenous feminist analysis to literary performances of Native masculinity. In her text *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (2005), Andrea Smith reveals the patriarchal and colonial roots of sexual violence against Native women and posits that sexual violence against women was and still is a primary tool of genocide in America. Smith cites several forms of sexual and gender violence against women including forced sterilization, rape, environmental racism, and boarding school policies. She asserts that sexual and gender violence includes any strategy that seeks to "not only destroy peoples, but to destroy their sense of being a people" (3). However, Smith only touches on the strategies and effects of sexual and gender violence on Native men. Indeed, a historical and literary record of sexual or gender violence on Native men reveals an entirely different story, one intertwined with Native women's stories. As partners, relatives and friends to and with each other, Native men and women share each act of violence and must together deal with the individual and collective repercussions. For instance, in Ridge's novel, white settlers force the protagonist to watch them rape his wife, thus enacting sexual and gender violence against both husband and wife that results in the protagonist's transformation into the murderous bandit seeking revenge. Just as both husband and wife experience the violence, so are both connected in their responses and attempts to overcome such violence. Therefore, in order to understand the effects of sexual and gender violence on Native communities, all the threads of this much larger story must be traced.

Although many scholars have contributed to a theoretical understanding of Indigenous feminism, few have put their theory into practice in analyzing literary productions. In *Mapping the Americas: The Transnational Politics of Contemporary Native Culture* (2009) Shari M. Huhndorf asserts that the "ways in which colonization has positioned indigenous women demand a feminist rethinking of Native politics and culture, a task to which nationalism is inadequate." Huhndorf's work on Native women's dramatic and literary productions attends to "the role of patriarchy in colonization, figures of Native women in colonial national origin stories, and the emerging transnational politics of indigenous feminism" (4). However, Huhndorf fails to look at the greater structures of gender for both men and women and its implications on Native cultures. Focusing our attention on women alone or even placing them in the center does not effectively address ideological issues informing gender structures as a whole, rather doing so perpetuates hierarchical dominance and oppression. I do agree with Huhndorf that "Literature is a key site of political struggle in colonial situations" (19). Therefore, this dissertation is my contribution to the discussion regarding the politics of gender violence against Native communities as captured in Native American literature after the U.S. reconceived Native nations as domestic dependant rather than independent or sovereign and beginning with the earliest extant Native-authored novel.

Furthermore, race and gender ideologies are intimately and equally connected to national identity. In her article "Race, Tribal Nation, and Gender: A Native Feminist Approach to Belonging" (2007) Renya Ramirez emphasizes that "race, tribal nation, and gender should be non-hierarchically linked as categories of analysis in order to understand the breadth of our oppression as well as the full potential of our liberation in the hope that

one day we can belong as full members of our homes, communities, and tribal nations" (22). Race and gender ideologies and corresponding hierarchical dominance helped fuel and perpetuate the stripping of Native national sovereignty in paternalistic U.S policies that conceived of Native nations as inferior and in need of protection. For instance, perceiving tribal societies as uncivilized and inferior, the reservation system intended to make tribes more "civilized" partly by stripping Native men of their manhood as warriors and making them become farmers or otherwise earn an income as head of household. Therefore, Native men must be included in discussions of sexual and gender violence because they too have experienced gender oppression and violence as a result of racism. Ramirez agrees that "both Indigenous women and men should develop a Native feminist consciousness based on the assumption that struggles for social autonomy will no longer include the denial of Native women's gendered concerns and rights" (22). However, Native men's gendered concerns and rights have also changed over time, most specifically in their roles and relationships within and outside of the community. As mentioned above, Native men have been forced into acquiescing to a foreign political and ideological system that gives them ultimate power as head of household and community leaders and thus perpetuates hierarchical dominance-based sexism and gender violence within their communities. Violence against Native men originates in such force and is perpetuated by their compliant complicity with ongoing oppression of their communities.

An Indigenous gender balancing system provides the guiding principles by which I analyze Native American literature as a social tool responding to ideological challenges and conflicts. Such a gender-balanced system provides the basis for understanding and representing an Indigenous ideology of the nation as a people. According to Scott Lyons, "A

people is a group of human beings united together by history, language culture, or some combination therein–a community joined in union for a common purpose: the survival and flourishing of the people itself" (454). In her chapter in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (2007), Emma LaRocque explains that "self-determination must mean that all individuals have a basic right to a certain quality of life, free from the violence of colonialism, racism/sexism and poverty, as well as from the violence of other humans, even if these other humans are one's people, or even one's relations, or are themselves suffering from colonial conditions" (61-62). Furthermore, LaRocque notes that "it is in moments of nationalisms that we are most vulnerable not only to essentialisms/fundamentalisms, but to the disempowerment of women" and, I would add, Native men (68). LaRocque classifies a move towards nationalism as exclusive, static, and therefore masculine in character. However, understanding nationalism from this colonial ideological standpoint limits its potential. An Indigenous feminist understanding of a national character is more inclusive, fluid, and gender balanced as a process of continual negotiation and decolonization focused on the people as a whole. Furthermore, such decolonization first requires sovereignty.

Sovereignty, particularly in rhetorical form, has been long debated and continually transforming in meaning across different tribal nations and as needs shift. My purpose here is not to redefine sovereignty but rather to employ its primary principles of self-determination and relationship. Self-determination defines the ability and will of a people to establish themselves as a nation in culturally appropriate ways. My analysis attempts to reveal such self-determined sovereignty within a text in relation to its particular cultural and historical context. More importantly, I endeavor to uncover such self-determined sovereignty as evidenced in relationships between text, author, and reader as well as textual

relationships between character(s), community, culture, and land. Relationship recognizes and negotiates differences for the sake of communal self-determination and sovereignty. How those relationships are built and maintained reveals information regarding a group's perceived and enacted sovereignty. For instance, Winnemucca's text attempts to build and maintain balanced relationships with her readers by sharing her culture and acknowledging differences and similarities across cultures. Her rhetorical sovereignty, however, originates from her personal self-determination to voice her concerns and is maintained by a constant focus on her people's welfare as a distinct nation. Such a focus attempts to reveal, critically assess, and decolonize effects of colonial ideologies and violence on her people.

Indigenous feminism offers a method for analyzing literary practices that attempt to decolonize ideological oppression with a focus on concepts of gender and race identity. As Lisa Kahaleole Hall writes, "Indigenous feminism grapples with the ways patriarchal colonialism has been internalized within Indigenous communities as well as with analyzing the sexual and gendered nature of the process of colonization" (278). Native women preserve Indigenous social balance by helping to renew *both* male *and* female leadership roles in the community as a method of decolonization. Therefore, an Indigenous feminist approach isn't limited to constructions of gender but more specifically addresses the colonial ideologies that inform constructions of gender, race, class, nationality, physical ability, etc. Indigenous feminist literary practices seek to expose these colonial ideologies and decolonize while asserting sovereignty.

Building on these theoretical definitions for my purposes, Indigenous feminism can be defined as the responsibility for the nurturance and growth of Native communities through storytelling as a communal process and action reflecting personal sovereign power. Whereas

colonial ideologies maintain racial hierarchies and binaries based on difference, Indigenous feminist storytelling embraces cultural or personal differences while responsibly and respectfully portraying complex relationships across cultures and history. More importantly, Indigenous feminist storytelling critically employs colonial stereotypes and ideologies to more effectively create awareness of or reduce their impact. Specifically, my analysis explores how Native American authors attempt to weaken misconceptions of the colonial hypermasculine "savage Indian" (as depicted by such characters as Magua in *The Last of the Mohicans*) evidenced by political rhetoric seeking to justify dispossession and dominance. I focus on how these authors adapt traditional knowledge of social balance through ideological subversion. My analysis of Ridge's text, for instance, reveals how such racial and gender expectations shape or determine the changing identity of his protagonist from noble farmer to brutal bandit, the opposite of what U.S. policies sought. However, performing the "savage" bandit in resistance is an uncritical acquiescence to colonial ideologies that results in death. I conceive of Ridge as practicing Indigenous feminism through this fictional subversion of racial and gender stereotypes on the hypermasculine frontier that seeks to critically assess the dangers of colonial ideologies and corresponding performances. So, when placed in conversation, the texts at the center of this study employ and explore the ramifications of such gendered expectations of and on Native peoples.

In deconstructing ideologies in these stories, I look at the text in its historical context and in relation to an evolving Anglo-American literary tradition. My goal is to explore how these Native authors practice Indigenous feminism through constructions of gender and gender violence in their attempt to negotiate and build or re-vision balanced relationships.[1] In other words, I will explore how these Native authors practice an Indigenous ideology that is

in conversation with colonial ideology. More specifically, I analyze how these authors' depict Native men or masculinity as both constructed by and in response to the colonial "savage (hypermasculine) Indian" stereotype. For instance, Alexie's protagonist, Junior, transforms from weakling to warrior as he moves across the reservation boundary. Such change and literary juxtaposition reveals opposing expectations and performances of Native masculinity but, more importantly, it shows Alexie's attempt at critically evaluating conflicting identity performances. I read such literary conventions as creating complementary and reciprocal relationships in order to develop critical awareness thus enacting an Indigenous feminist ideology.

My approach expands upon assertions of literary nationalism by such scholars as Robert Warrior, Jace Weaver, Craig Womack, and Penelope Myrtle Kelsey, who posit a purely tribally informed literary theory, one that seemingly limits conversation across cultural histories and national identities in order to focus on developing a more localized literary aesthetic. Although such a localized focus is valuable, it precludes a more cross- or transnational focus. I, too, am also asserting a tribally informed theory but one that adds Indigenous feminist relationships that attempt to develop a complementary critical conversation across nations. Indigenous feminism also seeks to critically assess the ideological push and gendered implications behind nationalism versus nation building. These scholars and I agree that the multiple possibilities of one's literary stance is culturally informed. Native literature maintains a mutually dependent relationship with the culture (both traditional and contemporary) from which it derived and therefore can be read for its culturally, socially, and ideologically informed constructions of gender. Furthermore, I hope to contribute to the discussion of Native American literary nationalism/nation building by

applying Indigenous feminist theory in response to colonial history and connecting it more specifically to constructions of gender in story and literature.

Ty P. K ā̄wika Tengan's *Native Men Remade: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Hawai'i* (2008**)** is the only text to date that presents detailed ethnographic work on Indigenous men and colonial gender violence. My study differs from his, however, because he does not discuss the Native literary contributions or constructions of Native masculinity in response to such colonial gender violence. Still, his work offers a new way of understanding colonial gender violence on Native men that becomes useful for Indigenous feminist literary applications.

Data Selection

Representing a range of Native authors from the nineteenth century to the present, the four texts at the center of this study--John Rollin Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaqúin Murieta: The Celebrated California Bandit* (1854), Sarah Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* (1883), Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1977), and Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007)--all present critical performances of Native masculinity. Because my overarching theme relies on balanced relationships, I've chosen texts authored by both men and women but with a particular focus on male gender roles. I've chosen two texts from each time period (nineteenth century and twentieth/twenty-first century) that address transforming political/cultural issues. As case studies placed in relation to each other, these texts capture transforming Indigenous feminist negotiations of colonial oppression.

Ridge's novel anticipated the dime or pulp novel and was succeeded by many spin-offs. Sarah Winnemucca was a prominent stage lecturer who traveled across the country to inform dominant society about Native cultures and struggles. Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* is one of the most widely read and critically addressed contemporary Native novels. Sherman Alexie is an award-winning contemporary author whose work in general is widely discussed. My purpose in selecting these texts is to show specifically how Native men were affected by colonization and efforts in transforming sovereign Native nations into domestic dependent nations.

The chapters on Ridge and Winnemucca attempt to explore the ways in which cultural contact and political dealings work to colonize and dissolve Native male gender roles before the turn of the twentieth century. I use these two texts to show how colonial expansion and the transformation of sovereign nations to domestic dependent relied on gender hierarchies and stereotypes. Ridge's text shows how in attempting to resist colonization, non-white men became infected by and perform these stereotypical identities thus ironically justifying rather than reducing their oppression. In playing the role expected of him, the main character seals rather than overcomes his condemned fate as a non-white male. Ridge's text exposes the true dangers in both assimilation and resistance to colonial powers. In a similar performance of expected roles, Winnemucca's text strategically plays gender and ethnic roles to her advantage in getting her message of sovereignty across to her white readers. Her text also provides greater insight into the practices that sought to assimilate Native men by subjugating them to colonial gender roles. Read together, these texts reveal the progressive effects of such gender violence on Native men and their communities during the ongoing negotiation of land and the formation of a national United States identity. They

also enact Indigenous feminism through their critical performances of expected roles in an attempt to deconstruct the colonial ideologies behind those roles and assert sovereignty over such ideologies. I then jump to the time period Kenneth Lincoln has called the Native American Renaissance of the 1960s and 1970s. Lincoln writes that contemporary Native literature "is not so much new . . . as regenerate: transitional continuities emerging from the old" (8). I turn to contemporary authors in order to explore practices of decolonization and sovereignty.

Assuming that colonial ideologies have indeed infected Native men as Ridge and Winnemucca suggest, Silko's novel is the first to actually propose a healing of the main male character. Although N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1966) deals with similar issues, the main male character does not resolve those issues in any significant way. Thus Silko's novel provides a model for healing or decolonization by enacting Indigenous feminist principles of balanced relationships through storytelling and performing archetypal characters. In this way, Native women like Silko erect a paradigm that enables Native men to regain a sense of their traditional gender role as a way of healing the gendered wound of neocolonialism or internalized colonization.

However, since Silko's novel, few Native male authors have followed Silko's lead. In most cases, characters aren't necessarily healed though they may resolve immediate conflicts, as in Louis Owen's *Bone Game* (1994). Silko's novel reveals the importance of complementarity, reciprocity, and the bridging of genders to work together towards communal healing or decolonizing. I read Sherman Alexie as following in her literary footsteps. His young adult novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* brings this exploration full circle by simultaneously capturing the essence of the colonial

hypermasculinity problem faced in Ridge's novel and its neocolonial ramifications while offering an Indigenous feminist alternative that seeks to critically assess and decolonize expected roles. Through his young performances of expected roles and his courage to cross boundaries and binaries imposed by colonial ideologies, Alexie's protagonist sees the values and dangers of such roles and thus learns to perform them but with a vital difference gained by such perspective. His newfound knowledge affords him greater flexibility and choice necessary to assert his sovereignty.

Methodology

My methodology derives primarily from the Indigenous feminist principles of complementarity and reciprocity necessary to maintain social balance and sovereignty as a people. I apply an understanding of these principles in analyzing gender performances within and by the text itself. This application to the text allows me to make connections between Native and Euro-American literary traditions, conventions, as well as individual and national identity construction.

Complementarity and Reciprocity

Complementarity and reciprocity are the prevailing concepts informing my Indigenous feminist reading of performed gender. The rhetorical and literary use of these concepts attempts to create a balanced relationship between reader and author that simultaneously decolonizes readers' minds. Reading constructions of masculinities in connection with complementarity and reciprocity discloses and helps to understand colonial gender violence thus asserting an Indigenous feminist decolonizing process that seeks to remove colonial ideological shackles.

Complementarity summarizes concepts of responsibility and relationship in the maintenance of social or communal balance. Complementarity is the overarching ideology behind actions or performances reflecting responsible relationships. Complementarity is expressed rhetorically. In discussing the social systems of Mesoamerican indigenous societies, Lisa Mary Souza defines complementarity as the "contribution of both male and female as necessary to create the whole, and, thus, accorded both men and women important relationships and responsibilities in the household and the community" (200-201). She notes that labor roles were not delineated as either "private" or "public," "whereby men exercised a role in the community and women were relegated to the home" and made subject to male dominance. "Rather, Mesoamerican households were loosely organized social units whose members were obligated to each other and the community through shared responsibility" (201). Betty Bell confirms that in Ojibwe societies, "The 'separate spheres' of men and women…are often experienced as situations and as complementary distributions of power that allow, as well, for gender variance" (308).

Beyond social organization, complementarity also encompasses the responsible sharing of cultural knowledge and ideologies both within and between societies. Rauna Kuokkanen discusses "hospitality" as a form of complementarity in her article "Toward a New Relation of Hospitality in the Academy" (2003). Although she focuses on academic exchanges, I also apply her theory to understanding cross-cultural exchanges of knowledge. She writes "Hospitality is a continuous never-ending process of negotiation–a productive crisis in which we work continuously toward a new way of thinking and ultimately a new relationship in which [a cultural or ethnic group is] compelled to recognize and accept its responsibility toward the other" (267). Complementarity is the rhetorical negotiation

between cultures and knowledge to advance critical thinking and action as a social venture. I attempt to simultaneously uncover and enact complementarity by responsibly negotiating the knowledge presented by these texts. The guiding question for this exploration is: In what ways do Native authors complementarily assert Indigenous ideologies while negotiating colonial constructions of the Indian "other"?

Reciprocity involves the actions or performances necessary to maintain or enact complementarity. The two principles are thus interdependent. Gregory Cajete explains, "the maintenance of dynamic balance and harmony with all relationships to nature is the foundational paradigm of Native science [and philosophy]….Reality is based on mutual reciprocity, the rule of 'paying back' what has been received" (73). Reciprocity is a way of recognizing and attempting to respectfully know and/or respond to the "other" in kind. In his discussion regarding Native American literary nationalism and the role of non-Natives, Jace Weaver asserts the value of "listen[ing] to and respect[ing] Native voices and, in keeping with the traditional Native ethic of reciprocity, not tak[ing] without giving something back" (12). However, Kuokkanen cautions that even responsible attempts to know and build relationships with the other come with certain limitations. Weaver conceives reciprocity as a hospitable or complementary gift exchange; one does not give out of a sense of obligation, restrict for any reason, or expect anything to be given in exchange but rather because doing so promotes complementary relationships, communal balance, and survival. I explore how the texts attempt to maintain reciprocal relationships through gender performances and complementary rhetorical exchange. I ask: What knowledge does each text offer the reader, particularly regarding gendered responsibilities or social roles? What rhetorical or literary

actions reflect this knowledge? How does this knowledge attempt to create complementary and reciprocal relationships with the knowledge offered by the "other"?

Unlike colonial/patriarchal societies and systems, these Indigenous feminist principles attempt to distribute social power equally. Therefore, guided by complementarity and reciprocity as enacted Indigenous feminism, I read Native texts for a balanced distribution of power across relationships. My focus is on the rhetorical and literary constructions and performances of complementary and reciprocal gender-based relationships and systems of power. Through my reading, complementarity reflects the author's rhetorical approach while reciprocity the literary performance and message itself in negotiating the gendered American nationalistic ideology and discourse.

Gender and Gender Violence

Gender is a performance of a prescribed social role, filled with particular expectations and responsibilities that inform relationships and distribution of power and knowledge. Yet, gender performances also inform and reflect social thought and change through time. Cheryl Glenn states, "Figuring gender denaturalizes the concept of sexual differences and investigates the cultural construction of men and women, thereby revitalizing our thinking about the appropriate and inappropriate roles and opportunities for sexed bodies. Thus, gender studies include both women and men, a shift in focus (from feminist studies) that holds potential for transforming rhetorical studies" (11). Reading a text through its gender performance and rhetorical constructions informs of progressive cultural changes. Cultural history can be read or "heard" through an interpretive literary history of gender constructions.

The difference between Anglo and Native constructions of gender revolves around the physical embodiments, performances, and applications or uses of gender. Anglo ideologies seek to keep nature and human, man and woman separate and thus easily categorized while most Native ideologies seek to balance a more nuanced relationship or complementarity of genders per the changing needs of communities and society in general. Bell explains that "…even though gender is central to the organization of Native nations as distinct social and cultural systems, it is often not closely related to power or biology…There is, however, no universal or necessary correlation between male and female descent and gendered positions of power and authority. Nor are gender and sex defined, necessarily, as culturally equivalent categories" (308). As Nira Yuval Davis explains in *Gender and Nation*, "…gender relations are at the heart of cultural constructions of social identities and collectivities as well as in most cultural conflicts and contestations" (39). Gender ideologies inform the very core of most conflicts between cultures, further complicated by race. Gender relations are also key to understanding and developing a national identity. This project deconstructs the various ways that Native American authors have responded to cultural contact with Anglo-Americans through the physical, rhetorical, political, and social implications of gender performances.

In her exploration of gender violence, Sally Engle Merry explains that "the conditions which breed gender violence include racism and inequality, conquest, occupation, colonialism, warfare and civil conflict, economic disruptions and poverty" (2). She calls such violence structural because it is "usually concealed within the hegemony of ordinariness, hidden in the mundane details of everyday life" and therefore "invisible and normalized" by dominant society (5). She explains that violence itself is a performance of

gender. In Western cultures, the perpetrator of violence performs masculinity while the victim performs femininity (11). Using these definitions and understanding of a history of gender violence against Native peoples, this work seeks to explore the ways in which Native authors negotiate such colonial gender violence.

Eduardo Duran explains Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a condition where the individual is cut off from a support system and internalizes grief, anger, shame, and fear among other emotions; PTSD can be conceived as a psychological wound resulting from gender violence. The initial stage includes a need to dissolve reality and replace it with an individualized world of fantasy and pretend, which Duran calls "Warrior Regression" or what I discuss as hyper-masculinity. Duran states that this warrior regression stage is "one of the quickest ways to psychologically survive…to emotionally and literally shut down emotions so as to avoid the pain" (41). As seen in my discussion of Ridge's novel, hyper-masculinity is a response to gender conflict where the individual performs an extreme version of Anglo-masculinity (which, ironically, perpetuates a "savage" stereotype) as a means of survival. In this stage, I find a damaging form of reciprocity where the individual fights back, responds to violence with heightened violence, only to eventually succumb to the ideological trap that Anglo-American masculinity poses for non-white male others.

During the second stage of PTSD, the male individual seeks to fulfill his tribal role at the expense of truly assessing the needs of the tribe over his newly acquired "needs" as an individual in search of glory and notoriety. "The warrior archetype is thereby withdrawn from the world, leaving an emptiness in the life of the person, family, and community. Attempts by the archetype to make itself manifest are plagued by unknown problems, which are for the most part expressed in a non-constructive way" (Duran 41). This progression of

stage one and two can be seen through my analysis of both nineteenth century Native texts as the background informing my discussion of the contemporary texts. Furthermore, Duran explains, Native male service as a refigured warrior-soldier complicates his understanding of whom he is protecting and whom he is in fact harming; "the man is serving as a warrior protecting the way of life of the people who have destroyed his traditional way of life. Serving in the colonial army can only contribute to the dissonance and splitting that the Native American male is already experiencing" (41). Such activity in the Western military makes Native men "complicit in some ways with the maintenance of a Euro-American hegemonic institution that naturalizes colonial rule by mapping it onto a system of gendered, raced, and classed power relations" (48-49). However, Tengan also notes that such military involvement may also help to re-create Native masculinity by giving them an opportunity to provide for their families and community while promoting survival and growth. This is the stage that poses the most internal or neocolonial conflict for Native men as seen in my discussion of Silko and Alexie's texts.

The third stage of PTSD according to Duran is "characterized by denial; the person attempts to believe that things are not as bad as they seem or that they will get better through some miraculous intervention" (41). Duran notes that the individual may partake in traditional ceremonies in hopes of being healed but "they seem to have forgotten that what gives medicine its effectiveness is the cohesive community" (41). Duran explains that this stage of PTSD is characterized by such feelings of anger that is misdirected towards others who suffer equally. He states that this point is when "the internalized self-hate creates ego-splitting" and the individual loses all control over any sense of true identity (42). This stage takes prominence in my discussion of contemporary Native literature.

Masculinity studies and queer theory offer alternative methodologies with a focus on deconstructing historical gender ideologies and performances and are therefore very similar to an Indigenous feminist methodology but without the cultural specificity. Although post-colonial queer studies is currently expanding to include experiences with colonization, queer theory and masculinity studies lack sufficient consideration of Indigenous gender ideologies or a North American history of colonization. A recent issue of GLQ entitled "Sexuality, Nationality, Indigeneity" exclusively discusses the immensely valuable intersections of queer theory and Native studies. In that volume, Andrea Smith notes that, "the subjectless critique of queer theory can assist Native studies in critically interrogating how it can unwittingly re-create colonial hierarchies even within projects of decolonization" (63). Although my study doesn't directly employ queer theory or masculinity studies, it seeks to bridge the gaps between these various approaches by developing an Indigenous informed methodology for understanding gender constructions in negotiation with the colonial other and seeking decolonization. I hope that this work does indeed push the conversation towards Smith's call for an "identity plus politics...that marks all identities and their relationships to the fields of power in which they are imbricated," a politics that includes Indigenous ideologies and histories. Furthermore, this project focuses on gender constructions informing communal, cross cultural, and national relationships and therefore does not consider sexuality as a more specific form of power relationships. Finally, this project focuses on the rhetorical constructions and literary performances of gender as a means to understand and reinforce social balance and relationships based on complementarity and reciprocity rather than colonial systems of power based on social hierarchies created to maintain dominance.

History of Gender Violence

Drawing on Tengan's assertion that "We need to see gendered social actors as complexly situated, located, and positioned in multiple settings and historical contexts," I explore the ways in which Native men are situated within dominant gender constructs and how Native authors respond to such positioning (15). Native men have suffered similar types of gender related oppression as have Native women or women in general. Regarding Indigenous Hawaiian men, Tengan explains, they "in general have lost their place and role in society. Often they linked this to the loss of the old ways–the religious formations, political systems, cultural practices, and relationships to land that our ancestors knew. With the arrival of colonialism, Christianity, and modernization, all of these configurations of knowledge and power were radically transformed" (5-6). Native men, like all women under the white male gaze, become subject to a projected hegemonic authority that seeks to reinforce both a gender and race informed hierarchy that asserts white male dominance.

Cultural conflict drastically and negatively affects Native males who seek to befriend their white brothers; patriarchal hegemony proves to be a formidable opponent deeply wounding Native men. Gender violence as a colonization/genocide method begins on an ideological level and becomes a performance that results in social division and conflict. Paula Gunn Allen states that such ideological imposition of "white-think" or a "system of mental processes…works for the survival and expansion of white culture, [but] it also results in the spiritual and psychic murder of those who exist outside its protection" (2003, 307). The cyclical effects of such historical gender violence include substance abuse, violence, and criminal activity often advanced by negative public attention in scholarly and literary depictions or representations of Native men that support colonial efforts (Tengan 9, 10).

Furthermore, Native men in power affected by such colonial gender violence further such efforts through "their patriarchal and misogynistic brand of activism and for their political collaborations in the power structures of the colonial state" (Tengan 10). Native men unknowingly perpetuate oppression of themselves and their people.[2]

Colonial/patriarchal systems rely on a gender/sex distinction to create a hierarchy where men rule and maintain dominance over women and as justification for conquest of pre-determined "weaker" and thus feminine "others." In "American Studies without America: Native Feminisms and the Nation-State," Andrea Smith writes that when

> colonists first came to this land, they saw the necessity of instilling patriarchy in Native communities, because they realized that Indigenous peoples would not accept colonial domination if their own Indigenous societies were not structured on the basis of social hierarchy. Patriarchy in turn rests on a binary gender system; hence, it is not a coincidence that colonizers also targeted Indigenous peoples who did not fit within this binary model (312).

Upon contact, Indians in literary and national discourse were aligned with women as the mysterious "other." As Gerardine Meaney writes,

> A history of colonization is a history of feminization. Colonial powers identify their subject people as passive, in need of guidance, incapable of self-government, romantic, passionate, unruly, barbarous–all of those things for which the Irish and women have been traditionally praised and scorned. (233)

In colonial ideology, "feminization and disempowerment are being equated" (Yuval-Davis 53). Imagining the "Indian" as a simulation of what America most feared or misunderstood

justified Anglo settlers' need to conquer and either to protect Natives from themselves or exterminate them, or at least their "savage" ways, from "civilized" cultures.

Patriarchy paired with race-based imperialism and colonization resulted in drastic changes in how Native men in particular were perceived and treated. In *Savagism and Civilization*, Roy Harvey Pearce writes that "American Indians were everywhere found to be, simply enough, men who were not men," where "men" indicated higher (white) male beings who reign over culture and society (6). In their own culture, Native men did not "reign" in this sense. In attempting to grasp and conquer such an unknown "other," American settlers constructed the Indian as "a symbol for all that over which civilization must triumph as they expand into the western frontier. The Indian who was important to Americans setting out to make their new society was not the person but the type, not the tribesman but the savage, not the individual but the symbol" (73). This mythological or simulated Indian becomes the symbol of everything that Americans strove to prevail over, particularly their own inherent weaknesses, in the creation of a national character.

After being stripped of their sovereign national identities during advanced colonization, Native men and women were expected to forsake their previous roles in their communities and adhere to the Western gender binary. Native men were forced to become farmers, which in their own culture made them "something other than a man" and more akin to women (Purdue 74). They were also expected to make decisions for the sake of the community as individuals rather than members of a tribal council. Although Native cultures were more open to gender differences, their social structures and gender roles drastically changed in compliance to a more limited cultural ideology. Jennifer Gillan explains the holistic effects or soul wound resulting from the period of allotment as a rejection of a

communal way of life in favor of “an individual’s accumulation of possessions and his subsequent increase in social status” reminiscent of Lang’s discussion of gender roles. “What arose in place of communal values was a culture of compensation that promised fulfillment through pursuit of private property, particularly consumer goods” (2). Such drastic social changes led to considerable unrest and division within both individuals and tribal communities further deepening soul wound. Men in particular suffered because the promised sense of power acquired through assimilation was entirely illusory and therefore an ideological trap. Native men could never ascend to the same heights or social position as Anglo men.

In order to reveal the effects of colonization on Native men, traditional knowledge must be disentangled from colonial ideologies. Lisa Kahaleole Hall writes that “because colonization relies on forced forgetting and erasure, the need to bring the past forward into our consciousness is ongoing. Reconstructing tradition and memory is a vital element of Indigenous survival, and there is nothing simple or one-dimensional about the process of reconstruction” (279). Tengan confirms that

> the remaking of the [indigenous] self and society proceeds through the reconnection with and retelling of [story, history]–legends, histories, personal stories, and narrative accounts of events. The [men’s eating house, gathering place] does this by contesting the dominant narratives of neocolonialism, modernity, and global capitalism; remembering l āhui (collectivity as a people/nation) through the commemoration and reliving of indigenous histories; carrying out ritual practices that (re)utilize, (re)consecrate, and (re)create sacred sites and spaces; …rewriting and reforming the

> body as site of personal and collective strength; and reforming subjectivities through the telling and hearing of life stories… (14-15)

I read stories by Ridge, Winnemucca, Silko, and Alexie as attempting to reconstruct both personal and collective tradition and memory of the colonial past meeting the neocolonial present.

This analysis of male gender role construction, transcultural conflict, and the soul wound not only provides a more complete understanding of this historical conflict but also better informs those difficulties that Native men currently face. Adaptation to such dire changes drastically effected changes at the tribal or cultural/social level and not always to the direct benefit of the individual or culture/society itself. However, using an Indigenous feminist lens to trace the gender conflict and corresponding soul wound along with adaptations to change, both failed and successful, creates an awareness of the pattern of change, sets precedents, and thus helps to determine how change and potential ideological traps are or can be handled and healed in the present and future. The passing down of stories and lessons is the best way to not only keep traditions alive but to offer wisdom that may prove useful when adapted for changing situations. My assessment of gender includes several different theoretical and literary/rhetorical approaches including the connections between genre and gender, gender and nation, and the theoretical positioning of Indigenous feminism in Native literary studies.

Genre, Gender, Nation

My analysis of Native texts explores the ways in which an author's use of genre(s) reflects their ideological positioning regarding gender and, by extension,

cultural/ethnic/racial/national identity. More importantly, an author's use of genre combined with other contextual gender representations (metaphor, symbolism, direct discourse/dialogue, etc.) reveal attempts at navigating conflicts that result from paradigmatically opposed social ideologies. Such a reading of these texts also reveals authorial efforts at building complementary and reciprocal relationships across cultures. Therefore, rather than promoting solitude, division, binaries/hierarchies, and individuality, these Native American stories promote cross-cultural or transnational relationships and community by reconciling ideological differences informing gender and corresponding symbols of identity. The mere fact that Native people began using the English language and print technology is testament to their attempt at creating a complementary and reciprocal relationship with Euro-Americans.

Post independence, nineteenth century authors were charged with creating an American literary tradition that was unique from the British tradition, particularly in the form of romantic fiction, and turned to its Indigenous culture as its distinguishing feature. Authors such as Charles Brockden Brown and James Fenimore Cooper wrote within a romantic tradition to reflect the American psyche, particularly in regards to a history of violent conflict and conquest of Indigenous inhabitants to secure a colonial relationship with the land. "Indians" in literature became empty signifiers (simulations), scapegoats, and tools in that they were reconstructed to the needs of the Anglo-American readers as projections of their own concerns regarding the morality of a developing nation. Representations of Indians in literature helped readers define themselves by what they imagine they were not: savage, child-like, immoral, primitive, sexually aggressive beings. Literary constructions of the Indian helped to define America more than truly representing Native Americans. The

"Indian problem" was the prevailing concern for America at the turn of the nineteenth century as Americans were deciding between forced assimilation or annihilation. Authors such as Cooper, Lydia Sigourney, and Lydia Maria Child sought to answer such questions within the romantic literary tradition that ended up perpetuating real violence by permeating mythological creations. Nineteenth century American authors re-created Indians as the rejected precursor to American civilization, the more primitive and child-like past that America conquered in the name of progress. The romantic tradition required a heroic conquest and authors such as Brown and poets Philip Freneau and William Cullen Bryant portrayed the "Vanishing Indian" as a necessary sacrifice for developing civilization and social progress.

Brown's gothic rendition of the romantic tradition in *Edgar Huntly* (1799) portrays the internal or psychological aspects of a nation attempting to deal with its own moral development. Brown's novel reveals Edgar's fears of being caught between savagery and civilization, immaturity and maturity, male and female. The "savage Indians" in the novel represent immature male youth filled with sexual aggression and immorality. The marriage that Edgar postpones represents adulthood, civilization, and pure morality often associated with femininity. Edgar must prove to himself and to others that he has developed and is ready to take on the responsibilities of the head of a family. In this reconstruction of the plot, Edgar is symbolic of the nation as a whole and its own concerns regarding its development. However, the novel reveals that in his misjudgment of the other as his repressed self, Edgar and the nation have not yet developed beyond narcissism and adolescence.

During the 1820s American romancers such as Cooper pioneered the raw masculinity-infused adventure. However, the romance found in texts such as Cooper's

Leatherstocking Tales is developed not around a man and a woman but rather a man and his Indian other and their shared love of nature. At the time these novels were written, America was preoccupied with the actual "Indian Problem" when the Native inhabitants who had not yet "vanished" and refused to assimilate into Anglo culture were seen as an obstacle to the continued expansion into and colonization of American land. President James Monroe promoted a voluntary removal process that basically tried to push Native Americans out of the way without engaging in violent conquest as they had in the eighteenth century. In actuality, this created a physical border or frontier between the "savage" and the "civilized." Cooper captured this frontier and the problems it posed to the construction of a developing national identity through his protagonist Natty Bumppo, a hunter who lived like and among Indians on the frontier.

Through his many adventures, Natty and his best friend/partner the noble Indian Chingachgook witness the conflict along the frontier between "savage Indians" and encroaching civilization. At the beginning of *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Natty and Chingachgook discuss their national histories. Natty tries to convince his friend that their histories are both based on conquest of previous inhabitants to prove that such conquest is natural, even destined. Such a sentiment reflects the national belief that America was destined to be a world leader because of its superior culture and institutions. Chingachgook refuses such a parallel between their cultures and instead constructs Indian history as part of the natural landscape and therefore eternal. The conversation ends when Chingachgook's son Uncas arrives with news regarding enemy Indians and approaching troops, a symbolic narrative move that seems to prove Natty's assertion.

The novel portrays Native American men as both savage (Magua) and noble (Chingachgook and Uncas), conflicting myths prevalent at the time in an effort to humanize real Native peoples, both destined to be removed or killed by a superior culture. The pathos of the novel reveals that the loss of America's native inhabitants is a necessary and natural sacrifice for the new, more civilized culture. Although Natty lives a life much like his Indian friend, he insists that he is a "man without a cross" and will always be a white man who has created a relationship with his Indian "other" along the frontier, thus making the way clear for approaching civilization. Natty's conflict regarding his role and complicity as lead scout for the "army" of civilization forces him to leave the Templeton settlement because he cannot live so close to the constraints of civilized law. In the end, Natty chooses to escape all society and die alone in the barren, sex-less prairie.

Like Edgar, Natty represents the American male psyche trying desperately to avoid the high morality of civilization while proving his own manhood and nationhood as both heroic and destined to greatness. Like the American psyche, Natty struggles with his own guilt for the history and violence of colonization yet seeks repentance by creating an innocent relationship with his Indian "other," his own repressed dark and wild side. This relationship proves destructive to both Native peoples and the frontiersman as civilization pushes forward in the frontiersman's/Indian's wake, destroying all hopes for American innocence. However, the fictional Natty provides the mythological basis and proof that such advance is possible for America. In order to fulfill the need for innocence and moral superiority, "savage" Indians become the scapegoats for justifying conquest and removal as seen in the emergence of Indian-hating.

Concerns regarding the "Indian Problem" were also prominently played out in Catherine Maria Sedgwick's historical romance *Hope Leslie* (1827), which attempts to bridge Native and Anglo cultures through friendships between women. Although this novel portrays women as more powerful than men in their moral sentiments, they are also revealed as powerless against cultural institutions that maintain a sense of superiority over the other and thus limit their ability to assimilate or become American citizens. Sedgwick's fictional feminine-oriented failure to peacefully answer the "Indian Problem" reflects America's own failure and turn to frustration and masculine-oriented violence on the frontier as civilization expanded westward.

In 1830, President Andrew Jackson enforced removal of Native tribes using familial rhetoric (i.e. "great white father") in government policy, vainly attempting to sweep away the "Indian Problem" without the use of violence, which effectively institutionalized racism based on the mythological savage "Indian" making way for Anglo settlement.[3] Indians now became obstacles to moral progress that needed to be removed by institutional force as well as physical violence. Robert Montgomery Bird's *Nick of the Woods* (1837) captured the sentiments of Indian-hating that fuels the violence behind removal policies of the 1830s and provides a possible mold for John Rollin Ridge's protagonist. Nathan Slaughter moves to the frontier to settle with his family, but his peaceful and trusting nature results in the brutal killing of his entire family by neighboring Indians. In revenge, Nathan lives up to his name and brutally slaughters as many Indians as possible, leaving his mark of the cross on their mangled bodies, thus attempting to maintain his religious and moral beliefs. Slaughter's revenge is justified by the Indian's initial violence and by his belief in the destiny of America, which he makes manifest by annihilating that which he believes is an impediment

to progress. This novel reflects the sentiments of citizens who believed the rhetoric of manifest destiny and wished to expel the savage Indian from the land and erase their memories and national identity.

Approaching the middle of the nineteenth century, violence was turned against other racial "others," particularly Mexicans who claimed American citizenship because they legally owned land and maintained citizenship in a neighboring nation. The conflict regarding Mexican land-owners' American citizenship and cultural acceptance into America eventually led to the Mexican-American war, ending in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Although Mexican-Americans gained legal citizenship, they remained victims of racial violence, especially in central California where land was especially valuable because of the promise of gold. In his discussion of Ridge's novel, John Carlos Rowe concurs that "To justify claims to both the mineral resources and productive land of California, interested and powerful groups quickly established social binaries between 'foreigners' and 'U.S. citizens' that drew upon the prevailing racial, class, and gender hierarchies of U.S. culture at mid-century" (151). Like Native people, Mexicans were cast stereotypically as culturally inferior to Anglos in order to further justify violence against them and the theft of their land.

Herman Melville's *The Confidence-Man* shows the truth behind the rhetoric of manifest destiny by revealing the conflicted nature of regenerating violence against Native people for the sake of a "morally upstanding" and heroic national identity. Melville mocks/satirizes the real sentiment of Indian-hating as it relates to expansion in his chapter "The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating." In the figure of the con man, he reveals that readers/society cannot trust what has been projected as Truth by either professional, government, or literary "officials." Melville questions the validity of Truth itself as

constructed by Anglo America at the expense of Native America. Ridge had preceded Melville in literary attempts to force Americans to examine their own myths and literary history more closely, suggesting that the counterfeit construction of native identity had been used to con them into believing that they were a chosen people justified in using violence.

What is the literary history of Native America in response to this evolving "America" and their place within it? What are their contributions to defining a nation both part of but perhaps separate from this Eurocentric version of America? How do these authors attempt to combat a literary history of erasure and create a more accurate representation of Native America? In other words, how do they attempt to decolonize themselves in literary and cultural history? How can an Indigenous feminist study of Native literature contribute to political and social dimensions of nation building? This dissertation seeks to find answers to these questions.

Applying the Theory: Chapter Descriptions

Each of the following chapters address the particular ways in which the authors use complementarity and reciprocity in their rhetorical and literary gender constructions. Each chapter is thus a case study intended to assert the value in an Indigenous feminist reading of the text and the various ways in which each author presents and historically situates Indigenous feminism.

Chapter 2 *John Rollin Ridge and Hypermasculine Conflict on the Frontier*

This chapter explores Ridge's adventure novel *The Life and Adventures of Joaqúin Murieta: The Celebrated California Bandit* (1854), the story of a Mexican bandit seeking revenge

against his Anglo oppressors in the early stages of California settlement. At the core of this novel are the ways that performed masculinity is tied to nationalism. Ridge's construction of masculinity (both in content and literary form or genre) in the 1850s reveals stark contradictions between violence and nobility, Native "savagery" and Anglo "civilization," the symbolic rhetoric used to justify conquest in the name of progress and an emerging American national identity. Ridge's rhetorical tactics and choices ironically subverts the political atmosphere that he negotiates in the act of writing, specifically his character's attempts to invert ideological systems of power through transformations of race and gender. Ridge's novel provides a prime example of Indigenous feminism because its subversive and ironic construction of performed masculinity and nationalism reveals the extent to which colonialism affected non-white males in the early-nineteenth century. In his part fictional, part journalistic adaptation of personal and national history, Ridge presents a nuanced understanding of these real political and ideological dynamics, reverses the symbols of conquest, and constructs an ironic and reciprocal relationship with perpetrators of patriarchal domination.

I assert that Ridge uses performances of gender and literary genre in connection to the racialized body and body politic to assert sovereignty not assimilation. I argue for a vital distinction from assimilationist rhetoric in the creation of an Indigenous feminist rhetoric of sovereignty using ironic reciprocity, a rhetorical strategy that I explain and develop further in the chapter. Although his characterization of Murieta as political and physical reciprocator results in destruction, Ridge's act of writing such historical fiction using ironic reciprocity proves a less dangerous and less complicit rhetorical response to colonial oppression and patriarchal systems. His novel uses the dominant discourse as a means to open up concepts of

justice and national identity based on his own unique perspective, thus creating a presence rather than an absence of both race and gender identity within the dominant discourse. An Indigenous feminist reading of this novel provides a new, complementary perspective that allows for the complications surrounding assimilation to emerge and lead to a more solid understanding of the politics associated with nationalism and masculinity. In the context of the larger project, this chapter reveals the danger in imposed limitations and stereotypical expectations that perpetuate Anglo male dominance and how the non-white male body itself represents a political/national threat to a masculine United States nationalism.

Chapter 3 *Gender, Literacy, and Sovereignty in Winnemucca's Life Among the Piutes*

Sarah Winnemucca's tribalography *Life Among the Piutes* (1883) presents a model for Paiute literary nationalism through her use of both gender and genre and asserts Paiute gender roles and identities as fluid based on the needs of the community. Written as an autobiography, *Life Among the Piutes* reveals a tribal history more than Winnemucca's individual history. She also emphasizes different gender constructions as central to social, cultural, and physical conflicts between her tribe and the colonial settlers in Paiute territory. This chapter will explore further how Winnemucca strategically constructs her role as a Native woman interpreter negotiating and performing masculinity while attempting to intervene in the gender violence against her male counterparts and community as a whole.

Although different from the performed masculinity of Native male authors, I contend that Winnemucca simultaneously performs masculinity and enacts Indigenous feminism through complementary and reciprocal relationships that promote social balance. Her performance of both genders has varied responses and results but generally grant her power

and access outside of the range of a typical Native woman. Such power and access also come with suspicions regarding her intent and general attacks against her character revealing the true nature of the masculinized political sphere that consistently seeks to degrade and oppress others to maintain power. I argue that Winnemucca's textual performance and critique of *both* masculinity *and* femininity reveals a self-determined, transnational response to colonization and morality driven power hierarchies in general. She asserts an Indigenous feminist consciousness by strategically and reciprocally employing gender in her physical as well as literary presence; her knowledge and performance of Western constructions of gender and race reinforces complementary and reciprocal relationships between nations and individuals within. Such negotiations expose the inflexibility of Western gender roles and the institutions they influence as well as the detrimental affects of assimilation to Western gender constructions and ideologies within her own community. Furthermore, her dualistic yet balanced gender performance complicates a wholly gender-divided approach to studying Native literature and reveals the paradox in doing so by questioning critical assumptions about authorial intent based on an author's perceived gender. My argument in this chapter asserts that *how* we assess gender performances as informing ideological positioning must complement *why* we analyze gender performances in the first place to avoid perpetuating colonial oppression. This chapter proves the value of Indigenous feminism as both a rhetorical and representational tool to build and maintain balanced relationships and sovereignty.

Chapter 4 *Systemic Transformation: Storytelling in Ceremony*

Through the healing ceremony of Tayo, a Laguna pueblo war veteran, Leslie Marmon Silko reveals that differing ideologies can remain in reciprocal relationship through a critical awareness of their interconnectedness and of an individual's place within the whole. Placing this novel on a continuum of Native male experience discussed in previous chapters offers a teleological look at contemporary Native American fiction as attempting to manifest Indigenous feminist social justice and decolonization as a continual process of critical awareness, negotiation, and adaptation. Indeed, this text reveals that contemporary Native people, mixed-blood males especially, cannot separate or disentangle the ideologies that define their history and identity without losing themselves and their culture entirely. I argue that Silko's novel asserts the need to more critically see and expertly negotiate Pueblo and Western ideologies in order to resist becoming a victim and to maintain social balance. Much like Winnemucca's performance of both genders, Silko's male protagonist learns to accept and embody both genders as necessary for individual and communal sovereignty. Silko attempts to bring the Native male back to traditional culture and a sense of self that embraces difference and transformation. Thus the novel asserts an Indigenous feminist critical consciousness and corresponding actions.

Furthermore, this chapter uncovers the myriad ways in which the personal becomes political in terms of the neocolonial social constructions that inform gender and racial/ethnic identity. I read the novel as enacting Indigenous feminism by exposing the ways in which social constructions can be both harmful and beneficial, depending on the how they are performed and internalized in both words and actions. I hope that such a reading exposes the dangers of perpetuating destructive performances of otherwise innocuous binaries. To read the novel solely as a *resistance* to patriarchal ideologies detrimentally performs those same

ideologies by reading them as simply *either* good *or* bad. Such a hierarchical reading fails to recognize its own neocolonial internalization of enacted social constructions. Using the novel as an example, Indigenous feminism reveals how consistently performed neocolonial social constructions become systematic and therefore more difficult to clearly recognize, assess, and avoid.

Chapter 5: *Fighting the Reservation of the Mind: Moving Across Borders and Binaries in Alexie's Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

In his most recent novel about and for contemporary young adults, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, Sherman Alexie employs gender and genre to overcome the "reservation of the mind." Alexie addresses both the physical and ideological implications of the history of hierarchical, paternalistic relationships and conflicts and shows that colonial ideologies summarized in the phrase "the reservation of the mind" are not only limiting but harmful to both individuals and communities. Furthermore, I argue that the novel distinguishes historic and geographic boundaries and ideological binaries as the source of neocolonial oppression and the "reservation of the mind." Ideological boundaries and binaries include those involving race and gender developed in previous chapters. Historical boundaries are those that limit a group's power in writing or understanding their own history. While applying an Indigenous feminist lens that relies on arguments from previous chapters, I interpret Alexie as attempting to puncture the reservation system's limiting boundaries and binaries in order to decolonize or escape the "reservation of the mind" through Junior's development into adulthood and acquisition of personal sovereignty as a postindian trickster, a concept explained further within the chapter. Combining the postindian trickster with

Indigenous feminism results in the Indigenous feminist warrior/trickster, itself a complementary and reciprocal relationship embodying storytelling traditions and cultural ideologies.

In this chapter, I argue that Junior's movement between ideological and physical spaces allows him to gain critical consciousness necessary in negotiating neocolonial boundaries and binaries. The novel presents an Indigenous feminist warrior/trickster performance through the physical movement of a young adolescent boy painfully aware of his tumultuous historical and ideological positioning, yet courageous in his attempts to forge a path for himself and others. I argue that Junior represents a transnational identity because of his courage to overcome historical trauma and re-define himself and his relationships with others both on and off the reservation. Therefore, he metaphorically becomes a foreign ambassador through his movement and relationships outside of the Spokane nation. Furthermore, the novel challenges neocolonial ideologies informing contemporary Native identities as *limited to* binaries of being *either* Indian *or* Anglo/Western, masculine *or* feminine, on *or* off the "reservation." Rather, with his burgeoning protagonist Alexie presents a model that accepts these binaries and attempts to build balanced relationships between seemingly disparate polar opposites, thus overcoming the "reservation of the mind." Finally, through Junior's experiences, the novel asserts a sovereign national identity with permeable boundaries and transnational citizens. This reading of the text helps to distinguish the differences and the relationships between physical and ideological boundaries and binaries affecting society and offers a solution that attempts to balance needs and assert sovereignty of both individuals and communities as a whole.

Limitations of the Study

This study of decolonizing gender in Native American literature does not and cannot offer solutions to real lived experiences with gender and sexual violence; it can only provide insight and a new perspective to the problem through literary analysis. Because this study is not ethnographic in nature, moreover, it does not include any oral narratives or interviews nor is it based on specific tribal distinctions beyond what is offered in and by the text itself. Rather, my focus is purely on literary productions. In order to reveal the ways in which these texts decolonize gender, I focus purely on the rhetorical choices (including genre) in relation to such literary conventions as characterization, plot, and irony, to name a few. I focus especially on rhetorical and literary complementarity and reciprocity as Indigenous feminist conventions. Although each author uses these conventions differently and for different reasons, I can not make assumptions about each tribal culture or a pan-tribal culture based on this analysis.

This study is not comprehensive in that it focuses on only a small fraction of available Native literature. I have chosen texts that specifically address gender issues and for this reason I include both male and female authors. Not all Native literature directly or even indirectly addresses these issues. My goal is to apply Indigenous feminism to a handful of texts in order to reveal its value as an analytical tool for decolonization.

[1] "Resistance to" implies an almost self-imposed subjugation to dominant culture and ideology. However, reading these texts from a more critical understanding of the relationships between race and gender and the corresponding cultural ideologies reveals a more dialogic than resistant rhetoric, dialogic in the sense that the texts present an alternative understanding of these relationships and ideologies, one that is more egalitarian, respectful, complementary, and reciprocal in nature and therefore also reflects an Indigenous feminist consciousness.

[2] For example, Jennifer Denetdale's historical work about the Navajo Nation reveals that "Navajo leaders, who are primarily men, reproduce Navajo nationalist ideology to re-inscribe gender roles based on Western concepts even as they claim that they operate under traditional Navajo philosophy" (9). Colonial ideology proves to subtly influence Native men more than they are willing or perhaps even able to admit; ongoing colonial history thus informs contemporary Native masculinities in both words and actions. Lisa Udel concurs that "In the face of coerced agrarianism and the attending devaluation of hunting, and the consequences of forced removal and relocation, Native men have suffered a loss of status and traditional self-sufficiency even more extensive than their female counterparts…[M]en suffer from an inability to fulfill traditional roles" (54).

[3] Furthermore, it is important to note that this familial rhetoric also positioned all Native Americans as dependents of the federal government, wholly infantilizing and feminizing them simultaneously.

CHAPTER 2: JOHN ROLLIN RIDGE AND HYPERMASCULINE CONFLICT ON THE FRONTIER

The once noble Mexican farmer turned bandit, Joaquín Murieta cut through California seeking revenge for unjustified wrongs perpetrated against him and other Mexicans. However, to the American settlers he merely represented an idea. "In the various outbreaks in which he had been personally engaged, he had worn different disguises, and was actually disguised the most when he showed his real features" (30-31). Joaquín Murieta performs as "savage" not because he was born that way but because others imagined him so; their imagination turned into expectation leaving Murieta with few other options than fulfilling those expectations by becoming a bloodthirsty "savage." Ironically, in order for him to lead a peaceful yet self-determined existence, he had to sacrifice himself ideologically and then physically. His eventual death at the hand of his oppressors allowed for continued fictions about non-white others to proliferate. But John Rollin Ridge's fictional re-creation of Murieta's story does not support submissive transformations or assimilation to a constructed expectation. On the contrary, Ridge's story seeks to warn others of such concession to dominant ideologies as evidenced by his glowing testimony of Murieta on the first page of the novel:

> The character of this truly wonderful man was nothing more than a natural production of the social and moral conditions of the country in which he lived, acting upon certain particular circumstances favorable to such a result, and, consequently, his individual history is a part of the most valuable history of the State. (7)

With the first extant Native-authored novel, *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta: The Celebrated California Bandit* (1854), Ridge carries on a tradition of literary negotiations of colonial ideologies informing centuries of Native and non-white oppression.

Beginning with Puritan settlers, Native peoples of North America faced physical domination based on pre-conceived notions of who and what they were in relation to these foreign others. "Indian," a misnomer, was meant to mark the supposed inhabitants of India, not the New World– a mistake that would cost Native peoples many lives and much land. The word "savage" would haunt Native peoples as the embodied psychological projection of the settlers eager to leave behind their own oppression back in Europe and forge a new life for themselves with the word of God as their guide.[1] European settlers believed that their dominance and ownership of the land was destined and they would stop at nothing to live up to their potential.

The settlers realized that bounded camps now known as early reservations could protect these Native inhabitants from those settlers whose fear and greed threatened Native lives. Noble intentions, however, proved drastically harmful as settlers viewed these reservations as a means of protecting themselves from the "wild savage" who threatened their dominance and destiny in the New World. Such inversions of meaning inform negotiating rhetoric between these two groups with a history of misused treaties; these settlers and the U.S. government never intended to fulfill their promises. Early reservations eventually turned into "Indian fighter" President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act (1830), which sought to ensure civilization's progress through continued westward expansion and the success of the self-made man over the "savage" and primitive other through their forced removal from desirable land. Meanwhile, tensions between Mexico, the neighboring

sovereign nation opposed to slavery, and the United states escalated to the point of war with Mexico in 1836. The conquest of Mexican lands mirrored the conquest of Native lands and relied upon the idea that Anglo-America was destined to become the greatest, most powerful nation. America's so-called Manifest Destiny required the violent manipulation of non-whites via ideological constructions of them as impediments to progress.

Jacksonian democracy supported the conquest of nature and non-white others in order to establish an "American national identity in the myth of the west" (Rogin xvi). In his exploration into this conflicted history, Michael Paul Rogin explains that the subjugation of the Indians required systematic control of bodies through personified metaphors and images. "The language of Indian relations points in part to the personal body as a metaphor for the social body, the conjugal body as ideological support for the political family, Indian massacre of women and babies as container for general social dislocation and justifier for imposed authority" (xix). In her exploration of Native gender, Betty Bell posits gender as a constructed means of control: "The narrative of the context for American is nonetheless the story of male confrontation, in which Indian men are simultaneously represented as powerful masculine warriors and as weak, effeminate pushovers…Just as the stories of the Republic and manifest destiny were told through the lives of extraordinary men, the stories of savagery and surrender were told through the lives of great and defeated chiefs" (313-314). Stories constructed and then reinforced metaphors as a means of maintaining social control over minds and bodies. Indian chiefs were thus great in that they exhibited much strength and power, a masculine quality necessary to reinforce the even greater strength and power of his conqueror.

The ideological construction of Native and other non-white bodies as a threat to American social control becomes physically realized in government policy and simultaneously mythologized in an emerging American literature revealing the psychological impact of such policies on Anglo-Americans.[2] Rogin details these psychological impacts as "disturbances in intimate family relations, to infantile dependence and sexuality, to primitive violence and the struggle for autonomy, to a feared early maternal power replaced by patriarchal rule" (xix). Thus, these ideologically informed policies and mythologies inform relationships between Anglo-Americans and Native peoples, transforming per the needs of an emerging American national identity and later effecting relationships with Mexico, another sovereign nation standing in the way of progress. Furthermore, supposedly democratic actions constructed from these myths reveal the duplicity behind Jacksonian policies and rhetoric. In sum, Jacksonian democracy relied on

> [imagining] Indians as children of nature, expelled from paradise by their exterminatory violence and requiring parental control, [which] rationalized Indian removal from their land. But this cultural myth defended against threats from the psychic and social interior as well as from the frontier, and in justifying Indian dispossession it helped form personal and national identity. (xix)

Rogin connects these ideologies to a construction of masculinity based on hard work and self-reliance, particularly within the masculine public sphere free from the private dominance of women and nature. "Indian freedom," he expounds, "would have to succumb to self-restraint, hard work, and emulation, for these were, from the perspective of the dominant culture, the requisites of maturity" (xxi). Furthermore, the relationship between the United States and Native Nations were altered significantly by Chief Justice John Marshall's drastic

repositioning of the Cherokees as a domestic dependent rather than a sovereign nation in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831). Race, gender and national identity become conflated in what Ridge considers the "social and moral condition of the country" that both he and his character must negotiate (7). His novel is an ironic response to Jackson's myth of the west and the hypermasculinization necessary to conquer the "primitive" obstacles to national progress and an idealized democracy.

John Rollin Ridge, a mixed-blood Cherokee with a politically active family history, was born in 1827, the same year that the Cherokee Nation wrote its national constitution in an attempt to maintain sovereignty. The need to write such a constitution resulted from colonial assimilation tactics that stressed the power of the written word to organize and rule society. However, as treaties between the United States and Native nations were continuously disregarded and removal from Cherokee ancestral land loomed, "it became apparent that the written word was much more duplicitous than the whites had been willing to admit" and their contradictory actions spoke much louder than words (Hudson 53). Inheriting an interest in both assimilation to "civilized" social ideologies upholding hierarchies *and* the creation of a Cherokee nation state, Ridge constructs a fictional character (based on the historical Joaquín Murieta) who reveals the interconnectedness of racial and gender struggles similar to his own experience as a male racial other in the United States.

Joaquín Murieta was a California immigrant miner turned infamous bandit after being subjected to race and foreign identity-based violence. The novel seems to objectively sensationalize this real historical violence, thus supposedly submitting or assimilating to the ideologies that support such violence. After all, the strong and powerful bandit is vanquished at the hands of the even stronger and more powerful white man. However, Jesse Alemán

argues that the novel's "violent allegories of assimilation that, far from advocating it, reveal how the practice of American ideologies, such as individualism, capitalism, and liberal democracy, by racialized subjects and populations disenfranchises them through a process that severs radical ideology from the racialized body politic" (73). The opposite of the supposed intention, assimilation proves to limit rights for non-white individuals seeking freedom and access into dominant society and government. The physical race-based violence in the novel helps to disclose the truth about assimilation rhetoric and practices. I build on Alemán's assertions to argue that Ridge uses performances of gender and literary genre in connection to the racialized body and body politic to assert sovereignty not assimilation.

A closer look at Ridge's racial and gendered ideological playing field (the social and moral conditions) provides crucial insight into his seemingly assimilationist rhetoric. I argue for a vital distinction from assimilationist rhetoric in the creation of an Indigenous feminist rhetoric of sovereignty using ironic reciprocity. Scott Lyons writes that "As the inherent right and ability of peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires in the pursuit of self-determination, rhetorical sovereignty requires above all the presence of an Indian voice, speaking or writing in an ongoing context of colonization and setting at least some of the terms of the debate" (462). I argue that Ridge does indeed create an Indian voice and sets the terms of debate through his rhetorical strategy of what I choose to call ironic reciprocity, which enacts Indigenous feminism as a critical balancing mechanism necessary to maintain sovereignty. Ironic reciprocity is the rhetorical negotiation of alternative ideologies that seemingly mimics them but with a subtle difference, which is the underlying assertion of sovereignty. Like mimicry, ironic reciprocity purposefully maintains aspects of

ambivalence and mockery through inversions used to destabilize colonial hierarchical dominance. However, I distinguish reciprocity from mimicry in that it rhetorically asserts an Indigenous ideology that seeks to preserve balance and sovereignty rather than merely subvert or undermine colonial authority.

A concrete example of ideological subversion using ironic reciprocity lies within Ridge's depiction of Murieta's decapitation and the heroic display of his head in the novel. Ridge's account of this performance of hypermasculine conquest subverts ideologies surrounding division between "savage" and "civilized." Such gruesome display of a victim's head or scalp *by Indians* abhorred "civilized" society but provided evidence of Indian primitiveness and thus justification for their conquest. Here, though, Caption Love, Murieta's captor, resorts to scalping/decapitation as necessary to quell the fears and doubts of Californians. As Ridge explains, "It was important to prove, to the satisfaction of the public, that the famous and bloody bandit was actually killed, else the fact would be eternally doubted, and many unworthy suspicions would attach to Capt. Love" (155). Ironically, nobody truly knew what Murieta looked like or they would have had a much easier time capturing him in the first place. However, Captain Love falls victim to duplicitous colonial ideologies as, Ridge explains, "he, accordingly, acted as he would not otherwise have done; and I must shock the nerves of the fastidious, much against my will, by stating that he caused the head of the renowned Murieta to be cut off" and preserved in order to be exhibited throughout the state (155-156). Ridge expects his readers to be shocked at such actions by one of their own rather than by the violent and primitive bandits or "savages." Ridge's authorial interjections read as ironic reciprocity in his attempt to protect the reader from Captain Love's unbelievable actions perpetrated for the people's own mollification even

though they feared such "primitive" violent performances. He mockingly reciprocates a general disdain for such violent performances while ironically inverting the performers and impact thus forcing the reader to question their own perceptions regarding performances of hypermasculinity and their ideological underpinnings.

While demonstrating Murieta's violent performance of hypermasculinity as vengeful retaliation, Ridge strategically inverts gender and racial paradigms, thus ironically reciprocating colonial ideologies that seek to subjugate racial others; like his oppressors, Murieta seeks to conquer all whites. "He had contracted a hatred to the whole American race, and was determined to shed their blood, whenever and wherever an opportunity occurred" (14). In essence, Ridge responds to mythological creations of the "savage Indian" with his own ironic creation of the dark-skinned "other" retaliating against a constructed American "race." The difference is his rhetorical stance: Ridge proclaims Murieta a hero not because of what he accomplished (or failed to accomplish) but because of what he helps to reveal regarding assimilation to ideologies of dominance based on race. I argue that although Ridge's characterization of Murieta as political and physical resistance leader results in Murieta's decapitation (in both reality and fiction), Ridge's act of writing such historical fiction using ironic reciprocity proves a less dangerous and less complicit rhetorical response to colonial oppression, patriarchal systems, and corresponding masculine performances. Ridge destabilizes dominant cultural norms by showing what assimilation to white "civilized" masculinity really entails: rampant and unjustified racial and gender violence that merely reinforces social hierarchies and dominance.

Furthermore, Ridge's ironic reciprocity warns of the physical and ideological danger of colonial complicity involved with assimilation. Thus, I argue that the novel exemplifies

Indigenous feminism as a deconstructive/decolonizing process because of its enacted rhetorical agency, sovereignty, and attempts at nation building in response to patriarchal colonialism. Such ironic reciprocity reveals the hypermasculine violence of colonial ideologies and provides valuable self-reflective insight that allows for the complications surrounding assimilation to emerge and lead to a more solid understanding of the gendered politics associated with nation building. Finally, I argue that the novel's mixing of genres–journalism, poetry, and historical fiction–simultaneously captures and mocks those genres' roles in a cycle of masculinity propelling the national psyche. Such genre mixing itself reinforces Ridge's rhetorical sovereignty as an Indigenous feminist value. In order to develop my argument, I begin with exploring the ideological underpinnings of the text and Ridge's rhetorical negotiations before explaining how the novel espouses Indigenous feminist values.

Ironic Reciprocity and the Symbols of Conquest:

"The character of this truly wonderful man was nothing more than a natural production of the social and moral conditions of the country in which he lived…" (7).

Ridge directly experienced Jackson's policies and conceptions of manhood during the struggles over Cherokee removal in which his family was deeply imbedded and which resulted in his eventual self-imposed exile from the Cherokee nation. Therefore, I read Ridge's novel as ironically portraying conflicts of masculinity related to racial construction and the corresponding conquest of dark skinned others. Murieta's "social and moral conditions" reveal the patriarchal colonialism imbedded in Anglo-American society that he seeks to subvert. Therefore, to understand how the novel ironically reciprocates imperial and patriarchal symbols of conquest, I first look at how the novel represents such "social and

moral conditions" informing Murieta's "natural" production and performance of masculinity and race. This reading of the novel reveals that racial and gender hierarchies and simulations of the "savage" Indian attempt to force non-white men to assimilate and thus become complicit in their own and their cultures' subjugation or be eradicated in the name of Jacksonian "progress." Retaliation against such rhetorical and physical duality requires the subversion that this novel attempts. In this section, I seek to answer the following questions: What are the symbols of conquest in the novel, specifically in terms of race *and* gender, and how are they represented and/or subverted in the novel? How does Murieta's experience of these symbols of conquest push him towards a personal transformation that relies on reciprocating hypermasculine violence? Ridge's own history informs my reading.

Born into the political as well as physical upheaval of the Cherokee Nation during the time of removal and treaty making in the early nineteenth century, Ridge follows a tradition of constantly changing and renegotiating rhetoric and communication between America's native inhabitants and his new Anglo "fathers."[3] As a young boy, he continuously overheard debates regarding failed treaties, removal, and factions within the Cherokee Nation and "the debates and discussions instilled in him a respect for the effective use of language and the arts of argument and persuasion. He worked hard to improve his own facility with the English language" (Parins 14). Ridge was one of the first to willingly acquire a Western education, but one that espoused assimilatory rhetoric. Thus, Ridge's writing career began with written correspondence about the political upheaval in the Cherokee Nation all while in the midst of such inflammatory, influential, and transformative rhetoric and ideologies. His political struggles commenced with translating emerging American social and moral

ideologies and their colonial impetus while also constructing an identity never before seen amongst either Native or Anglo-Americans as an educated mixed-blood.

In taking up his father's and grandfather's mission, Ridge struggled to unite the "savage" and the "civilized" while finding himself subject to the ideologies that justified conquest based on racial difference. He learned that "progress" and "civilization" entailed acquiring a Western education as well as Anglo-American dress and speech; he learned to "walk the walk" and "talk the talk," or perform a non-Indian and therefore "civilized" identity. According to some scholars and historians, Ridge is considered an assimilationist, but insight into his knowledge and appropriation of these ideologies and rhetoric prove differently. In his biography of Ridge, James W. Parins writes: "He was a romantic figure in a romantic era, a man well aware of his image…[who] cultivated the idea of himself as a misunderstood, passionate genius" (1). John Carlos Rowe further explains that such "genius" derived from Ridge's image of himself as "[exemplifying the] cultivation and cosmopolitanism he argued Native Americans could achieve within Euroamerican society" (153). He evidently understood that performances granted certain privileges in dominant society. Ridge's identity was clearly entangled in competing ideologies and rhetoric that romanticize him as part Indian but also elevates him racially and morally as part Anglo, identities further informed by colonial and Jacksonian conceptions of masculinity or manhood.

The Jacksonian notion of the self-made man endorses the material and social benefits of hard work, dedication, and individuality that was inaccessible for non-whites.[4] In his discussion of masculinity in Native author William Apess's autobiographical texts, Peter L. Bayers argues that, to avoid being victimized by "Anglo ideologies of manhood," Apess

"both rejects and appropriates these ideologies to serve his own personal and political purposes" (142). Bayers explains how Jacksonian ideology of the self-made man seeks to feminize the previously hypermasculined Natives in order to assert and define Anglo manhood and national identity in comparison. "For Jackson, the conflict between whites and Indians was a battle between Anglo manhood and primitive manhood…the triumph of whites over Indians validated virulent Anglo manhood while in turn rendering Indians 'feminine' through their submission [and thus justifying] their removal" as an impediment to "civilized" masculine progress (Bayers 126). Such alternating and conflicting constructions of the Indian served to fulfill Americans' needs of being both morally and physically superior. As seen with the Cherokee Trail of Tears, the U.S. government enforced removal but was not responsible for lives lost in the process, further displaying conflict between moral intent in words/policies and the actions that contradicted such intent. Removal from traditional lands to distant unclaimed land thus imposed the choice of assimilation or extermination under the rhetorical guise of protecting Indigenous sovereignty and culture. Assimilation, however, simultaneously required forsaking Native cultures and identities. Therefore, while either choice resulted in similar consequences, Ridge's feigned assimilation using ironic reciprocity in the novel as well as his own performances allows for potential retaliation and cultural as well as individual survival.

Furthermore, Jacksonian America sought to establish a linear trajectory of white "fathers" thus "linking whiteness to [power and] manhood itself" (Bayers 127). During the early to mid nineteenth century, conceptions of manhood reached a "conflicted state…between classical republican manhood and an androgynous version of Anglo manhood that blurred traditionally masculine and feminine character traits" further

complicated by Jackson's Indian-hating hypermasculinity (126). The classical republican tradition of masculine virtue posits selflessness for the sake of the polity, often through heroic military acts, while Jackson's self made man endorsed social progress based on individuality. The embodied difference is revealed in displays of hypermasculinity and violence along the expanding frontier moving further away from the feminized East and androgynous Eastern men and towards continued conflict with the Indians who stood in the way of individual and therefore national success. These conceptions of manhood or hypermasculinity represent the symbols of conquest, or the actions informed by the discursive and metaphoric. Bayers argues that "Apess appropriates a [classical republican] definition of manhood…in order to challenge Anglo power and claim a space for himself and Natives in the Jacksonian era" (123-124). Without fully examining the implications, Bayers inadvertently illustrates Apess's rhetorical assimilation as enacting ironic reciprocity, simultaneously adopting and deconstructing ideologies that enforce conquest, a move that Ridge also endeavors in his historical fiction novel.

Entangled in such rhetorical symbols of conquest and their real physical manifestation, Ridge killed his neighbor, the suspected murderer of his father and grandfather. In anguish and fear of being put to death for the murder according to Cherokee blood law, Ridge fled to California where he found others facing similar struggles with citizenship and justice in the post-Mexican-American war turmoil.[5] His fervent letter-writing turned into journalism and poetry, two genres that were perhaps the most provocative and transformative at this time in American literary and social history. However, he wrote fiction only once with this novel, which he may have hoped would have the same impact on his readers as the purported realism and accuracy of news reporting and the sentimentality of poetry: political and ideological subversion and activism.

Ridge's personal life and struggles with retributive violence, just law, and an honorable national identity echo from the pages of his novel as he relates a unique and subversive understanding of the symbols of conquest and violence in relation to governance and justice. The "social and moral conditions" detailed in the novel inform both Ridge and his fictional representation of Murieta, a historical bandit whose real story Ridge tracked in California newspapers and which parallels the fictional story. In both fiction and reality, the ideology of "foreign" and "savage" versus "civilized" inform the impetus towards hypermasculinity and violence and thus Ridge's rhetorical and literary choices in his representational performance of race and gender.[6]

Ridge's fictional Murieta, whom he both mocks and commemorates, negotiates an ironic re-construction of the political atmosphere that Ridge himself traversed at a crucial time in Cherokee history and Indian removal policies. Louis Owens explains that Ridge "gives ample evidence of being divided within and against himself; he embodies cultural fragmentation" by being "intensely dialogic," capturing "two distinct linguistic consciousnesses, two kinds of discourse" (35). Cheryl Walker clarifies that this discourse focuses on the polar opposition and conflict between American individualism and Cherokee collectivity. In comparing the colonial dialectic to a more community-based dialogic, David Moore explains that "A dialogical perspective, while not denying the power of specific dialectical interactions and dominations, incorporates multiple dialectics to recognize a more complex field where crisscrossing dialectics layer and act" (56). However, Owens, Walker, Moore and other critics fail to explore the corresponding gendered components of such discursive and linguistic consciousness that reveal a different understanding of Ridge's rhetorical and political stance.

Both historical and fictional Murietas face the enactment of romanticized racial stereotypes upon the violent, hypermasculine Western frontier, where such "noble" yet "savage" others' subjugation became necessary for encroaching "civilization" and patriarchal colonialism. On the Western frontier, in California specifically, Anglo male supremacy and national identity was threatened by the imagined "savagery" and hypermasculinity of racial others, specifically Mexicans and Indians. In his critical discussion of the colonial period, Richard Slotkin explores the race and gender-based national myths upon which frontier development relied. The Anglo frontiersmen believed "that their own individual prowess, their associated power, and the efficacy of their time-perfected technological gear (axe and rifle) made them able to contest with the forces of the natural wilderness as an equal protagonist" (412). However, these frontiersmen relied upon violence in the name of civilization and progress as well as material wealth. "Both [the hunter and the entrepreneur] relied on material success on a massive scale to prove the power of their manhood in a threatening world," one by his greater acquisition of land, the other by his superior destructive acts. "The first felt that he had demonstrated his superiority to the poverty of his origins, the second that he had asserted his power over the obstacles put in his way by nature" including those considered "savage" or less civilized (413). These frontiersmen and mountain men "shared the Jacksonian passion for upward mobility and self-transcendence through capitalist endeavor" and exemplified "an idiosyncratic and extreme expression of its values," which included the heroic conquest of the simulated hypermasculine Indians who stood in their way (413). Race and gender thus become ideological symbols of conquest inflicted upon and then taken up by male racial others as the seemingly only option for survival at worst and as hopeful assimilation at best.

Race-based violence simultaneously enacts patriarchal ideologies and gender hierarchies. What happens in the novel and the history of the frontier it reflects is the violent alignment and ordering of physical and raced bodies along a concurrently gender based hierarchy. Because Mexicans and Native Americans threatened a national sense of masculine superiority, violence against them became a necessary means to reinforce superiority and subjugation when legal or governmental attempts failed. Furthermore, Jacksonian masculinity viewed such violence as a necessary means to personal success. Facing racially other men with similar or equal physical strength, Anglo-American men needed to become more and more "masculine" or hypermasculine in order to succeed in their mission, to conquer all that stood in their path. Hypermasculinity becomes the extreme physical representation and enactment of patriarchy and Jacksonian masculine nationalism informing the moral conditions that both Ridge and Murieta faced.

In his fictional adaptation of this history, Ridge presents a nuanced understanding of and viable alternative response to these real political and ideological dynamics. He inverts the symbols of conquest and inflicts them back upon perpetrators of colonial domination and thus constructs an ironic and reciprocal relationship. Faced with the double-edged sword of assimilation to U.S. patriarchy or ethnic extermination, Ridge's novel warns of the futility in blindly mirroring performances of Jacksonian masculine violence and reveals the duplicity behind white patriarchal nationalism and colonialism. As the Indian wars settled down and the U.S. focused attention on the conflict with Mexico and issues with slavery in the Southeast, Ridge's novel effectively responds to expanded and heightened racial conflicts by ironically capturing those struggles and subverting the symbols of conquest based on race

and gender in particular. Ridge's ironic reciprocity intends to expand American nationalism to include diverse cultures, ethnicities, and historical experiences.[7]

More specifically, Ridge's literary construction of male gender identity in the 1850s reveals stark contradictions between violence and nobility, Native "savagery" and Anglo "civilization," the mythological and symbolic terms used to justify conquest and gender violence in the name of progress. This historical fiction novel includes a lengthy introduction to the factual story of Murieta and Ridge's experience writing about him in California newspapers. The publisher's preface encourages readers to further consider Ridge's own personal and "natural" history as a Cherokee Indian, "born in the woods–reared in the midst of the wildest scenery–and familiar with all that is thrilling, fearful, and tragical in a forest-life," intended to make him akin to Murieta as "primitive" in nature based on race while more "civilized" in action (2). The publisher connects Native Americans and Mexicans based on racial difference from Anglo-Americans but simultaneously differentiates them based on ability to assimilate or become "civilized" as demonstrated in Ridge's act of writing. Ridge's own history informs his rhetorical choices and actions because he personally experienced violence between and among men from different racial and/or political backgrounds; although he initially retaliated with violence, thus perpetuating the conflict (like Murieta), he later responded with "civilized" but perhaps sensational language and story.

However, Ridge's rhetorical tactics and choices are an ironic subversion of the political atmosphere that he negotiates in the act of writing, specifically with his character's attempts at reciprocating display of power through transformations of race and gender. While demonstrating the protagonist's violence as reciprocal, the novel inverts gender and

racial paradigms, thus ironically destabilizing the colonial systems that seek to subjugate and assimilate racial others. Therefore, while racial distinctions certainly exist in the novel, they help to critique rather than accommodate colonial ideologies informing such distinctions. Using his critical understanding of the real impact of colonial symbols (embodied in language and the ideological underpinnings of such language) across cultures, Ridge subverts colonial ideologies in his use and construction of language and character. In this way, Ridge critiques symbols of conquest as hypermasculine and criminal when based on colonial ideologies.

Placing the novel in the West during expansion tells us a great deal about Ridge's understanding of ideologies embedded in such language and performance at that time. Correlating language and identity, the Native "savage" became the romanticized "Vanishing American" or "noble Indian" in most public media and literary representations during the antebellum period. The Wild West opened to male adventurers seeking alternatives and resistance to the increasingly dividing class and race conflicts of the "civilized" East, thus inverting the savage and civilized paradigm in terms of geography and class as well as race. Thus "savage" becomes a romanticized concept inverted to describe men, white American men in particular, who lived without laws, morals, or manners in the new West, in contrast to the feminine, domestic, eastern "civilization." "Rather than an untouched wilderness, the empire is represented as the setting where the primal man is staged as a highly theatrical spectacle by deploying the technologies of mass destruction and mass media he fled from at home. He proves his virility not in a bloody contest with a native other, but by acting before the eyes of a domestic audience" (Kaplan 99). The primal man seeking adventure and status on the Western frontier performs hypermasculinity through acts of violence supported by

American nationalism and patriarchy. Anglo-American men faced an internal struggle regarding their own primitive natures and resistance to domestication/feminization and played out this ideological struggle in the public eye. The West was wild and uncultured and only real "manly men" who lacked any desire for domesticated civilization ventured forth into this dark unknown world, a subversion of masculinity in relation to expansion and the myth of the West and a haughty performance of masculinity and imperialism.[8] The "Vanishing American" or "noble Indian" thus became the dichotomous "noble savage," a simulated threat that led the new Anglo manly-man to the West in resistance to domestication while nobly expanding civilization by eradicating the savage.[9]

Ridge's fictional construction and rhetorical representation of "savage" and "civilized" utilizes ironic reciprocity to critically assess and destabilize the racial ideologies upon which such symbols depend. Such critical assessment is furthered by the author's intrusions on the text, making connections between the story and history. Ridge first uses the word "savage" to describe a fellow bandit, Claudio, who is likened to a wild, predatory animal. He again uses it to describe a band of Indians the outlaws evade by hiding in a "rugged" and "wild range lying to the west" (17, 26). Upon joining this group of "savages," one of the bandits barely escapes execution by "an exasperated party of Americans" (26). Ridge, briefly stepping out of storyteller mode preaches that, "The ignorant Indians suffered for many a deed which had been perpetrated by civilized hands" (27). In this instance, Ridge expresses both sympathy for and difference from mythologized "Indians." Rhetorically, Ridge reveals his keen understanding of the difference between real Native people and the constructed or simulated "Indian."[10] By ironically employing the words "ignorant" to describe the wild yet savvy Indians, "savage" to describe the vengeful Mexican bandits, and

"civilized" to describe the unjust Anglo-Americans, Ridge both employs and mocks dominant stereotypes of Indians and Mexicans in relation to the antagonistic white settlers. His rhetorical construction ironically contradicts the actions or performances of these various groups. In the greater context of the novel, Ridge's employment of these terms presents the confusing ideologies behind them and the corresponding damaging results, thus mocking those ideologies that categorize all non-white races as ignorant and savage and all whites as civilized.

Ridge's description and language choice echoes those of the first American settlers and colonizers who employed the historical and often religious language of conquest to justify colonization of the Native inhabitants, texts that Ridge likely came in contact with repeatedly through his education. "American Indians were everywhere found to be, simply enough, *men who were not men*, who were religiously and politically incomplete" and thus beast-like in their lowly yet most natural state (Pearce 6, emphasis added). Similarly, Ridge describes a band of Tejon Indians as "swarthy subjects" in their "naked majesty," "poor, miserable, cowardly," "engaged for the most part in the very arduous task of doing nothing"--language reminiscent of the often conflicting descriptions of the "noble savage" but mixed with a touch of sarcasm and sincerity making it difficult to determine Ridge's position (36). This use of imagery, simile, metaphor, and sarcasm presents an ironic and reciprocal representation of the language and ideology that it simultaneously employs. In essence, Ridge's rhetoric can be read from both sides of the colonial fence, as being *both* supportive of hierarchies based on class *and* resistant to hierarchies based on race. Furthermore, the narrator continues the sarcastic representation of the California Indians' caution and cunning

as *both* cowardly *and* courageous, ironic contradictions that reveal Ridge's own ambiguities regarding a pan Indian identity.

In contrast, Ridge portrays Anglo-Americans as "lawless and desperate men, who bore the name of Americans but failed to support the honor and dignity of that title…ignorant and unlettered…unmanly" and cruel oppressors: no flowery language, no hint of sarcasm (9-10). Basically, Ridge describes Anglo-Americans as "savages" without actually using the word while directly yet sarcastically describing Indians as "savage." This sarcastic contrast reveals a more nuanced understanding and employment of the ideologies and rhetoric that inform a cultural understanding of the binaristic "savage" in relationship to the "civilized." Like other Native orators before him, Ridge mocks the contemporary cultural perceptions of Indians while presenting his perception of adventurous Americans in the west. However, employing these rhetorical symbols of conquest even while mocking them creates a cultural similarity between the Native author and the predominantly Anglo reader and engages that reader in a more critical understanding of those symbols when reversed or inverted. Moreover, by rhetorically showing characteristic similarities rather than differences between Indians and Anglo-Americans, Ridge builds a reciprocal relationship between them that reveals the complexity of racial, ethnic, or cultural identity beyond simplified binaries, hierarchies, or overarching stereotypes.

However, the narrator's rhetoric changes, depending on whose perspective is being recounted and for whose benefit. For instance, the narrator considers Murieta's deeds against white settlers as horrible outrages but considers acts against Murieta and the Tejons as equally outrageous. Alternating sides emphasizes the actions themselves rather than membership based on race or social class, making it difficult to pin down Ridge's true

alignments. He provides a more critical and nuanced understanding of the *practice* of violent colonial ideologies, regardless of who perpetrates it. Ridge's novel focuses on the actions, the performance of cultural constructs typically represented in language and rhetoric, while also subtly playing with the rhetoric itself. Ridge's rhetorical choices work to subvert and ironically reinscribe nineteenth century ideologies and race-based binaristic definitions of "savage" and "civilized" and the corresponding gender violence.

Masculine gender violence fueled by colonial ideologies of greed produced vengeful fugitives/refugees of the law, much like Ridge himself. With this novel, Ridge acknowledges the complicity of individuals in perpetuating unjust laws and nationalistic discourse that govern gender roles and corresponding gender violence in particular. In cyclical fashion and based on the tension between republican and Jacksonian manhood, force induces retaliatory force and violent performance of masculine superiority accompanied by rampant theft of property. The republican tradition conflicts with race-based Jacksonian manhood; Ridge portrays both as harmful. Only the poor and (most of) the women in this novel are spared, thus connecting wealth and economic status with masculine superiority. Chinese men fare the worst not because they are wealthy but because they have few allies and rarely if ever fight back; rather, they are represented as weak and of little social value, people no one else will defend. Hypermasculine violence thus is a means by which to protect one's often ill-gained property and sense of morality and superiority.

These "social and moral conditions" or colonial ideologies translate into the symbols of conquest that inform Murieta's transformation and complex duality. In constructing his main character, Ridge shows a contradiction between how those who later feared him perceive Murieta and how he began life as humble and noble. With a bit of sarcasm and

irony in juxtaposing the words and corresponding conflicting concepts of “natural” and “production,” Ridge reveals how non-white men succumb to these conditions and symbols through hypermasculine force. Murieta is both a construct or product and a natural phenomenon, wherein lies Ridge’s message of the ensnaring duplicity of colonial ideologies and masculinity.

Later the notorious bandit as perceived by Anglo-Americans, Murieta begins as the Mexican born boy with a “very mild and peaceable disposition…a generous and noble nature… [with] no sign of the indomitable and daring spirit which afterwards characterized him” (8). He leaves his country and kin tired of the violence and revolutions to seek the enthusiasm of the “American character” and its infectious promise (8). At first he is respected in a California mining community but the “blight” of the “lawless and desperate men, who bore the name of Americans but failed to support the honor and dignity of that title,” descended upon him and other Mexicans who they considered “conquered subjects of the United States, having no rights which could stand before a haughtier and superior race” (9). Ridge writes, “The prejudice of color, the antipathy of races, which are always stronger and bitterer with the ignorant and unlettered, they could not overcome, or if they could, would not, because it afforded them a convenient excuse for their *unmanly* cruelty and oppression” (10, emphasis added). Ridge employs irony and sarcasm in these opening passages to reveal a more critical eye to colonial ideologies informing divisions based on gender and race. He critiques these Western American mountain men and frontiersmen as an ignorant and extreme representative of prejudiced American men seeking their own wealth and status; these men, their actions, and what they represent are not to be envied or modeled. Yet, ironically and with reciprocal hypermasculine force and greed, Murieta falls prey to

their deceptive ideologies and false promises. Like these Anglo-American men, he seeks the elusive American Dream that emerged with the frontier.

The frontier becomes both a site for American individualism and opportunity and the formative enactment of white masculinity developed and maintained by asserting both physical and sexual dominance over racial others. However, the fear of lost class or power status within a gendered patriarchal system results in the sexual abuse of racially other women, simultaneously emasculating or feminizing the men whose honor and virility are thus severely insulted. In the first few pages of the novel, Ridge interjects his own thoughts regarding a small class of Anglo-Americans who bring with them the racism and gender violence that helped pave the way for "civilization" through unjust and "unmanly" cruelty along the frontier. In a patriarchal society, such a class of individuals represents those of the lowest class who were often subjected to gender violence as a means to keep them down. In turn, they inflict violence upon others who further threaten their potential for rising up in status. Furthermore, Ridge's use of "unmanly" in this instance prepares the reader for his subtle understanding of contradicting male gender performances: "noble" and "generous" vs. "cruel" and "haughty." Lastly, Ridge's knowledgeable insight into this conflict reveals the overlap between Ridge and Murieta's experiences in that they both suffered similar intrusions or "blights" brought by "lawless" Anglo-Americans who, actually supported by federal law, took what they wanted, when they wanted, striking down any non-Europeans in their paths. As Aléman explains, "it is not lawlessness that causes" social conflict in the novel; rather, these "lawless" Anglo-Americans "follow the letter and spirit of American laws that systematically worked to dispossess California's Mexican and Native Americans"

(80). Federal law consents to and actually promotes race-based, hypermasculine violence as a means of acquiring physical property and therefore wealth and power over others.

Such social and moral conditions produce conflict that relies on the conquest of hypermasculinized race-based others. However, these others must first be induced to perform hypermasculinity in order to justify conquest; such inducement requires acts of hypermasculine violence that seek to shame and emasculate or feminize male racial others into subjugation. Ridge's "lawless" Anglo-American men brutally attack Murieta, who submits to their "outrageous conduct" because of their physical dominance and number (10). In this scene, Murieta's character reads as morally superior but physically inferior, thus ironically doubly feminizing him in the eyes of Anglo-American readers. This feminization is further perpetrated when the Anglo-Americans in the novel force him to watch as they rape his wife, powerless to stop it. Sally Engle Merry explains that "men often use violence to establish power hierarchies, both against other men and through raping other men's wives" (3). According to Ridge, this "was the first injury [Murieta] had ever received at the hands of the Americans, whom he had always hitherto respected, and it wrung him to the soul as a deeper and deadlier wrong from that very circumstance" (10). The narrator informs the reader that Murieta is deeply affected by this wrongdoing, not only because of the act itself but because it shatters his previous conceptions of Americans as respectable and morally superior. This first injury enlightens Murieta of the truly degenerate and dangerous "social and moral conditions" of the country he had previously regarded so highly, causing him to completely change his understanding of Americans and his role in this new ideological war zone. Furthermore, the reader follows Murieta's movement towards clarity as a means of

creating sympathy for his plight and troubling Anglo-American readers' thoughts about racial or foreign others.

Racism paired with gender violence temporarily forces Murieta into performing the role of inferiority designed for him as a feminized Mexican male servant to his white "superiors." He retreats in an effort to maintain his "*moral* bravery" (or feminine characteristics per Western and frontier sentiments) only to be assaulted again and again while in pursuit of fortune and happiness, the American Dream. However, as Murieta's transformation begins with the sexual assault of his wife, it reaches its apex when he is bound to a tree and "publicly disgraced with the lash," only to then watch as his half-brother is hung "without judge or jury" for supposed horse theft (12). These violent acts compile the many disgraces and "the social and moral conditions" that forcefully shape Murieta into the vengeful, murderous bandit, the mythological/simulated dark-skinned, hypermasculine "savage" that Anglo-Americans sought to suppress now tied tightly into a dangerous reciprocal relationship with his tormentors.

Murieta's character as racial and thus emasculated/feminized "other" must first change considerably in order for him to execute the revenge for the "wanton cruelty and the tyranny of prejudice" he experiences at the hands of Anglo-Americans. In response to the racial violence, Murieta both inverts and mimics the racial dynamics and becomes more "savage," more violent, and thus more "masculine" than these Anglo-men whose savagery was justification for conquering the "savage other" in the way of progress. "His soul swelled beyond its former boundaries, and the barriers of honor, rocked into atoms by the strong passion which shook his heart like an earthquake, crumbled around him" (12). Murieta ironically becomes that which Anglo-men feared and sought to conquer: a blood-seeking

wild animal. Ann Stoler explains that "Elaborate codes of conduct that affirmed manliness and virility arose from colonial cultures of fear–white men making vulnerable claims to legitimate rule saw their manhood bolstered by perceptions and practices based on their racial superiority" (844).[11] As colonial subjects, Ridge and Murieta's subversive attempts at maintaining respectful relationships are continuously and violently squashed, resulting in few options for survival other than violent retaliation (and thus a different kind of assimilation) or the ironic reciprocity seen in Ridge's act of writing this novel.

While he transforms into a murderous bandit out of revenge, Murieta finds that the transition can-not be reversed; he has indeed been trapped. "He had contracted a hatred to the whole American race, and was determined to shed their blood, whenever and wherever an opportunity occurred…He had committed deeds which made him amenable to the law, and his only safety lay in persistence in the unlawful course which he had begun…He walked forth into the future a dark determined criminal, and his proud nobility of soul existed only in memory" (14). His vengeance leaves a path of gore and "diabolical murders" (21). Yet, as seen in later descriptions of his actions, Murieta maintains a sense of nobility underneath this performed exterior by only harming those who had harmed him in the past or may have the intent to harm him. He does not attack women or children and often dissuades Three Fingered Jack from unjustly harming those who cross their paths. Upon killing an innocent man whose money Murieta wanted only to "borrow," Murieta is struck with remorse for his ill-deeds against such an "honest and hard-working a man" (33). Ridge thus constructs his Murieta as internally divided between his former nobler self and the murderer he was forced to become per "the social and moral conditions" surrounding him, making him a much more complex character than expected of the "savage" stereotype informing his transformation.

Throughout the novel, Murieta navigates a myriad of racial, gender, and national identities, all of which are variations of caricatures or simulations, an ironic play on imperial ideologies and the "manifest manners" of the myth of the West.[12] Such simulations are common in literature, "as the simulations of the other are instances of the absence of the real" (Vizenor 1). Simulations thus become embodied, although literary, representations of ideologies that inform actions and politics. Space and place, too, garner simulative or mythologized ideologies that inform the bodies within, doubly inscribing them. In terms of physical space and embodied representations,

> the spatial representations of domesticity and Manifest Destiny seem to exemplify the divisions between female and male spheres: the home as a bounded and rigidly ordered interior space as opposed to the boundless and undifferentiated space of an infinitely expanding frontier. The ideology of separate spheres configures the home as a stable haven or feminine counterbalance to the male activity of territorial conquest. (Kaplan 25)

This definition expands upon the already numerous and changing definitions of civilization and savagery in relation to gender roles where "the conditions of domesticity often become markers that distinguish civilization from savagery. Domestication implies that the home contains within itself those wild or foreign elements that must be tamed; domesticity monitors the borders between the civilized and the savage as it regulates the traces of savagery within its purview" (Kaplan 25-26). Such attempts at domestication and feminization are best realized within the reservation policy that sought to contain the simulated hypermasculine "savage Indian." In this ideologically gendered way, domestication in the form of reservation and removal policies and gender-specific training at

Indian schools are acts equivalent to feminine subjugation to the rational or reasoning masculine patriarchal intellect. Murieta's transformation from domestic nobility to wandering "savage" mirrors/mocks the Anglo male's movement from the East to the West, away from feminine domestication/subjugation towards masculine prowess and freedom within the wilderness. Murieta's identity changes as he maneuvers through the California landscape and its many ideological manifestations where, like his Anglo-male counterparts, he seeks to conquer/domesticate/subjugate the territory through reciprocal ideology and actions. However, as seen in the novel, such reciprocity reads as yet another form of "savage" violence resulting in Murieta's symbolic and physical decapitation.

Although Murieta attempted to escape his own "degenerate countrymen" in Mexico to live a domestic life untroubled in America, he finds that he is now subjected to Anglo-Americans' "unmanly cruelty and oppression" (8, 10). Again, Ridge's use of "unmanly" ironically negotiates the ideological gestures that informed treatment of Indians (and Mexicans) both in literature and reality. Ridge attempts to reconcile and negotiate the performance of racial identity and gender across these varying cultural and ideological boundaries and thus subverts the common understanding of what is "savage" by ironically projecting it back upon the Anglo settlers.[13] Such an ironic in/subversion involves Ridge moving from an understanding of the language, symbol, or simulations informing ideologies of westward expanding "civilization" (i.e., Manifest Destiny) to the inverse performance of that ideology as represented in his story. Ridge questions the *physical enactments* of masculinity in conflict with the ideological/social/cultural understanding of masculinity. Having come to America to escape political unrest in Mexico, much like the author's own escape from the Cherokee Nation, Murieta finds that he must constantly re-create his own

identity and its performance in order to survive the ideological unrest in California.[14] Ridge writes of Murieta: "In the various outbreaks in which he had been personally engaged, he had worn different disguises, and was actually disguised the most when he showed his real features" (31). As the well-known, simulated roving "bandit," Murieta must negotiate the ideologies that always already presuppose his identity so that the real Murieta remains disguised even when blatantly revealed. He is very aware that his mythological or simulated image in others' minds disguises his true physical being; the "real" Murieta becomes an absent presence to California settlers because they were not ideologically prepared for such a performance of gender and racial identity. Furthermore, Murieta reinforces his "real" or natural identity as that which was actually not a performance in juxtaposition to his ironic performance of simulated identities. "Except to few persons, even his name was unknown, and many were personally acquainted with him and frequently saw him…without having the remotest idea that he stood connected with the bloody events which were then filling the country with terror and dismay" (19-20). Of this transformational character, Ridge writes, "Fate was weaving her mysterious web around him, and fitting him to be by the force of circumstances what nature never intended to make him" (12). Fate becomes dependent on man-made circumstances and choices that work against or in conflict with nature. The ideological "circumstances" Murieta faces represses his natural character, forcing him to become somebody entirely different in different situations, fulfilling expected simulations or evading them entirely depending on his performance.

Ridge's Murieta must attempt to assimilate to American and Western expectations of both masculinity and race but realizes early on that he will always be oppressed by the ideologies that construct his perceived and manifested identity. Murieta says: "…I *am* a

man. I was once as noble a man as ever breathed, and if I am not so now, it is because men would not allow me to be as I wished" (106, emphasis in original). As he transforms and assimilates into the Western "savage" bandit, he fails to negotiate boundaries of race and gender and merely succumbs to the myth of the ideologically gendered and racialized West where he is always already subject to Anglo male violence regardless of his class status or how he performs masculinity. Ridge's character attempts to invert physical manifestations or performances of Anglo ideologies and is thus destroyed. Ridge's ironic reciprocity is the physical act of writing a novel that seeks to question *both* the ideology *and* the actions/performances informing the conflict therein, particularly in terms of race and gender as "tools" of conquest. In the next section, I argue that Ridge's novel represents his rhetorical response through another other's racialized/gendered body, whose ironically reciprocal actions reveal Indigenous feminist values rather than mere subversion of gender identities as viewed through the social and moral ideologies informing those physical performances.

Translating Ironic Reciprocity as Indigenous Feminism:

"…and, consequently, his individual history is a part of the most valuable history of the State" (7).

Ridge's opening paragraph asserts the importance of his role in writing this historical novel and the role of the character in the history of the state, thus connecting Ridge's act of writing with Murieta's acts of resistance as one and the same, synecdochic parts to the whole.[15] I argue that Ridge's writing acts as Indigenous feminism by focusing on the construction and decolonization of gender in relation to race, national governance, and justice and asserting rhetorical sovereignty. My argument here relies on Malea Powell's discussion

of rhetorical survivance (Vizenor's term combining survival plus resistance) that Native authors "consciously or unconsciously use in order to reimagine and, literally, refigure 'the Indian.' It is this *use* that [both Powell and I] argue transforms their object- status, a presence instead of an absence" (400). Although rhetorical sovereignty includes rhetorical survivance, it also asserts Indigenous feminist transnational ideologies in relationship with (rather than merely in resistance to) colonial ideologies. In showing how Ridge creates such an historical presence, I explained above how colonial ideologies of subjugation based on both race and gender are integral to the composition of a national American identity in the nineteenth century. Here, I attempt to show how Ridge and his text complicate and expand the non-white role in that emerging identity through a dialogic and ironic attempt at maintaining sovereignty and balanced relationships with the colonial other. Such a reading of the text enacts Indigenous feminism because it deconstructs the racial and gender ideologies that the colonial other attempts to impose on non-whites. An Indigenous feminist text thus endeavors nation-building through critical and balanced ideological relationships.

In her book *Home Fronts: Domesticity and its Critics in the Antebellum U.S.,* Lora Romero distinguishes nationalism from nation-building in terms of their symbolic gender representations. Nationalistic discourse, she argues, focuses on life, death, and violence and is therefore masculine in nature. Nation-building discourse focuses on cultivation, education, and social reproduction and is therefore feminine in nature. Furthermore, she argues that the fear of emasculation drives nationalism. Although such a distinction seems to reinforce binaries or hierarchies, it allows for a theoretical understanding of the rhetorical moves towards national identity construction and performance. Indigenous feminism seeks to embrace the values of and critically employ nationalism in ways that builds relationships

across sovereign nations; Indigenous feminism encompasses nationalism and nation-building as equally valuable in attempts at building transnational relationships. Indigenous feminism understands nationalism and nation building as a constant balance-seeking negotiation. Therefore, I argue that Ridge's text employs a nationalistic discourse surrounding race/ethnicity and gender as a means to building national identity and transnational relationships and therefore exemplifies Indigenous feminism. His form of literary Indigenous feminism relies on the use of ironic reciprocity to subvert and critically assess the colonial nationalistic discourse that informs racial and gender violence.

As discussed above, Ridge employs ironic reciprocity as Murieta attempts to subvert racial and gender hierarchies through the very means by which they are created and sustained: violent nationalism. However, Murieta does not succeed in abolishing all antagonistic Anglo men, a political stance taken up in resistance, but rather succumbs to the violence that continues to subjugate racial others through the cycle of masculinity. Ideological assimilation, even in a pose of resistance, is always already self-defeatist for non-white males per the social practice to which they simultaneously assimilate and resist; reciprocal actions result in heroic physical and symbolic destruction, or so it would seem in the novel. Success in resisting imperial and patriarchal ideologies, therefore, is much more complicated and relies on subversion and irony, as represented by the novel itself.

Ideological subversion or sovereignty is easily detected in the novel when read for enacting ironic reciprocity. In asserting his agency through writing as a (partly) non-white male, Ridge engages in a colonial discourse of gendered and racial hierarchies. The text as discursive map informs responses to, rather than appropriations of, power relations and the ideology of gender and/or racial dominance.[16] Thus, in the act of translating and applying

dominant ideologies through and onto oppressed others, Ridge must first employ them, engage them in dialogic relationship, before he can successfully complicate them. More specifically, employing patriarchal and colonial ideologies and their corresponding practices and symbols of conquest simultaneously destabilizes them when perspectives and performers are inverted as explored above. Interpreting Ridge's employment of ideologies requires deconstructing his rhetorical acts "and locat[ing] and account[ing] for those acts within the compulsory frames set by various forces that police the social appearance of gender" and the ways that gender thus informs racism and, by extension, national identity (Butler 33). Thus far, I have traced the ideologies that place Ridge's text within the dominant discourse. But how can our reading of the text as a subversion of that dominant discourse inform Ridge's position on sovereignty and nation building?

Although many believe that Ridge espoused assimilationist rhetoric, reading his novel as ironically reciprocal and with a more complicated understanding of Indigenous feminist nationalism/nation-building transforms the text and our understanding of Ridge's political message. Ridge knew how to stage Murieta because he had personally experienced much of the same oppression and violence. Although his life as a fairly well-known journalist in California and his overly romantic poetry seem to prove his assimilatory tendencies (at least in his use of romantic literary conventions if not also the ideologies behind them), his *act* of writing such a genre-blending novel reveals a sense of complexity that *both* resists *and* upholds the need to assimilate for the sake of *both* individual *and* cultural survival. Assimilation to dominant ideologies read as ironic reciprocity destabilizes a simplistic understanding of ethnic or racial differences and how those ideologies are truly enacted or performed. Thus, true assimilation is a farce, a fundamental contradiction that eventually

leads to self-acknowledged extermination. Ironic reciprocity in the novel exposes the truth behind corrupt assimilation ideology and practice as a colonial binary used to conquer: an individual would always already be either white or non-white and therefore on one side or the other of accompanying binaries (gender, economic/social status, etc.).

As mentioned above, the genre-blending nature of the novel itself is a form of ironic reciprocity. Ridge's mixing of genres, journalism and historical fiction specifically, simultaneously captures and mocks those genres' roles in the creation of a cycle of masculinity that propels the national psyche.[17] For example, many of Murieta and his bandits' ill-deeds are captured in the novel as "reports" or second or third hand news in the form of conjecture or gossip. "It was not long before the entire county rung with the accounts of frequent, startling, and diabolical murders" (21). Ridge quotes *The Marysville Herald* of November 13, 1851, "speaking of the horrible state of affairs," which, written in the passive voice, doesn't directly impugn Murieta but lays the seed in the minds of the fearful and racist white settlers. Ridge then recounts the gossip of supposed sighting of Mexicans "dragging at the saddlebow by a lariat an American whom they had just lassoed around the neck" and connecting this conjecture to the murders found in the same area (21). Such a rhetorical blending within a piece of historical fiction reveals the implications of the supposedly factual news genre on the continual creation of and subjection to racial stereotypes and simulations. Imagined fictions reflect from the pages of supposed fact, induce continued imagined fictions, and thus inform social and national action. Simulated racial males become the mythologized scapegoats for real life violence; racial other males are blamed for murders often perpetrated by white males, who relied on these colonial myths as their ticket to freedom from their actions. But, in the novel, Murieta willingly takes credit for

these deeds (which didn't necessarily belong to him directly or indirectly) because they propelled the image of him as someone to be feared and respected, offering him a sense of security in hypermasculinity. Thus, Ridge knowingly constructs his fiction blended with journalism to play on his reader's sense of sympathy but to also mock their own enactment or performance of symbols of conquest (race and gender). He carries the reader through a subverted and ironic enactment of the dominant discourse concerning race and gender and leaves them with a strong political message about injustice and racism.

In his authorial and rhetorical *use* of dominant ideology, discourse, and genre, Ridge metaphorically declares that, while an individual may find temporary success in assimilation to the nationalistic binary, subjugated others must subtly expose and thus subvert corrupt patriarchal and colonial ideologies for the sake of nation-building and maintaining sovereignty. An example of Ridge's construction of Murieta's ironic success can be seen more clearly in a scene when, at the height of his bandit career with $5000 reward on his head, he awaits a boat heading West to San Francisco loaded with "heavy bags of gold dust" that he intends to steal (68). Ridge writes, "…perseverance is always rewarded if the object desired lies in the bounds of possibility" and he describes Murieta as a waiting "martyr" amidst large mosquitoes who

> bit him unmercifully… [and] reign as the aristocracy…He at last saw the white-sheeted schooner stealing along in the crooks and turns of *just the crookedest stream in the whole world*, so narrow and so completely hid in its windings by the tall flags which overspread the plains for many miles to the right and left, that the white sail looked like a ghost gliding along over the wavering grass. (69, emphasis in the original)

The mosquitoes easily represent the California settlers unjustly attacking Murieta in hopes of ridding him from their so-called "kingdom." In attributing the sail color as white, the boat metaphorically represents the elusive Anglo civilization and the stream upon which it travels as the accompanying ideology that is both "crooked" and difficult to navigate because of its "narrow" dimensions. Furthermore, Ridge constructs this image as metaphoric of the self-propelled Anglo-American progressive thrust across the grassy plains from "right and left," East to West, leaving destruction in its "wake" (the expanding Frontier ideology). Murieta soon commandeers this boat and returns home an ironic success/failure, ironic because it was achieved only through the violence learned from the colonizer, violence that sought peace but instead eventually leads to his real and figurative decapitation and therefore failure to effectively survive and ascend through assimilation. Murieta's reciprocal performance of his other (violent and racist white men) ironically results in only heightening rather than subduing racial and gender violence.

According to Ridge's subtle rhetoric and literary description and subversion, Murieta's hypermasculine retaliation perpetuates the projected identity of racial others. Thus, his vengeful object of desire, to reciprocally subjugate white "civilization," was not in the bounds of possibility for success within such an ideology and he eventually fails. Based on the romantic nature of the narrative, his failure remains heroic through the act of resistance itself. Furthermore, in emphasizing the "crooked" aspect of the stream, a metaphor for the ideology that Murieta attempts to invert, Ridge reveals his true feelings about Anglo "civilization" as not truly living up to the noble and honorable projection of itself as a just nation. Ridge questions the appeal to and the martyrdom of those who aspire

to assimilate. His construction of such a character and scene itself reveals a new possibility for success in destabilizing the governing rules of identity and hierarchical ideologies.

Ridge recognizes the cumulative and collective threat of assimilation and in fact denounces total ideological assimilation while simultaneously working within the governing ideological conventions that subjugate racial others even in retaliation. Nira Yuval-Davis clarifies that "The universal inclusiveness of assimilationism is misleading, because while individuals might gain entry on that basis to the hegemonic collectivity, their collective identity would not" (54). Race aligns an individual with a collective identity that can never truly assimilate while an ambiguously raced individual may assimilate by simultaneously denouncing his cultural or ethnic identity. Of Ridge, John Carlos Rowe writes that

> Handsome and cultivated in his speech, elegantly dressed even in the rough mining towns of California, Ridge apparently did not experience racial discrimination or exclusion during the few months in 1850 he worked in the gold fields, but he must have known how important his education, speech, and dress were in protecting him from the violent, racist xenophobia experienced by so many other 'foreigners' in the mines. (152)

In considering his own experiences, Ridge's novel is ironically romantic but it also transcends racial markers in that it proposes a color-blind collective national identity inclusive of various cultures and ethnicities. He creates a presence for cultural/ethnic others who aspire to an honorable, noble, and just national identity, thus enacting cultural/ethnic sovereignty. However, his portrayal of class-based violence revealed through his rhetoric and characters' actions against social inferiors (such as the Chinese and Tejon Indians) seemingly succumbs to individualistic ideologies that inform class-based differences and

oppression. However, like the above reading of race and gender, Ridge simultaneously mirrors and critiques assimilation to individualistic class-based ideologies.

For example. Murieta's final act of assimilation occurs when he forsakes the benefits of community (safety in numbers) for his personal survival–an act that further assimilates him to the dominant ideology of individualism and class uplift but that directly leads to his capture and decapitation. Unexpectedly discovered by his pursuers, Murieta calls for his band's escape, "every man for himself" (152). As the prominent leader of a dangerous band of murderers with a price on his head, Murieta seemingly separates from the group in hopes that he alone might escape his pursuers. He does not escape and, upon being riddled with gunfire, declares "Don't shoot any more–the work is done" and "surrend[ers] to death…proudly submitting to the inexorable Fate which fell upon him, if we may call it Fate when it was born from his own extreme carelessness in separating himself from the main body of his men and in a habitual feeling of too much security at his rendezvous" (153). In this passage, Ridge metaphorically reinscribes Murieta as the masculine head of a body politic and therefore subject to the discursive individualism that fueled national and personal ideologies at this time. Murieta finally succumbs not to his pursuers but to his ill-chosen "Fate" as a "natural production of the social and more conditions of the country" and "acting upon certain particular circumstances favorable to such a result" (7). However, Murieta's choice in separating from the group can be inversely read as sacrificing himself for the sake of the community, in hopes that the others will continue more effectively without him, the now singular object of Anglo-California's fear and perpetual violence. Most important is Ridge's construction of Murieta as having completely assimilated to hierarchical ideologies that directly lead to his demise and the message that such performance carries.

Indeed, near the end of the novel, the reflective narrator/author reveals Murieta's individualistic need for revenge and sustained pride. Ridge makes it very clear that Murieta's violence was not the result of communal desire; rather, he acted entirely in his own self-interest. He writes:

> It may be distinctly set down, however, in the outset, that though many villainous deeds [have] transpired…all this might and seemingly chaotic scene had its birth in the dramatic brain of Joaquín–an author who acted out his own tragedies! Divergent as were the innumerable lines of action, yet they were all concentrated upon one point and directed to one purpose–that which existed in the breast of Joaquín. (109-110)

Murieta succumbed to the dominant ideology of individualism even if for a seemingly communal purpose. However, by violating his true or natural character, Murieta and others like him (Ridge included) *perform* acts of assimilation and individualism that result in effective subversive (if not also romantic) resistance or sovereignty.[18] Even though Murieta is killed in the end, Ridge asserts and assures that both he and his protagonist remain a vital part of the history of the state, a part that captures efforts at maintaining sovereignty, even those efforts that failed.

Rather than enter into the violence or political upheaval knowing that it would not solve his or his people's problems, Ridge chooses instead to enter the campaign through words and story. In doing so, Ridge highlights fiction as the place where the ideological violence actually began and one of the few places where it can truly be appeased (beyond the rare practical and unbiased legal cases), but also the place where the reader (presumably mostly Anglo-Americans) can begin to look past racial distinctions and colonial ideologies and see similarities in and across collective or transnational identities.[19] Ridge attempts to

subvert the hierarchical ideologies bred within romantic literature and perpetrated on the Western frontier while using romantic literary conventions that support heroic resistance. He uses the tools to subvert the ideologies and to ensure the presence and histories of Native peoples. Thus, his message at the end of the novel:

> …The story is told. Briefly and without ornament, the life and character of Joaqúin Murieta have been sketched. His career was short, for he died in his twenty-second year; but, in the few years which were allowed him, he displayed qualities of mind and heart which marked him as an extraordinary man, and leaving his name impressed upon the early history of this State. He also leaves behind him the important lesson that there is nothing so dangerous in its consequences as *injustice to individuals*–whether it arise from prejudice of color or from any other source; that a wrong done to one man is a wrong to society and to the world. (158, emphasis in original)

Ridge acknowledges that the novel is indeed a heroic and didactic story with which he seeks to join the debate over race politics and a developing national identity. Ridge uses Murieta's story to rhetorically impact the dominant discourse and ideology, to question and, in fact, *transcend* racial injustice first informed and further fueled by gendered colonial hierarchies. Murieta responds to racial injustice through performance of hypermasculinity revealing the interdependence of race and gender in colonial/imperial ideologies and patriarchy.

A final textual example involves the scene when Murieta and Three-Fingered Jack come upon two sleeping Chinese miners. Three-Fingered Jack is known for his violent brutality, exemplifying extreme Hypermasculinity, while Murieta more equally (and perhaps justly) balances and exhibits his hypermasculine aggression only to those who have

threatened him in some way. In the scene with the Chinese miners, "who were most probably supplied with a due amount of cash, as Chinamen generally are," Murieta was "for riding on" and leaving the men unperturbed, but Three-Fingered Jack could not resist "at least giving their pockets an examination" (47). The two "helpless Chinamen" awoke and "seeing a horrible-looking devil [Jack, not Murieta] standing over and glaring upon them, raised a hideous shriek, and, rising, fell upon their knees before him with the most lugubrious supplications" (47). Although the narrator blames their lack of expected cash, the Chinamen's exhibition of extreme masculine weakness and fear further provokes Jack's anger and hatred causing him to cut their throats instantly. Murieta instantly regrets Jack's actions but realizes that any sign of weakness on his part would only further exacerbate and redirect Jack's anger onto him. Murieta acknowledges Jack's extreme hypermasculine violence as unnecessarily cruel (and perhaps even racist) but knows that he needed such bravery (and racism) on his side against the white men. Therefore, this scene reveals the interdependency of racial and gender violence (as well as class) and the corresponding hierarchies through the actions of Three-Fingered Jack, the extreme version of Murieta, the ironic romantic figure seeking racial justice through gender violence.

Furthermore, Ridge's ironic romanticism can be seen in the embedded poem "Mount Shasta, seen from a distance" as representative of the essence of Ridge's message and subversion. As a whole, Ridge's romantic poetry reflected a man struggling with his own identity and alienation. Poems such as "To Lizzie" and "The Stolen White Girl" reveal not only his knowledge of mythological and biblical characters in the Western tradition but that he believes his own identity reflects such imaginative characteristics, often to the point of narcissism. His biographer writes, "If the poem does present the self-portrait it seems to,

Ridge saw himself as a romantic hero–a dashing, passionate adventurer…[with] a darker side…He saw himself as an intense person who hated and loved deeply, like most heroes of literature and myth" (Parins 78). Poems such as "The Still Small Voice" and "Still, Small Voice" reflect Ridge's internal struggle to control his life because of his own history and fate, presumably as a Cherokee mixed-blood enmeshed in the conflict between the "savage" and the "civilized."

Ridge wholeheartedly believed in the essential need for progress amongst developing societies but, more importantly, he believed that modern forms of "civilization" relied too heavily on violence and war. Although Cheryl Walker contends that Ridge was less interested in racial politics as he was national politics, Ridge's poetry pairs the two as synonymous at this time in American history. Ridge upheld communal governing practices where "government is wisest that's designed / For good of greatest number of the kind," as written in his "Poem" (Parins 150). Furthermore, poems such as "The Atlantic Cable" shows that he understood that "There are no hierarchies of value implicit in nature itself; culture creates the basis for distinctions" (Walker 136). Thus, Ridge turned to nature as a guide for a more enlightened and egalitarian form of government as seen in the Mount Shasta poem, thus again (perhaps inadvertently) responding to both racial and gender politics at the time by calling for a more "natural" form of government.

As read through the intimate relationship between race (savage vs. civilized) and gender (masculine vs. feminine) as symbols of conquest in the construction of an American national identity, Ridge asserts a more naturalized form of government. The poem is interestingly placed in an early section of the text when the bandits are hiding out amidst "human savages and savage beasts," "ignorant Indians [who] suffered for many a deed which

had been perpetrated by civilized hands" living west of Mount Shasta (26-27). Such an ironic juxtaposition of the Indian inhabitants and the bandits creates a relationship between the two groups, which indicates the poem's singular importance at this point in the novel. The poem title "Mount Shasta, seen from a distance" alludes to not only a physical distance but an ideological or symbolic one as well. The poem describes Mount Shasta as dreaded, mighty, solitary, grand, pure, unpolluted, cold, a natural manifestation of God: "Well might it win communities so blest/To loftier feelings, and to nobler thoughts–/The great material symbol of eternal/Things!" (25). In all its natural yet holy and noble glory, this "white shaft" is a model for "sovereign law" in California (23, 25). From the Anglo-American gendered perspective, the mountain can be read as *both* masculine *and* feminine in character by exhibiting both sentimental (feminine) and intellectual (masculine) prowess as well as being both moral (feminine) and noble (masculine). However, Ridge refers to the mountain as gender-neutral, thus declaring it a completely natural manifestation without the stain of human prejudice, yet encompassing balanced Western gender qualities in the projection of an idealistic image of law and governance.

While Ridge proclaims this idealism of law as a possibility, his romantic construction posits it "outside the realm of human experience" (Walker 138). Walker writes that "by invoking the law of Mount Shasta, Ridge universalizes subjugation" under natural rather than cultural or man-made rule of law often despoiled by racial and gender prejudices. But, in the context of the novel, Ridge is not necessarily an advocate for a legal system that is devoid of human feeling. Rather, he attempts to reveal how man-made law *is* subject to human prejudices that are often unjust and produce violence, thus emphasizing and making ironic Ridge's own hierarchical assertions about Native tribes in various stages of progressive

"civilization." On the one hand, he connects with those who live and govern by such hierarchies, while, on the other hand, he admonishes the underlying human prejudice. Doing so strategically creates rhetoric that is *both* assimilatory *and* critically and ironically responsive to such hierarchies. He believes in the *sentiments* of the enlightened form of United States government but not the racial and gendered ideology-infused and prejudiced *performance* of that government.

In this poem, Ridge reveals that he was indeed a product of gender hierarchical ideologies and not immune to their influence, but he portrays them with a vital difference. He creates a male "Genius" figure who "builds his glorious throne" at the top of the mountain where he is privy to all of its secrets and insight with a "gaze supreme" (24). This genius is both God and Ridge himself as an artist and creator, another projection of his own ego but an important message regarding the supremely enlightened male role. Yet, the image of this supreme male being atop the echelon of natural government is entirely unlike the Anglo-American image of the frontiersman or the U.S. government leaders for he is an artist, an observer, a receptacle for all the natural beauty that lay before him. From an Anglo-American perspective, this male genius is a mixture of genders in the performance of both nobility and passivity, humbled by and subject to the glory of pure nature. Yet, as made by a God in human male form, Mount Shasta becomes an allegory for a "sovereign law" that only men can produce, men like the "Genius" who embrace and allow themselves to be ruled by nature (25). Ridge plays with Anglo-American perspectives of gender (and therefore hierarchies in general) and figures them as unenlightened, man-made artifacts imbued with "human feeling, human passion" and prejudice that should have no real bearing on governance (25).

Based on this reading of his rhetoric in the poem and the novel, Ridge's political position aligns him more with an autonomous or sovereign politics rather than a proponent of assimilation or even separatism. According to Yuval-Davis, whereas "separatism is often a strategy of resistance to both racism and assimilationism" with absolute boundaries and limited acceptance of others into the group, "autonomous movements put the emphasis on grass-roots activism, autonomy and self-sufficiency, as an initial stage from which they can co-operate with others once they feel more empowered and confident" (54-55). Based on this definition and the above analysis, Ridge sought cooperative autonomy/sovereignty more than pure separatism by attempting to distinguish differences in practices or performances of justice when based on social constructions (race and gender). He calls on society to practice a more noble justice based on pure nature itself, a more truly "enlightened" and therefore "American" ideal, rather than on perceived truth often swayed by human prejudice. By extension, he calls on Anglo-America to see the Cherokee nation in this more "civilized" approach to justice that ultimately seeks equality for all, even those seemingly less civilized or technologically or socially undeveloped. He simultaneously questions the need for violence itself (as a masculine form of justice and national identity) *and* the Cherokee blood law as perhaps an uncivilized or unnatural assessment of an individual's actions; he addresses and creates a parallel between both Anglo-America and the Cherokee nation. In creating such a parallel, Ridge universally scrutinizes the practice or performance of prejudiced and violent or hypermasculine ideologies and therefore enacts Indigenous feminism.

By questioning both racial and gender identity in relation to practices of justice, Ridge opens the possibility for the subversion of ideologies informing binaries, hierarchical

oppression, and violence. This interpretation or translation of Ridge's text "[invites] a new imagining, not particularly of the 'real' or the 'true' but of the *possible* hearings and tellings" of Native-authored texts (Powell 399, emphasis in the original). Connecting the act of writing with the development of a national identity, "'Agency,' then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation and [the] repetition" of the rules that constitute identity within the dominant discourse and "only within the practices of repetitive signifying [can] a subversion of identity [become] possible" (Butler 145). A national identity relies upon the individual possibilities and variations in engaging and subverting static notions of identity through constantly transforming and balanced relationships. By solidifying into history another other's experiences with gender hierarchies and performances, Ridge both associates and disassociates with Murieta in an effort to reveal the dangerous possibilities of total ideological assimilation especially when read as enacting Indigenous feminism. His novel uses the dominant discourse as a means to open up concepts of justice and national identity based on his own unique perspective and thus creates a presence rather than an absence within the dominant discourse. Powell confirms:

> Native people have used the very policies and beliefs about "the Indian" meant to remove, reserve, assimilate, acculturate, abrogate, and un-see us as the primary tools though which to reconceive our history, to reimagine Indian-ness in our own varying and multiplicitous images, to create and re-create our presence…[now] we have a language, a system of participation, a rhetoric, with which to articulate [critique]. (428)

For Ridge, articulating his critique of the American West required translating and negotiating the various competing myths and ideologies of the gendered West that evolved

out of colonization. Regardless of whether Ridge was truly an assimilationist or not, his literary and rhetorical actions are beneficial for an American national identity by ensuring both a presence and a history for non-white Americans upon which future generations can reflect. The historical, ideological, and literary constraints that inform the remaining pieces of him must be carefully considered before vilifying him. Reading his critique through an Indigenous feminist lens and portrayal of rhetorical sovereignty in relation to hypermasculinity reveals a new and more complete history of the West from a mixed-blood Cherokee perspective. Using this process of translation and interpretation offers new possibilities for all Native-authored texts, which may reveal even more valuable practices of rhetorical sovereignty as Indigenous feminist in nature as seeking to build relationships across discourses and institutions of power based on *both* political *and* social constructions of gender and race. Furthermore, this reading attempts to reveal how Native authors construct identity, both racial and gender, in both words and actions and in an effort to maintain balanced relationships necessary for nation-building.

This discussion has attempted to uncover how colonization and assimilation proved extremely difficult for Native men because of the implicit gender violence it entailed. The ideological conflict that patriarchal colonization posed was not easily resolved in the practical lives of Native people. John Rollin Ridge offers a novel and a socially active Native voice that reflects a critical Indigenous feminist consciousness concerning the gendered implications of colonial relationships in the development of a more transnational American national identity. As read through an Indigenous feminist lens, his novel seeks to deconstruct ideological constructions that fuel conquest in an attempt to build transnational relationships across sovereign American identities.

[1] Etymologically, the word "savage" originates as a French word and was used to describe their English neighbors in the late 16th century. As an adjective, "savage" applied to individual persons as "uncivilized; existing in the lowest state of culture," intended to distinguish the evolving class system and power rivalries between growing nations in Europe (OED). According to somewhat cursory definitions, civilization is "the state of being refined in manners, from the grossness of savage life, and improved in arts and learning" as opposed to savage which is the "native state of rudeness, one who is untaught, uncivilized or without cultivation of mind or manners" (Pearce front matter). The two words, intricately intertwined as opposites without true distinction, rely upon an unspecific understanding of rudeness or manners, learning and cultivation, words with potentially and vastly different meanings depending on a person's culture of origin. Although we can not assume that the British were the first to be described as savage, the fact that they acquired this distinction during a time of contact and cultural development provides interesting insight to the historical trajectory of the word. In all instances, the word pertains to a particular cultural perspective as a means of conquering the "other" initially through rhetorical domination.

[2] Such literature includes the gothic romance *Edgar Huntly* by Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving's short stories and poems, and James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking series.

[3] Jackson constructed a familial rhetoric that made himself and other government officials the "fathers" of the fledgling Indians thus his dependent flock that desperately needed his protection and guidance. For more, see *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* by Michael Paul Rogin.

[4] Some would say that such notions are still present today demonstrating the pervasiveness of ideologically informed gender identities in relation to national identity.

[5] Ridge's family members were strict proponents of assimilation as a means of social progress, which included attempts at changing Cherokee law regarding penalty for murder known as the "blood law." "The blood law called for retaliation whenever a Cherokee took another's life, even if the death is accidental. If the killer fled to escape punishment, one of his close relatives would be killed" (Parins 4). Ridge's grandfather advocated for the deletion of the accidental death component and won.

[6] I employ the term "race" here because of its historical application and implication encompassing broadly defined phenotypic differences not based on ethnicity and culture. In this way, Native Americans and Mexicans are seen in the same racial category even though they do not share ethnicity, culture, or national identity.

[7] However, per Ridge's own prejudices against other, less "civilized" or progressive Native tribes, he did not escape the penetrating ideologies regarding class differences within and between ethnic groups, a topic for another study.

[8] "Myth" is defined and used in this context by Richard Slotkin in *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America.* "Myth expresses ideology in a narrative, rather than a discursive or argumentative, structure" thus making the "myth of the frontier" highly ethnocentric (6). He writes: "…the actual work of making and transmitting myths is done by particular classes of persons; myth-making processes are therefore responsive to the politics of class difference," to which we might also add racial and gender difference as well (8). Thus, the "myth of the West" is a cultural production from a classed Anglo-American perspective.

[9] For example, in *The Last of the Mohicans,* James Fenimore Cooper's juxtaposition of Uncas, the Native male of "beautiful proportions," against Magua, the simulated violent savage, against Gamut, the feminized Anglo (civilized) male of awkward and "rare" proportions, reveals the subverted binary of "savage" and "civilized" as well as the complicated gendering of nobility. Through Uncas, Cooper "imagines that civilization necessarily spells the end of archaic proportions" in physicality as well as ideology while Gamut "is the vehicle by which civilization is carried into the wilderness" with "linked images of language, femininity, and power" (Romero 394). Thus, the East becomes associated with a feminized, language and reason-based civility and the West becomes associated with the now physically dominant, adventurous, and wild "savage" male seen in the character of Hawk-eye, an adventurous transplant from the East.

[10] In *Manifest Manners*, Gerald Vizenor explains that the "simulation of the indian is the absence of real natives–the contrivance of the other in the course of dominance. Truly, natives are the storiers of an imagic presence, and indians are the actual absence–the simulations of the tragic primitive" (vii).

[11] Stoler's argument is based on the concept that the personal is tied to the political and explores sexual relations between the colonizer and the colonized.

[12] Manifest manners is Vizenor's translation of the ideology of conquest.

[13] Such subversion of these terms and ideologies is not unique to Ridge as his predecessor William Apess also projected the term back on to Anglo-America in several of his own texts.

[14] A brief description of Ridge's own experiences prefaces the novel. For a more detailed history of Ridge, see James W. Parins' biography *John Rolling Ridge: His Life and Works.*

[15] Arnold Krupat writes in his book *Ethnocriticism*: "Metonymy and synecdoche I take as terms that name relations of a part-to-part and a part-to-whole type. Thus, where personal accounts are strongly marked by the individual's sense of herself predominantly as different and separate from other distinct individuals, one might speak of a metonymic sense of self. Where any narration of personal history is more nearly marked by the individual's sense of himself in relation to collective social units or groupings, one might speak of a synecdochic sense of self, both metonymy and synecdoche constructing identity syntagmatically, along the horizontal axis of contiguity and combination" (212).

[16] My argument here stems from Judith Butler's discussion of gender identity in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.*

[17] For more on genre and myth in relation to national identity, see Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence*, Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel*, and Amy Kaplan's *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture.*

[18] In fact, we can read this as a judgement of the Ross party who were responsible for killing Ridge's father and grandfather and continued to use violence as resistance.

[19] Although a common move attempted by other Native American authors/rhetoricians, William Apess for example, Ridge was the first to do so using fiction.

CHAPTER 3: GENDER, LITERACY, & SOVEREIGNTY IN WINNEMUCCA'S *LIFE AMONG THE PIUTES*

Arming themselves with "manifest destiny" rhetoric, which claimed divine Anglo-Saxon superiority as justification for the conquest of Indigenous and Mexican peoples and the land they occupied, white settlers forcefully pushed into California territory. The two year long Mexican American War resulted in the acquisition of present-day states California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada. However, Native tribes and landed Mexicans continued to stand in the way of not only civilized progress but the vast riches that gold and the California soil offered the ever growing numbers of United States citizens.

Relationships with the Paiute Nation became key to movement into the area as their lands stood directly in the path of settlers and miners moving towards California through the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Like the Cherokee Nation, Paiutes were subject to various methods of removal and attempts at assimilating or civilizing the Indian, then wards of the state per the Indian Appropriation Act of 1871. Daughter to the Chief, Sarah Winnemucca witnessed and engaged in her tribe's struggles to remain in their ancestral lands and maintain sovereignty while attempting to build balanced relationships with their white relatives. Her *Life Among the Piutes, their wrongs and claims* (1883) is the first autobiographical account written by a Native woman and reveals valuable information regarding this history and conflict.[1] However, her autobiography focuses less on her life and more on the trials and tribulations of her tribe's relationship with the United States. Born around 1844, Winnemucca learned to read and write English while a domestic worker for a white woman after expulsion from a convent school for being Indian. Furthermore, her birth coincided with the politicization of the women's rights movement with the Seneca Falls convention of

1848; the movement would later be vital in supporting Winnemucca. With such a history transpiring around her, Winnemucca learned about cultural and gender differences at a young age. She became a translator, then activist as lecturer and author using her strong literacy skills. Her autobiography appeals to the readers to stop the government from removing the Paiutes from their land or attempting to control their people.

While on tour with her stories and lectures, she often posed for pictures that portrayed her as "a civilized Indian woman, the performance that would be the most persuasive to her audience of reformers and legislators" (Powell 2006, 71). Like Ridge's portrayal of Murieta, such performances seemingly reinforce stereotypes of the "other." Winnemucca negotiates "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" in her performance of "the appropriate concerns of dominant cultural notions of 'woman'" (Powell 72, 77 emphasis in the original). Although different from the performed masculinity of Native male authors, I contend that Winnemucca simultaneously performs masculinity and enacts Indigenous feminism through complementary and reciprocal relationships that promote social balance. Complementarity summarizes concepts of social responsibility and sharing; reciprocity involves the actions or performances necessary to maintain or enact complementarity by recognizing and attempting to respectfully know and/or respond to the "other" in kind. In her physical and rhetorical maneuvers, Winnemucca performs masculinity in the role of warrior chieftain and interpreter and femininity in her selective deference to men and dominant cultural stereotypes, both for the strategic purpose of fulfilling her and her community's needs, thus maintaining balance. Whereas previous scholarship focused mostly on her rhetorical social positioning in correlation with gender

performance, I argue that her autobiography asserts the importance of connecting ideology, morality, and *action* with those performances. Therefore, I read her performances as attempting to blur the boundaries between both cultures and sets of gender roles by showing the values (and detriments) within them as a means of creating balanced relationships across imposed colonial boundaries. Furthermore, her dualistic yet balanced gender performance complicates a wholly gender-divided approach to studying Native literature and reveals the paradox in doing so by questioning critical assumptions about authorial intent based on an author's perceived gender. My argument in this chapter asserts that *how* we assess gender performances as informing ideological positioning must complement *why* we analyze gender performances in the first place to avoid perpetuating colonial oppression.

Unlike the critical attention that Ridge garnered, scholars have been less critical of Winnemucca's seemingly assimilative tactics in their assessment of her gender performances. In effect, the scholarship grants Winnemucca more agency as a Native woman while deriding Ridge's agency as a man complicit with colonial ideologies. Juxtaposing analysis of these two texts reveals contradictions within scholarship, both Native and feminist, that ultimately perpetuates gender hierarchies and violence. For instance, Malea Powell and other scholars focus extensively on Winnemucca's performed femininity without duly accounting for her performed masculinity as equally strategic and vital. My critical assessment of Winnemucca's performance of masculinity leads to a different, more nuanced understanding of the text, its author, and the culture it depicts and attempts to simultaneously critique and complement the scholarship surrounding this and other Native-authored texts. *Using* Indigenous feminism as a theoretical approach concurrently *enacts* Indigenous feminism by attempting to broaden the understanding and practice of sovereignty

and more effectively listening to the various complementary parts of the much larger story. An unbalanced theoretical approach to Native literature and culture reproduces rather than transcends colonial oppression.

Danielle Tisinger explores Winnemucca's text-based gendered performance of power but focuses purely on Western conventions without focusing on the alternative gender ideologies that her text and the act of writing reveal. Tisinger resolves that Winnemucca's "status as a woman…mediates between the more threatening demeanor of a male Paiute warrior and the tribe's very immediate need for public support and assistance" (177). However, Tisinger does not effectively unpack this assertion through a critical analysis of the text and its performance of gender in both word *and* action. Nor do any of the critics more thoroughly explore the ideologies informing such a performance. Does Winnemucca's representation of Paiute males reinforce the "threatening" and "savage" Indian warrior stereotype prevalent along the frontier? How does Winnemucca mediate such gender stereotypes through her performance as a Paiute woman often simultaneously performing masculinity? Further, what ideologies does she negotiate in such gender performances? Finally, how does she strategically counter while simultaneously perform Western gender expectations in an effort to obtain the public support her tribe needed to assert sovereignty? These are the questions I address in this chapter.

This chapter explores how Winnemucca physically and rhetorically constructs and enacts gender to maintain sovereignty for herself and the Paiute nation. A critical analysis of her literary construction and performance of gender reveals that Winnemucca actively critiques her primarily Anglo-American audience's society and institutions, specifically the corrupt Bureau of Indian Affairs, while attempting to preserve and transform Native gender

traditions through adaptation. If the physical body is a text performing gender (as well as racial/ethnic identity), then Winnemucca deconstructs and resists a colonial masculine/feminine gender hierarchy that reinforces social and institutional dominance through both her embodied and literary gender performance. Moreover, she attempts to maintain complementary and reciprocal relationships between both actions and words (bodily representation and textual production) and between both Anglo and Native American cultures. I argue that Winnemucca's textual performance and critique of *both* masculinity *and* femininity reveals a sovereign yet transnational response to colonization on the expanding Western frontier through her attempt at building critical yet balanced relationships. She employs Indigenous feminism by critically performing both genders in her physical and literary presence; her performed knowledge and critique of gender ideologies reinforces complementary and reciprocal relationships between nations and the individuals within.

My exploration of Winnemucca's Indigenous feminism follows the linear trajectory of her own narrative as she weaves in the integral threads of learned and practiced Paiute sovereignty. I explore how her choice in formal structure complements her content. I first look at the impact that traditional stories and history have on her developing literacy of language, ideology, and culture as well as her own identity as a Paiute leader. I then look at how she acknowledges both Paiute male and female experiences with colonial gender violence and parallel Christian moral discourse and how she responds to these experiences through her textual performance of gender and Indigenous feminism that reinforces Paiute cultural and political sovereignty.

Traditional Stories, History, and Sovereignty

Winnemucca's understanding of racial and gender social constructions derive from traditional stories and the values she learns from her grandfather paired with her experiences translating across language and culture.[2] In this section I argue that Winnemucca's cultural knowledge informs her strategic choice in genres, which asserts sovereignty, complementarity, and reciprocity by incorporating and responding to Western literary conventions while emphasizing Paiute historical traditions.

In the first chapter entitled "First meeting of Piutes and Whites," Winnemucca describes when, as a small child, her grandfather, Captain Truckee, was chief when the first whites arrived in their area in Western Nevada. He was very optimistic, for he believed their arrival marked the reunification of separated siblings per a Paiute traditional story about parents of two girls and two boys, one set dark and the other white. Capturing this traditional story and her response to it, Winnemucca writes,

> Then he summoned his whole people, and told them this tradition: –"In the beginning of the world there were only four, two girls and two boys. Our forefather and mother were only two, and we are their children. You all know that a great while ago there was a happy family in this world. One boy and girl were dark and the others were white. For a time they got along together without quarrelling, but soon they disagreed, and there was trouble. They were cross to one another and fought, and our parents were very much grieved. They prayed that their children might learn better, but it did not do any good; and afterwards the whole household was made so unhappy that the father and mother say that they must separate their children; and then our father took the dark boy and girl, and the white boy and girl, and asked them, 'Why

> are you so cruel to each other?' They hung down their heads, and would not speak. They were ashamed. He said to them, 'Have I not been kind to you all, and given you everything your hearts wished for?…' He said, "Depart from each other, you cruel children; – go across the mighty ocean and do not seek each other's lives." So he separated his children by a word…Now, the white people we saw a few days ago must certainly be our white brothers, and I want to welcome them. I want to love them as I love all of you. But they would not let me; they were afraid. But they will come again, and I want you one and all to promise that, should I not live to welcome them myself, you will not hurt a hair on their heads, but welcome them as I tried to do." How good of him to try and heal the wound, and how vain were his efforts! (6-7)

Captain Truckee believes that the white men he sees are the descendents of the original siblings come to "heal all the old trouble" (7). Despite his enthusiasm, he later finds that the feud the story relates has not yet ended and his people's livelihood and culture will be severely threatened. Yet, he insists that his people try to love the white people in order to heal the wound that keeps them separated.

Captain Truckee becomes a role model for his granddaughter, Sarah Winnemucca, whose autobiography seeks to reveal both the psychic and physical wounds that Anglo-America continued to cut open as the colonial frontier between the so-called "savage" and "civilized" moved through Paiute territory. As a leader, her grandfather exemplifies a balanced mix of Western-informed gender characteristics (both feminine and masculine); he is caring and protective, strong and sensitive. Furthermore, her grandfather presents a model for forgiveness, complementarity, reciprocity, and uniting opposing sides for the greater

good. Sarah attempts to follow his model through her balanced actions and words. Specifically, she learns that the English language and literacy of Western social constructions are valuable mediating/reciprocating tools by which the two cultures can understand and heal but also continue to inflict harm. She learns that language carries within it ideologies that inform social performance and interactions including those regarding both gender and race. Yet, Winnemucca vows to "fight for [her] down-trodden race while life lasts," and her autobiography serves as the written testimony, or "rag friend," of her attempt at maintaining complementary and reciprocal relationships across cultures and nations (6).

Like her grandfather, Winnumucca saw and employed literacy as a powerful mediating tool. According to Captain Truckee, his "rag friend" letter contains mystical powers to communicate information that cannot be visually or otherwise translated between him, the white settlers, and military personnel. Truckee understands the letter as "a symbol of the goodness and powerfulness of white people and of their high regard for him as a true and loyal friend" (2002, 413). He acknowledges that these powers derive from language, the ideologies such language carries, and the actions they inform. "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, written by the white "chieftain," speaks for Captain Truckee and can travel to places when he cannot. However, Captain Truckee acknowledges that the rag friend needed to be deployed strategically for he could not show it to the Mexican enemies he fought against in fear of retaliation. Thus, employment of the rag friend and the English language in general becomes supremely important to Paiute survival. Winnemucca explains, "[Captain Truckee]

told his people that his word was more to him than his son's life, or any one else's life either" (20). However, his use of "word" means both the words themselves as well as the integrity and complementarity in the *use* of those words, the promise they enact or perform. Sarah and the rest of the tribe give their "word" to try to heal the wounds between the Paiutes and the whites. For Captain Truckee, Sarah, and the Paiutes in general, language is *both* symbol *and* action.

For Winnemucca, language becomes a living promise of her grandfather's legacy and thus her cultural tradition itself, both of which she takes very seriously despite the injustice and violence perpetrated against her and her people. She later realizes her own complicity as translator and performer of the very words and culture that determine her people's future. However, written language also "becomes a prime signifier of Winnemucca as a subject, an Indian who is able to decode and mediate Euroamerican knowledge" (Powell 413). In living up to her promise, Winnemucca carries on a sovereign tradition to speak and write for herself and her people but she does so cautiously and with critical awareness of the danger she faces as an Indian woman empowered with the English language and corresponding Anglo cultural literacy. Her autobiography acts as a rag friend for both her and the Paiute people in that it is a tribal testimony to their experiences through Sarah's words and performance. Writing such a testimony enacts sovereignty in response to those with ill intentions and imperial power who seek to subjugate her as a Native woman; simultaneously, her rag friend, like a hand extended, attempts to support complementary and reciprocal relationships.

Through her cultural and rhetorical literacy, Winnemucca avoids subjugation exacerbated by racial and gender colonial hierarchies. In employing and performing cross-cultural literacy, she asserts a Paiute national identity intended to complement rather than

oppose an American national identity, thus affirming an Indigenous feminist ideology or consciousness that figures a combined national identity as *both* masculine *and* feminine, Paiute *and* American.[3] Such a cross-cultural literacy required that Sarah be intimately familiar with the simulated Indian and its gendered connotations and impact on the American imagination in the nineteenth century as seen in her textual performance.

Seen as an effort to more accurately represent Native identities, Winnemucca presents the reality of Paiute culture and history by choosing to write part autobiography, part memoir, part history, and perhaps even part fiction, culminating in an all-inclusive genre otherwise known as a tribalography, capturing the conflict facing the Paiute people. In LeAnne Howe's essay "A Story of America: A Tribalography," she writes that tribalography theoretically captures an epistemology that "comes from the native propensity for bringing things together, for making consensus, and for symbiotically connecting one thing to another" (42). Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* could be considered the very first tribalographic depiction of gender as symbiotically combined. As a result of solidifying gender roles and the sexual division of labor where men preserve the business and intellectual realms and women the emotional, artistic, and domestic, historical narratives are considered a masculine form of literature and romance as feminine. However, authors like Nathaniel Hawthorne attempted to appropriate the romance novel because it became so popular and therefore lucrative. Literary genre is thus imbued with gender performance and anxiety regarding unclear boundaries. Winnemucca's tribalography presents these gendered genres simultaneously, asserting a more inclusive alternative that concurrently achieves complementarity and reciprocity between content and genre.

Winnemucca's choice in combining literary genres plays a part in the continuing development of a national character that is inclusive of both Anglo and Native Americans and attempts to resist literary misrepresentations used to justify colonization. Her tribalography exemplifies her cultural, rhetorical, and political literacy regarding the development of an American national identity and the roles that Native people played at the time. Furthermore, her choices in genre parallel her more general theme of inclusion and reciprocity. For instance, the history, or "tradition" that she relates in the first chapter is inclusive of both Anglos and Paiutes in the historical family. While maintaining this similarity of tradition and kinship, she also establishes the primary difference as that of phenotype, which causes the original siblings to quarrel and feud with each other. Thus, the tradition itself acts as both binding and prescriptive in that continued feuding might result in yet another infraction and separation of family.

Furthermore, Winnemucca's use of the "tradition" genre presents an entirely different approach to understanding the self as a synecdochic constituent of the nation, a complementary and reciprocal part to the whole. Arnold Krupat writes that Native American self-perception is synecdochic rather than an individual part on its own "attracted to introspection, expansion, or fulfillment" as seen in the Western self. He explains that, "one might perhaps instantiate an 'I-am-we' experience as descriptive of the Native American sense of self, where such a phrase indicates that I understand myself as a self only in relation to the coherent and bounded whole of which I am a part" (1992, 209-210). Based on the tradition Winnemucca relates, included in this greater whole are *both* Anglo *and* Native Americans as siblings in the same family. Her choice to include this traditional "family" narrative at length early on asserts a cultural as well as literary difference. Because of the

gendered history of Western literary production, Winnemucca's *use* of that history and production reveals her tribalography as *both* romantic *and* historic, and *both* masculine *and* feminine.

The "tradition" narrative follows the romance genre's construction: conflict and separation calls for heroism and reunification. Yet, from a Western literary perspective, Winnemucca's tribalography as a whole *is* and is simultaneously *not* romantic or historic; it is similar but different. In the "tradition" she relates, Captain Truckee views his returning kin as an heroic attempt at reunification and inclusion in spite of differences and he attempts to respond reciprocally, a legacy that his granddaughter continues in writing this tribalography. Therefore, Winnemucca's use of genre reinforces the theme; theme and genre are in fact interdependent and synecodochic.

Additionally, this embedded national narrative or "tradition" reveals a previously oppressed and ignored history and culture that was piquing the interests of ethnographers seeking to capture the "Vanishing race" in the late nineteenth century. The foregrounding of a cultural tradition and story places the non-Native reader in unfamiliar literary territory without attempting to be ethnographic or privileging the reader as the observer of the "other." Such a rhetorical strategy and use of traditional stories "deliberately obscures the apparently privileged glimpse it affords of Indian culture, while asserting the legitimacy and endurance of that culture…[asks] readers to reconsider their relationship to the material they are consuming…[and attempts] to restructure the relationship between readers and writers, listeners and speakers, non-Indians and Indians" (Senier 14-15). The "tradition" and history reveals only that which is necessary for the reader to engage in and be convinced by Winnemucca's testimony and argument. Therefore, Winnemucca expresses and maintains a

vital cultural difference but attempts to build complementary and reciprocal relationships across those differences.

Winnemucca creates a reciprocal relationship with those Anglo-Americans engaged in such a discourse by adding and asserting her tribally informed perspective and knowledge and thus maintaining sovereignty. Furthermore, foregrounding Native history in tribalography enacts political sovereignty through self-representation. In her contemporary exploration of Native self-representation, Mary Lawlor further explains that "the revision of conventional history by colonized peoples [is necessary] in order to resuscitate their own 'hidden histories.' This is the moment of decolonization…when history begins to not only include accounts of marginalized peoples, but to be produced by them in various forms of self-representation" (Lawlor, 39). Furthermore, Winnemucca's tribalography opens up interpretations of history by providing an alternative perspective. Keeping history alive, even with its embedded ambiguities and conflict, maintains a reciprocal relationship with Anglo-American histories and representations and enacts Indigenous feminism.

However, Winnemucca only reveals those Paiute traditions that are necessary for cross-cultural understanding. Always underneath Native self-representation, Lawlor argues, is what she calls "displayed withholding," which

> Implicitly projects a difference and a bounding off from the dominant streams of being and knowing in the cultures of the United States. It is the point where the performance or display says, 'There is more, but we choose not to show you…' [It] demonstrates a resistance to identification with the reader for political reasons; and, in part, it designates a principled decision not to share information or knowledge with those who will not be properly prepared for it. (62)

Such cultural withholding sustains those differences necessary to preserve or protect that culture from exploitation and colonization. For example, rather than providing unnecessary ethnographic details surrounding this traditional narrative about separated siblings (such as details regarding the cultural practice or use of the tradition itself), Winnemucca focuses on the Paiute people's losses and suffering due to continued conflict with their white brothers. She does so not only to further her argument against such treatment or to present her historical perspective but to also maintain a Paiute-centered history. She emphasizes the ideological implications of the story and withholds the unnecessary ethnographic details. To maintain a history of the loss that Paiute society experienced through colonization is to maintain a relationship with that which was lost: tradition and culture but also the possibility of reunification with those kin, Anglo-Americans, who share in that history.[4] Thus, Winnemucca's inclusion of the "tradition" narrative, though withholding ethnographic details, attempts to build a complementary and reciprocal relationship with her Anglo-American readers while asserting her own and Paiute sovereignty through Indigenous feminism.

Cross-Cultural Gender and Moral Literacy and Mediation

Many scholars have discussed Winnemucca's strategic employment of her identity as an Indian woman. However, this scholarship doesn't effectively address her complementary employment of Paiute masculinity while negotiating the colonial racial and gender-informed morals and discourse. My argument in this section builds on previous scholarship by asserting that her cultural literacy informs her complementary and reciprocal gender performance of both femininity and masculinity as activist, leader, and warrior. Such a

gender performance simultaneously upholds Paiute ideologies and sovereignty in the advancement of a more inclusive national United States identity.

In the first chapter of her tribalography, Sarah expresses her knowledge about conflicting social constructions and their literary representations. As the narrative continues, she continues to mediate and translate cultural understanding and representations of masculinity and the discursive morality upon which both Native and Anglo masculinities rely. She realizes and attempts to explain how such mediation often reproduces rather than reduces conflict. However, she also finds that she can use her cultural literacy to her advantage and perform the necessary gender roles needed to produce the desired effect. Consequently, she indirectly identifies the fundamental paradigm or ideology that informs gender and race as a hierarchy of dominance in Western cultures while inclusive, complementary, and reciprocal in Paiute culture. In practice, she exemplifies that the Paiute ideology incorporates binary gender roles as needed for the sake of the community, showing that binaries aren't necessarily harmful. However, Winnemucca explains how Anglo masculinity negatively affects Paiute men and conceptions of masculinity upon first contact. Much like Ridge's argument, explored in the previous chapter, Winnemucca indicates that conflated performances of Western gender and morality produce cross-cultural conflict that reinforces rather than renounces Western dominance.

Winnemucca's Paiute tribesmen's cooperative engagement in acts of violence through warfare in the Mexican-American War, specifically those acts that seek to uphold an American nationalistic identity, informs them about Anglo-American masculinity and patriarchy at its very core. After coming back from the battlefield in California where they helped fight against Mexicans, she writes: "They had learned to love [their white brothers],

and they hoped more of them would come. Then my people were *less* barbarous than they are nowadays" (10, emphasis added). Winnemucca explains that her people were not "savage" or "barbarous" *before* contact with Anglo-Americans. She implies that contact with and influence by Anglo-American society, corrupt men in particular, directly and negatively affects Paiute culture as a whole through the initially exciting yet damaging influence on Paiute men. They trusted their "white brothers" and believed them all to be honorable. Led by their testimony and evidenced by the many gifts they bring back with them (especially guns), the rest of the community also felt "peaceable toward their white brothers" (10). These feelings turn sour when many settlers begin to stream through Paiute territory en route to California. Turning to her readers, Winnemucca writes, "You call my people bloodseeking. My people did not seek to kill them [the settlers], nor did they steal their horses–no, no, far from it…my people helped them. They gave them such as they had to eat. They did not hold out their hands and say:– 'You can't have anything to eat unless you pay me.' No, –no such word was used by us savages at that time" (10). Winnemucca not so subtly mocks the "savage" or "barbarian" adjectives describing Native peoples and asserts that such blatant adherence to Anglo masculinity was not part of a traditional Paiute culture but rather resulted from contact and conflict with whites; the Paiute people, men in particular, learned this behavior from whites.[5] Cari Carpenter further articulates that Winnemucca's ironic use and "re-articulation of the original-the dominant discourse-…exposes it as a fabrication" (74). Winnemucca's ironic use of these stereotypes calls attention to Anglo anxieties and fabrications surrounding Native identity.

As explored more fully in the previous chapter, Anglo-Americans largely did not consider Native American men as true "men" because of their supposed "savage" and

therefore moral and politically flawed nature. Instead, they viewed them as a threat to their own moral and intellectual superiority. Therefore, if not true men, the "savage" Indian threatened Anglo-American masculinity by challenging the systems upon which their masculinity relied: civilization and Christian morality. Without the ideological framework that defines their role in society, Anglo-American men, anxious about their ability to uphold civilized Christian morality, lose their identity and their purpose. Therefore, a subset of Anglo-American men often resorted to violence against those who threatened them, thus themselves exhibiting "savage" behavior while maintaining a sense of superiority and manifest destiny. As explored in my discussion of Ridge's novel, such a set of Anglo settlers and military personnel, mostly men, taught (or forced) Native men in particular to become the savage or barbarous warriors Anglo society defined, anticipated, and fabricated by treating them as inferiors and subjecting them to unjust violence. By first performing such behavior and then prompting Paiute men to mimic them, they both condone and condemn such behavior. Blinded by their own self-righteousness, such instruction and provocation later justified Anglo conquest of the Paiute people.

Winnemucca's rhetorical use of the words "savage" and "barbarous" in this context subtly exposes her critical knowledge of underlying motives determined to uphold patriarchal, white, male dominance under the guise of Christian morality. She goes on to recount how whites in fact acted "savagely" by ruthlessly killing their Indian brothers, evoking fear among her people. This provoked fear informs many of their interactions with Americans and prompted some of her people to respond with reciprocal violence interpreted as "savage" by Anglo-Americans. As Winnemucca's subtle rhetoric shows, differences in

conceptions of gender and race lie at the core of the ongoing conflict between Anglo-American and Native American societies.

Because Winnemucca's purpose, as I interpret it, is to critique while also incorporate the Anglo-American colonial system and its moral underpinnings into a broader, more inclusive ideological paradigm, it comes as no surprise that she immediately includes a chapter presenting those ideologies as found in chapter 2, "Domestic and Social Moralities." This chapter also serves as a historical record of Paiute gender roles and activities prior to contact with and in comparison to Anglo-America. Winnemucca consistently asserts the egalitarian and complementary nature of Paiute society in opposition to the more strict binaries and hierarchies of Anglo-America. For instance, she writes that the Paiute "chiefs do not rule like tyrants" but rather all are welcome to speak at the council-tent, including women. She also includes a description of the coming of age and marriage rituals for Paiute girls and explains that, upon marriage, a woman "becomes" her husband and "promises to be himself…to make their husbands themselves" (49, 53). Although they have distinct, even binary labor roles, the husband and wife become a unit and share those roles as needed, often crossing genders or, rather, embodying and balancing both genders simultaneously. For example, Winnemucca writes that a new father will "[assume] all his wife's household work" in honor of his wife and child. "If he does not do his part in the care of the child, he is considered an outcast" (50). In this way, gender for the Paiutes is a fluid rather than a static construction based on the needs of and in an effort to maintain balance in the family unit and tribal community.

Although the Paiute tribe maintains a system of complementarity between genders, social roles are still dualistic in the sense of duty to the community or tribe as informed by

biological sex differences. She explains in this chapter that women are responsible for "dress[ing] the game, prepar[ing] the food, clean[ing] the buckskins, mak[ing her husband's] moccasins, dress[ing] his hair, bring[ing] all the wood,–in short, do[ing] all the household work" (49). She also mentions in "The Bannock War" chapter that women are also responsible for digging roots (194). Men, on the other hand, are responsible for preparing their own instruments to hunt and cut the meat, participating in tribal council decision-making, engaging in warfare and general protection of the tribe, and fulfilling other fatherly and spousal duties previously mentioned. Such distinctions in labor are somewhat typical in Native societies according to Theda Purdue who writes: "Men and women performed different tasks: in most of North America, men hunted while women farmed and/or gathered…Task defined gender among native people, and a woman could not fill the role of a man and remain an ordinary woman. Similarly, a man who worked alongside women in the fields crossed genders and became something other than a man" ("Rethinking," 74). When a man performs women's work or fails to participate in men's work, he is thereafter considered something other than an ideal man, but not necessarily female either. In her ethnographic work on the Ojibwa, Ruth Landes explains that gender variance supported complementary social roles:

> Even the most conservative women usually find it necessary to take up some prescriptively masculine work at one time or another…Those women whose behavior is exceptional [shamans, 'manly women'] are not judged with reference to the conventional standard but with reference to their individual fortunes only. The conduct of the ideal woman, therefore, and the behavior of any individual woman may be quite at variance. (Bell qtg Landes 308-309)

Therefore, such gender fluidity or variance seems not shameful but rather a natural process needed to maintain balance based on individual performances of social roles.

Through her narrative, Winnemucca indirectly explains that gender becomes less about a compulsory performance of sex (or sexuality) and more about the vital labor role one fulfills in balancing the needs of the tribe. However, to complicate matters, in "The Bannock War" chapter, Winnemucca relates how one particular man who "did not go out to help and defend his people" was therefore considered a coward and the Chief ordered him to wear women's clothing and do women's work the rest of his life, which he did willingly (194). Although the individual's honor is indeed blemished, Chief Winnemucca re-assigns him to a role in which he can regain honor and maintain balance by fulfilling different duties. The worst form of punishment for failing to fulfill one's role or follow the chief is exile from the tribe as seen when the often-resistant tribesman Oytes is exiled for disobeying the chief's orders. Inversely, success in fulfilling another role results in ascension within the tribe beyond simply female or male roles.

By seemingly creating a gender hierarchy, the example of the failed warrior appears to contradict an understanding of complementarity or equality between gender roles within Paiute society. From a literary standpoint the reader is unable to ascertain whether this hierarchy was indeed part of Paiute culture, how it manifested within that culture, or if they appropriated such a hierarchy from Anglo-Americans. Rather, readers can only recognize this contradiction and attempt to understand its importance to the narrative and intended purpose. Perhaps Winnemucca attempts to show a similarity between the two cultures regarding gender roles in order to gain her reader's trust. Or perhaps this example has less to

do with gender roles more generally as it does with Winnemucca's particular role within the tribe in relation to Paiute men, warriors, and Chiefs in particular.

Regardless, this contradiction supports a more nuanced understanding and use of gender and sex-based roles in Paiute society; gender can be understood from *both* an Anglo *and* Paiute perspective (their gender ideologies are not necessarily mutually exclusive) based on the context and the general needs of the community. If a warrior is unable to fulfill his role, he is asked to be a farmer instead, thus taking on a typically woman's role as a biological male (gendered as both masculine by biology and feminine by assigned communal role). However, the same is true inversely as Winnemucca is elevated not only to warrior but to symbolic Chief, implying that these roles aren't limited to a particular sex or hierarchical position but rather based on the ability of the person to fulfill their initially sex-assigned gender role per the needs of the group. If one breaks these assigned roles, they are viewed as either a leader transcending such roles or a dishonorable example to others. Either way, however, the person maintains a vital (although altered) role within the community.

Although an important discussion, I believe that Winnemucca's framing of this example seems not to point out binary gender roles as much as it emphasizes the importance of the Chief within the tribe and the need for communally balanced individual contributions. While her father, Chief Winnemucca, admonishes this one tribe member for his failures as a warrior, he praises his own daughter for doing what warriors typically do: defend their people. He says:

> "I am much pained because my dear daughter has come with the fearful things which have happened in the war. Oh, yes! my child's name is so far beyond yours; none of you can ever come up to hers…Now hereafter we will look on her as our chieftain,

> for none of us are worthy of being chief but her, and all I can say to you is to send her to the wars and you stay and do women's work, and talk as women do." (193)

He simultaneously reduces one man's role from warrior to farmer and elevates Winnemucca's role to Chief (symbolically since he is still the official Chief), which, she infers, is such a well-respected role that men would gladly wear dresses and do women's work if the Chief tells him so. Furthermore, a well-respected Chief "holds [the people] together, and helps them to do right…no man can be a leader among Indians who is not a good man" (194). This passage and her father's proclamation relates Winnemucca's deserved appointment to a highly respected role held primarily by male warriors, thus showing her "crossing" gender roles by fulfilling male duties. However, the emphasis again lies *less* on actual gender and *more* on the ability to fulfill assigned tasks initially determined by but not limited to sex or biology, a distinct and subtle difference from Anglo-American gender roles based on social hierarchies and power informed solely by sex differences and corresponding gender performances.

Thus, cultural translation and mediation regarding gendered labor roles becomes a major part of the cross-cultural conflict specifically between the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Agents and the Paiute people. Approaches to such cross-cultural translation and mediation reveal ideological underpinnings that either oppress or attempt to create relationships across differences. Winnemucca exposes these conflicts and responses from either side, particularly in terms of gender roles and labor expectations. Betty Bell explains that "With the installation of the reservations…labor (or 'work') was introduced as a sign of masculine superiority over women who, confined to domestic and gardening chores, did not 'work.' By regulating the sexual distribution of work, federal agencies determined how

Native peoples and communities would perceive their own labor in terms of gender conventions" (316). For example, in "The Malheur Agency" chapter, Agent Parrish requires that the Paiute people plant and farm without consideration of their traditional labor roles. Oytes declares that he refuses to do such work for he and his men have "'[their] own work to do, – that is, to hunt for [their] children'" (107). Oytes resists engaging in work he deems as inappropriate for men whose labor as hunters is necessary to feed their children. Chief Winnemucca humorously elucidates on such cultural misinterpretation when he defends his people's willingness to work for the white man. Winnemucca writes: "My father broke out laughing; they all laughed and said: 'What can they expect from women who have never been taught to work?'" (109). Bell sees the men's laughter as a learned response to "the idea that women may work," thus a cultural appropriation of gender roles (316). I assert that what they find humorous is the accusation that their men are lazy because of the federal agent's expectation for men to do women's work, men who have not been previously trained to do the work of women because it was not culturally appropriate.[6] Combining these two interpretations, they laugh at the Chief's play on gendered labor roles in calling his men women by which he means colonial, not Paiute, women. This reading offers a more critical understanding of the Chief's cultural mediation as attempting to build balanced transnational relationships by including the agent and his cultural beliefs in on the joke. Unfortunately, the ethnocentric agent missed the punch line.

The inclusion of such cultural detail and comparison provides the necessary key to understanding the centrality of gender in Winnemucca's critique and literary performance. The second chapter on morality clearly positions gender roles as the prominent feature of difference at the core of the conflict that the rest of the book elucidates. Doing so also sets

up Winnemucca's attempts to deconstruct and reveal colonial constructions embedded in language while asserting her own cultural traditions. Furthermore, the above analysis reveals that changing ideological perceptions regarding gender roles also caused internal conflict within the Paiute tribe as Winnemucca's intentions and motivations were questioned because of her changing roles. However, she uses this confusion to her advantage by emphasizing her difference and thus effectiveness within and across both cultures.

The primary difference in mediation of genders derives from the discrepancy in rhetoric used by both Winnemucca and the BIA Agents and other "bad" white men she encounters. She realizes early on that words don't always complement actions and that language both written and oral is a powerful tool often abused or misused mostly by white men in positions of power or threatened by those they believed to be inferior to them. Furthermore, the guise of Christian virtues lies beneath words and actions as she critiques interpretations of "goodness." She interprets Anglo actions as contradicting their words and reveals that such contradictions reinforce hierarchical gender performances upon which Anglo dominance relied. She strategically employs this interpretation to assert her own and Paiute sovereignty.

First, Winnemucca sets an interesting comparison between the white BIA Agents, settlers, and soldiers further revealing her cultural understanding of the separation of gender (and race) from task or role. Her brother advises her that "Because white people are bad that is no reason why the soldiers should be bad, too," a comparison she later reiterates and proves through her actions with both Agents and soldiers (85). This comparison reveals the different types and use of power based on role, a system that Winnemucca must negotiate rhetorically and physically. The white Agents seek financial gain and political power while

the soldiers most often seek peace and justice but are often wrongfully led by the Agents against the Indians for the Agents' personal gain. However, the Agents consistently communicate the intent to help the Indians assimilate into civilization but fail to model those actions themselves, often contradicting each other for their own personal benefit. Winnemucca writes: "…we shall never be civilized in the way you wish us to be if you keep on sending us such agents as have been sent to us year after year, who do nothing but fill their pockets, and the pockets of their wives and sisters, who are always put in as teachers, and paid from fifty to sixty dollars per month, and yet they do not teach" (89). She beseeches her white audience to review her testimony to see how poorly the Agents treated her and her people and how such treatment failed to set up a good model for Indians to follow and in fact barred them from ever gaining entrance to the "civilized" world. Furthermore, Winnemucca emphasizes the Agents' failure to fulfill the roles that Paiute men and Chiefs in particular were expected to model. Instead, she portrays her own people as already similar to idealized Anglo-Americans in their displays of civilized goodness and therefore should be left alone altogether.

Based on this contradiction between the Agents' roles and intent, language and actions, Winnemucca critiques the moral underpinnings of Anglo religion and culture (including colonialism) by consistently playing with the meaning and practice of Christian "goodness." In the plea to her audience, she directly refers to them as good Christian people, thus appealing to the same values that she critiques among the Agents, asking them to right their wrongs in a sense, or rather to live up to the roles and virtues that they administer and to which they expect the Paiute adhere. She "turns the tables" or reciprocates a concern regarding practiced virtues. Throughout the text, Winnemucca reveals the contradiction

between these varying definitions of performed goodness. She asks how one is supposed to be a "good Indian" when the examples of such goodness vary so drastically. For example, according to Winnemucca, Agent Parrish is removed from his post because he was not Christian even though his actions were more "good" in nature than his "Christian" replacement, Agent Reinhard, whose actions were often contradictory and obviously not "Christian." Agent Reinhard consistently treats the Indians with anger and condescension, revealing his insecurity and false pretenses. Mocking his moral virtues, Winnemucca writes, "Then our Christian father forgot himself and said, 'If you don't like the way I do, you can all leave here. I am not going to be fooled with by you. I never allow a white man to talk to me like that'" (126). Winnemucca subtly exposes the inherent hierarchical racism and sexism behind colonial conceptions and performances of "Christian goodness" as well as the Agent's own masculine insecurities with his assertion of dominance, connecting a sense of morality with gender and race. The Agent expects the Paiute men to be submissive to him, like women, because he is racially and therefore morally superior to them. The text is riddled with such comparisons and contradictions between good and bad and attempts at forcing submission to masculine/patriarchal colonial dominance. In another instance, some Indians are considered "bad" by the white settlers because they supposedly steal cattle from the whites even though they do so because they are starving from their Agent's neglect and have no other choice. According to some of the Paiute, an Agent is considered "bad" because he gives Indians firewater when he knows that he shouldn't while he is considered "good" by American government for doing so. Thus, "goodness" typically refers to how a person's actions benefit Anglo-Americans and their racist colonial missions.

An especially interesting example of the contradictions of "goodness" is when most of her people do finally receive food and other products from their "bad" Agent. Both the Paiutes and the Agent consider Oytes "bad" because he traded with another tribe and refused to do as the Agent said. Therefore, he did not receive any rations. Once everybody else receives their rations and leaves, Oytes says to Sarah, "You and I are two black ones. We have not white fathers' lips." She responds, "No, we are two bad ones. Bad ones don't need any pity from any one" (114). They agree that they did not receive rations because they were somehow different from the rest. Oytes uses skin color and physical attributes as a metaphor for his and Winnemucca's resistance to white ways. She revises his language from "black" to "bad" to show that their actions indeed make them "bad" according to the Agent's perspective when, in fact, they are doing good for their people.

The connection here between Oytes and Winnemucca is interesting because she seems to be doing as the Agent wants but implies that in fact she only does so in order to help maintain sovereignty rather than truly do as the Agent tells her. She gets paid to translate for the Agent but more accurately translates for her own people, thus making her similarly "bad." Throughout the text she reveals how, like Oytes, she consistently does not do as the Agents tell her because she did not want to be complicit in harming her people. She explains that the Agents often expected Indian male translators to "sell-out" their own people in exchange for monetary gain, much like the Agents themselves did repeatedly. The Agents do indeed set a bad example by abusing their assigned task or role and expecting their Indian interpreters and other employees to do the same. Of the Indian interpreters, she writes:

> Some of the interpreters are very ignorant, and don't understand English enough to know all that is said. This often makes trouble. Then I am sorry to say these Indian

> interpreters, who are often half-breeds, easily get corrupted, and can be hired by the agents to do or say anything. I know this, for some of them are my relatives. (91)

She acknowledges that there has been a negative precedent set for interpreters against which she must act but with the added constraint (or benefit) of being female and a full-blooded Paiute. This precedent causes additional problems for both the Agents and her own people because neither group trusts the mostly male interpreters, upon whom they rely to mediate across cultures, thus perpetuating hierarchical dominance. This scenario clearly articulates Winnemucca's conflicted yet vital position as a woman translator but also her keen knowledge of the differing ideologies that inform both moral rhetoric and social action, especially in terms of race and gender. Her role as full-blooded female interpreter offers a difference that could change the damaged and hierarchical dynamics between her people and the Agents. Her very presence as such exposes the inconsistent or twisted performance of hierarchies and corresponding morality as harmful in both their limitations and lack of complementarity and reciprocity.

As a culturally literate Paiute woman interpreter of the ideologies informing political relationships between race and gender, Winnemucca acts as a moral buffer between often opposing masculinities. She also manages to exemplify complementary gender through her cross-cultural performance of both masculinity and femininity in her typically male social roles as translator, orator, and warrior. Tisinger explains that Sarah

> uses her position as a woman who performs brave feats like a man as a tactic to draw in and keep her audiences. Presenting herself as a woman warrior, but also as a woman well aware of her control over her body, she illustrates her awareness of White cultural norms; she sets up the circumstances in which it is acceptable for her

> to be a woman warrior within a tribal context, yet she also maintains a respectability suitable to her White readers. (186-187)

Because in both cultures women were seen as upholding cultural morals, she is viewed as trustworthy compared to the men who are easily swayed by superficial desires such as money or respect–her performed gender mediates such assumptions. In fact, Agent Reinhard replaces her with her cousin Jerry because he knew that Jerry was more susceptible to corruption and thus more easily manipulated. When Reinhard accosts a young Paiute boy whom he felt mocked him, Winnemucca explains to him that the boy did not understand the English language. She translates cultural differences and admonishes Reinhard for his ignorance. When some of the head Paiute men ask her what to do in several tricky situations with the Agents, she makes sure to reassure them that she is merely an interpreter, a woman moreover, thus appeasing their masculinity before being persuaded to give her advice on the matter at hand and fulfilling a typically male duty. She says to them, "If it was in my power I would be too happy to do so for you, but I am powerless, being a woman, and yet you come to me for help. You have your interpreter; why does he not talk for you? He is the man for you to go to" (139-140). Her advice was typically sought to promote peace and justice while maintaining a high sense of morality. In this same example, the men respond to Sarah: "Sarah, we know that Jerry is in with the Agent, and it is no use for us to ask him…So we came to you, for you are the only one that is always ready to talk for us. We know our sister can write on paper to our good father in Washington if she will" (140). Throughout the text as in this example, Winnemucca subtly and strategically employs her cultural and rhetorical knowledge of Paiute and Anglo masculinity and her role as a woman interpreter to mediate

across cultures; she effectively fulfills both roles as needed for the greater physical and moral benefit of her people.

Her trustworthiness leads to becoming a protector as well as leader, often through war zones, thus a performance of Paiute masculinity as warrior/leader. Specifically, Winnemucca performs Paiute masculinity as she traverses Anglo-American male spaces as an interpreter and speaker for and leader of her people, but also asserts herself as a dominant Indian woman unlike the stereotypical "squaw," or effeminate and weak Indian. Embodying both strong male and female powers, Winnemucca displays bravery, leadership, confidence, honor, and immeasurable moral and physical strength. In this sense, she becomes a woman warrior fighting for the rights of her people. She is the only woman in the text who participates in masculine activities making her especially unique but also less predictable and thus more effective. She uses her unique gender performances to disarm and convince her many different audiences to assist her. "Her status as a woman, then, mediates between the more threatening demeanor of a male Paiute warrior and the tribe's very immediate need for public support and assistance" (Tisinger 177). Furthermore, her mediation as woman warrior exposes the colonial hierarchical dominance and gender violence against Paiute men and their inadvertent complicity. Therefore, her cultural literacy and gender performance proves to be the most effective rhetorical and physical tools in response to colonial and imperial oppression. Her performance of Paiute masculinity, even as a woman, maintains those roles that were drastically endangered by colonialism.

Furthermore, performing masculinity while discursively reinforcing femininity affords Winnemucca the freedom to traverse physical space in ways that nobody else could. This space includes both the physical borders of the Western Frontier (between reservation or

tribal land and "American" soil) as well as the ideological or cultural borders (read savage vs. civilization) as informed by gender portrayals and subversions to reveal the colonial boundaries or borderlands on both fronts. Winnemucca traverses both boundaries simultaneously thus reinforcing her cultural literacy and ability to transcend social constructs that would otherwise restrain her as a Native woman. As illustrated in the "Bannock War" chapter, Winnemucca is the only person who can and is willing to traverse through war zones as she helps the soldiers pacify turmoil between the warring Bannock Indians and the white settlers while rescuing her family caught in the crossfire. She writes: "Yes, I went for the government when the officers could not get an Indian man or a white man to go for lover or money. I, only an Indian woman, went and saved my father and his people" (164). As Carpenter elucidates, as "only" an Indian woman Winnemucca traverses typically male boundaries and spaces, "an ironic commentary [for] it is while ostensibly affirming her femininity–her deference to the men (and to the reader)–that she in fact dictates her literal, and literary, movement" (77). Performing the humble Indian woman allows Winnemucca the freedom to travel where she pleases, a freedom not typical for women at this time. Winnemucca's sex and hybrid gender performance, paired with her race and position as interpreter affords her access to multiple places open to no other, male or female. However, such access as Native female interpreter also came with its own set of dangers from white men, who were both aroused and threatened by her power, and white women, who were fearful and angered by her gender performance, all sentiments that she attempts to assuage in the act of writing her tribalography.

Indian women's physical safety was endangered by colonialism as they became sexual targets for Anglo-American men. The text is very telling of the sexual violence

perpetrated against Native women and Winnemucca makes it clear that Native men did not practice such violence against either Indian or Anglo women. The ambiguity or rather "respectability" of her use of the word "outrage" to describe sexual violence further exemplifies her cultural literacy. Carpenter explains that, "In adopting a synonym of rape or sexual assault that was familiar to white women, Winnemucca asserts not only that such violations occurred but that they were, indeed, violations. Winnemucca uses white women's language of respectability and domesticity to gain the white reader's empathy" (75). Such use of language is an attempt to unite white and Indian women against white male perpetrators while expressing her anger for such acts. Carpenter explains:

> That is, she challenges the assumption that women are too weak to defend themselves: indeed it is unwomanly (and un-Indian) *not* to do so. In this and other instances, the word 'outrage' functions as an ironic contrast between the uncivilized white men–who regularly violate Paiute women–and Paiute women, who have never committed such crimes and yet are considered beasts. In moving from the position of the white, middle-class woman who is outraged to that of the Paiute woman who, through her own anger, prevents that outrage, Winnemucca claims for herself the personhood that is denied Native American women in the conventional ethnography. (76)

Indeed, Winnemucca's performance speaks volumes about the status of Native and all women in American society in the late nineteenth century. However, in their focus on Winnemucca's performance of femininity, Tisinger and Carpenter neglect a fully developed analysis of her performance of masculinity.

Colonization relies upon sexual and social conquest based primarily on gender roles and performances by both women *and* men, which simultaneously dismantles complementarity and reciprocity between genders. "The symbolic use of women in colonization projects involves imagining the land about to be colonized as female and repeatedly constructing Native women in ways that justify not only the violence and the destruction of the conquest but also the subsequent marginalization of the colonized" (Venegas 63). Inversely, the colonial project depends on constructions of Native men as equally violent and corrupt and thus complicit in the symbolic and real rape of women and the land, stripping them of their traditional roles replaced with dishonor and shame. In her tribalographic accounts of her gender performance, Winnemucca negotiates and maneuvers around ideologies informing colonial simulations of Indians in a rhetorically astute effort to speak through such simulations or fabrications constructed to justify colonization. She does so through her performances of race and gender, masculinity and femininity in an effort to maintain complementarity and reciprocity between genders and cultures, as this analysis has attempted to reveal.

Winnemucca strategically employs her gender and cultural literacy to her advantage, often to gain sympathy or trust, reminding U.S. military and government officials that she is "only an Indian woman" and so ostensibly powerless (p. 136). However, she also uses the same rhetoric to prove to her Paiute people that a woman can lead them in times of conflict when Paiute men failed, the consequences of which, as discussed earlier, resulted in her subverting performed gender roles and becoming a Chief and woman warrior with both physical and moral strength.[7] Winnemucca performs *both* the feminine *and* masculine culture-specific or expected gender roles based on the context and needs of her Paiute people,

often combining and transforming these roles simultaneously in order to maintain complementarity and reciprocity as vital cultural traditions. For example, in order to gain Anglo-American financial support to publish her tribalography, she performs as the perceived virtuous and innocent "Indian Princess" (complete with "traditional" wardrobe) in order to fulfill her new tribal role as woman warrior seeking to protect her tribal nation from further assault, a typically male role.

Winnemucca employs other subtle performances of cross-cultural rhetoric and ideology. In her interpretations of the words "good" and "bad," parallel to her use of the words "savage" and "civilized," Winnemucca takes advantage of Anglo stereotypes of Indians to engage and then mock those perceptions by reciprocally projecting them back onto the government Agents. However, by comparing actions among the Agents, soldiers, and Paiute leaders (herself included), she reveals that not all are inherently "bad" according to *both* Anglo *and* Paiute cultural standards. Rather, she focuses on the actions themselves to ascertain the true value of an individual as emphasized in the repeated phrase "no man can be a leader among Indians who is not a good man," a phrase which loosely applies to *both* the gender *and* the cultural designation per the above analysis (194). Clearly women can be leaders as much as male leaders need also be good; a leader must be good regardless of gender or sex. Thus, she critiques not the men themselves but *both* the actions informed by colonial violence *and* their accompanying discourses that rely on strict hierarchical binaries, all colonial masculine spheres that she penetrates as a Paiute woman. "The 'good' Indian Princess and the 'bad' Indian squaw are summoned to resolve not only who 'we' (Americans) are but also what 'we' have done and where 'we' are going" (Venegas 76). Although a carrier of the dominant discourse and thus seemingly complicit in colonization,

her rhetorical and ideological reciprocity mocks the discourse from which it derives and its effects on *both* Paiute women *and* men. Therefore, her strategic rhetorical employment of gender and morality seeks to contribute to a developing and more inclusive national identity. Through her literary performance of gender and cultural literacy, Winnemucca enacts Indigenous feminism and sovereignty by simultaneously critiquing Anglo ideologies while asserting Paiute ideologies in an attempt at establishing complementary and reciprocal relationships.

In terms of the text as a whole, Winnemucca's choices in genre, style, themes, and other rhetorical strategies attempt to appeal to and mediate between both male and female, Anglo and Native audiences. The text itself acts as a translator that "seeks to alter the politics of cross-cultural communication itself" (Senier 92). *Life Among the Piutes* intervenes with and refutes sentimental politics, "which assumes that *feeling* and experience are ultimately communicable" and vulnerable to colonization (Senier 92). In translation and mediation through the text itself, Winnemucca refuses to allow her text to be "feminized" according to American literary history where sentiment or feeling equates "feminine" by focusing on her actions rather than her feelings. In a few instances, she appeals to the audience's emotions but rarely does she reveal her own emotions about a situation other than a tone of anger and sadness displayed at crucial moments throughout the text as she comments on events or actions and their dire consequences. Rather, the text focuses on Winnemucca's courageous physical and ideological movement across borders and thus often reads more like a historical narrative or adventure novel, typically considered a "masculine" genre that women authors rarely attempted. Therefore, Winnemucca's physical and literary anomalism as both masculine and feminine made her both a social and literary outcast

subject to criticism, but mostly only from those who had the most to lose (Anglo men of power such as BIA Agents and Paiute men).

Winnemucca's exhibition of literary and enacted masculinity threatens male power while exerting female agency. Although her "periodic self-justification and insistence on her individual agency may be a feature of Western autobiography…her moments of self-vindication also speak to a Paiute audience, since Paiutes as well as whites criticized her" and thus exemplifies transcultural or intercultural mediation (Senier 95). Such mediation exhibits a sense of discursive power that is "'essential to action and the right to have one's part matter.' Gaining that power often requires translating one's own opinions into the dominant idiom by employing *dialogism.*..a conversation among conflicting intentions, values, claims, opinions–a conversation among her selves" (Glenn 104). Winnemucca thus becomes more than just a Native woman, she becomes a myriad of possible genders, races, cultures, and nationalities. She is politically and socially trans-identity, or able to consistently move across identities with various positionalities and thus unable to be classified in simplistic binaries. To be trans-identity is to strategically move along an ever-growing continuum of possible identities.[8] Using her trans-identity literacy, her knowledge and performance along this continuum of possible identities, Winnemucca attempts to break down the barriers of gender and race, all within a traditional Paiute context, and through dialogic reciprocity reveals another vital layer of the conflict: cross-cultural mediation and translation.

Unlike most of her male counterparts, Winnemucca resists mimicry by presenting her tribalographic rag friend, by embodying both genders simultaneously, and by attempting to step outside of the ambivalence that colonial discourse projects upon its subjects. According to postcolonial scholars, "Only by stressing the way in which the text transforms the societies

and institutions within which it functions (its 'transformative work') can such mimicry be avoided and replaced by a theory and practice which embraces difference and absence as material signs of power rather than negation, of freedom not subjugation, of creativity not limitation" (Ashcroft et al 166). Indeed, Winnemucca consistently yet subtly critiques the "goodness" of the institutions and individuals that embody white masculine institutions and personhood, including Christianity, the BIA, and the patriarchal U.S. government and society in general. Rather than merely mimic the colonial discourse that seeks to subjugate Indians both female *and* male, Winnemucca strategically employs and critiques that discourse while simultaneously providing an alternative that allows for difference, especially in terms of how gender is perceived or performed. Malea Powell writes that Winnemucca "uses [her] positioning" as part of a group of women reformists and thus "civilized" Indian "to open a space in which she is like white women but is not white, at the same time that she is like Indian women but is not 'primitive.' This is the space of her textual authority–the space from which she establishes her own representations as 'truth' because she, unlike others in the room, can see both positions–white and Indian, [masculine and feminine] clearly because of her position between them" ("Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins" 86). Thus, Winnemucca and her story reflect a tribal philosophy of "everything is everything" in a way that asserts agency as well as a respectful, complementary, and symbiotic or reciprocal relationship with the other.[9] My analysis seeks to add a focus on men and masculinity missing from previous scholarship and necessary to reach such a conclusion that enacts Indigenous feminism as decolonial social project.

Winnemucca embodies the Paiute gender philosophy of complementarity, similar and different, while incorporating and critically responding to the violently enacted polarity of

colonial gender roles. She uses translations and mediations of gender and border crossing to her advantage amongst both Anglo and Paiute, gaining trust while placing herself in the direct line of fire, both physically and politically. Yet, she presents a clear understanding of the complexity of language and cultural translation as it relates to or reflects social constructions and actions. She responds by asking that people judge her on how her actions do indeed reflect her words, modeling the philosophy that she espouses. Doing so is both complementary and reciprocal because she presents her own culture's traditions in order to set the path for fellow Paiutes but also Anglo-Americans. Therefore, she performs acts of self-determination by asserting the agency to participate in the ongoing development of an inclusive American national identity. She performs Indigenous feminism by simultaneously critiquing the dominant discourses and actions as enforcing binaries and hierarchies based on power rather than communal needs.

Winnemucca's text is transformative for many reasons. As evidenced in the letters included at the end of the tribalography, she convinces several white men to support her and her people and uses these letters as rag friends to gain more support. Her performances were continuously well received by late nineteenth century audiences garnering her the rare opportunity to publish. In terms of gender, her cultural literacy allows her to transcend colonial limitations of both race and gender and perform the roles necessary to traverse the complicated hierarchical terrain of mid-nineteenth century United States. By resisting the dominant discourse, she asserts agency in defining herself as an Indian woman warrior maintaining Paiute gender roles based on social needs. Individual self-definition simultaneously enacts communal sovereignty.

Finally, this reading reaffirms assertions that gender performance can be read as a political act negotiating underlying ideologies used to enforce colonial dominance but does so with an emphasis on Native female performances of masculinity, a combination of genders vital to a more complete understanding of the effects of colonization on Native societies as a whole. Reading texts through an Indigenous feminist lens exposes the nature of the culturally informed political activism embedded therein and not just *why* but *how* we analyze gender as a form of activism and decolonization as well. In tracing such developments between and within Native authored texts considering their unique cultural and historical contexts, critical readers can better understand colonization and its real ramifications as experienced by varying Native individuals and nations. Indigenous feminist literature and theory enacts sovereignty through such complementary and reciprocal negotiations. As the nature of colonial relationships continue to transform drastically through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an Indigenous feminist reading of Native texts helps to trace those changes and responses as seen in the following two chapters.

[1] I use the contemporary spelling of Paiute with the "a," which, when missing, reflects Winnemucca's usage.
[2] I use the word "literacy" to denote an understanding of culturally informed physical and rhetorical performances of gender, race, and national identity.
[3] For more on this topic, see Elizabeth Archuleta's forthcoming work on the subjugation of Indian female bodies based on racialized and gendered constructs.
[4] In their discussion of mourning loss, David L. Eng and David Kazanjian explain that "to represent the losses of colonized peoples as resolved through mourning is to consider history past, concluded, and dead, while, paradoxically, to represent these losses as unresolved allows for a productive, 'ongoing and open relationship with the past'" (Lawlor 71).
[5] Detailed information about the term "savage" and its implications on Native peoples can be found in Roy Harvey Pearce's *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind.* He writes, "American Indians were everywhere found to be, simply enough, men who were not men, who were religiously and politically incomplete…and stood everywhere as a challenge to order and reason and civilization" (6).
[6] Forcing an agrarian lifestyle on Native men was another tool of assimilation that required tribal groups to live as independent families resulting in a loss of tribal cultural lifestyles. It also forced tribes to participate in the American economic system. The government further enforced this practice with the Dawes/Allotment Act parceling out land to tribe members.
[7] Danielle Tisinger writes that "Presenting herself as a woman warrior, but also as a woman well aware of her control over her body, she illustrates her awareness of White cultural norms…[and] writes herself as a woman of moral virtue with the physical strength to maintain that virtue" (186-187).
[8] I use the term trans-identity rather than queer because the term queer tends to remove focus on identities whereas trans-identity maintains identity as necessary to negotiate complementary and reciprocal relationships.
[9] See LeAnne Howe for more regarding this tribal philosophy.

CHAPTER 4: SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION: STORYTELLING IN *CEREMONY*

As explored previously, cultural ideologies inform social constructions and symbolic systems imbued with meaning, particularly relating to race and gender. Nineteenth century Native literature reveals strategic negotiations with cross-cultural ideologies using race and gender constructions. As culture adapts and changes, so do symbols and their corresponding social construction and meaning. Progressing into the 20th century, Native literature continues to respond to historical and ongoing conflict and addresses larger, more diverse audiences. A continuing history of colonization informs contemporary identity conflicts with neocolonialism, the dominant or hegemonic control of minorities in the United States through social constructions. Institutionalized neocolonialism manifests internally within individual and communal bodies calling for new literary negotiations. The body itself becomes the new colonial landscape making social constructions and performances the neocolonial villain. "All bodies are socially constructed–that social attitudes and institutions determine far greater than biological fact the representation of the body's reality…Social constructionism makes it possible to see [physical difference] as the effect of an environment hostile to some bodies and not to others, requiring advances in social justice rather than medicine" (Siebers 738). Social constructionism opens up conversations about bodies that are simultaneously raced and gendered by a predominantly Western society and calls for deconstruction and decolonization. Individual bodies suffer the consequences of illness-inducing, ideology-informed social constructions unexplained by modern medical science. How then does an individual or community seeking to maintain sovereignty eradicate neocolonial psychic and physical pain? Under such constraints, difference can be understood as moving beyond, yet inclusive of, ideological social construction and into the internalized

sphere of the body-mind relationship. In focusing on the individual while maintaining a crucial connection to the communal, Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony* enacts decolonization in the text, in reader's imaginations, and society as a whole. Such literary decolonization relies on both a theoretical and practical understanding of Indigenous feminism as asserting inclusive open systems that rely on difference and transformation.

The novel illustrates neocolonial illness embodied in Tayo, a Laguna Pueblo World War II prisoner of war returned to his home in western New Mexico. He suffers from a mysterious illness. Although the Western medical doctors prescribe avoidance of traditional medicine, Tayo's family seeks traditional medicine men to help. Through his healing ceremony, Tayo begins to understand the nature of the witchery, the malevolent force at the source of his and the communal illness. In ceremonially building relationships with archetypal predecessors such as Yellow Woman and Arrow Boy, Tayo begins to understand his place in the world and find peace within himself.

In healing Tayo, Silko prescribes a decolonial process that begins with individual and communal awareness of and resistance to colonial systems and ends with a self-determined realignment to a thriving open system. Systems include any physical or ideological entity composed of a variety of parts working together, such as social or political institutions or the body itself. Whereas an open system relies on and adjusts to changes and transformations within the parts of the system, a closed system is static, inflexible, and does not allow for difference or change. Racial and gendered (and therefore politicized) individual and communal bodies are very much open systems with their "own forces that we need to recognize if we are to get a less one-sided picture of how bodies and their representations affect each other for good and for bad" (Siebers 749). Both individual and community

bodies are organic agents "teeming with vital and chaotic forces. [They are] not inert matter subject to easy manipulation by social representations" as explored in previous chapters (749). As living agents with the free will to act in their own and others' interests, individual and communal bodies maintain complementary and reciprocal relationships with social systems while both undertake vital transformations; every part within the system is equal in its connection and ability to affect other parts and the system as a whole. A closed system creates individual bodies without agency, free will, or the vital connection to other parts and the system as a whole.

Silko's protagonist, Tayo, and his war buddies come to represent the general state of contemporary *individualized* Native male identities as socially constructed subjects of Western ideologies. As allegory, the novel becomes social commentary. Tayo illustrates the internalized struggle against the pressures of conflicting social constructions; he is both emotionally and physically different, based on what his body represents and the associated psychic and physical pain he experiences. However, rather than seeing difference as an impairment or a divisive quality, Silko celebrates it through her representation and healing of Tayo, where difference is necessary for maintaining an open system adapting to internal and external pressures. Placing this novel on a continuum of Native male experience discussed in previous chapters offers a teleological look at contemporary Native American fiction as attempting to manifest Indigenous feminist social justice and decolonization as a continual process of critical awareness, negotiation, and adaptation.

I argue that Silko models such an open system through her adaptation of traditional Native storytelling to maintain relationships across colonial boundaries and binaries. Through her literary representation of these relationships, she asserts that decolonization

requires understanding that binaries are only harmful when used to re-enforce socially constructed dominance through racial and gender hierarchies, much like Winnemucca's argument explored in the previous chapter. Also like Winnemucca, Silko simultaneously presents an Indigenous feminist model of social justice by focusing on the social institutions (or closed systems such as Western schools, medicine, military, and government) that impose neocolonial dominance. Furthermore, Silko's novel models complementary and reciprocal relationships in negotiation of dominance inflicted on the individual and communal body by both self and others, internal and external. As seen through an Indigenous feminist lens, the novel offers a decolonizing process intended to balance relationships through storytelling while also asserting a sovereign communal identity for Laguna Pueblo people. Balanced relationships can be assessed through the gender and racial dynamics displayed in the novel while considering the historical impact of colonial dominance on Native male bodies explored in previous chapters. Much like Winnemucca's performance of both genders, Silko's male protagonist learns to accept and embody both genders as necessary for individual and communal sovereignty.

My analysis attempts to expand upon previous scholarship on gender in the novel in an effort to increase its social value. Kristin Herzog's article "Thinking Woman and Feeling Man: Gender in Silko's *Ceremony*" explores the healing powers of gender blending and storytelling as cultural epistemology. She writes that "For American Indians, spirit ties all human beings to each other and to the whole cosmos; therefore it also unifies the genders. Spirit does not dissolve gender distinctions, but it renders certain gender traits as interchangeable" (33). While Herzog does not fully explore the ideological basis for understanding such a "spirit," Indigenous feminism proposes that it is based on

complementarity and reciprocity as the key principles for maintaining balance. This work extends Herzog's discussion by more thoroughly exploring how Silko's novel as a whole builds complementary and reciprocal relationships between words and actions (both the fictional relationships *in* the text and those created *by* the text with the reader), individual and community, and community and society in response to neocolonialism. Furthermore, this analysis uncovers the myriad ways in which the personal becomes political in terms of the neocolonial social constructions that inform gender and racial/ethnic identity. I read the novel as enacting Indigenous feminism by exposing the ways in which social constructions can be both harmful and beneficial, depending on the how they are performed and internalized in both words and actions. I hope that such a reading exposes the dangers of perpetuating destructive performances of otherwise innocuous binaries. To read the novel solely as a *resistance* to patriarchal ideologies detrimentally performs those same ideologies by reading them as simply *either* good *or* bad. Such a hierarchical reading fails to recognize its own neocolonial internalization of enacted social constructions. Using the novel as an example, Indigenous feminism reveals how consistently performed neocolonial social constructions become systematic and therefore more difficult to clearly recognize, assess, and avoid.

Because much of this discussion builds on the evolving conversation about feminist healing in the novel, I will simultaneously summarize that conversation while presenting my analysis of narrative form, Tayo's illness, and his ceremony before elucidating further on the Indigenous feminist aspects of the novel. To this discussion I add the focus on masculinity as a hierarchical social construction effecting Tayo's physical and mental health. I argue that Tayo's illness stems from Western constructions of masculinity conflicting with Laguna

ideologies, further exacerbated by a colonial history of hierarchical racial binaries culminating in neocolonialism. The narrative form mirrors Tayo's illness and ceremony; the blending of narrative traditions is at first confusing but then essential to Tayo's transformation.

I then focus on the novel's illustration of Indigenous feminism through a critical awareness of performed social constructions and an innovative re-visioning of gender roles and constructions. Tayo's story as ceremony reveals how Yellow Woman leads him towards "being" Yellow Woman, blending masculinity and femininity, before he can more clearly "see" himself in relation to the rest of the world and the systems he perpetuates through his gender performance in particular. His newfound understanding of himself in relation to these systems finally helps him to heal/decolonize the wounds of performed colonial/neocolonial masculinity. I argue that Tayo's healing requires that he embrace and equalize feminine attributes that seek to nurture himself and his community. Furthermore, Silko implies that Native women help lead Native men through the ideologically constructed gender maze much like the sand painting ceremony Tayo undergoes as part of his healing; women warriors help men lead the way through enemy territory. Unlike other theories previously used to understand the social implications of the novel, an Indigenous feminist lens connects various forms of identity politics from a uniquely Indigenous perspective to disentangle the Native individual from the neocolonial system. Finally, an Indigenous feminist reading of the novel exposes it as a decolonial social justice project.

Narrative Form

Silko's narrative construction enacts Indigenous feminism in the re-visioned creation of the storytelling tradition. Silko employs the Thought-Woman mythological character as a

traditional storyteller and creator further blended with the character/narrator to position the reader within the context of Native traditions transformed within the text-based format. As Silko suggests throughout her novel, culture and traditions are not permanent but, rather, a continual process of becoming, changing, and adapting as necessary to teach new lessons for survival. I argue that the formal narration of the story blends binary opposites of *both* male *and* female voices and Western and Laguna literary traditions as necessary for understanding the complete story. Story itself relies on both genders and binaries in general as integral to understanding their performance and effects.

Silko begins by placing the story within the mythological context of Thought-Woman, who is the spider, original storyteller, and creator of all life through the power of thought. Silko frames this story as if it were another of Thought-Woman's thought creations and thus transforming the physical world. Silko not only places the story within Laguna Pueblo history and mythology but also relinquishes authorship or authority over the story. She poses as a mere conduit for the story and not its creator; the story is thus a gift provided to the community much like those given to traditional storytellers to heal or teach a valuable lesson. In his exploration of myth in the novel, Robert Nelson writes that, because of the formatting of the novel's first few pages, neither Silko nor Thought-Woman is the sole narrator of the full story. Rather, he claims, Tayo also narrates as the unassuming carrier of the stories. Nelson writes:

> Perhaps what we are to understand, taking the first two pieces together, is that creative power occurs where gender is liminalized: to know the whole story is to know both the male and the female aspects of the story. Gender is an articulation of

> life, but the life being articulated, i.e., taking form, could go either way and, in a wholly realized universe, does go both ways. (44)

Nelson indirectly confirms Silko's Indigenous feminism even in the most basic element of formal narrative identity; the story relies on both male and female narrative voices as equalizing forces. Using Nelson's assertion of liminalized gender binaries, I develop an Indigenous feminist analysis of the related racial/ethnic binaries in the novel's formal composition as attempting to build similarly equalizing and balanced relationships for the purpose of decolonization.

Decolonization requires critical attention to the ways in which stories are told, the language and construction. While blending narrative conventions, Silko's novel asserts the value in bringing together seemingly incongruous customs, thus simultaneously maintaining Laguna epistemologies. Early sections of the novel seem out of place or even out of sequence as Silko collapses linear narrative, adapting it to a more cyclical oral storytelling format. In the first seemingly poetic section, "mythic" man and woman reveal the importance and origin of stories and ceremony, connecting these words to the initial framework of Thought-Woman. This connection represents the symbiotic and complementary nature of story and ceremony, reflecting the cycle of words that lead to other stories common in Laguna storytelling. Ku'oosh, the medicine man who first tends to Tayo and symbolizes not only storytelling traditions but Laguna worldviews as well, describes this cycling of words and stories as fragile. "The word he chose to express 'fragile' was filled with the intricacies of a continuing process, and with a strength inherent in spider webs…[I]t took a long time to explain the fragility and intricacy because no word exists alone, and the reason for choosing each word had to be explained with a story" (35). Such storytelling requires "the

responsibility that went with being human [which] demanded great patience and love" (36). As Barbara Godard explains, Silko "reviv[es] traditional storytelling techniques in new forms…posits the word as a process of knowing, provisional and partial, rather than as revealed knowledge itself, and aims to produce texts in performance that would create truth as interpretations rather than those in the Western mimetic tradition that reveal truth as pre-established knowledge" (184). Storytelling itself builds complementary relationships between individuals, society, and the natural world.

As another complementary storytelling method, the literary form of the novel sets a concerned tone regarding a shared illness. Silko frequently employs dramatic pauses and line breaks and inserts parallel stories derived from ethnographic accounts of Laguna mythology. These written and re-written transformations of the performed oral tradition create deeper meaning, a life outside of the frozen words on the page. In these stylistic aspects of Silko's writing, both Laguna and Western literary traditions begin to overlap. Silko's style and tone exhibited in non-linear form is specific to Native oral traditions but also revises them by incorporating Western literary traditions of written linear narration and genre stylistics of prose and poetry. The reader enters a world where Western and Laguna narrative styles and forms are blended for a common purpose. Throughout the novel, Silko continues to jump from a recognizable Western narrative prose to an oral storytelling of traditional stories in poetic form, weaving in the elements necessary for a complete understanding of the ceremony as a whole. Time moves forward from beginning to end but continuously jumps back and forth, often crossing from Tayo's experiences to mythical times, thus creating relationships across literary genres and across time. As explored in previous chapters, genres

in a Western tradition are symbolically linked to gendered performances. However, Silko's blending of genres liminalizes gender and literary traditions, making them equally vital.

Similar to Winnemucca, Silko's method of genre blending reflects the message of the story and is integral to the effectiveness of Tayo's ceremony. The story becomes a dynamic performance that involves the reader and encourages varied interpretations through collaboration of listener/reader and storyteller/author and thus conveys the transformative and communal power of oral storytelling. "The text as other can be perceived as a virtual life-form (in the Wittgensteinian sense of a 'language game' as a life form), as a complex and dynamic pattern (of signifiers) that forms part of the self-shaping process of living cultural systems" (Brill de Ramírez 15). Thus, the actual format of the novel becomes the entry point into Tayo's ceremony, paralleling this ideological performance and process of transformation through awareness of both the story pattern and the "other" in order to help self-identify and heal. Gregory Salyers points out:

> [T]he frustration that this [form] may produce is, however, a prominent feature in the beauty and power of the novel. The reader experiences in a small way what Tayo has to overcome, and readers who complete the ritual of reading are left with a vision of the world not unlike that of Tayo's at the end. This is a vision that heals deep wounds and provides hope in the possibility of creation rather than fear at the possibilities of destruction. (32)

The texts' form therefore reflects Western and Laguna literary traditions as well as the psychological condition of the protagonist. In this way, Silko builds complementary and reciprocal relationships with the reader across the boundaries of the written form, making the novel itself a kind of Indigenous feminist ceremony.

Tayo's Illness

Silko's protagonist, Tayo, is a mixed-blood Native who grew up on the Laguna Pueblo with his Auntie, Uncle Josiah, cousin Rocky, and Old Grandma. His light brown but not-white skin, hazel eyes, and uncertain White paternal lineage mark him as an ambiguous body, visually different and therefore dangerous to those who rely upon easily identifiable social constructions, such as race and gender. Western medical practitioners and others who conform to colonial ideology, such as Auntie, view Tayo as weak, defective, and untreatable when unable to recover from his misdiagnosed illness. Tayo alone must fight as if the illness were his enemy, a premise that only perpetuates his symptoms by ideologically pitting himself as Laguna against himself as American.Tayo's illness stems from colonial ideologies that enable a rigid dichotomy between illness and health, self and other, physical and metaphysical science, and, by extension, male and female as embodied gender opposites of strength and weakness. Tayo suffers from physical and mental fragmentation resulting from neocolonial binaries forcing him to identify as *either* Native *or* Anglo as reflected in his gender performance. Neocolonial binaries impose dominance through such either/or distinctions. Within the closed imperial system, Tayo cannot choose one identity without completely abandoning the other; yet until a choice is made, his life has no meaning and no purpose. The conflict causes Tayo to experience intense physical and emotional pain when he is unable to unravel the Western ideologies he has assimilated. Thus he remains disconnected from his Laguna identity and community as well as greater society. His illness results from his embodied difference and internalized conflict as a mixed-blood Native American man simultaneously representing and enacting the role of colonizer and colonized.

Tayo's story begins with his blended memories of growing up in Laguna and his traumatic experiences in the second World War, simultaneously blending cultural epistemologies and their corresponding histories. For Tayo, such a seemingly incongruous blend perpetuates his illness. For example, he remembers when he was unable to distinguish a slain Japanese soldier from his own Uncle while his cousin Rocky reassures him that Uncle Josiah is safe at home and that they were where they were "supposed to be," American soldiers helping to fight a war against oppression.

> He examined the facts and logic again and again, the way Rocky had explained it to him; the facts made what he had seen an impossibility. He shivered because all the facts, all the reasons made no difference any more; he could hear Rocky's words, and he could follow the logic of what Rocky said, but he could not feel anything except a swelling in his belly, a great swollen grief that was pushing into his throat. (9)

Tayo cannot perform as an American soldier, killing for his country, and he cannot understand why Rocky insists that this is the role that two Laguna boys from the pueblo are supposed to play. He can no longer distinguish fact from fiction or logic, or what he believes from what he has been told to believe; he is overwhelmed, physically gagged, when confronted by signs, visions, and language that he is unable to comprehend. Tayo cannot extract his memories or Laguna worldview from the patriarchal mindset forced on him during the war, leaving him feeling completely lost, alone, and ill. From an Indigenous feminist perspective, Tayo becomes dormant and static out of fear of ideologically-informed performances that exacerbate oppression; he does not know how to negotiate a balanced relationship with the "other," both internal and external.

Although other critics have discussed these cultural ideology-informed racial differences, they have neglected the gendered implications of those differences. Gender and race/ethnicity are dual components of a closed colonial system intended to maintain dominance. Tayo questions his role when at war and confronted physically with the hypermasculine violence expected of American men defending the righteousness of their nation. Subconsciously he begins to question his role as a Laguna male carrying with him the oppressive history of Native Americans. Blending that history with the present, he finds himself behind the gun symbolically shooting at his own family, unable to distinguish between what he sees and what he feels and understands. Tayo questions his own identity and accompanying role as *both* Native *and* American but, more specifically, his performance of a Native man fighting as an American man.

The contrasting rain in the jungles of the south Pacific and the drought back home in New Mexico mirror Tayo's internal conflict. Tayo suffers from the merciless rain in the jungle during the war and he curses it, praying for "dry air, dry as a hundred years squeezed out of yellow sand, air to dry the oozing wounds of Rocky's leg, to the torn flesh and broken bones breathe, to clear the sweat from Rocky's eyes" (11). The rain as metaphor for the flood of conflicting information and emotions that Tayo experiences while at war drenches his brain and soul. But when viewed from a Navajo understanding of the differences between a "male" and "female" rain, this oppressive, damaging, and therefore excessively "male" rain may also represent actual masculinity as the source of Tayo's illness.[1] Bodies, like the land, need both heavy rains and dry periods to survive; an unbalanced amount of either can be dangerous.

Tayo prays that the deluge will cease so that both he and Rocky can heal properly. In war, the "male" rain comes as a mockery to Tayo who is surrounded by death and hypermasculine destruction, the opposite of everything that he was taught to believe. He blames the rain for Rocky's death because he came to understand what Uncle Josiah had told him, that "nothing was all good or all bad," and he could not bring himself to blame the Japanese grenade or the U.S. corporal (11). So Tayo damns the rain, hoping that his words would "make a cloudless blue sky, pale with a summer sun pressing across wide and empty horizons" and save him from destruction amidst the confusing signs (12). Furthermore, Tayo notes that all skin begins to look the same after death, Japanese, Laguna, white. However, these various signs in the form of gendered landscape and skin color connect Tayo to Laguna and serve to reinforce rather than alleviate his internal struggle. By damning the "male" rain, he thus damns the power of masculinity to be wholly destructive rather than life sustaining when balanced. In this way, Tayo unknowingly succumbs to the dangers of a closed systemic performance of otherwise harmless binaries.

From an Indigenous feminist perspective, Tayo's "illness" results from a history of colonial conflict and harmful neocolonial performances that seek to keep seemingly disparate identities separated. While at war, he cannot disconnect himself and his community from the world around him, even when he is told that his sanity depends on maintaining separation. Tayo attempts to resist his Laguna worldview because Auntie, Rocky, and Western society demand he do so. He is literally caught between ideological opposites, the racial/ethnic binary imposed upon him as a mixed-blood Native man in Anglo/Western society. While in the veteran's mental hospital, all efforts to find balance between conflicting worlds continue to fail Tayo. Left with no alternative, he dissociates, shuts off, and hides away; he becomes

"white smoke" with "no consciousness of itself," invisible, static, closed (14-15). Tayo psychologically exists in a safe place where he can avoid all emotion and past memories and thus all neocolonial conflict. What Tayo partly experiences psychologically is a severely split self-identity as a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a psychological condition resulting from trauma such as war. His participation in the war only exacerbated his harmful performance and internalization of a closed system that relies on separation and hierarchical binaries.

Specifically, Tayo struggles between seeing himself as an individual within a divided Western society and an individual within a kinship based society. Such confusion begins with believing that difference is dangerous or bad, another colonial hierarchy. One of Tayo's symptoms is excessive vomiting, reflecting the novel's short epigraph that notes that the belly is the place where the stories, the lifelines to his culture, are kept, which implies a metaphysical illness with physical symptoms. "Tayo's belly contains a sickness that he is trying to purge; a story would be a tonic to him" but, not just any story, the right story, a story that helps him dissolve the colonial binaries that constrict him (9). To begin the healing process, Tayo must first vomit up the lies and confusion and begin to see the world differently.

> He couldn't vomit any more…so he cried at how the world had come undone, how thousands of miles, high ocean waves, and green jungles could not hold people in their place. Years and months had become weak, and people could push against them and wander back and forth in time. Maybe it had always been this way and he was only seeing it for the first time. (18)

Unable to recognize or treat Tayo's metaphysical symptoms, the doctors release him from the hospital with orders to avoid any traditional medicine, an insurmountable expectation considering the ideological and epistemological implications of his illness. Avoiding traditional medicine proves to only exacerbate Tayo's symptoms and push him further into non-existence.[2]

To make matters worse, Tayo returns home only to be surrounded by others who suffer from different manifestations of the same illness. Most of his family members and friends are also ill or unbalanced because of external pressures and their own internal identity conflicts resulting from neocolonialism. Others' symptoms are exhibited through violence, alcohol abuse, self-hatred, alienation, and malevolent individualism. Even the land itself is sick with drought and the U.S. government's exploitation of its natural resources, the uranium necessary for the war. This more communal illness perpetuates Tayo's own illness as he has few healthy or balanced people to model. Instead, he is left to mimic those he sees around him in order to feel connected in some way. He assumes the shame and guilt that Auntie places on him and drinks heavily with his war buddies, becoming violent from the self-hatred that surrounds him.

In Auntie's mind, Tayo represents the "other," the source of the entanglement, and thus the illness of the community. So Auntie emotionally ostracizes Tayo for what he represents while at the same time physically accepting him into the family, further confusing him. The narrator explains that "She wanted him close enough to feel excluded, to be aware of the distance between them" (67). Auntie tells Tayo horrible stories about his mother to remind him of his controversial origins and what he portrays to her and the community. To

make matters worse, Tayo returns home from the war without his cousin Rocky and thus shares a similar guilt with Auntie for his inability to save him, the "chosen one."

In elevating Rocky while defaming Tayo, Auntie unknowingly perpetuates gender- and race-based oppression formed by neocolonial social constructions. Auntie believes that Rocky represented hope for the community because he fulfilled the dominant cultural expectations of American masculinity; he was a star athlete, bright, and destined for success. She sees Tayo, on the other hand, as weak and shameful because he symbolized a history of oppression that led his mother towards alcoholism and prostitution. Tayo feels as if he should have been the one left behind, not Rocky, and begins to believe what his Auntie already believes: that he is the source of illness in the community. Such neocolonial "discursive power is necessarily contingent upon its respondent validation on the part of the disempowered other" (Berry Brill de Ramirez105). Considering his confused psychological/ideological situation, Tayo is at Auntie's mercy, thus validating and empowering her opinion and treatment towards him.

At home, Tayo is surrounded by the memories and the immense loss of his cousin and Uncle Josiah who died while he was in Japan. His only remaining source of community or family comes in the form of his alcoholic war buddies, Harley, Emo (who hates Tayo for being a mixed-blood), and Pinkie. Together they try to cover up the pain with alcohol and exaggerated stories of when their uniforms covered up the color of their skin and elevated their social status, if only temporarily. The veterans longed for the sense of belonging that came with wearing a military uniform, making them a symbol of masculine America. Along with the uniform came all of the Anglo masculine traits of courage, strength, sexual attraction (and prowess), duty, freedom, and honor.

Structurally, Silko forms one of Emo's stories in a way similar to the traditional stories within the text to show the confusion behind the story's purpose and the mistrust Tayo has developed for stories in general. The stories begin to overlap and intensify his anger over the lies and confusion. "But he wasn't sure any more what to believe or whom he could trust. He wasn't sure" (63). Tayo was sure that he could not accept these stories and remembers only the shame that he felt for covering up the truth that he was a "half-breed Indian," only borrowing the uniform and the pride that went with it. Over beers and attempts to memorialize their triumphs as American war heroes, Tayo unmercifully reminds them that once the uniform came off, they returned to being Indian and no longer received the benefits of being an American man.

> Here they were, trying to bring back that old feeling, that feeling they belonged to America the way they felt during the war. They blamed themselves for losing the new feeling; they never talked about it, but they blamed themselves just like they blamed themselves for losing the land the white people took. They never thought to blame white people for any of it; they wanted white people for their friends. They never saw that it was the white people who gave them that feeling and it was white people who took it away again when the war was over. (43)

Rather than blame the colonial ideologies that inform their perceived position in society, the veterans blame themselves. Eager to befriend and resemble their white brothers, they fail to see their own complicity in continuing oppression through their self-hatred. They believed that as men they were responsible for protecting their people and their country but they failed to recognize for whom and what they were really fighting: their own oppressors and continued oppression of others.

While his buddies seek new ways to hate the Japanese and themselves, Tayo cries for them, their hatred, and disillusionment. In their shame and guilt, they turn to alcohol as a way of slowly poisoning themselves and avoiding the feelings that their experiences have provoked. Harley doesn't feel anything and masks his lack of emotions with "smart talk and laughter" (23). Emo's lack of feeling results in disrespect for the Earth and therefore himself and his culture. Through these stories, Tayo begins to see the Native shame and the white pride that hides within them, both a result of colonial hierarchies. Tayo tells his buddies "I'm half-breed. I'll be the first to say it. I'll speak for both sides. . . . The war was over, the uniform was gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted" (42). He knows that neither culture is solely to blame or is deserving of hate even though they want to blame themselves for the drought and communal illness. He cries because he does not know what to do with that guilt and shame or how to heal himself or his buddies while maintaining a sense of masculinity and cultural pride.

The narrative during these sections of memory mirror Tayo's internal conflict as his memories switch from his pre-war experiences with his Uncle and cousin at the pueblo, to the experiences of being at war in Japan, and then back at the pueblo with his war buddies. Such narrative construction forces the reader to become a vital part of Tayo's ceremony as we directly participate in his blurring of ideologies through the act of reading. Again, this narrative method situates the reader as a listener of a performed storytelling but also as a new character in the story with the ability to affect the telling and outcome. According to oral traditions, stories fluctuate through interactions, the relationship between teller and listener who work together in creating and re-creating each story. Furthermore, such narrative

interweaving underscores the importance of reciprocity but now across time and space between story and reader.

The true source of the entangled stories is the performed ideologies that perpetuate blame and shame for being Indian or mixedblood and thus weaken the community by promoting individualism. The stories that the war veterans choose to repeat allow them to forget their painful pasts, whereas the stories that Auntie chooses constantly reminds her of the painful past and her largest failure, both resulting in alienation or psychological isolation from their community. With these examples, the reader begins to see the truth behind the prophecy presented in the novel's beginning: "Their evil is mighty/but it can't stand up to our stories./ So, they try to destroy the stories/ let the stories be confused or forgotten./ They would like that/ They would be happy/ because we would be defenseless then" (2). The stories are a means of splintering the tribe into poorly supported individual parts, thus leaving both the parts and the whole defenseless against the witchery and performed neocolonial social constructions.

Everybody surrounding Tayo falls prey to the evil and witchery in these confused or forgotten stories perpetuated by self-hate, fractured identities, and individualistic ventures and he becomes both the receptacle for and representative of all of these evil stories. The basis for the neocolonial witchery hinges on the concept of defining oneself in relation to the "other" through the language and epistemology embodied in the stories. "An individual becomes a person in contrast to some 'other' or non-person and, ironically, by which an individual recognizes his or her own subjectivity only 'in experiencing [him or herself] being made into an object' by others" (Farley 192). It is through this individualism that people like Auntie and Emo affirm their own identities in oppressing and devaluing Tayo's actions; such

individualism becomes witchery as both evil and destructive within a communal culture and society.

Further, ideological remnants within the language and the stories themselves inform this individualism based in Western culture; "ideology interpellates concrete individuals as subjects, and bourgeois ideology in particular emphasizes the fixed identity of the individual" (Belsey 597). In Tayo's case, Anglo-American patriarchal and racist ideologies inform and fix his identity through group identification while making him an individual subject to such ideologies and definitions. Tayo does not tell his own story; rather, it is told to him and he therefore constructs and performs his identity through the ideology of others who wish to make him into a subject as well as place him in the generalized category of "other." It is no wonder then that Tayo constructs such a fractured identity when he is placed as and *performs* the subject and the "other" as an individual and group member both within and outside of Laguna. Yet his is a unique position for he must come to realize that his differences are valuable for the progression of Laguna society and culture in accepting the individual "other" for the continued strength of the whole.

> Furthermore, Tayo's illness results from a history of colonial trauma (war, genocide, reservations and removals, institutional racism) imbedded within his blood and memories. According to Eduardo Duran, secondary PTSD "can be acquired by having family and friends who have been acutely traumatized," trauma that includes generations of genocide and internalization and performance of colonial ideologies (40). Tayo's identity encompasses many often conflicting and chaotic elements and relationships both past and present, shaping and tangling his identity in a history of conflict with the closed colonial system. Commenting on the color of Tayo's "Mexican eyes" that remind others of "things that happened," Night Swan tells him:
> [People] are afraid. They feel something happening, they can see something happening around them, and it scares them. Indians or Mexicans or whites–most people are afraid of change. They think that if their children have the same color of skin, the same color of eyes, that nothing is changing. They are fools. They blame us, the ones who look different. That way they don't have to think about what has happened inside themselves. (98)

> Beginning to understand the impact he has on his community, Tayo experiences trauma on multiple levels and therefore physically, ideologically, as well as metaphysically represents a difference, causing fear amongst those attempting to assimilate to colonial ideologies, like Auntie. Although traditionally stories have the power to both heal and make ill, Silko suggests that it is performed adherence to the closed system itself that creates a self-destructive behavioral pattern or illness as seen in Tayo and his war buddies; their illnesses worsen as they desperately attempt to find balance within a system that does not allow for difference or change of any kind. The prophecy from the beginning of the story, while warning of evil, also suggests the power of the stories to overcome and heal but only when used by and for the sake of the community; the necessary ceremony must be imbued with an Indigenous feminist consciousness of balanced relationships.

The Ceremony

To combat the neocolonial ideologies that are making Tayo sick, he must first re-connect to the stories "he had believed in…for a long time, until the teachers at Indian school taught him not to believe in that kind of 'nonsense'" (19). Rather than completely dispose of them, Tayo must put the stories and experiences from his past into perspective to enable him to heal. I argue that to begin healing, Tayo must overcome the witchery and its resulting trauma, shame, blame, and self-hatred and begin to accept and perform his identity outside of imposed hierarchies, outside of the witchery. He does so by being one of the first to complete an adapted ceremony necessary to create a new story for himself and his people.

Silko presents the healing of Tayo through a traditional, yet modified and transformational storytelling performance. At the heart of this storytelling is the complementary and reciprocal relationship between individual identity and communal sovereignty based on strength and unity in difference when viewed from an Indigenous feminist perspective. Silko states: "When I say 'storytelling,' I don't just mean sitting down and telling a once-upon-a-time kind of story. I mean a whole way of seeing yourself, the people around you, your life, the place of life in the bigger context, not just in terms of nature and location, but in terms of what has gone on before, what's happened to the people"

(Salyer 1). Storytelling constructs the core of a Laguna ideology and worldview and is a necessary component to Tayo's healing ceremony. This Indigenous feminist reading of the novel and the stories within seeks to reveal and critically assess ideologically infused performances and relationships.

Storytelling embodies reciprocity based on the premise that all creation is connected on life's "web" or open system, both historically and spiritually; individual actions affect all others on the web through a network of relationships. Each individual or element thus has equal importance where a part to the whole is equally as important as the whole itself. Therefore, healing focuses upon a holistic approach encompassing the many relationships within a community. If one relationship loses balance or harmony, it can affect the community in various ways. In order to heal and regain balance and harmony, the healer or storyteller must assess the community as a whole to find the source of illness while also addressing the individual's needs. The individual as well as the community must be re-balanced to stress the importance of reciprocal relationships. Individual and cultural identities are constructed by the ever-transforming stories and their performances that reflect changes occurring on individual, communal, and societal levels.

In order to heal, Tayo must begin by fully understanding the stories, his history, and his place within the community. The elders send Tayo to the mixed-blood Navajo medicine man Betonie, who lives in the hills overlooking Gallup, New Mexico and the old Navajo ceremonial grounds.[3] As Tayo surveys Betonie's earthy living quarters, he notices old newspapers, phonebooks, and calendars piled high and notes that these, too, "were plainly part of the pattern; they followed the concentric shadows of the room" (120). Betonie's home connects all time and cultural paths as part of a pattern of stories. By stepping into

Betonie's house, Tayo becomes a central part of the truths and stories that these scraps create. Betonie tells him that the story pattern had been growing for hundreds of years and that these bits of the past carried stories that were necessary for the ceremonies. He explains to Tayo that all of his personal experiences were also part of the pattern and that Tayo and his Laguna people must complete the ceremony by defeating the witchery through transformed stories, ceremonies, and performances.

Betonie tells Tayo a story describing a long-time-ago contest responsible for the creation of the witchery and all suffering. He tells Tayo that although Indians created the witchery through storytelling they also have the power to defeat it with new stories. Betonie explains:

> Some people act like witchery is responsible for everything that happens, when actually witchery only manipulates a small portion. Accidents happen and there's little we can do. But don't be so quick to call something good or bad. There are balances and harmonies always shifting, always necessary to maintain. . . . It is a matter of transitions, you see; the changing, the becoming must be cared for closely. (130)

Betonie emphasizes the importance of change to maintain harmony and balance, validating Tayo's differences and providing him with new ways of seeing the world and himself within it. In a reciprocal fashion, he also shares with Tayo his own family's stories of facing and defeating the witchery. He then sends Tayo into the mountains to complete the ceremony and perform his own story of success over the witchery as a powerful act of self-determination.

Through this telling of Tayo's story and the adjoining stories, Silko suggests that there is a fairly constant pattern, which includes *both* the traditional communal Laguna ways adapted as necessary for healing and survival *and* the ways of the witchery, which promotes stagnancy, individualism, and isolation from the community; assimilation or appropriation of the colonial ideologies; and the corresponding stories of shame, fear, and destruction. The witchery thrives on confusion or ideological entanglement of the pattern and thus further isolation from a clear identity, strained relationships, and failed acceptance into a community because of seemingly threatening differences. But the necessary changes to the community rely on the witchery; the two components or binaries are interdependent.

However, within Tayo's story or ceremony, Silko reveals the possibility of a choice with which part of the pattern the individual aligns himself; the choice then determines his fate. The greater pattern includes and is thus informed by and adapted to the witchery, creating a vital need for an awareness of the witchery in order to avoid it. Although a combination of forces seemingly control the pattern, an aware individual is afforded a degree of free will in his construction and performance of identity within the pattern, thus affecting the progression of the pattern. Silko stresses the importance of awareness of the "other" with Betonie and his modern adaptation of a traditional ceremony; binaries are not so easy to distinguish, boundaries between seemingly opposing sides are often blurred. Silko emphasizes the role of stories in this pattern-making in the final words from Old Grandma: "It seems like I already heard these stories before. . .only thing is, the names sound different" (260). This quote along with the previous quote by Betonie concerning "becoming" (simultaneously combining male and female voices) sums up the cyclical or spiral nature of the pattern, which inherently includes witchery, and of time itself; communities progressively

face the same types of conflicts over and over again but with different manifestations in an ongoing and vital process of transforming and becoming.

At the start of the novel, Tayo is in a confused state, attempting to make sense of the various stories and relationships that were tangled up within him. He seeks "something that wasn't unraveled or tied in knots to the past–something that existed by itself, standing alone like a deer" but fails to realize that nothing truly stands alone, that everything is interconnected including the witchery (6-7). He is numbed into inaction and acceptance of his illness and potential demise. Through his ceremony, his awareness of the patterns and the witchery grows and he begins to unravel all of the threads of thought within him; he begins to understand his relationship and place within the world. Most importantly, he begins to take action and make decisions that benefit himself, his family, his community, the earth, and greater pattern of life. In essence, he realizes that he has the agency to change his own story, his future, and the future of those around him; he begins to construct and perform an identity for himself out of his new understanding of the pattern within the stories.

As his war buddies attempt to trap him by brutally killing one of their own, Tayo completes the ceremony by overcoming the fear and shame of not being able to save his friends from the destruction of the witchery. More importantly, this violent scene at the uranium mine atop Mount Taylor helps shape Tayo's understanding of performed patriarchal masculinity where hierarchies are maintained through physical violence. He realizes that the violence helps the witchery and that his participation in the violence will only serve to keep him imbalanced and ill. He accepts the knowledge or belief that by focusing on his own health and life he positively affects the rest of the community; he must make responsible choices for himself and his relationships. Tayo has come to terms with what he truly

believes in: his Laguna cultural heritage and belief system, the strength and power in his identity as a mixed-blood Indian, and his unique place within the community and the greater pattern or system. He releases responsibility for those caught up in the witchery or ideological entanglement, knowing that he cannot sacrifice himself to the fear and self-destruction; his personal story must be one of transforming and becoming for both his and the community's benefit. Although critics have explored this healing story pattern in a somewhat similar fashion, none have fully explicated an understanding of the role of gender and performed ideologies in relation to the stories themselves, as seen in the next section.

Gender Complementarities: Tayo and Traditional Stories

Much has been written about the feminist aspects of Silko's novel, specifically surrounding Ts'eh/Yellow Woman and Night Swan, the dominant female characters who assist in Tayo's healing. Paula Gunn Allen and Kristin Herzog, for instance, focus on the feminine nature of life force or spirit at the center of creation. Their myopic focus on the feminine, however, neglects the complementarity of gender by excluding the masculine forces also inherent in a life force or spirit.[4] Their neglect thus perpetuates hierarchical binaries by claiming greater importance in the feminine aspects and performances in the novel. In her analyses of male alienation, Judith A. Antell argues that Tayo's healing relies on his awareness of and connection to feminine power. Her description of the novel's strongest figure of feminine power, Ts'eh, is imbued with polarity: she is earth and water, fire and moon, fruit and famine, rain and drought, life and death (219). But she does not explore the complementary masculine components of such polarities and their importance to Tayo's healing. These analyses simply don't take into account the dual gendered and

ideological nature of Tayo's illness or the Indigenous feminist aspects of the healing ceremony itself.

Although I agree that the novel asserts feminine healing properties, I argue that the healing actually combines femininity with masculinity through Indigenous feminist principles of complementarity and reciprocity. As outlined in the previous sections, Tayo represents the degradation of Laguna male roles because of internalized conflict regarding opposing identities or ideologies as imposed by colonial patriarchy. In response, Silko uses stories to bring Tayo back to health by reestablishing his gender-balanced role within his community. More specifically, I argue that she transforms Tayo's healing ceremony into a dual adaptation of traditional Yellow Woman and Arrow Boy stories that signify the valuable healing properties of difference as well as the personal sacrifices necessary for the sake of the people. Furthermore, her adaptation of these traditional stories reveals an adjustment of dual gender roles or how gender roles are perceived and performed based on the changing needs of Laguna people. In this way, both the novel and Tayo maintain complementary and reciprocal relationships as a form of healing ideological illness.

In most versions of the Yellow Woman story, Yellow Woman leaves the social boundaries of family and community by wandering off into the mountain where she engages in heroic acts that require a struggle to re-define her own identity through a transgression of societal norms. Often times, this transgression involved an affair with a hunter from a neighboring tribe from whom she receives the necessary sustenance for her people, thus uniting Yellow Woman with masculine roles such as providing meat for the community. However, Yellow Woman always returns and her transgression, heroism, and transformation result in saving the community from drought, starvation, and other dire threats. Paula Gunn

Allen writes that "[the Yellow Woman] stories do not necessarily imply that difference is punishable; on the contrary, it is often [Yellow Woman's] very difference that makes her special adventures possible" (Allen, 227). Through strategic resistance, self-determination and transformation, Yellow Woman questions societal norms based on ideologically-informed performances including those related to gender and race or ethnicity.

Silko's adaptation of the Yellow Woman stories revolves around the communal need for individualism and embracing differences. Silko states that "the stories about [Yellow Woman] made me aware that sometimes an individual must act despite disapproval, or concern for appearances or what others may say" (*Yellow Woman* 71). In this sense, individualism is sometimes needed in order to spark a necessary change within the community. Yellow Woman's difference and constantly transforming identity positively affect the community and teaches to embrace differences to help rejuvenate and strengthen unity. Silko states, "survival of the group means everyone has to cooperate" regardless of differences (*Yellow Woman* 67). Individualism becomes a necessary component of community transformation and unity, rather than an ideological polar opposite imbued with hierarchical dominance. Yellow Woman stories reinforce the need for *both* individuals *and* community where individuals are intimately connected parts to the whole. Silko further notes that Yellow Woman's identity itself changes within and between stories and between masculine and feminine roles, emphasizing the fluidity of gender based on the needs of the individual or community.

In light of the above, Silko creates Tayo's healing ceremony by placing him in Yellow Woman's role and thus transforming physical barriers imposed by colonial hierarchies and closed systems into an open system, a continuum of possible and

interchangeable identities. In the Yellow Woman role, Tayo leaves his community during the ceremony, faces extreme challenges and adventures in the mountains, and returns having transformed and transgressed societal norms yet reconnected to his culture and his role within the community. While on the mountain, Tayo makes love/has a love affair with Ts'eh, the more prominent Yellow Woman character in the book, renewing his connection to the land and the mountain but also to his own role as provider, protector, and hunter. By placing Tayo *in* an archetypical female role but also having him *interact with* an incarnation of Yellow Woman, thus reinforcing his masculine role, the ceremony attempts to balance out the hypermasculine patriarchal ideologies that are making Tayo sick; masculine and feminine reunite and balance each other within the individual. Furthermore, while rescuing the cows, Tayo also encounters the archetypical hunter from the Yellow Woman stories, who leads him back to Ts'eh and his cattle. The hunter is presumably also Ts'eh's husband, thus a manifestation of Arrow Boy.

Traditional Arrow Boy stories of Keresan tribes reveal the intimate connection between male and female as husband and wife.[5] Arrow Boy is synonymous with the archetypical hero figure amongst these Pueblo tribes because he is often represented as poor and despised within the community but, like Yellow Woman, he is able to overcome negative social constructions and norms by proving himself worthy of communal acceptance. In most of the stories, Arrow Boy travels upward into the sky or the next world (either up or down) where he faces daunting challenges in order to save others or rescue his wife. In other stories, other men who see him as effeminate and unable to fulfill his role as man in the community attempt to shame and mock him by selecting him to lead a deer ceremony. In most of the stories, Arrow Boy's role as man and husband is at stake.[6]

Although Silko writes much about the Yellow Woman story and even writes her own modern-day version of the story, she has only written one story about Arrow Boy as seen in her collection *Storyteller*. In "Cottonwood Part Two: Buffalo Story," Arrow Boy (also referred to as Estoy-eh-muut) is Yellow Woman's husband. Buffalo Man kidnaps Yellow Woman and takes her to the East (perhaps signifying "new day" or maybe even white civilization or just the "others"). Arrow Boy seeks her out with the help of Spider Woman who gives him red dust to throw in the eyes, blinding the buffalo guards. After Arrow Boy kills Buffalo Man and his people, Yellow Woman tells him that she loves the Buffalo people and wants to go with them, so he kills her too in order to fulfill her wishes. Arrow Boy takes the buffalo meat back to the people who need it and the hunters regularly visit that place to replenish their supply of meat.

In essence, these stories assert the value of building and maintaining complementary and reciprocal relationships across genders and cultures. Yellow Woman is held captive by the foreign others but, rather than detest her captors, she learns to love them. In an attempt to be the good man and husband, Arrow Boy must rescue her and slay her captors, only then to sacrifice his wife to them. He becomes a hero to the people for he supplies their regular necessary sustenance. Both Yellow Woman and Arrow Boy create a reciprocal relationship with opposing groups and the hunters honor this relationship and sacrifice by continually partaking in the buffalo meat. Although the Buffalo people are killed, their spirits live on by providing meat for the people; they too sacrifice, balancing the relationship. These reciprocal and complementary relationships result from Yellow Woman's ability to cross boundaries and adapt or transform and both Yellow Woman and Arrow Boy's willingness to make individual sacrifice for the sake of the people. By uniting these archetypical characters

in the form of Tayo, Silko blends these acts into one as a form of individual and communal ceremony, reinforcing the importance of gender complementarity and reciprocal relationships. However, as captive of conflicting ideologies, Tayo must undergo ideological transformations or transitions for this to occur.

Such transitions begin in the novel with an embedded story that resembles that in which Arrow Boy must save the people from a drought by playing hide and seek with Wind Maker Old Woman, who has stolen the clouds and keeps the people captive. In Silko's version, the hero, Sun Man (Arrow Boy), must win a guessing game with Gambler (Wind Maker Old Woman), who has also stolen the clouds and keeps the people captive. The story emerges in the novel at a point after Tayo has one more drinking session with his buddies and vomits up everything, "all the past, all his life," shedding his former self and beginning to transform (168). He recalls the Scalp Ceremony, which recounts the dangers of coveting other's property and the haunting shame that the sense of ownership and loss can provoke. The Sun Man/Arrow Boy story invokes Tayo's transition, the challenge he must overcome for the sake of the people. "Old Betonie might explain it this way–Tayo didn't know for sure: there were transitions that had to be made in order to become whole again, in order to be the people our Mother would remember; transitions, like the boy walking in bear country being called back softly" (170). Like the Arrow Boy stories, this scene in the novel shows Tayo being called to duty for the people and undergoing a necessary transition from one who bears the shame and guilt to someone who proves himself worthy. His transition requires that he quits performing colonial masculinity and perform Laguna masculinity instead, a role intended to maintain complementarity and reciprocity.

Through the ceremony, Tayo also regains a sense of his communal role by fulfilling the needs of the community as well as his own. Such awareness relies on an ideological transformation necessary for his healing; he must learn to use traditional knowledge and gender roles to negotiate neocolonialism. With the help of the hunter and Ts'eh, he recovers Josiah's cows from the white rancher, whose imposed ideologies force Tayo to believe that he had innocently acquired those same ideologies and believed them as fact rather than tools of deception (i.e., neocolonialism). "He knew then that he had learned the lie by heart–the lie which they had wanted him to learn: only brown-skinned people were thieves; white people didn't steal, because they always had the money to buy whatever they wanted" (191). Tayo cuts away at the fence of lies that kept white and brown separate and oblivious to their complicity in the witchery. Focusing on his cattle rescue mission allows him to release the controlling ideologies and thoughts of the past that made him ill and begin to understand the truth about time, the certainty only in the present, "qualified with bare hints of yesterday and tomorrow" (192). As he struggles with his mare, he remembers how Josiah had taught him that violence and anger would not provide desired results. When he begins to lose his nerve and confidence, a mountain lion saunters up to Tayo and reminds him of his mission, who he is, and his role in the story: "Mountain Lion, the hunter. Mountain lion, the hunter's helper" (196). Tayo creates a relationship with the mountain lion based on traditional Laguna knowledge, positioning himself within that knowledge and reinforcing his role as hunter. He follows the mountain lion's path while fear and insecurity settled and clarity emerged. This part of the ceremony effectively provides Tayo with the necessary release of neocolonial ideologies while reinforcing Laguna traditions and his role within them. By showing Tayo traversing the symbolic paths of Laguna myth-based epistemology and colonial ideology, this

scene reveals the Indigenous feminist critical awareness and ideological transformation necessary for the ceremony to succeed.

The solidification of Tayo's role and emerging Indigenous feminist consciousness continues, following an almost devastating encounter with two cowboys in which Tayo must face his internalization of neocolonial witchery. The cowboys pick Tayo up from where he was thrown from his horse but are distracted by the mountain lion's footprints whose skin would bring them more money and fame than an Indian's. In their wake, Tayo faces his fear and anger and realizes that he is "not one of the destroyers" and that he could finally see the truth behind the witchery. "The destroyers had tricked the white people as completely as they had fooled the Indians, and now only a few people understood how the filthy deception worked; only a few people knew that the lie was destroying the white people faster than it was destroying Indian people" (204). Tayo's healing relies on him becoming one of those few critically aware people who understand their role in maintaining Laguna traditions while negotiating neocolonial witchery.

Due to imposed colonial ideologies, gender becomes of primary importance as it reveals and perpetuates internalized colonial ideologies or neocolonization. Through the ceremony, Tayo becomes part of the stories about Yellow Woman and Arrow Boy (the hunter), perhaps as a third person or perhaps as the combined embodiment of both Yellow Woman and Arrow Boy. Silko writes that, ultimately, gender and sex don't matter in Laguna society beyond the simple fulfillment of communal needs: "No job was a man's job or a woman's job; the most able person did the work" (*Yellow Woman* 66). Although ultimately Tayo's sex and gender aren't important to the outcome, sex and gender lead him towards the ceremony as a mixed-blood Laguna male whose performed role in the community had

become lost and unbalanced; gender is the conduit through which he realigns his entire identity and understands the neocolonial struggles he and his community face. Likewise, one's duty or role is not determined by blood-quantum or racial identity. Because of his difference as a mixed-blood male facing contemporary ideological challenges, including gender performances, Tayo becomes the primary initiate into this newly transformed world through this revised ceremony. Tayo enters the realm of story, fulfilling communal needs through his association with other sacred mythological figures and with the purpose of sharing his story to help save the people. That is, Tayo becomes the most able person for the necessary communal transformation because his gendered experiences and transgressions help reveal insidious neocolonial changes in gender informing one's identity and role within the community.

The transition and ceremony are not complete until Tayo faces the witchery at the uranium mine, the symbol of the hypermasculine violence and colonialism at the source of Tayo's illness. The witchery, however, does not come in the form of the white man but rather in the form of Tayo's friends, other Laguna males who face the same struggles as Tayo, others who had become destroyers unaware of the "thick white skin that had enclosed [them], silencing the sensations of living, the love as well as the grief" (229). Ts'eh prepared him by saying that "Only destruction is capable of arousing a sensation, the remains of something alive in them; and each time they do it, the scar thickens, and they feel less and less, yet still hungering for more" and that such violence and destruction "is the only ending [to the story] that [the destroyers] understand" (230, 232). Tayo must stop the destruction and the thickening of emotion without retaliating with further violence or destruction. He must be willing to face the self-destruction and sacrifice of his friends without interfering,

letting the wound begin to heal. His time with Ts'eh in the mountains had filled him with love and prepared him to face the destroyers with the courage that only such love could provide. With the power of love and self-awareness coming from all directions, Tayo realized that his strength had always been hidden within him and that he would be able to face the destroyers and survive. He knew that he had to turn the destruction back on itself even if it meant sacrificing his friends in the process. He knew that he was now at the center of the story, where it all began, and that everything depended on him.

> He cried the relief he felt at finally seeing the pattern, the way all the stories fit together–the old stories, the war stories, their stories–to become the story that was still being told. He was not crazy; he had never been crazy. He had only seen and heard the world as it always was: no boundaries, only transitions through all distances and time…He had only to complete this night, to keep the story out of the reach of the destroyers for a few more hours, and their witchery would turn, upon itself, upon them. (246-247)

Tayo becomes Arrow Boy saving the people from evil magic, knowing that their magic won't work if he is watching (247). He watches as his friends destroy each other, knowing now that he will no longer be a victim, "a drunk Indian war veteran" who was destined not to survive and whose death would cause the people to blame themselves with immense anger and bitterness, perpetuating neocolonialism (253).

Like Arrow Boy, Tayo is called upon to save himself, the stories, and the people but through a new understanding of gender roles and neocolonialism. Led and nurtured by Yellow Woman/Ts'eh, he must sacrifice those whom he thought were his friends for the sake of the community and in an effort to successfully negotiate the witchery, the closed

neocolonial system that perpetuates hierarchical separation and oppression. Supported by the archetypal female figure, Tayo simultaneously fulfills both gender roles as necessary for the community and to maintain complementary and reciprocal relationships. Tayo, like Arrow Boy, becomes a hero not because of violent acts but because of critical knowledge about his enemy, the destroyers, and his willingness to make a sacrifice. Perhaps most important, Tayo becomes a hero because of his complementary and reciprocal relationship with Ts'eh/Yellow Woman and the land culminating with the strength and courage necessary to overcome the witchery for both himself and his community.

The ceremony reunites Tayo with traditional stories and his culture, but also with his own gender-balanced powers to help untangle the stories and harmful hierarchical binaries and embrace his difference. Furthermore, the ceremony reinforces Tayo's role as provider for and protector of his family, but not from a Western understanding of masculinity where violence maintains gender hierarchies. Rather, Tayo is able to provide for and protect with non-violence and a more gender-balanced understanding of his communal role. By creating such balance between masculine and feminine powers, he transcends the dual pronged and hierarchical gender/racial binary imposed by colonial hierarchies at the core of his illness. Silko's novel asserts that such static hierarchies or ideologies cause disconnection from culture and the land and therefore are the source of illness and witchery affecting both individuals and communities.

Tayo's story shows what happens when identities and ideologies become fixed and cease to adapt to the changing community. Tayo's subjectivity is caught between opposing ideologies and he becomes ill because he can find no alternative discourse, no story or performance where his physical or ideological identity differences fit in, so he must create

and perform his own version of traditional stories. Therefore, although the stories of Yellow Woman and Arrow Boy remain the same in terms of plot, the performance itself changes, allowing for contemporary manifestations and purposes.

Reading *Ceremony* through an Indigenous feminist lens promotes a critical and self-reflective awareness of colonial history's effect on both individuals and communities and reveals a process of individual and community revitalization through strategic negotiation, self-determination, and transformation. The novel thus reflects Indigenous feminism through its reciprocal and complementary relationship between and performance of knowledge and actions: Indigenous because of the unique history that informs contemporary Native American experiences; feminist because the novel attempts to rectify institutionalized neocolonial gender oppression. Furthermore, the novel exemplifies an Indigenous feminist process towards self-determination or national sovereignty that requires struggle and transgression in both words and actions for success. This expanded reading of the novel reveals that although closed cultural or ideological systems can be toxic, the individual elements and ideologies, the parts to the whole, are not inherently harmful, which an Indigenous feminist reading of the novel helps elucidate. Rather than succumb to performances and systems that trap and make ill, Silko's novel proposes an alternative that embraces individual elements and differences: an open system that expands both outward and inward, based on the performance of Indigenous feminist principles of complementarity and reciprocity and through stories constructed to heal. Complementary and reciprocal open systems allow for differences and encourage balanced relationships based on self-determination rather than visual representation, classification, and performances of static

ideologies. Without the fear of fragmentation or illness derived from differences, individuals and communities in an open system can thrive and sustain balanced relationships.

Based on their own histories of oppression, Native women such as Silko recognize historical and ongoing ideological gender violence against Native men. As members of communities seeking to maintain complementarity and reciprocity, Native women seek ways in which they can lead Native men towards health, often through re-establishing or revisioning both male and female roles within the community. In the case of *Ceremony*, Tayo must experience a combination of Laguna gender roles in order to understand the value and importance of complementarity and reciprocity for his own and his people's survival, learned through his physical performance of Laguna ceremony and story. Like Ts'eh/Yellow Woman, Silko leads Native male authors towards similar literary constructions and negotiations as seen in the next chapter.

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[1] The Navajo reservation lies just to the west of the Laguna Pueblo and the two cultures share similarities. The novel blends these cultural worldviews in some of its features. Furthermore, the Navajo conceive of gender as multiple instead of completely binary with a more nuanced blending of gender attributes. For more on this topic, see Will Roscoe's *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (1998).

[2] The "rest cure" prescribed to the narrator of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" reflected masculinist ideologies regarding women's mental illnesses. The story reveals how such a "cure" permitted the continued oppression of women. Tayo is similarly oppressed. Furthermore, this representation of modern medicine acts as the neocolonial process of exterminating the "Indian," ensuring that Indian culture does indeed and finally "vanish" from American society.

[3] Gallup is located within the Navajo reservation and Betonie is Navajo, not Laguna.

[4] This is a critique of feminist theory in general, one that I am attempting to overcome through my contributions in this dissertation.

[5] Laguna is a Keresan tribe in that it shares the Keres language with Acoma, Cochiti, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Santo Domingo, and Zia Pueblos.

[6] From Ruth Benedict's *Tales of the Cochiti Indians*

CHAPTER 5: FIGHTING THE RESERVATION OF THE MIND: MOVING ACROSS BORDERS AND BINARIES IN ALEXIE'S *ABSOLUTELY TRUE DIARY OF A PART-TIME INDIAN*

As exemplified in the previous chapters, a history of U.S. federal policies culminating in the contemporary reality of reservations adversely affects Native peoples' continued relationships with the land, themselves, and each other. Representations of the "Indian" informed policy and relationships between the United States and Native Nations as based on hierarchies of dominance. Such representations alternated between the "savage" and the "noble" Indian depending on the changing needs of an emerging United States national identity and as justification for continued colonization. These representations become social constructions that Native people must physically and rhetorically negotiate. Some Native people succumb to enacting these constructions only to find their inherent limitations and dire consequences. Others use these constructions to their personal and communal benefit. As a physical embodiment of the constructed history of Native people, the reservation system was another method intended to destroy the tribal system and help assimilate Indians into "civilized" society. The reservation system upholds hierarchical dominance through isolated training, reformation, and enforced social constructions. Once reformed from tribal life, the supposedly "civilized" Indian would leave the reservation, contribute to dominant society, and join the great American "melting pot." Mishuana Goeman asserts that "Through imposed spatial ideologies and their narration in popular culture, land and people become seemingly bound and fit into tight containers, in this case the reservation…what becomes elided in the colonial political bind are the histories of movement and mobility of people and

ideas" (179). Like social constructions of identity, the reservation itself becomes a construction of neocolonial dominance. Therefore, maintaining personal and national sovereignty requires deconstruction or decolonization of these physical and ideological boundaries and binaries of dominance.

Throughout this text I have developed an Indigenous feminist theory that contributes to understanding and connecting concepts of national identity, tribal histories, and gender ideologies in an effort to combat colonialism and neocolonialism. Using Indigenous feminism as a theoretical lens, I analyze the ways in which individuals and communities (critics included) unknowingly perpetuate oppression in both word and action and how literature models new forms of decolonization through assertions of sovereignty. An understanding of literary negotiations through performed gender roles changes when texts are reconceived as attempting to build or maintain balanced relationships. An applied Indigenous feminism makes essential connections between gender and race constructions and sociocultural ideologies to show how their performances are mutually informed. Such an approach allows for deeper understanding of the negotiation and impact of ideologies and informs processes necessary for decolonization. But what are those processes exactly? How can a text effectively negotiate a history of social constructions as that history and the history preceding it continues to fade from view? In Silko's novel, the protagonist deconstructs the various competing and malignant representations informing his estranged identity. But how can a text further such deconstruction in order to critically assess and avoid such developed and socially perpetuated estrangement altogether?

Like Silko's representation of healing neocolonial wounds by embracing difference, Sherman Alexie's much younger and more contemporary young protagonist, Junior, in *The*

Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian embraces his differences early on and avoids such estrangement altogether by performing a new, although controversial, gender and racial identity. His performance questions neocolonial boundaries and binaries limiting himself and his people. He simultaneously transforms his national identity by asserting sovereignty from neocolonization enforced by the reservation system. Like Silko's Tayo, Junior's differences offer him valuable insight into the changes needed for himself and his community. However, he must use this insight to negotiate the historical constructions that would perpetuate rather than alleviate his and others' oppression. As a form of Indigenous feminist critical consciousness and decolonization, his transformation relies on both ideological and physical (complementary and reciprocal) subversion and re-positioning necessary to maintain balanced relationships within and across national boundaries.

In Alexie's young adult novel set in present time, historically informed gender and racial constructions reveal self-perpetuating neocolonial conflict and its ramifications on social positionality, status, and self-identity. Arnold Spirit Jr. (aka Junior), a 14 year-old boy living on the Spokane Reservation in Washington State, confronts these conflicts through gender and race performances and his simultaneous movement across neocolonial boundaries and binaries, both physical and ideological. Although surrounded by poverty, his greatest challenge on the reservation is his physical difference–"abnormalities" from being born with hydrocephalitis or water on the brain–justifying his subjection to ridicule and physical violence. His best friend Rowdy, a modern version of Ridge's hypermasculine Murieta, beats up anybody who messes with them. The novel focuses on when Junior's life changes drastically when he decides to traverse boundaries and binaries to attend Reardon, the off-reservation, all-white school where he believes he can acquire a better education and the

necessary hope to survive. Junior's true conflict arises as an internalized "reservation of the mind," which limits him and his community from seeing or feeling a sense of hope for themselves, their families, or their nation.

The "reservation of the mind" concept originates from an Adrian Louis poem that Alexie cites as the most influential on his work. In "Elegy for the Forgotten Oldsmobile," Louis depicts the cataclysmic world of urban city life and the psychological result of U.S. policies on Native people as "the reservation of the mind." The narrator speaks to his Uncle Adrian, who is dying of cirrhosis of the liver and is the impetus for his contemplations of a world askew, internalized to the point of being contained by it, much like the physical reservations. The poem depicts a state of imposed hopelessness strapped like a straightjacket on an otherwise sane person. In the biography preceding the poem, Louis writes:

> Poets (especially Indn [sic] poets) should use their tool of words for political gain and cultural survival…Indian poets must keep us from dying as a culture, as a race–too many skin bards are writing about coyotes and turtles when they should be writing about their brothers and sisters who have murdered their livers. We should be writing about the children born of relocation, about urban skins and res poverty, about the continual termination policies of this gov't, about 49's and snagging, about our strengths as members of specific and autonomous nations, those things we call recognized tribes. (145)

With this novel, Alexie attempts to fulfill Louis's demands by having his protagonist discover his nation's strengths hidden behind a variety of problems brought about by colonization. The "reservation of the mind" is the state of mind regarding the colonial history of boundaries and binaries and its contemporary neocolonial effect that informs

Alexie's work but does not constrain it. Rather, I assert that Alexie's work seeks to illuminate and remove the psychological straightjacket, the "reservation of the mind," the neocolonial descendant of U.S. policies resulting in despondency, poverty, sexual and gender violence, and alcoholism in order to reveal the true values and strengths of the Spokane Nation. Furthermore, the novel distinguishes historic and geographic boundaries and ideological binaries as the source of neocolonial oppression and the "reservation of the mind." Ideological boundaries and binaries include those involving race and gender developed in previous chapters. Historical boundaries are those that limit a group's power in writing or understanding their own history. Meredith K. James seeks to understand how the history of the reservation system informs Alexie's work. She writes,

> Reservations were not only an attempt to separate Indians from the white settlements of the early United States, but also to impose European philosophies and worldviews…the most devastating effect was the colonial administration's belief that there would be a clear delineation between land and the culture. Therefore, the concept of the 'reservation of the mind' suggests that there should be no clear distinction between the physical and mental space of the reservation" (8-9).

Because her book was published before Alexie's *Diary*, I borrow from James's assertion regarding the history and implications of reservations as enforcing colonially imposed limitations on Native culture, land, and government. While applying an Indigenous feminist lens that relies on arguments from previous chapters, I interpret Alexie as attempting to puncture the reservation system's limiting boundaries and binaries in order to decolonize or escape the "reservation of the mind" through Junior's development into adulthood and acquisition of personal sovereignty.

Junior's understanding of these neocolonial boundaries and binaries imposed through the reservation system derives from a unique postindian trickster perspective and performance that allows for the development of personal sovereignty. Prolific Native scholar

and author Gerald Vizenor defines "postindian" as a movement away from the cultures of dominance and the historical trauma of neocolonialism. Postindian tricksters "deconstruct the very opposition between past and present, defying linear thinking, just as they refuse the opposition between victim and aggressor" (Madsen 66, 67).[1] In her critical assessment of Vizenor's fiction and theory, Deborah Madsen explores the particularities of trauma on Native peoples. She claims that dominant discourses institutionalize "trauma as fundamentally unknowable," thus perpetuating neocolonial oppression and victimry disguised as assimilation through mourning (64).

> The acceptance of loss, an acknowledgement that things cannot get better, like the assimilation of the self to the culture of dominance, is clearly an undesirable location for the Native American subject. To write *out* of mourning, however, to write *against* mourning and the assimilated self, is a strategy that resists the passive position of the victim and the hopeless victim at that. (66, emphasis in original)

In postindian trickster style, Junior crosses boundaries and binaries not to assimilate (as some critics postulate) but to re-create himself, "to disrupt the flow of dominance in both space and time," and escape historical and present-day trauma resulting from the reservation system (Madsen 67). Junior as postindian trickster becomes a healing and creative force necessary for decolonization, an essential component of Indigenous feminism. Combining the postindian trickster with Indigenous feminism results in the Indigenous feminist warrior/trickster, itself a complementary and reciprocal relationship embodying storytelling traditions and cultural ideologies.

Alexie responds to the "reservation of the mind" by defying previous criticism regarding his controversial representations of Indians as poor and homeless alcoholics while

simultaneously having Junior defy boundaries and binaries in all of their symbolic and real manifestations. Like Silko's novel, *Diary* as allegory becomes social commentary about authorial representation as a form of sovereignty and the "reservation of the mind" affecting his critics. In their physical and ideological movement, I argue that both author and character represent sovereign possibilities in maintaining balanced relationships with the "other" through an Indigenous feminist critical consciousness of and negotiation between *both* self *and* other. Such consciousness further informs the construction of transnational yet sovereign tribal identities. Transnationalism enacts both sovereignty and Indigenous feminism through its complementary and reciprocal relationships with other nations. A nation must first consider itself sovereign in order to build and maintain such relationships. I argue that Junior represents such a transnational identity because of his courage to overcome historical trauma and re-define himself and his relationships with others both on and off the reservation. Therefore, he metaphorically becomes a foreign ambassador through his movement and relationships outside of the Spokane Nation. In discussing similar movement across national boundaries (or diaspora), Indigenous feminist scholar Renya Ramirez explains that "Rather than assuming that urban Indians progressively lose a sense of their tribal identity and become closer to ethnics or other minorities, the term transnational highlights their maintenance of tribal identities" (*Native Hubs*, 14). Both Alexie and his character step out of, rather than become subject to, neocolonial boundaries and binaries in an effort to maintain tribal identities and sovereignty.

In this chapter, I argue that Junior's critical awareness of his tumultuous historical and ideological positioning and his courageous attempts to forge a path for himself and others presents an Indigenous feminist warrior/trickster performance necessary for

decolonization and freeing Native peoples from the ideological as well as physical "reservation." The book explores the interconnectivity and potential transformation of ideology and identity through altering one's own ideological and physical positioning. Furthermore, the novel challenges neocolonial ideologies informing contemporary Native identities as *limited to* binaries of being *either* Indian *or* Anglo/Western, masculine *or* feminine, on *or* off the "reservation." Rather, with his protagonist Alexie presents a model that accepts these binaries and attempts to build balanced relationships between seemingly disparate polar opposites, thus overcoming the "reservation of the mind." Finally, through Junior's experiences, the novel asserts a sovereign national identity with permeable boundaries and transnational citizens.

My analysis focuses on two interweaving threads. First, Alexie's blending of text and graphics creates a relationship between historical stereotypes of Native people and contemporary manifestations of Native identity. These textual relationships reinforce a "connection between an embodied self and the world in which that self exists" resulting in a self-aware and sovereign identity in relationship to others (343). Second, in building and maintaining vital relationships, Alexie and his character avoid becoming subject to colonial ideologies and the physical and historical boundaries of the reservation while re-defining tribal identities and sovereignty. As Indigenous feminist warrior/tricksters emphasizing the importance of personal sovereignty and decolonization from within, Alexie and Junior transform and assert their difference and maintenance of Indigenous ideologies as a necessary communal power upon which their tribal nation relies. Alexie asserts that decolonization requires removal of the neocolonial "reservation of the mind" imposed upon Native peoples and which sought to enforce assimilation and perpetuate colonial oppression.

The Text as Body: Genre and Formal Components

Alexie's novel poses several new insights regarding Native American literary genre that have not yet been explored or discussed in other scholarship but that I attempt to illuminate here. Like *Life Among the Piutes*, the novel is written in the first person, but in this case the subject matter is fictional and truly focuses on the experiences of the protagonist. Yet, in both genre and content, the novel explores the implications of ideologies passed down from generation to generation and is therefore tribalographic in its temporal and physical projection from historical community to present-day individual. Although primarily a diary, Alexie employs several different genres, including graphics and lists drawn and produced by the main character (via artist Ellen Forney), as a means of healing and representing his thoughts and emotions. The cartoons of the various others who influence Junior counterbalance the focus on the individual with Junior's expanding community. By including particular traits from a variety of distinguishable genres, the novel defies definitive genre characterization from either a Western or Native literary perspective. In its stylistic diversity, I argue that the novel itself reflects an Indigenous feminist consciousness through its balanced employment of text and graphics, focus on the individual and community, and a temporal projection forward and backward.

The novel's many images connect to a younger reader who is more attuned to graphic popular culture. Alexie's goal is to reach "reservation kids, who, like him, grew up either with heroes who had been created by the white media or no heroes at all" (Spencer 2). He says, "In order for the Indian kid to read me, pop culture is where I should be…I'd rather be accessible than win a MacArthur" (Spencer 2). However, he simultaneously acknowledges

that non-Indians may relate to themes in the story. Alexie transforms the idea of pop culture into a more diverse understanding of American culture that crosses ethnic and ideological borders. Young Native readers will for perhaps the first time see themselves in print and read a story of success about someone who faces similar struggles negotiating two apparently opposing worlds. Non-Native readers will relate to the more general struggles of the self-consciousness of youth but will also see into the mind of the often overlooked "other," an opportunity not offered to them either. All readers will thus bring their own identities to bear in their reading, effecting transnational communication and relations.

The novel is not only enjoyable but also pertinent to all readers beyond young adults who face internal struggles based on external and/or historical conflicts. In response to criticism of Alexie's use of popular culture, James Cox explains that using such references allows him to reach a broader audience and,

> revise and subvert the misrepresentations in popular culture narratives while concomitantly emphasizing how the misrepresentations have a destructive influence on his characters' self-perceptions… By intervening in a media the dominant culture privileges, Alexie claims an authoritative place from which to speak. Once he occupies an authoritative space, his narrative subversions enliven the voices the dominant culture's stories of conquest silence and exposes the absurd incongruities between the European and Euro-American narratives and what Cogewea in Mourning Dove's novel calls "actual conditions." (64-65)

Similarly, Shari M. Huhndorf elucidates on the use of the graphic or visual as a "key site of political struggle in colonial situations. Because the racial ideologies that support imperialism depend on the legibility of bodies, or the idea that physical appearance reveals underlying traits, displaying colonial subjects becomes a means to establish the differences that naturalized inequalities" (20-21). She specifically refers to the display of Native and indigenous bodies at world fairs as spectacle and empty signifier to be filled in by the patriarchal, masculine gaze of the colonizer who "objectified and dehumanized racialized

peoples as they consolidated white identities across boundaries of gender, ethnicity, and class, even as the ostensibly objective gaze masked the violence of conquest and the complicity of visual forms in that violence" (21). The openness of such signifiers, she argues, allows for the strategic use of graphics/images "to disrupt as well as to reproduce discourses of power [and] to reveal and potentially neutralize their colonial function, turning these images to subversive purposes" depending on who uses them and for what purpose (21-22). While the novel entices and connects to a variety of readers through pop cultural depictions of both Anglo and Native characters, as a whole, the novel illustrates a singular and unique experience and perspective; it attempts both transnationalism and sovereignty by graphically neutralizing colonial identity constructions.

As insight into a personal sovereign perspective, Junior's cartoons depict his own fears or concerns about his and others' lives and relationships. For instance, the image of him at a crossroads with one sign pointing to his home on the "Rez" and the other pointing towards "Hope" and the unknown marked as "???" captures the imposed limitations of the reservation from Junior's perspective. A house on the "Rez" side leans and shows some bruising while he faces the blank unknown on the "hope" side, clearly illustrating his perceived options resulting from his own and his community's "reservation of the mind." Including such images continuously connects him with his local and expanding community and reflects their impact on his development as an individual. Including this connection made through graphics and text reveals the tribalographic aspects of the novel, making it less about Junior alone and more about the many influential and complementary relationships in Junior's life, including relationships with a historical past and contemporary signs of the

colonizer. Discussing the visual or graphic as a vital component of Native politics, Huhndorf explains that

> Their ability to mediate across time and space facilitates historical recovery and the constitution of transnational communities across geographical distances. Additionally, because of the association between visual technologies and modernity, unorthodox indigenous uses counter the progressivist racial logic that predicts the disappearance of Native peoples in modernity and underlies colonial nationalism. These analyses position visuality alongside literature as a ground of political contestation that potentially counters the invisibility of Native peoples and redefines their social place…Considering indigenous practices as part of a visual economy requires taking account of the global political contexts in which images emerge and circulate and situating them in representational traditions across time and space. (22, 23)

Indeed, this self-conscious awareness of the other (global and transnational) yet with focus still on the self (local or tribal) as tribalography is complemented further by a textual negotiation of neocolonial boundaries and binaries informing identity construction.

Alexie blends genre and formal components that reflect identity constructions in order to effectively transcend such constructions' imbued symbolic power. In his discussion of the erotics in Joy Harjo's poetry, Robert Warrior relies on Audre Lorde's essay "Use of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" to understand theory's physicality and materialism and to support a need for "an oppositional space from which to restore gender identity as an analytical category in discussions of tribal politics and community values" (342). The

"erotic" can be understood as anything that is physically and ideologically oppressed by a dominant power including self-representation and identity construction. Warrior writes,

> To engage the erotic is to challenge the power of the psychic structures that keep us in our place…The erotic, thus, is a key to affirming the worth and the wholeness of the self…In this way, the erotic becomes a way of measuring a life, with that measure being more about the quality of life in our bodies than achieving a set of specific goals. (342-343)

The erotic can thus also refer to colonial constructions of the "Indian" challenged by the Indigenous feminist; to employ the "Indian" in all of its gendered and raced manifestations is to perform as Indigenous feminist warrior seeking to deconstruct and decolonize. Alexie's blending of genre creates a bridge between historical stereotypes of Native people and contemporary manifestations of Native identity in relationship to those stereotypes. The result is a self-aware and sovereign identity composed of and in relationship to these various parts. Thus, like Silko, Alexie's genre blending enables the reader to focus more on the content and its impact rather than trying to fit it into a stereotypical literary category that often comes with its own set of limitations, expectations, and history, especially those that force an identity (gender, ethnicity, race, nationality) onto the text, its characters, and by extension its author. More specifically, the formal blending of genres emphasizes the blending of past and present in transforming contemporary relationships to maintain social balance.

Including the stereotypes of both Native and Anglo-Americans in these images facilitates a critical conversation and balanced relationship between past and present. The novel reveals the complexities of stereotypes and their negative affects on both individuals

and communities. Acknowledging the difficulties in accessing meaning through words, the graphics included with the text attempt to break down all boundaries imposed by language and historical representation. Junior explains the value of the cartoons in the first chapter:

> I draw because words are too unpredictable, too limited… when you draw a picture, everybody can understand it…So I draw because I want to talk to the world. And I want the world to pay attention to me…So I draw because I feel like it might be my only real chance to escape the reservation. (5-6)

These drawings embody Junior's thoughts and feelings and reflect the theme of crossing boundaries, both physical and ideological, often perpetuated in language. The combination of image with language reveals how damaging *uncritical* relationships with colonial ideologies can be for *both* Native *and* Anglo-Americans; identities and actions can be damaging if they perpetuate oppressive ideologies.

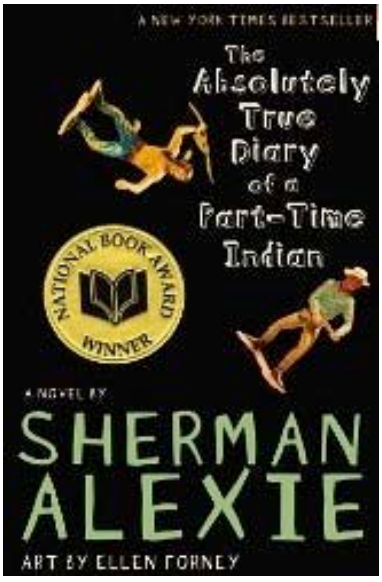

Figure 1

The book's cover, for example, offers up a recognizable historical conflict, signaling old ideologies and mythologies that have malignantly informed a United States history and

society (Figure 1). Two worn toy figures float on a sea of black as if they had just been tossed to the wind or neglected after years of use. The Indian toy portrays the shirtless, feathered "Indian" preparing to throw a spear over-head while the fully clothed cowboy sports a cowboy hat and sawed-off shotgun held confidently at his waist; both reflect a social and historical construction of masculinity in relationship with the other. The cowboy and Indian figurines symbolize the conflict between fact and fiction, past and present, white and non-white, and the colonial binaries of masculinity and femininity that pose identity conflicts. These toys recall the historical and literary representations of masculinity along the real and fictional frontier at the edge of "civilization" during the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This historical past marks the physical movement across ideologically informed boundaries and the expanding dominance of one set of ideologies that limit and attempt to violently eradicate the other. Therefore, the cover graphic is reminiscent of the hyper-masculinized stereotypes of Native men often depicted in and gracing the covers of adventure or historical romance novels where the "Indian" always meets his dire ends at the hands of the frontier cowboy armed with Manifest Destiny ideology, the belief that he was divinely destined to take over the United States.

Later, such stereotypes of Indian men transform per the needs of a developing national United States identity concerned with miscegenation. Such Indian men appear on the cover of Harlequin romance novels representing the forbidden love between white women and Indian men and the white men who seek to save or control their female counterparts from illicit temptation. In fact, when Junior discovers that his sister, Mary Runs Away, wants to be a romance writer, he imagines and draws such a book cover possibly entitled "*Savage Summer, Apache Heat, Lummi Lust* or *Yakama Yearning"* (38, Figure 2).

The graphic image covering this contemporary novel and Junior's mocking book cover alerts readers to the vital importance of this historical yet ongoing conflict of doubly romanticized masculinity and race prevalent in both society and literature.

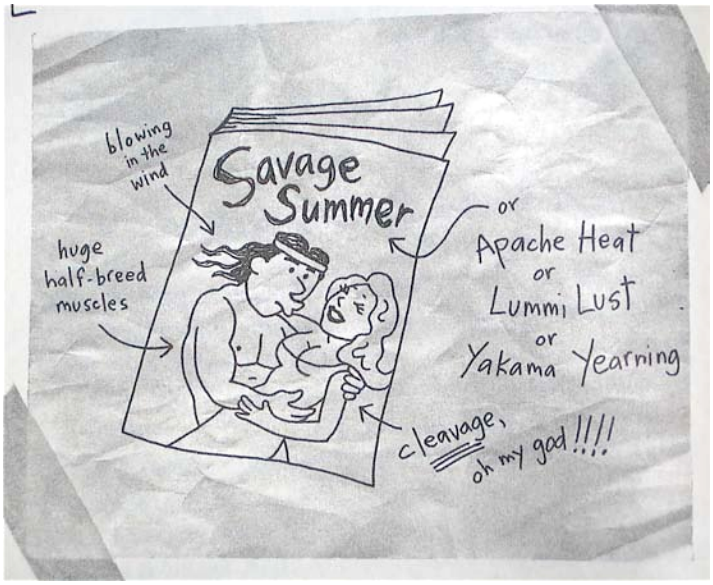

Figure 2

When Junior learns that his sister reads and wants to write romance novels, he connects with her through the act of self-constructed representation in text and graphics, reflecting the novel itself. He wonders if her romance novels have trapped her in unattainable dreams and if he too is trapped in such ironic and fatalistic romanticism. At Reardon, the all-white school, Junior falls in love with Penelope, a white bulimic girl whom Junior tries to save from bulimic self-destruction. He asks his new friend Gordy how he can get her to love him back. After some research on the Internet, Gordy returns to detail the media attention about a white girl who disappeared in Mexico and the *lack* of attention about several hundred Mexican girls who also disappeared in the same area; he decides that such disparity is racist. He tells Junior that white girls are "privileged…damsels in distress" and that in loving a white girl, Junior must be "a racist asshole like everybody else" (116).

Unknowingly, Junior has indeed been held captive by ideologies that perpetuate white supremacy and racism. The novel acts as a sort of ideological captivity narrative where roles are reversed. Junior is held captive by Anglo-American romantic mythologies and ideologies. Although his love for Penelope ironically captures the history of racism imbued in historical romance novels (in the realm of James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*) and their Harlequin romance offspring, Junior does not continue to pursue a romantic relationship with Penelope and all that she represents. Rather, Junior spends most of the novel reminiscing about his relationship with Rowdy and how to "get him back" as his best friend. Thus, the real conflicted relationship at the core of the novel occurs between Junior and Rowdy, represented in the cartoon of them as superheroes coming together as a super power (102, Figure 3). As discussed further in the next section, this relationship symbolically captures the two boys as two parts of the same person along with a history of gender and race stereotypes essential to Junior's development and transformation.

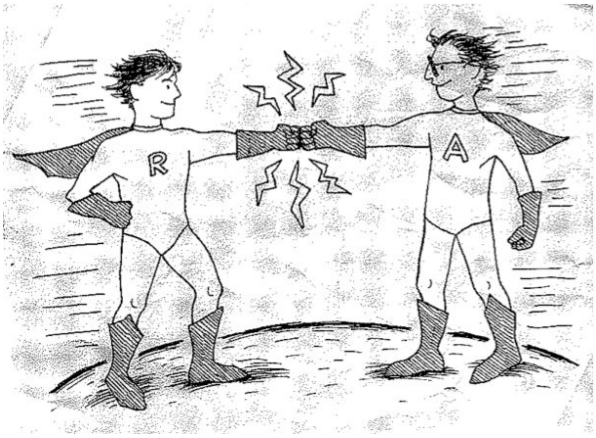

Figure 3

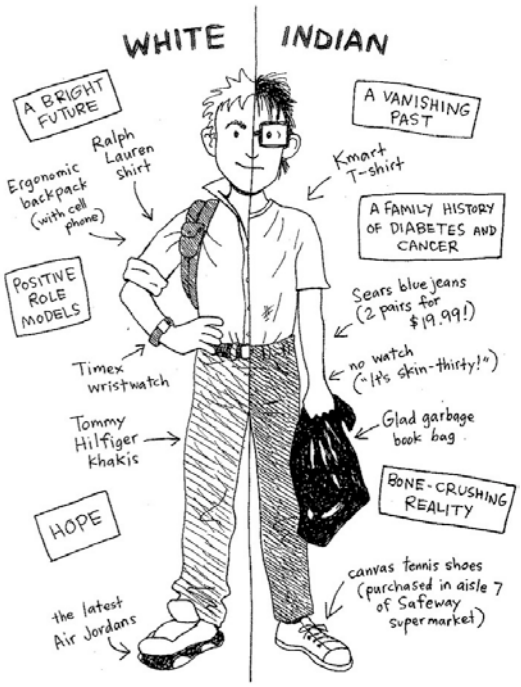

Figure 4

With these graphics, Alexie anticipates and directly responds to accusations that his novel espouses assimilation to white culture by critically representing such accusations as illogical. The book's fundamental image representing the contemporary "part-time Indian" shows Junior as split in half with one side as "white" and the other as "Indian" and the corresponding characteristics of each captured in textual labels (Figure 4). This pairing of text and image emphasizes the intricate relationship between *both* reality *and* romanticized fiction co-mingling as Truth within Junior's identity and perception of himself in relation to a stereotypical "white other." The word "vanishing" recalls the true fiction of the supposedly "vanishing race" of Indians depicted on the cover and upon which Anglo-America relied to establish itself. The image reveals Junior's belief in the fiction of "white" supremacy and inherent "bright futures" and thus captures Junior's internalized "reservations," his own colonialist appropriated stereotypes, as they relate to historically situated racial and gender identity (although this particular image doesn't depict gender as obviously as the front

cover). In combining past and present identities and cultural stereotypes, Junior simultaneously represents and complicates both. Alexie's choice of mixed genres provides insight into Junior's thoughts and feelings as he departs, transforms, and returns.

This image also ironically reveals the impossibility of dividing identity into parts either physically or conceptually. Alexie mocks racial and ethnic stereotypes and the idea that a person could be part Indian or part any ethnicity based on blood quantum or participation in culture. In her discussion of Alexie's earlier work, James explains

> Alexie's almost exclusive portrayal of full-bloods is not only his attempt to record a life closer to his own, but also to keep tribal images intact. Rather than discuss the mixed-blood experience on and off the reservation, Alexie wishes to show how fragmentation affects full-bloods. Separation from culture, family, and land doesn't necessarily occur from being off the reservation or from a lack of knowledge about tribal heritage; it can also happen within the boundaries of the reservation. (33)

In terms of decolonization and identity construction, the issue becomes less about blood or race and more about the ideologies and physical limitations imposed on Native people. Decolonization does not provoke the need to pry apart someone's identity or alliances but rather to acknowledge and recognize both the values and dangers of different cultural beliefs and limited historical understanding; decolonization relies on balanced relationships as a key component of Indigenous feminism.

As captured in this image, Junior's core conflict centers upon the internalized fears and simulations that consistently constrain him but upon which he relies to push him further. In another example, Rowdy's father asks Junior if he's gay when Junior asks him to give Rowdy the cartoon of them as superheroes. "I wanted to tell him that I thought I was being

courageous, and that I was trying to fix my broken friendship with Rowdy, and that I missed him, and if that was gay, then okay, I was the gayest dude in the world" (103). While simultaneously mocking homophobia and the feminizing aspects of gay love, Alexie humorously negotiates static and romantic notions of heterosexuality as normal and dominant. According to Stephen Evans, Alexie blends irony and satire, "'humor and wit for the purpose of improving human institutions or humanity" and to "convey for readers vital resonances of realism when he uses [stereotypes] to express the recursive, historical patterns of defeat and exploitation of Indian peoples by white civilization" (6). Blending genres and blurring boundaries forces readers to more clearly see and understand neocolonization and historicize, with self-reflexive satire and humor, modern Native experience. The transformation of humor from being self-condescending to self-reflexive reveals Junior's development into adulthood but also uncovers the values of his culture and community that he had previously overlooked or failed to recognize because of internalized colonial oppression and historical trauma. Through developing consciousness, Junior begins to more clearly see the strength and hope that he was looking for in the same place where he had previously felt its absence; the difference lies within his perception and ideological positioning informed by his physical movement across boundaries and binaries. Such movement depends on his evolving relationship with Rowdy, complemented by his relationship with his sister and grandmother.

Reciprocal and Complementary Relationships

Even in his characterization Alexie attempts to avoid easy categorization. He constructs characters with a high degree of depth and diversity, making them *both* idealistic

and realistic. Readers are often surprised by these characters' emotional, social, and intellectual depths yet want to believe in them and what they represent. Again, readers become active participants in the story and can therefore begin to see the same possibility in themselves and those around them. In this way, the novel challenges the readers' own "reservations of the mind." Perhaps the most interesting component of Alexie's characterization is the unique relationship between Junior and Rowdy in that they represent reciprocal and complementary forces as foils. Returning to Warrior's discussion of Harjo's poetry, overcoming oppression and realizing "healthy transformation" depends on reclaiming bodies and the history that informs identity (347-348). Junior and Rowdy's relationship and its impact on Junior's self-identity represents such reclamation and healthy transformation. Junior's relationships with others also provide the valuable insight he needs to more critically assess and transform himself but more importantly, to avoid being trapped by the "reservation of the mind." These various relationships help encourage Junior's development into an Indigenous feminist warrior/trickster.

Junior's experiences as a result of his physical ailments inform his character and his choices. Junior introduces himself with the line "I was born with water on the brain," a condition that he claims is the source of his "weirdness" but also his strength and poetry, as readers later learn (1). As his teacher Mr. P tells him, "[he's] been fighting since [he] was born" and should continue to fight for opportunity, for hope. He identifies as a "zero on the rez," the lowest possible denominator, the weakest and least valuable member of the tribe. For these reasons, Junior, much like Tayo from Silko's novel, is seen by others and learns to see himself as weak and in need of protection and therefore "other," which often equates to non-masculine or feminine per colonial ideologies seeking to maintain patriarchy or male

dominance. He relies on his best friend Rowdy to protect him. Junior introduces Rowdy as "the toughest kid on the rez…long and lean and strong like a snake" (15). Rowdy's toughness is a result of his father's excessive abuse, making Rowdy hypermasculine in his vengeful violence against others and his desire to protect his position of power among his peers, much like Murieta from Ridge's text. Together the two represent a complementary and reciprocal relationship as foils: Junior tries to heal the physical ramifications of harmful ideologies from which both he and Rowdy suffer and Rowdy pushes Junior towards deeper self-knowledge and personal success while trying to protect him along the way. Such success, however, relies on Junior expressing and coming to terms with his own violent and vengeful side symbolized by Rowdy in order to rise above colonization, historical trauma, and a hypermasculine response that only perpetuates these problems. He does so through the example and support of his friends and family as he crosses the reservation boundary to attend Reardon. Finally, the construction of Junior and Rowdy as foils represents Alexie's response to internalized colonial ideologies that seek to polarize and keep Native people in "the reservation of their minds" by pitting them against each other and themselves.

Perhaps the most telling of both Rowdy's and Junior's characters is the state of poverty in which they live on the reservation. Because the issue of poverty is discussed at length early in the novel, it is a crucial element in the character development of both boys. Blatant in Junior's declaration of poverty and reservation life is the extremely harmful impact that socially constructed stereotypes have on Junior: he feels powerless and unable to break out of the vicious cycle. The worst part about poverty, Junior explains, is that "you start believing that you're poor because you're stupid and ugly. And then you start believing that you are stupid and ugly because you're Indian. And because you're Indian you start

believing you're destined to be poor. It's an ugly circle and *there's nothing you can do about it*" (13). He also claims that the reservation is the most isolated place in the country, "located approximately one million miles north of Important and two billion miles west of Happy" (30). Junior's feelings of isolation and melancholy about life on the reservation intensify exponentially when he discovers that his geometry book, about which he was so excited, once belonged to his mother as indicated by her name written on the cover, a realization that he describes as "the saddest thing in the world" (31). Because the geometry book is so very outdated it symbolizes the institutionalized racism and oppression Junior faces. His heart, hopes, and dreams are hit "with the force of a nuclear bomb" and he responds by throwing the book and accidentally hitting his teacher in the face, metaphorically waking them both up to the roles they play in the colonial system and connecting them through the "geometric" trajectory of history (31, Figure 5). Mr. P candidly explains the truth about reservation history

> When I first started teaching here…We beat…the rowdy ones…That's how we were taught to teach you. We were supposed to kill the Indian and save the child…We were supposed to make you give up being Indian…We were trying to kill Indian culture…I deserved to get smashed in the face for what I've done to Indians. Every white person on this rez should get smashed in the face…All the Indians should get smashed in the face too. (35, 42)

Mr. P captures the essence of colonial constructions of Native masculinity embodied in Rowdy, one of the "rowdy ones" entangled in colonial ideologies and stereotypes. He simultaneously employs historical rhetoric from Captain Pratt, the founder of Indian boarding schools who said "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man." After expressing his anger

about such injustice and learning more about the history behind it, Junior decides to go to Reardon where he believes he will receive the best education along with the white farm kids there. As depicted in another of his cartoons, he expects hope at Reardon to be like a white flying mythical creature amidst smiling clouds. He exaggerates whiteness as full of hope perhaps to counter his own experiences of extreme poverty. These exaggerated differences and expectations help to express his true fear of the stereotypes informing his identity but reinforce his internalized inferiority. Junior begins to question the social constructions he has internalized and allowed to limit his own movement and progress.

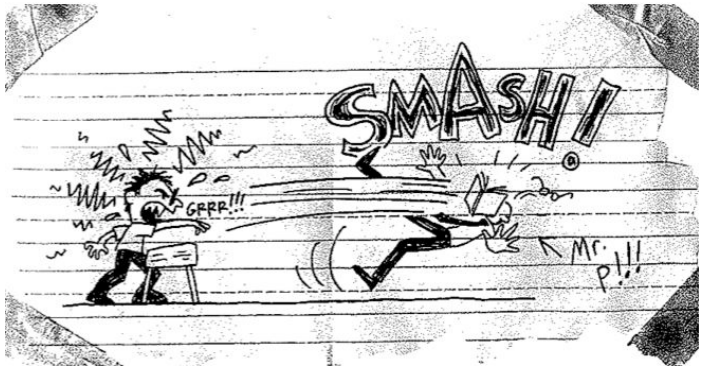

Figure 5

Once Junior realizes how history and colonial ideologies have shaped his education, expectations, and identity, he sees how the "reservation of the mind" has trapped him along with others on the reservation. The reservation becomes symbolic for inhibiting physical and ideological boundaries that impose categories, hierarchies of dominance, and their corresponding identities, such as colonial constructions of gender and race. After Junior succeeds at Reardon, he realizes the power of expectations and stereotypes, his own and others.'

> I'd always been the lowest Indian on the reservation totem pole–I wasn't expected to be good so I wasn't. But in Reardon, my coach and the other players wanted me to be

> good. They needed me to be good. They expected me to be good. And so I became good. I wanted to live up to expectations. I guess that's what it comes down to. The power of expectations. And as they expected more of me, I expected more of myself, and it just grew and grew… (180)

Junior begins to see the inherent, interdependent connection between these ideologies and identities and the corresponding need to move outside of the "reservation of the mind" through both words and actions. He begins to develop a critical awareness of his own as well as his community's identity as strong and courageous, an awareness that affords him the opportunity and hope to transcend historical trauma and potentially lead others towards awareness and transcendence. He learns to resist internal colonization and begin decolonization by promoting new possibilities, new hope for himself and his people, especially Rowdy. In this way, Junior becomes both warrior and caregiver for others on *and* off the reservation.

I argue that in moving across these imposed and self-perpetuated physical and ideological boundaries, Junior develops a better sense of self and reflects upon that which had previously constrained him. The schools become symbolic representations of the two cultures and Junior's socially constructed and polarized identities within each. On the reservation he is the "weird" weakling and feminized Indian–physically and ideologically subjugated, domesticated, and in need of protection. At Reardon he is the potentially dangerous hypermasculine Indian warrior, resembling Rowdy. He refuses to allow the imposed boundaries of the "reservation" to limit him based on these ideologically gendered and raced spaces and identities. His movement between these two spaces and corresponding identities represents his development and capacities to encompass *both* of these constructed

identities and simultaneously move beyond them. In being both physically and ideologically nomadic, like "old-time Indians" moving to survive, as Rowdy learns to see him, Junior represents both past tradition and the contemporary renewal of that tradition for the sake of decolonization and sovereignty. Finally, his choice to become nomadic in this sense forces him to change his self-identity as well as how others view him, thus affecting change in others, particularly his best friend.

Yet, in classic trickster style, Junior's story also reveals the dangers of a heightened sense of pride, self-centeredness, and hypermasculinity. His self-awareness is tested when he faces his now fierce basketball rivals at Wellpinit, his old reservation school. Junior's internal crisis regarding his Indian identity is ironically captured by the two teams' mascots: the Wellpinit Redskins versus the Reardon Indians. Although his coach tells him that he could be an all-star player and even play some college ball, possibilities that make him more fully realize newfound confidence, he admits his own nervousness before the game. His father tells him "Nervous means you want to play. Scared means you don't want to play" and Junior realizes that at Reardon he was the former and at Wellpinit the latter, emphasizing the change he had undergone in choosing to cross boundaries (181). He discovers that the power of expectations push him to develop his own strengths and abilities. He acknowledges that he was forging new ground, that he "was something different, something new…a crusading warrior…[but] like one of those Indian scouts who led the U.S. Cavalry against other Indians" because he wanted revenge against Rowdy, to embarrass him in front of everybody (181-182). The conflict and irony is not lost on Junior who says, "I was kind of suspicious that white people were really interested in seeing some Indians battle each other. I think it was sort of like watching dogfighting, you know? It made me feel exposed and

primitive" (184). Paired with the cartoon of himself as the "white-lover" devil versus the Angelic warrior, both of which show a facial expression of uncertainty and a "Who am I?" thought bubble, this quote further reveals Junior's identity crisis (Figure 6). In both frames, he conceives of his identity as seen through the eyes of his own Spokane community; he is *either* a traitor *or* a warrior, reinforcing colonial stereotypes and hierarchies of dominance. While Junior wants to prove himself to the world, especially his tribe, through hypermasculine displays of physical superiority, he realizes that his desperate need to become a man came with a steep price: the heartbreaking and shameful knowledge that his success prevented his Wellpinit friends from discovering their own potential. After winning the game, Junior cries tears of shame because he "had broken [his] best friend's heart" (196). This experience exemplifies the dangers of pride and cultural defiance yet reinforces the value of shape shifting with critical awareness of one's own actions and responsibilities. Junior's graphic representation and response to this experience promotes Indigenous feminist decolonization of neocolonial identity constructions and the corresponding "reservation of the mind"; in performing hypermasculinity, he discovers the inherent dangers and seeks to overcome those ideological constructions and performances by more critically understanding their history and impact.

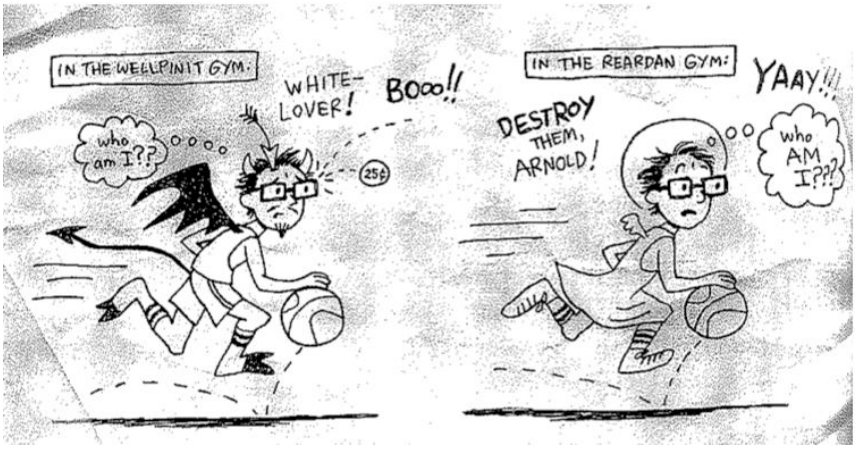

Figure 6

Junior's development and the transformative relationship between these best friends can also be read through a separation/departure and recovery motif similar to Silko's novel. Junior separates from his hypermasculine angst-driven foil (Rowdy) in order to forge into unknown territory that requires him to re-build his identity, including gender and racial identity, making himself even more vulnerable to criticism from his community and further vulnerable to a new community at Reardon. In the process, Junior embraces his vulnerability only to find that his many differences within another physical and ideological context can be empowering rather than disempowering. Forced to acknowledge the dangers of social ascension and resulting hypermasculinity, he then returns and recovers his relationship with Rowdy (and by extension his traditional or historical self) over a game of basketball, re-creating that relationship with a newly empowered self-identity (the metaphorical lesson gained through contests in trickster stories). In essence, Junior embraces his old self as an integral component of his newly constructed self. Furthermore, through his transformation from physically "disabled" and feminized intellectual nerd to popular masculine (yet sensitive) jock, Junior recreates both identities as entirely different and new. In combining past and present identities and racial and gender stereotypes, Junior simultaneously represents and complicates both, made possible by Alexie's choice of mixed genres that provide insight into Junior's thoughts and feelings as he departs, transforms, and returns.

These characters and their actions reveal not only the conceptual importance of such multi-dimensionality but its practical value as a vehicle for necessary changes that ensure individual and community sovereignty. These characters also reveal the need for reciprocity

between and within individuals. Rather than deny their full expression and internal gender complementarity, Junior and Rowdy must embrace both their "femininity" and "masculinity" as constructed in both Western and Native societies in order to develop into adults and to maintain their friendship. Junior's bravery in overcoming obstacles initiates such development. As a consequence, Junior joins Rowdy in climbing the tallest tree on the reservation from which they see the world anew, as beautiful and full of possibility. Even though Rowdy refuses to follow Junior to Reardon, Junior's insistence creates the possibility for Rowdy and his model of bravery makes the path easier to follow. In this way, Junior becomes a role model for Rowdy and others on the reservation.

While Rowdy helps Junior to better understand his development into manhood, I argue that, in complementary fashion, the women in Junior's life help him to maintain a cultural understanding of social roles and balance. Junior's grandmother in particular has a significant impact on his development and critical insight during these major changes in his life. Through her, Junior learns the values of tolerance, kindness, and forgiveness. Grandmother Spirit was a well-respected woman on the reservation, as evidenced by the huge turnout at her funeral. Junior's graphic of her reveals an eccentric older woman who simultaneously embraces her culture while blending in popular culture and a sense of humor about her own culture. For instance, she calls the beaded keychains that she sells on eBay "Highly Sacred Aboriginal Transportation Charms" (69). Junior relies on his grandmother for advice because she proves herself to be more insightful and wise than he first expects. She has a keen awareness of human nature and Junior is consistently amazed by her tolerance of others, which he calls her "greatest gift" (155).

In describing his grandmother, Junior explains that she represents a more traditional Indian perspective of "forgiving…any kind of eccentricity" and celebrating weird people, including epileptics, who were often shamans, and gay people seen as "both male and female [and thus] both warriors and caregivers" (155).[2] He explains, "ever since white people showed up and brought along their Christianity and their fears of eccentricity, Indians have gradually lost all of their tolerance. Indians can be just as judgmental and hateful as any white person. But not my grandmother" (155). She was kind and friendly to everybody, even invisible people whom she worried she might offend. She even asked her family and tribe to forgive the drunk driver who killed her. "My grandmother's last act on earth was a call for forgiveness, love, and tolerance…Even dead, she was a better person than us" (157). Junior learns about such forgiveness, love, and tolerance from his grandmother and realizes that he must carry on her spirit as he vows to "always love [his tribe] for giving [him] peace on the day of [his] grandmother's funeral" (160). These are the traditions that Junior returns to again and again and carries with him throughout his personal transformation as a constant connection to his culture. More importantly, his grandmother teaches him cultural values and ideologies that inform social roles and the means by which he can help to sustain balance within him and the community.

Through his choices and transformation, Junior takes over the role of his grandmother. Grandmother teaches the value of respect through actions, communal bonding through support (even when Junior is seen as a traitor), and tolerance for differences. Because of his grandmother, he realizes that he too has special powers. In this way, Grandmother Spirit and Junior both become symbols of tradition and hope, of looking backward and forward simultaneously, for those on the reservation. Junior carries on his

grandmother's tradition and symbolizes hope in following dreams for those both on and off the reservation. Such a role is not constrained by gender but encompasses both genders and possibilities. By taking over his grandmother's role in the community, Junior becomes both warrior and caregiver, and therefore an Indigenous feminist warrior/trickster critically aware of and strategically employing gender and racial performances as necessary to maintain complementary and reciprocal relationships.

But the culmination of loss in his sister's death shakes his belief in himself and his hope and he is again forced into facing the corresponding historical trauma. At her funeral, he literally runs smack into Rowdy, who blames Junior for his sister's death. He claims that Mary would never have left to follow her dreams if Junior hadn't left to find hope at Reardon. As Junior's alter ego, Rowdy stirs up Junior's self-doubt and almost pushes him into a self-pitying depression. What saves him is the tragic irony of finding everybody drinking in an attempt to wash away their own sadness about alcohol-related deaths in their lives. "I know that death is never added to death; it multiplies. But still, I couldn't stay and watch all of those people get drunk. I couldn't do it" (212). He realizes that, although they came together to grieve "in the same exact way," such grieving through alcohol made no sense and simply increased loneliness and trauma and he vows to never drink. Instead, he returns to school at Reardon to escape the ironic grieving and finds that everybody there is worried about him. They try to console him because "[he] was important to them" regardless of their mutual suspicions of each other when he first arrived at Reardon (212). Moving across these physical spaces, these imposed boundaries and binaries in his time of grief provide him with a sense of perspective. He comes to terms with his sister's death by learning to embrace such "good and sober moments tightly" (216). In contrast to the laughter

during his grandmother's funeral, Junior finally cries for his sister, for himself, and for his "fellow tribal members [who] were slowly killing themselves…[because they] have forgotten that reservations were meant to be death camps. [He] wept because [he] was the only one who was brave and crazy enough to leave the rez. I was the only one with enough arrogance" (217). Junior simultaneously recognizes the complications and values that his actions provoke with the self-reflexivity necessary of an Indigenous feminist warrior/trickster, creating an active presence for himself while disclaiming colonial ideological dominance, tragedy, and neocolonial "reservations."

Although Junior already has a strong sense of humor, both his grandmother and sister teach him the value of accepting the irony, the humorous yet tragic wisdom afforded by life and death, with laughter. "When it comes to death, we know that laughter and tears are pretty much the same thing" (166). His sense of humor allows him to see both the irony and the tragedy simultaneously and in balance, thus releasing his grief and sense of victimry. Although humor is universal, the particularities of Junior's situation are unique to him and essential in building his awareness and character. His outlook and positioning on the reservation inform his perspective regarding reservation conditions. Humor enables him to be self-reflective and handle his own insecurities and fears while transcending imposed binaries and boundaries of race and gender social constructions. Furthermore, humor helps build and maintain community across boundaries and as a way of mourning loss together.

> And when we said good-bye to one grandmother, we said good-by to all of them. Each funeral was a funeral for all of us. We lived and died together. All of us laughed when they lowered my grandmother into the ground. All of us laughed when

> they covered her with dirt. All of us laughed as we walked and drove and rode our way back to our lonely, lonely houses. (166-167)

Throughout the novel, the reader laughs and cries along with Junior and his tribe, making us part of the community as well. The transformation of humor from being self-condescending to self-reflective reveals Junior's development into adulthood but also uncovers the values of his culture and community that he had previously overlooked or failed to recognize through his poverty and race-based depression stemming from neocolonialism and historical trauma. He more clearly sees the strength and hope that he was looking for in the same place where he had previously felt its absence; the difference lies within his perception and ideological positioning. However, the repetition of the mourners all laughing together through these events creates a paradox with the final assertion of loneliness as everyone returns to their isolated internal selves.

As the head warrior scout into the future, Junior later realizes that he "might be a lonely Indian boy, but [he is] not alone in [his] loneliness," that there were various "tribes" to which he could and does belong (217). Such thinking frees him from the self-pity and isolation embodied in the "reservation of the mind" and allows him to find a collective identity through self-declared independence. When he learns to accept his loneliness as communal, he also begins to see himself as a member of various groups but not limited to or by them, "and that's when [he] knew that [he] was going to be okay" (217). Such an "ironic, trickster storyteller embrace[s] a positive multiplicity of being…The trickster does not unify, does not resolve and remove contradiction, fragmentation, or multiplicities. He holds them in balance" (Madsen 67-68). Junior learns to mourn historical trauma and present loss through "an active process of engaging and accepting [that] loss," which allows for agency

and action through a "reintegration of the ego" that resists victimry and assimilation to a colonial ideology dependent on dominance (Madsen 65, 66). Junior becomes an Indigenous feminist warrior/trickster who "possesses the power…to disrupt the flow of dominance in both space and time" and "deconstruct the very opposition between past and present, defying linear thinking, just as [he] refuses the opposition between [feminized] victim and [hypermasculine] aggressor" (Madsen 67). He does so by *both* resisting the neocolonial "reservation of the mind" that seeks to limit possibility *and* asserting Indigenous values of balanced relationships. He accomplishes this in his final act of reintegrating his ego, embodied in the figure of his best friend Rowdy, by reciprocating a belief in the other to overcome challenges through a complementary game of hoops without the burden of keeping score.

In the flashback that leads into the end of the novel, the tree represents both the history of Native Americans as "older than the United States" and thus older than the reservation system, as well as the immense obstacles that such a history creates. Junior climbs the tree with Rowdy and sees "from one end of the reservation to the other… [their] entire world" (219, 226). He calls the tree a "monster," symbolizing that which provokes fear because it falls outside of the realm of the everyday, the knowable. In the final scene, Rowdy and Junior no longer fight against each other but for each other and their tribe. They come together and embrace their differences; "We didn't keep score" (230). Rowdy wants Junior to succeed and vice versa. Both readers and characters learn that Junior's differences make him powerful when he learns to grasp them rather than let others suppress them. Through his differences, he represents *both* the tribe's fears and weaknesses *and* strengths and possibilities simultaneously. How he *uses* these differences reflects potential sovereign

power. Thus, as a coming of age story and allegory for the communal need to push each other further, beyond self-imposed or perpetuated neocolonial boundaries and binaries, the novel teaches to embrace beneficial differences by challenging static notions of identity, both individual and communal while building and maintaining transnational relationships.

With this novel, Alexie too becomes an Indigenous feminist warrior/trickster, unwilling to give up even in the face of isolation from his own Spokane tribe and literary critics. Several critics accuse him of negatively portraying Native people and embracing white culture as the solution to problems on the reservation. In this fictional response, he reveals that different approaches and controversy are valuable if they promote discussion, possibility, and new perspectives. Furthermore, the novel forces readers to question the history of the reservation itself and think more critically about its imposed boundaries and binaries. Readers are left with a vision of the reservation without boundaries, an acceptance and embrace of history and the hope to move beyond it, to become something new while holding on to that which is valuable from the past and present. Thus, reading the novel with an Indigenous feminist consciousness allows and encourages critical conversation and demonstrates the hopes and values of achieving balance in all relationships. Pairing Indigenous feminism with the postindian trickster allows for trickster-like movement across neocolonial boundaries and binaries necessary for transformation and decolonization.

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[1] For the sake of this argument, I summarize and combine these concepts from what are much larger conversations regarding trauma theory, melancholia and mourning, survivance, and the postindian. For more on trauma theory see work by Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, and Ruth Leys. For more on melancholia and mourning see work by David Kazanjian and Dominick LaCapra. For more on the postindian see Gerald Vizenor's vast body of work.

[2] Gay or queer identity in this sense refers to both sexual desire and gender identity. As mentioned earlier, gay or queer identity can also be seen as a rejection of patriarchal heteronormativity, still maintaining a focus on sexuality although with the integral component of gender identity and performance. For the purposes of this discussion,

however, the focus is on socially constructed gender identity and performance rather than gay or queer identity as sexual in nature.

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