Sentimental Ideology, Women's Pedagogy, and American Indian Women's Writing: 1815-1921

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Sentimental Ideology, Women’s Pedagogy, and American Indian Women’s Writing:

1815-1921

by

Christine Renée Cavalier

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sentimental Ideology, Women’s Pedagogy, and American Indian Women’s Writing: 1815-1921

by

Christine Renée Cavalier

Washington University in St. Louis, 2011

Professor Vivian Pollak, Chairperson

This dissertation examines how sentimental notions of respectable womanhood and refined education shaped the polished poetry and prose of four seminal female figures in the history of American Indian literature: Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (1800-1842), the earliest American Indian female author recovered thus far; E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913), the most successful nineteenth-century Native writer who became Canada’s iconic poetess and Native national symbol; S. Alice Callahan (1868-1894), the first American Indian female novelist; and Zitkala-Ša (1876-1938), the first American Indian woman to write and publish her memoirs without a white ghost-writer or other editorial “assistance.” Sentimental ideology underwrote the disciplinary intimacy whereby genteel mixed-blood women achieved their effective literacy and was also inextricable from the bicultural nationalism being inculcated through the elite boarding school curriculum of Indian Territory. The federally funded off-reservation boarding schools of the Dawes Era, meanwhile, would regularly deploy the image of Native schoolgirls being transformed through sentimental social values and literature, although very few students would ever experience the genteel cultivation being promised. The poetry and prose
composed by the Native recipients of sentimental female pedagogy, however, transcend any simple acts of parroting and, rather, critically engage with the gender, racial, and class prejudice inscribed within Anglo-American sympathy. Building off of sentimental tropes and narratives, these Native women conventionally testify to a marginalization that is both gendered and racial; seek psychological relief through reassuring domestic plotlines in which trials lead to reconstituted kinship ties and personal fulfillment; and imagine a spiritual transcendence of their present cultural dilemmas via the redemptive power of female sensibility and domestic virtue. Nevertheless, their oeuvres also express at various moments a skepticism towards sentimental casts of thought that is no less penetrating and frustrated than that expressed by twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics. When taken as a whole, the bicultural textuality of these four authors illustrates an invariable, programmatic conformity to none of the current interpretations of literary sentimentalism. Critiquing, ironizing, but also pressing against and expanding the ideological limitations underwriting the tropes of sensibility, domesticity, and sympathy, these Native women writers broaden the cross-cultural pertinence and apologetic potential of sentimental literature.
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I consider myself very fortunate to have spent the past six years exploring the remarkable biographies and impressive rhetorical accomplishments of four courageous Native authors: Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, E. Pauline Johnson, S. Alice Callahan, and Zitkala-Ša. I have also had the privilege of pursuing this area of enquiry with the collaborative support of many scholars and role models. Within the English Department of Washington University in St. Louis, I am particularly indebted to my advisor Professor Vivian Pollak for both supporting my decision to undertake an interdisciplinary dissertation project and for also keeping me beneficially grounded in literary analysis. Reflected throughout this dissertation, moreover, is the mentorship of Professor Wayne Fields who, during his tenure as the Director of American Cultural Studies and through the generous financial assistance of the Lynne Cooper Harvey Fellowship, guided my formative cross-disciplinary learning opportunities—including my initial venture into American Indian Studies. I am also especially grateful to Professor Carter Revard whose enthusiastic, yet always scrupulous engagement with my efforts as a still-maturing scholar of Native literatures and history renewed my resolve to bring this seemingly enormous endeavor to its successful conclusion.

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authorship by the archives of the Indiana Historical Society and Earlham College’s Lilly Library and Professor Susan Rose Dominguez’s painstaking transcriptions of Zitkala-Ša’s personal correspondence. Finally, during my unexpected detour to the Deep South, my dissertation project was ultimately kept on track through the very helpful resources of the College of Charleston’s Addlestone Library. To all of the mentors, scholars, and institutions of higher learning that have facilitated the composition of this dissertation, I humbly extend a most heartfelt “thank you.”

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INTRODUCTION

Sentimental Pedagogy, Collaboration, and Resistance

Critical efforts to recover the biography and oeuvre of neglected Native women writers have generally treated the engagement with sentimental social values and literary conventions as an embarrassing historical affectation that must be downplayed in order to foreground these authors’ legitimate and sincere expression of subaltern protest. Such approaches overlook how, on the one hand, transatlantic sensibility shaped the educational opportunities and the literary endeavors of indigenous women, and, on the other hand, how a commitment to Native culture and advocacy altered the sentimental literary tropes and genres that Native authors employed. In other words, by obscuring indigenized sentimentality, critics sacrifice a more complete understanding of how, in several notable cases, Native women’s collaboration with Anglo-American pedagogy and literary forms gave rise to nineteenth-century authorial acts of resistance. Consequently, this dissertation examines how sentimental notions of respectable womanhood and refined education shaped the polished poetry and prose of four seminal female figures in the history of American Indian literature: Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (1800-1842), the earliest American Indian female author recovered thus far; E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913), the most successful nineteenth-century Native woman writer who became Canada’s iconic poetess and indigenous national symbol; S. Alice Callahan (1868-1894), the first American Indian female novelist; and Zitkala-Ša (1876-1938), the first Native woman to write and publish her memoirs without a white ghost-writer or other editorial “assistance.”¹ Drawing upon Craig Womack’s rejection of “the supremacist notion that assimilation can only go in one direction, that white culture always overpowers Indian

¹ See Bernardin 216.
culture, . . . that Indian resistance has never occurred in such a fashion that things European have been radically subverted by Indians”(12), this exploration of nineteenth-century education and authorship reveals that female pedagogy is not a one-way street or limited to a passive reception of the dominant culture’s literary and social values but also produces remarkable textual instances of American Indian women assuming the mantle, both figuratively and literally, of cross-cultural mediators and pedagogues.

Of course, as with any discussion of nineteenth-century women’s writing, an examination of the sentimentality deployed by American Indian women, and especially the hyper-textualized sensibility clearly informing Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s and E. Pauline Johnson’s poetry and prose, can become mired in the various debates regarding the cultural work and authenticity of women’s written self-expression. Searching for an interdisciplinary definition of sentimentality, June Howard has necessarily gestured toward the multitudinous literary conventions that meld the eighteenth-century effusions of sensibility to the female moral authority emanating from within the nineteenth-century domestic sphere: “[W]hen we call an artifact or gesture sentimental, we . . . mark a moment when the discursive processes that construct emotion become visible. . . . [W]e are recognizing that a trope from the immense repository of sympathy and domesticity has been deployed; we recognize the presence of at least some fragmentary element of an intellectual and literary tradition” (Howard 76). As recent scholarship has shown, in turn, this “intellectual and literary tradition” commonly deemed to have been uniquely feminine was, in fact, inspired by masculine political discourse, or as Julie Ellison amply demonstrates: “The strategies of female authors and the meanings of the feminine in the culture of sensibility make sense only in the context of this long preeminence of
masculine tenderheartedness. . . [S]ensibility with all the trappings—weeping, melancholy, suicide, self-pity, weakness, victimization, and sympathy—begins as a transaction that is insistently about parliamentary manhood” (19).² By privileging the textual eliciting of sympathetic emotion as a didactic expression of virtue and civic religiosity; promoting tears and sympathetic community-building as the humane outcome of imperialism’s systemic inequalities and racialized injustices; and predicing these refined sentiments upon an idealized domestic sphere of female self-effacement, masculine sensibility laid the groundwork for the conffated social critique and compassionate tears that came to characterize Anglo-American women’s writing by the mid-nineteenth century.³

² Elizabeth Barnes similarly points to British Whig models, privileging Adam Smith’s 1759 Theory of Moral Sentiments and what she calls his notion of “sympathetic identification” as the ideological as well as pedagogical substance of sentimental literature: “[I]magining oneself in another’s position . . . signified a narrative model whereby readers could ostensibly be taught an understanding of the interdependence between their own and others’ identities” (ix). It is this eighteenth-century concept of sympathy, moreover, that has clearly informed Laura Mielke’s recent coinings of the “moving encounter” as yet another figure of nineteenth-century sentiment: “[W]hat I call moving encounters [are] scenes in which representatives of two ‘races,’ face-to-face in a setting claimed by both, participated in a highly emotional exchange that indicated their hearts had more in common than their external appearances or political allegiances suggested. . . . Essential to such scenes was the sentimental intermediary who provided necessary translation—linguistic, cultural, affective—and attempted to minimize the emotional volatility” (2).

³ As Howard observes, the masculine discourse surrounding sensibility popularized the authorial evocation of readers’ sympathetic compassion and tears as a matter of moral pedagogy, political innovation, and theological proof: “Philosophers like Lord Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau derive benevolence and, ultimately, morality in general from human faculties that dispose us to sympathize with others. . . . The natural goodness of humanity . . . is visible most directly in our sensations of compassion, and the goodness of God is visible in the implanting of such faculties in humanity” (Howard 70). Conversely, Julie Ellison has underscored how the sympathetic tears of elite males not only testified to the racial and class exploitation underwriting empire-building but also exonerated the “man of feeling” who acknowledged his “implication or responsibility” in the great chain of circulating commodities (12-13): “The moral embarrassment of the sensitive intellectual crystallized as a response to three historical factors: first, the racial politics of international mercantile and colonial power relations; second, a concept of the economy as a system that produced suffering for some and privilege for others; and third, cultural opportunities for the display of sympathy, especially sympathetic masculinity” (12). In other words, the artful expression of sympathy not only assuaged masculine guilt but also granted the author access to an imagined community of like-minded, commiserating peers. Finally, in tracing the literary provenance of the many tropes of self-effacing renunciation and compensatory logic that Cheryl Walker scrupulously classifies in her seminal analysis of women’s poetic sensibility (50), Paula Bernat Bennett asserts that the nineteenth-century fixation upon female seclusion, duty, and suffering had its basis in eighteenth-century masculine fantasies of “mother-love and home” (24):
Since the 1977 publication of Ann Douglas’s *The Feminization of American Culture*, moreover, a critical morass of conflicting assessments of women’s sentimental prose and its ideological implications has developed, all stemming from and, in some measure, contributing to the seminal Douglas-Baym-Tompkins debate. Describing the female reading public from the 1840’s to the 1880’s as having been “damaged” by their exclusion from real power and responsibility, Douglas argues that sentimental novelists avoided making any significant challenges to women’s marginalization and instead produced reassuring portrayals of women beautifully effacing their own needs, inhabiting an idealized household, triumphing through weak religious platitudes, and receiving attention for their self-indulgent emotions (62, 6, 4, 9, 13). That is, rather than directly opposing capitalist greed and patriarchal exploitation, sentimental authoresses cooperated with the commercial commodification of sympathy and abetted “male hegemony” by insisting “that the values a society’s activity denies are precisely the ones it cherishes” (12-13). Conversely, Nina Baym’s *Woman’s Fiction* reduces much of what Douglas defines as sentimental fiction to a single “tale” concerning “the formation and assertion of a feminine ego” and asserts that women writers actually endeavored to empower their female readers through this plotline of trials and triumph (11-12). For Baym, sentimental fiction ultimately celebrates heroines who make use of their intelligence and character to overcome emotional disappointments and social liminality and who create, in the process, their own satisfying domestic sphere (11-12, 19-22, 38). In contrast to a Douglas-like

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Associated initially with refined poetic sensibility, the qualities which constituted the nineteenth-century female sentimental . . . were first associated with the valorization of home and family by male Continental writers publishing in the second half of the eighteenth century. . . . Behind the genteel aesthetic and inseparable from it lay a domestic ideology that made many so-called “feminine” psychic qualities fundamental to the refinement of male bourgeois subjectivity. (22-3)
dismissal of “the cult of domesticity” as an apology for excluding women from economic and political power (26), Baym also argues that antebellum authors described domesticity, not as the sum of household chores and caregiving duties, but as the network of intimate, affirming relationships that are predicated upon “love, support, and mutual responsibility” (26-7). Although these “domestic values” are typically expressed within a household setting, they extend beyond spouses, children, siblings, and even gender, so that “men as well as women find greatest happiness and fulfillment in domestic relations” (27).

Finally, Jane Tompkins’s Sensational Designs contends that, in seeking to transform the nation and the world according to the image of the American middle-class home, sentimental authors created plots in which the disempowered paradoxically conquer the hearts and minds of others and collaborate with the kingdom of God. Although Tompkins and Baym agree that sentimental authors not only portrayed domestic values as crucial to ensuring ethical decision-making processes within the public sphere but also championed the idea that domestic suffering could ultimately bring emotional, if not always material, rewards, Baym describes the religious rhetoric of woman’s fiction as a form of “social strategy” that is “always subsumed within... domestic ideology,” whereas Tompkins insists that women authors genuinely desired to circulate “the beliefs that animated the revival movement in antebellum America” and to educate readers in “right” Christian feelings and behavior (Baym 41, 43; Tompkins 149). Defining sentimental fiction as “the story of salvation through motherly love” (124-5), Tompkins reads sentimental fiction’s combination of feminine submission and religious consolation as offering women the opportunity to re-envision themselves collaborating
with the ultimate power and authority of the Almighty. In other words, women are being encouraged “to fulfill” their assigned gender role by “transcending” it through an identification with God (161). Inspiring women not only to convert men and children and but also to condemn the excesses of American capitalism and politics, female authors played a pivotal role in the “country’s vision of itself as a redeemer nation” (171-2).

Thus, although Baym and Tompkins uniformly reject the charges of anti-feminist collaboration and intellectual vapidity that Douglas levels against sentimental fiction, Baym works to redeem the content of sentimental texts, while Tompkins stresses what she sees as their revolutionary spiritual and social commitments.

A corollary to these conflicting evaluations of nineteenth-century women’s fiction, there is also the question of whether the voice emanating from sentimental verse is, in fact, authentic in terms of gender or race. In Mary Loeffelholz’s assessment of recent recovery efforts, critics have privileged those “authentic” lyric voices that express a “spontaneous domestic realism” with its concomitants of subversive anger and resistance, while dismissing other speakers’ perspectives for being “derivative” or overtly collaborative with the gendered themes and conventions of sensibility (17).

For example, Paula Bernat Bennett classifies nineteenth-century women’s poetry according to a three-tiered hierarchy of derivative (bad), difference-feminist (conflicted), and equality-feminist (satisfactorily subversive) female voices. That is, she defines “literary sentimentality” as the hyper-textualized imitation of eighteenth-century males’

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4 According to Heather Dubrow’s explication of the lyric and its history, the lyric speaker has been valued either for revealing her individual feelings within a specific place and moment in time or for resisting temporality altogether and articulating a perspective mediated by literary genre or universal experience (179). Janet Gray, in turn, has attempted to consolidate these opposed critical approaches by arguing that, even when engaging in an escape from history, the lyrical voice cannot deny her own linguistic temporality and the “situatedness” of the cultural and social context from which she gains access to this educated form of expression (5-6, 9, 12).
articulation of Romantic sensibility; “high sentimentality” as the conflation of True Womanhood and female influence with social reform; and “parodic/gothic sentimentality” as the ironization of the suffering and gender injustices borne by the self-effacing “Angel in the House.”\(^5\) Furthermore, not content with pitting the ventriloquized lyric voice of belle lettres against the legitimately resistant voice speaking from lived female experience, Bennett also undertakes to oppose those American Indian authors whom she categorizes as raised “white,” adept in “white poetic conventions,” and relegated to “reimagining what Native cultures were like” to the real Native voices—whose unspoiled indigeneity requires, of course, the trusty mediation of “white” translators (103, 211). Ironically, the disturbing outcome of such well-intentioned projects to recover and preserve the “authentic” American Indian voice is the actual exclusion of Native texts and the alienation of Native people from their own indigenous identities, or as Scott Michaelson observes using the early works of Vine Deloria, Jr.: “All types of anthropology necessarily fabricate an ideal Amerindian against which ‘Indian people begin to feel that they are merely shadows of a mythical super-Indian’” (4).

Nevertheless, as the texts of Schoolcraft, Johnson, Callahan, and Zitkala-Ša will amply illustrate, “Amerindians are multiplicity: “There is little sense of a ‘lost identity,’ and they ‘choose from a wide variety of paths of progress,’ many of which are newly invented by Amerindians” (Michaelson 4). In turn, rather than automatically assuming that minority women authors engaged with either the hyper-textuality of sensibility or the conservative gender values of “high sentimentality” out of an inauthentic regard for the good opinion of “the dominant population” (Bennett 60), this dissertation explores the

\(^5\) See Bennett 22-7, 43, 49-52, 120-34, 159-63.
pedagogical context for Native students’ appropriation of Anglo-American culture and literature. As Mary Loeffelholz has shown, literature that rejects the adulation and pecuniary remuneration of “bourgeois art” as well as the difference feminism and didacticism of “social art” is not so much a sign of superiority, whether in terms of imagination or gender consciousness, as it is a turn-of-the-century marker of class privilege and superior access to “emergent formal and informal institutions of higher culture and the ever finer gradations their burgeoning made possible” (135-6): “Within a later nineteenth-century American literary field […] taking up these new positions entailed rejecting or modifying earlier nineteenth-century modes of becoming a woman poet, modes rooted in the domestic-tutelary complex and its instrumental, didactic understanding of women’s writing, in favor of a more autonomous sense of the aesthetic” (6). Yet, for even the most privileged Native women, there was a paucity of accessible alternatives to the literary lessons inscribed with middle-class mores and sentimental conventions. For example, Pauline Johnson’s impressive pedigree and the genteel refinements of her acculturated Mohawk lifestyle were not enough to overcome the limitations placed upon her education by poor health and a fraught relationship to both the Iroquois and Euro-Canadian milieu immediately outside her own bicultural domestic circle. Highly evocative of the domestic-tutelary relationship between Jane Johnston Schoolcraft and her Anglo-Irish father at the very outset of the nineteenth century, Johnson would become entirely dependent upon her English-born mother’s sentimental home schooling for several years. Consequently, Pauline Johnson self-consciously

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6 Indeed, although her scholarship does not directly touch upon the poetic production of nineteenth-century Native women, Mary Loeffelholz has helpfully redirected the attention of readers and critics alike to the all-important role played by women’s access to education: “The history of how nineteenth-century American women wrote poetry is part of a wider history of women’s access to particular forms of cultural capital” (8-9).
confesses in an 1897 interview, “I’m not what you call an educated woman” (“An Interview”). Interestingly enough, she appears embarrassed by her mother’s disciplinary intimacy which, by the fin-de-siècle, appears to have become too bourgeois and old-fashioned to do credit to Canada’s Native New Woman.

However, a lack of educational alternatives remains a far cry from Paula Bernat Bennett’s assertion that, unlike other minority writers who “employed [sentimental] conventions by choice,” Native authors were coerced into their effective literacy (82).

That is, Bennett’s generalizing declarations concerning Native women’s pedagogy, which

7 This is not to suggest, however, that Johnson actually conveyed a lack of education or polish. Even her rather unsympathetic interviewer observes, “[S]he does pretty much everything that a real Indian would not be expected to do, and leaves undone everything that one would expect of a child of the Iroquois. And she talks like a Vassar graduate, only with a trifle more naïveté” (qtd. in Gerson and Strong-Boag, “Championing” 53). It should also be noted, moreover, that for Johnson, “success” as a poet and performer was not merely a matter of changed hearts but also an expanded mind. That is, bourgeois art provided an invaluable means of acquiring other forms of cultural capital in lieu of formal education. In an 1890 letter to a friend, written two years before her stage debut at the Toronto Canadian Literature Evening, Johnson blurs any distinction between her authorial ambitions and her desire for a remunerative profession, obviously expecting her confidante to understand how paid “work” is inseparable from her political and private goals:

I am willing to consent to anything legitimate, that will mean success in the end. Not that I ever expect that success to mean fame . . . I have a double motive in all my work and all my strivings—one is to upset the Indian Extermination and noneducation theory—in fact to stand by my blood and my race. The other is that . . . I hope to see something of the great world . . . , and to do this one must work. (qtd. in Gerson and Strong-Boag, Collected xvi)

Johnson pursues her literary work in the belief that she will thereby be granted access to the empirical knowledge and sophistication of the genteel tourist.

8 Disciplinary intimacy or “the domestic-tutelary-complex” achieved its authority through a coalescence of intense parent-child bonding, sentimental literature’s promotion of conservative gender values, and the demarcation of the domestic sphere as the appropriate space for educating children and expressing affection, piety, and sensibility (Brodhead 70, 72). For Loeffelholz, in turn, “disciplinary intimacy” became mid-century sentimental print culture’s ideological foil and backlash to institutional education’s espousal of Enlightenment ideals and emphasis upon women’s expanding intellectual role as teachers over their traditionally affective role as mothers (15, 20-2, 36-7). Fundamental to both Brodhead’s and Loeffelholz’s description of this home-schooling pedagogical model, moreover, is the idea that the bourgeois mother and the texts that she gives to her offspring actually converge within the child-student’s superego. That is, like the sentimental parent within the home, nineteenth-century sentimental print culture didactically models for the home-schooled student a “true” woman’s prioritization of childhood and home; her sensibility to loss, suffering, and injustice; and, not least of all, her selfless service to her family. Consequently, the child-student’s imitation of her sentimental literary lessons has been interpreted—in all too many cases, without a proper consideration of the child’s own resistant agency—as an indication of her interiorization and acquiescence to maternally-reinforced social values.
are clearly based upon late-nineteenth-century federal education policies and off-reservation boarding schools, leave little interpretive space for Schoolcraft’s, Johnson’s, Callahan’s, and Zitkala-Ša’s multicultural liminality and privileged embrace of Anglo-American textuality: “Native American students were far less enthusiastic when it came to education in the white man’s ways—not surprisingly, since their primary motivation for assimilation came from the barrel of a gun” (82). As will be seen from Zitkala-Ša’s resistant rhetoric, even when read against the published self-expression of those who experienced federally-controlled Indian education, Bennett’s perspective all but erases the achievements and long history of North America’s bicultural Indians who did indeed choose strategic acculturation and, hence, selectively adapted Anglo-American discourse and social values for their own cultural and political purposes. Rather than abjectly acquiescing to the pedagogical authority of white strangers in order to evade extermination, these Native-identified women were taught to engage in the most elite genres comprising nineteenth-century women’s literature and to emulate middle-class mores either from within the mixed-blood domesticity of their own homes or an educational institution which they entered by their own volition and in which they

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9 In all fairness, it should be noted that Bennett’s generalizing assumptions appear to have been based upon the work of Native critic Paula Gunn Allen and, in particular, her explanation of “why Indian people didn’t publish their work for the most part until [the twentieth] century”: “For one thing, literacy as understood in modern America is not particularly useful to tribal peoples. . . . For another, instruction in literacy was accomplished through humiliation, beatings, and isolation in huts, dark closets, and tiny prisons. When students are force taught . . . their reluctance to take up pen and write is hardly surprising. Nor were Native people educated to become literati” (15). Interestingly enough, Allen’s remarks are not only historically limited to the federal government’s late-nineteenth-century assimilation project but are also closely tied to a highly personalized, familial narrative. That is, Paula Gunn Allen’s analysis is being deployed against the assimilationist legacy of her great-grandmother who, by Eurocentric reckoning, successfully collaborated with acculturative education: “She learned how to be a literate, modest, excruciatingly exacting maid for well-to-do white farmers’ and ranchers’ wives. She didn’t follow exactly the course laid out for her, and became the farmer-rancher’s wife instead. The bitter fruits of her efforts are still being eaten by her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. I often wonder if we will recover from the poisonous effects of Indian-saving” (13).
excelled by their own scholarly merit. In turn, these women deployed a bicultural version of literary sentimentality in order to consolidate their own familial legacy of tribal leadership and privilege and/or to translate the political concerns and agenda of their respective indigenous nations into the language of a dominant Eurocentric culture. Most importantly, these Native women authors endeavored to illustrate not simply indigenous equality with but superiority to Anglo-American claims of respectability, intellectuality, and civilization.

For example, placing Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s earliest poetic attempts side by side demonstrates how the author’s self-conscious compliance with her father’s Anglo-Irish heritage could coexist with a tenacious—and resistant—subjectivity. In her “Stanzas, Written in 1815 before going to hear my Father read religious services,” a teenage Jane Johnston associates both her piety and her versification with patriarchal authority and tutelage: “First to my God, my heart and thoughts I’ll raise, / Then from my earthly father counsel take / From him I’ll learn to sing my Savior’s praise” (Lines 1-3). Even as they represent a mixed-blood daughter’s deference to her Anglo-Irish father’s Christianity and lyrical expectations, Jane’s “Stanzas” nevertheless betray the poetess’s

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10 However the terms “bicultural” and “mixed-blood” may overlap in the biographies of Schoolcraft, Johnson, Callahan, and Zitkala-Ša, it would nevertheless be a mistake to conclude that Native-identified women of partial—or even mostly—European descent were automatically acculturated or, at the very least, sympathetic towards Anglo-American social values. Historically, and particularly in the case of matrilineal indigenous nations, the fact of intermarriage between whites and American Indians and subsequent interrogations of blood quantum have been highly unreliable indicators of mixed-race tribal members’ cultural loyalties and often-complex attitudes toward assimilation; see especially White, Perdue, and Macenczak. By the same token, the fact that all four authors were, in fact, mixed-bloods does shed considerable light upon the nature of their biculturalism. Despite their access to multiple cultural “worlds” (Mihesuah, “Commonality of Difference” 42)—owing in large part to their physical appearance, acculturative education, and genteel economic and/or social status—, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, E. Pauline Johnson, S. Alice Callahan, and Zitkala-Ša all refuse either to “pass” as Anglo-American women or to assimilate unconditionally into a Eurocentric nation. Rather, these four women indomitably embrace their respective tribal identities as a fundamental aspect of their political and authorial subjectivity.

11 It should be noted that Robert Dale Parker has chosen to retain Jane Schoolcraft’s idiosyncratic capitalization style.
surprisingly stubborn self-possession. Subtly suggesting both the chary independence of an adolescent as well as the jealously guarded autonomy of a wary convert, she chooses to appeal first to her God and the divine authority that supercedes the “counsel” of an “earthly father” and then limits John Johnston’s authority to his artistic direction. Perhaps, then, it is her sense of stifled spiritual individuality that inspires the young girl to conclude her poem with the cliché that this world is a “vale of woe” (Line 12).

As can be seen from her 1816 poem “On reading Miss Hannah Moore’s [sic] Christian morals and Practical Piety,” Jane Johnston is also highly selective in her appropriation of sentimental rhetoric and appears particularly drawn to True Womanhood as a means of claiming equality with Anglo-American women and as a preferred pathway to a bicultural assertion of her own moral authority and resistant perspective. Apparently wanting to impress her paternal tutor with her zeal for literacy and self-cultivation—after all, she could converse on not one but two of Hannah More’s books—and eager to display her grasp of belles lettres, she decides to compose a poetic book report. By the same token, in direct contrast to her poetic praise of evangelistic conduct-of-life-manuals, her choice of form asserts her preference for the aesthetic pleasures of verse over prosaic didacticism:

O that the precepts they [More’s books] impart,

May ever influence my mind,

And to each virtue form my heart,

That should adorn all womankind. (Lines 5-8)

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12 As Robert Dale Parker explains, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s early poem responds to two of Hannah More’s didactic texts, Practical Piety and Christian Morals, which were published no more than five years before Jane’s versified commentary.
Responding to her encounter with a popular exponent of women’s spiritual discipline and reform, the teenager first articulates a desire to be shaped or “formed” more completely by not just the morality but also the gender values set forth by More’s books. Yet, despite taking these “precepts” literally to “heart,” she nonetheless eschews disinterested spirituality and desires this True Womanhood because it is, like an adornment, decorative. Consequently, Jane appears rather discerning in her embrace of those precepts that are intended, at least by her estimation, for “all womankind” and that should, therefore, make the Mêtis girl equally as respectable—and attractive—as her pious Anglo-American peers.

Most importantly, her poem’s final lines gesture toward a bicultural interpretation of True Womanhood that transcends feminine aesthetics and genteel accomplishments. Embracing, in Christian terms, the powerlessness associated with women’s poetic sensibility, Jane humbly confesses her inability to achieve either her spiritual goals or earthly happiness without God’s gracious intervention:

In virtue, I could never grow,
Without the spirit from above
Nor lead a life of bliss below,
Without my Savior’s tender love. (9-12)

Yet, with this infusion of “the spirit from above” and her “Savior’s tender love,” Jane lays claim to a considerable spiritual power that has not only private but also potentially political ramifications: “Then may I still what’s good pursue,/ And strive to conquer what is ill” (my emphasis, 13-14). Recent reevaluations of sentimental women’s self-professed mandate to overcome disbelief and degenerate behavior would suggest that
Jane’s resolve to “strive to conquer what is ill” be read as a feminized iteration upon imperialist rhetoric. That is, she is espousing a kind of “Manifest Domesticity,” with its interrogation of the female heart, middle-class home, and nation-at-large for “traces of foreignness that must be domesticated or expunged” (Kaplan 600). To invert Laura Wexler’s reading of sentimentality’s sadistic ulterior purposes, Jane Johnston deploys More’s writing “as an aid in the conquest of the self,” only after having first internalized “[t]he energies [sentimentalism] developed . . . as a tool for the control of [racialized] others” such as American Indians (101). Jane’s struggle for the mastery of sin and self thus becomes an interiorized colonization that endeavors to crush whatever impulses and cultural values Anglo-American discourse has excluded as extraneous or “savage.”

Yet, notwithstanding their provenance in a laudable endeavor to confront the psychological subjugation of those who were excluded from the intended white, middle-class audience of sentimental literature, Kaplan’s and Wexler’s interpretive methods ironically underestimate the racial and cultural perspicuity with which Native readers could selectively adapt their sentimental literary lessons. Indeed, Jane’s very biculturalism complicates any easy assumptions concerning what this poetess might have deemed to be “ill,” “savage,” and worthy of Christian conquest. In light of her family’s support of the British and their Native allies during the War of 1812, the teenager would have deemed Americans to be “foreign” enemies worthy of spiritual censure, and long after the cessation of hostilities, Jane’s association of female virtue with the “conquest” of wrong becomes culturally provocative. For example, one-time guest Anna Jameson particularly recounts Jane’s admiration for an Ojibwe female warrior who “fought & headed her people in the last war,” leading Native forces against the Americans (Parker
As late as 1836, Jane was still expressing a marked antipathy for American culture and politics and, in her private correspondence, communicated her moral condemnation of Washington, D.C. as “the Seat of -- (pride and voluptuousness) I was going to say” (qtd. in Parker 70). Jane Johnston’s reading of Hannah More thus appears to have not only inspired the kind of evangelical, reformist impulses later associated with “high” sentimentality but also to have laid the groundwork for her poetic expressions of Indian advocacy. In other words, Jane’s reading of sentimental poetry and prose establishes a rhetorical foundation for her acts of cross-cultural mediation and critique of American hegemony.

Three years after Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s poetic response to popular moralistic sentiment, American lawmakers were turning their attention to the possibility of “providing against the further decline and final extinction of the Indian tribes, adjoining the frontier settlements of the United States, and for introducing among them the habits and arts of civilization” (“Civilization Fund Act” 33). With the passage of the Indian Civilization Act in 1819, the U.S. government began subsidizing the establishment of schools within indigenous nations and made explicit overtures to missionary societies to fulfill this agenda (Reyhner and Eder 43). Soon missionary-pedagogues were fanning out across the homelands of what later came to be known as the “Civilized Nations” of

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13 Having personally witnessed the aggrieved widow-turned-warrior’s warm reception from British-controlled Fort Mackinac, Jane Schoolcraft later impresses Jameson with the notion that this unconventional approach to “conquer[ing] what is ill” was nonetheless aesthetically impressive or ornamental and by no means erased the young indigenous woman’s coquettish femininity: “Mrs. Schoolcraft, when a girl of eleven or twelve years old, saw this woman, who was brought in the Fort at Mackinaw and introduced to the commanding officer. . . . In the room hung a large mirror, in which she surveyed herself [presumably wearing her slain husband’s “ornaments, wampum, medal”] with evident admiration and delight, turning round and round before it, and laughing triumphantly” (77-8). Anna Jameson was a noted Victorian critic of art and Shakespeare, a friend of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, and an accomplished travel writer who, in her three volume Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada, provides what Robert Dale Parker considers the fullest account of Susan Ozhaguscodawayquay Johnston’s life; see Parker 16.
the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Muscogee or “Creek” peoples. Indians’ begrudging acceptance of this missionary presence signaled a calculated compromise that reached beyond what the white missionary-pedagogues imagined themselves to be accomplishing and toward the national survival that beset indigenous nations so desperately sought to secure.\footnote{As Angie Debo points out in regard to the Creek Nation: “A few of the leading chiefs . . . subscribed in theory to the principle that only the acquisition of the white man’s culture would save the Creeks from extinction” (Debo 85).} In other words, families enrolling their children in mission schools were motivated by the necessity to better comprehend and contain the threat of Euro-American cultural ascendancy rather than by any exclusive desire to learn of Christ. Students, in turn, were pursuing their people’s cultural endurance and resistance through varying degrees of selective assimilation to what Amanda J. Cobb has described as a constellation of “literacies” deployed during the pre-Removal “colonial education” of Native children: “Civilization meant acculturation, which entailed more than learning to read and write; acculturation included learning the appropriate ideologies, cultural conventions, traditions, and social skills” (26-7).

Nevertheless, unlike Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, the female recipients of this pre-Removal missionary education left behind no poetic or prose reflections upon either their bicultural upbringing or their tumultuous experiences of genocide on the borders of the United States. On the one hand, missionary-run boarding schools typically would not have inculcated anything like what Catherine Hobbs has called “effective literacy” or “a level of literacy that enables the user to act to effect change, in her own life and in society” (1). Within the manual labor model of education being applied by missionary-pedagogues, students were acquainted with a combination of religious, economic, and academic literacies, but, as one might assume, a great deal of emphasis was being placed
upon learning a trade or, for girls, spinning, weaving, and sewing (Cobb 29). In other words, the domesticity being taught was still very much tied to household production and subsistence and was a far cry from the decorative pursuits, intellectual cultivation, and affective discipline being promoted by sentimental texts and popularized in middle-class homes. On the other hand, the sheer realities of Indian Removal and ongoing decades of cultural displacement would be enough to explain students’ textual silence. For the Muscogee Nation in particular, the United States’ earliest large-scale experiment in allotment in severality would prove a disaster for both property and human rights, with Native-identified families forced from their homes by violence, the wiles of land speculators, and the anti-Indian bias of the Alabama courts to which Creek citizens were now subject. All Creeks—full bloods and mixed bloods, traditionalist and acculturated—would have a share in the displacement: “[N]ot more than half the Creeks

15 For more on the theoretical bases and practices of the manual schools, see Cobb 27-31; McLoughlin 3360-1; Reyhner and Eder 52-3; Mintz 75-93; and Macenczak 31-2. Interestingly enough, Kimberly Macenczak’s study of Sophia Sawyer, the eccentric missionary-pedagogue who began her work with the Cherokees in 1823, demonstrates how the education provided by Sawyer’s New Echota day-school placed more emphasis upon academic subjects than did the typical manual boarding school: “Reading, Spelling, Writing, Geography, Arithmetic, History, and Bible were taught. Of an average 25 students [in 1833], ‘Seven are writing—twelve are in Geography—two in Parley’s first Book of History—. . . twenty three can read—Some of these can read correctly and understand”’ (30). Despite the arguments in favor of boarding school education, which included day-schools’ inability to combat “irregular attendance, parents’ arbitrary removal of their children, and parents’ negative character influence” (28), the labor required to keep the Brainerd boarding school operational and the premium placed upon the manual labor aspects of the curriculum ultimately meant that teachers sacrificed time that should have been devoted to academics so that students could be put to work:

[A]t Brainerd education unquestionably centered upon manual labor. This shift in emphasis was due in part to the notion that Indian children were either not capable or not worthy of an academic education equal to that of the white man’s. It also represented a misunderstanding of the Lancaster methodology in which teachers were encouraged to keep students busy and accountable. . . . New Echota seemed to adopt the System in a more pure form than did Brainerd. This is due in large part to the fact that New Echota was never a boarding school, and manual labor was not necessary for the success of the school. (32)

16 See Young 4, 16-17, 39, 191-3; Foreman, Grant 107-8; and Debo 100. Dividing up the commonly held lands of the tribal community, the 1832 treaty guaranteed each citizen a 320 acre allotment of land in Alabama, while any excess land would be made available for white settlement.
who were uprooted from the loved soil of Alabama ever lived to thrive again in the rude
land into which they were transplanted” (102-3). For the bicultural women caught up in
this chaotic period of dispossession and exile, the uncertainty of their families’ and
nations’ very survival would have made bellettristic self-expression much less of a
priority, let alone a reality.

Rather, it would be the following generations of vehemently nationalistic and self-
consciously genteel women of Indian Territory who would most closely engage with Jane
Schoolcraft’s literary pursuits. During the first two decades after Removal, the Civilized
Tribes were busily establishing boarding schools that would prepare graduates to serve
their respective nations. The Cherokees and Chickasaws were particularly
distinguished in the founding of prestigious schools; however, these antebellum
academies would cater almost exclusively to the mixed-blood children of politically
prominent families. In 1851, the Cherokee Male and Female Seminaries were
established with the intention of “carry[ing] the mental culture of the youth of [the]
nation to the highest practicable point” (qtd. in Mihesuah 22). Endeavoring to become
independent of the oversight and curricular control of Euro-American missionary boards,
the increasingly secular Cherokee educational system nevertheless continued to conflate
education, Christian cosmology, and public service (20-2). This is especially evident in
the course of study selected for the Female Seminary which was not only modeled after

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17 See Cobb 45-7; Mihesuah 22, 68-71, 98-100; Hoffman 39-43.
18 The disproportionate number of mixed-blood Cherokee seminarians can be explained, in part, by the
school’s thorough entrance exam which obviously favored those students who not only spoke English at
home, but also had the economic means and free time necessary to acquire more than a rudimentary
understanding of “reading, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, and geography,” or as Cobb acknowledges with
regard to the Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females: “The school’s capacity enrollment when it first
opened shows the number of families willing to do without their daughters’ help at home” (Mihesuah 30;
Cobb 44). For more on the majority of mixed-blood students at the Cherokee Female Seminary, see
Mihesuah 23, 72-84, 117, “Appendix A.”
the curriculum that Mary Lyon devised for her Mount Holyoke Seminary but was also taught by graduates of that Massachusetts institution (30-4, 52-3). This Mount Holyoke connection also bears out in regard to the 1852 establishment of the Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females whose first matron was a graduate of Mary Lyon’s seminary and whose curriculum, modeled after Matron Carr’s own studies, shared texts and subjects in common with the generally more advanced Cherokee Female Seminary (Cobb 42, 46-7; Mihesuah 30-1, 34-5).

In theory, the coming generation of bicultural Cherokee and Chickasaw women would experience the same refined and intellectually rigorous instruction that the Euro-American missionaries themselves had received back East. Eventually, therefore, the Civilized Nations would no longer find themselves relying upon white women as the harbingers of new intellectual horizons and exemplars of a transatlantic standard of gentility. By the same token, there was an unstated yet compelling tension between intellectual innovation and cultural conservatism that linked the missionary endeavors of the Mount Holyoke students-turned-teachers with the progressive aspirations of Indian Territory, or as Amanda Porterfield has argued:

Lyon’s students . . . shared with nonwestern women a belief in maternal responsibility for maintaining religious tradition and cultural stability, and

19 In opposition to the “belle-ideal” model of female consumerism and superficial accomplishments, Lyon’s Mount Holyoke Seminary reflected her vision of intellectualized “True Womanhood” that encouraged pious, self-effacing devotion to teaching and missionary activity (13). In Lyon’s reformulation of republican rhetoric, just as the intelligence and virtue of women were essential to the success of democratic self-government, so “disinterested benevolence” or selfless service to others was inseparable from personal conversion and the salvation of the world: “But it is not enough that a great number of ladies are well educated. They must also have benevolence enough to engage in teaching. . . . The spirit of this seminary is suited not only to increase the number of educated ladies, but to enforce on them the obligation to use their talents for the good of others, especially in teaching” (Tendencies 296-7). It was this educational vision, then, that would have a formative influence upon the elite boarding school curriculum of Indian Territory.
a loyalty to male authority as an essential aspect of religious tradition and cultural stability. . . . [B]oth they and nonwestern women were caught up in powerful, and to some extent similar, forces of social change. These forces threatened social stability and the survival of traditional religious cultures, but they also led to the creation of new religious cultures that involved new opportunities for women through education, teaching, and social influence, and new opportunities for philanthropic service. (141-2)

Resisting the steady erosion of the “self-sufficient, family-based economies, arduous labor, and intense piety” that marked their Puritan heritage, the Mount Holyoke missionaries were combining the old religious ardor of “the common folk of New England” with the new egalitarian notions of what women could learn and accomplish (12). Like these “backwoods” missionaries, moreover, Cherokee and Chickasaw bicultural elites were responding to a much more traumatic cultural erosion by combining the old with the new or the arguably conservative goal of safeguarding indigenous sovereignty with the transformation of traditional institutions into forms recognizable and respectable to the western world. In turn, by taking up the mantle as teachers with qualifications equal to that of their white predecessors, Native graduates of Native-supervised seminaries were a key example of the “new religious cultures” and “new opportunities for women” that arose from such cross-cultural pedagogical encounters.20

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20 See, for example, the circuitous tribute to the transformative ministry of Euro-American missionaries provided by a student-contribution to A Wreath of Cherokee Rose Buds, the 1854-55 publication of the Cherokee Female Seminary (Kilcup, “Two Scenes” 408-9). Supposedly delineating the positive impact of Christianity on Cherokee society, “Fanny” relegates the spiritual content of missionary work to generalities, while being very specific in defining how the “arts of civilization”—a phrase seemingly drawn from the very language of the 1819 “Civilization Fund Act”—have empowered her people with a new economic system and lifestyle, with literacy, and with information (408). In turn, she portrays the traditional ceremonial practices of the Cherokees being replaced, not with Christian church services, but with the public examinations and recitations of the Rose Buds themselves:
Notwithstanding the proselytizing goals of the Mount Holyoke missionary teachers and the nationalist agenda of the Cherokee and Chickasaw leadership, however, the best indication of how parents and the students themselves responded to an acculturative boarding school education may be found in the various exhibitions given by the schoolgirls. The graduation festivities at the Cherokee Female Seminary and examinations for the Bloomfield Academy, both of which could last for several days, were nothing short of state occasions with hundreds of guests in attendance and orations given not only by the students but also by the respective nations’ leading politicians (Mihesuah 74-6, 81; Cobb 52, 59-60, 62-3). These celebrations were not complete, moreover, without the schoolgirls’ much-anticipated poetry recitations, musical performances, and plays. Dressing in the height of Victorian fashion, engaging in

The general observance of [“a ball-play” and “a green-corn-dance”] has ceased. Other festivals or “gatherings,” have taken their places, where the mind is exercised instead of the body. . . . The girl, instead of engaging in the dance, keeping time with the rattling noise of the terrapin-shells, bound to her ankles [sic], keeps time with the chalk, as her fingers fly nimbly over the black-board, solving some problem in Algebra or Geometry. . . . It is Examination Day at the Female Seminary, and here are assembled, father, mother, brother, and friends, listening to the prompt recitations of a daughter or sister. . . . I hope we may advance, never faltering, until all the clouds of ignorance and superstition and wickedness flee from before the rays of the Suns of Knowledge and Righteousness. (408-9)

On the one hand, despite the conspicuous absence of Cherokee cultural traditions from the curriculum of the Female Seminary, Fanny nonetheless demonstrates a surprising degree of insider’s knowledge concerning her ancestors’ “festivals” and women’s role in them. On the other hand, Fanny’s underlying point is that education is the new civil religion of the Cherokee Nation, and the schoolgirls of the Cherokee Seminary are among the vanguard of this new social order. Intriguingly, Fanny metaphorically alludes both to Christ, the “Son of Righteousness,” as well as the “Sun of Knowledge” as coeval sources of enlightenment and cultural change; but, significantly, she posits Knowledge first.

21 This support for children’s academic accomplishments and Anglo-American institutional education is also demonstrated before Removal, or as Sophia Sawyer remarks concerning her day-school in an 1833 letter: “The parents also encourage me by occasionally coming to hear the scholars read, and whenever I have given notice at the close of a term, they have always given importance to the school by visiting it, and having the children present in season and clean” (qtd. in Macenczak 29).

22 As Linda Kerber points out, the idea of combining belles lettres and oral performance may have originated with Emma Willard’s Troy Seminary, “the most innovative boarding school of [the Early

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various genres of refined literature, and displaying a proficiency in the fine arts, the Cherokee “Rose Buds” and Chickasaw “Blossoms” demonstrated their successful adaptation of what Cobb defines as “academic” and “social” literacy, signaling the schoolgirls’ equality with well-bred Anglo-American women (14-15). Providing much-needed insight into how the schoolgirls responded to the demands of acculturative pedagogy, between 1854 and 1855 the Cherokee Female Seminary supplemented its annual commencement exercises with the publication of students’ poems, creative essays, and editorials in the school paper *A Wreath of Cherokee Rose Buds* (Mihesuah 36-44).23 Echoing the moralizing, essentialist rhetoric of their missionary-teachers, some schoolgirls dutifully extemporize upon their destiny to exert their influence for the building up of male character and the preservation of civic virtue, or as “Qua-Tsy” opines: “How often have we heard it reiterated that the destiny of the world depends on woman—that woman is the appointed agent of morality—the inspirer of those feelings and dispositions which form the moral nature of man” (410).24

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23 See also Kilcup 319-414. Although this interpretation of the Rose Buds’ contributions to *A Wreath* differs significantly from Jaime Osterman Alves’s anachronistic reading of these mid-century texts against not only the seminary’s altered educational agenda and student body after the Civil War but also the federal boarding schools at the turn of the century, Alves similarly foregrounds the critical importance of the *Wreath* as an indication of the schoolgirls’ idiosyncratic, un-programmatic engagement with acculturative education:

> The simultaneity of the school and the newspaper was critical in mutually reinforcing and shaping the students’ acculturation . . . , giving the students opportunities not only to read but also to write of their own successful and unsuccessful experiments with the values they were learning to adopt and the behaviors they were learning to practice. In a broader sense, too, the publication . . . [.] disseminated not only among the students but also outward to the wider Cherokee community, facilitated the sense that Indian education is a public endeavor, one in which the entire community has an interest and a stake. (79-80)

24 For a surprisingly early articulation of Cherokee female influence, see John Ridge’s 1826 epistolary essay on his nation’s “state of Civilization”: “In our Country, females aspire to gain sober men for husbands and mankind must yield to the tender sex. Woman civilized [sic] man or makes him barbarous at
However, as can be seen from Qua-Tsy’s substitution of Cherokee nationalism for Republican Motherhood, she is also very cognizant of the pressure being placed upon her fellow students to conform strategically to Anglo-American cultural values: “Nor does the destiny of man as an individual, alone depend on female influence, but that of nations, kingdoms, and empires. . . . The elevation of the Cherokee people also depends upon the females; and, perhaps, particularly upon those who are just springing into active life and who enjoy the privileges of this Institution” (411). From the perspective of the students themselves, as well as the Cherokee political establishment, the “Rose Buds” were not being prepared for assimilation to American society and citizenship but were being educated to contribute to the elevation and strengthening of their own distinct nation. Indeed, several students emphasize that attending the Seminary places upon them the particular obligation of being not just educated but also “useful” women. With her “Peep into the Future,” “Inez” predicts that her fellow graduates will be pursuing lives of “usefulness” within the Cherokee Nation as teachers in the public and the private

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25 As Linda Kerber has famously argued, the ideology of Republican Motherhood underwrote the expansion of women’s education after the American Revolution: “The model republican woman was a mother. The Republican Mother was an educated woman who could be spared the criticism normally addressed to the Learned Lady because she placed her learning at her family’s service. . . . By their household management, by their refusal to countenance vice, crime, or lack of benevolence in their suitors and husbands, women had the power to direct the moral development of the male citizens of the republic” (228-9).

26 Likening her classmates to “Eight pretty green PARROTS” who “spoke with art,” naughty “Lily Lee” pokes fun at the superficial repetition and memorization required by teachers and applauded by parents (Lines 33-4). Nevertheless, while Paula Bernat Bennett characterizes this poem as a “wicked” parody of “whites: drab, pompous, long-winded, and male” (83), her reading misses entirely the poem’s exclusionary context. That is, underwriting and mollifying Lily Lee’s wit is a defensive nationalism or the poem’s assertion that this “literary day” is for Cherokees—i.e., birds—only:

Within the precincts of the Bird Nation,
All was bustle and animation;
For that day was to witness a literary feast,
Where only Birds were invited guests. (my emphasis, Lines 9-12)
spheres: “The regular thoughtful Louisa is teaching a public school. . . . ‘Alina’ is teaching school successfully somewhere in the Nation. The witty ‘Nan’ is also engaged in the same occupation. . . . ‘Maggie’ is at home teaching her little bothers and sisters” (406). Nor were Inez’s prognostications a matter of wishful thinking: According to Devon Mihesuah, “By 1858, fifteen of the twenty-six Female Seminary graduates had been hired to teach in the Cherokee public schools that did not give instruction in the Cherokee language; only two teachers in the entire school system were not of Cherokee descent” (46).  

This mandate to uplift the Cherokee people also becomes articulated through the schoolgirls’ self-conscious dismissal of traditional customs and lifeways as so many signs of ignorance and poverty. For example, Na-Li, an orphan who was adopted by missionaries, defensively asserts that full bloods are devoted parents but adds that “commoners” are too uninformed to seek out education for their children: “My beloved parents were full Cherokees. They belonged to the common class; and, yet, they loved their children as well [as] the rich; but they had never attended school, and therefore did not know the value of learning; and probably would never have made provision for me to attend school” (“An Address” 403). Hinting that being full-blood and being poor go hand in hand, Na-Li’s essay depicts education and progress as inextricable from ethnic admixture and a successful adaptation to Anglo-American economics. Going one step further, Na-Li’s representation of Cherokee life before the arrival of white missionaries

27 Nevertheless, these halcyon years of Cherokee graduates’ embracing their pedagogical calling were not to last. Financial woes, even before the Civil War, would steadily impede the seminary’s ability to accept new students, and, with the conflict’s outbreak, the school would be closed altogether until the 1870’s when it would reopen as primarily a finishing school for mixed-blood students who could pay their own room and board. The reopened school would also include an “indigent department” for students—mostly full bloods—who were expected to earn their keep doing domestic chores in return for what amounted to little more than a grade school education; see Mihesuah. Not surprisingly, there was a noticeable decline in actual graduates from the institution during the two decades preceding the passage of the Curtis Act.
makes traditionalism synonymous with deprivation or the absence of the decorative domesticity and intellectual cultivation that predominates in sentimental depictions of the middle-class home: “[N]o neat grass-plot bordered with flowers; no shrubbery or rose-bushes to add the beauty of cultivation to the wild scenery of nature. . . . No little stand of books, no vase of flowers, filling the room with fragrance, no neat papers are to be seen; nothing but the mere necessities of life” (“Two Scenes” 408). Nor were the culturally condescending attitudes expressed by the “Rose Buds” limited to their own people. Evincing an exaggerated disdain for the “uncivilized” nations with whom the Cherokees might somehow be compared, “Ka-Ya-Kun-Stah” provides a decidedly supercilious description of “An Osage Wedding” that complicates her membership in the “red race”: “Every nation and race of the world has its peculiar customs, and none are more striking than some of the marriage ceremonies of the red race. Take for instance, an Osage wedding. . . . How pleased seems the mother as she is consenting to give up her child for the price of ten mules” (402). Bicultural Cherokee nationalism obviously inspired a kind of anthropological curiosity concerning the customs and rituals of the traditionalist Indian and the surrounding “wild” tribes.

By the same token, for the rising post-Removal generation, “civilization” was a kind of contest between whites and the bicultural elite of the “Civilized Nations,” and acculturation was not the ends but the means to establishing Cherokee superiority. In her poem “Our Wreath of Rose Buds,” “Corinne” explains that the schoolgirls’ “bright thoughts” and gentility are cultivated so that the grace and respectability of Cherokee society will exceed that of other nations:

Like roses bright we hope to grow,
And o’er our home such beauty throw
In future years—that all may see
Loveliest of lands,—the Cherokee. (402, VII)

Similarly, “Edith” concludes her rhapsodic description of the bicultural elites’ “elegant white dwellings” and abandonment “of the rudely constructed wigwams of our forefathers . . . not more than half a century ago” with the observation that the Cherokees are already challenging Euro-Americans’ pretensions to a gentility that has taken their white ancestors centuries to master: “Every thing around denotes taste, refinement and the progress of civilization among our people: well may they vie with the long enlightened inhabitants of the east” (403). Underlying this rhetoric of the “civilization contest,” moreover, is the indictment of Indian Removal as an attempt on the part of Jacksonian-Era Americans to discredit Native adaptability and intellect. That is, in an effort to erase the very indigenous biculturalism that had inspired humanitarian opposition to the federal government’s policies toward the Southeastern tribes, Native peoples were not simply removed to the West but were also isolated from various forms of cultural capital and “enlightenment.” Eager to disappoint the negative expectations of unsympathetic whites and American politicians, the Cherokee schoolgirls therefore embrace sentimentality-infused female pedagogy as part and parcel of the knowledge and prosperity that their enemies would keep from them. Indeed, progressive citizens can be seen to have sought out and even celebrated their daughters’ acculturation to sentimental social and spiritual values because this sentimental pedagogy represented an ongoing
access to transatlantic intellectual and political capital in the present and national
endurance through cultural adaptability in the future (Cobb 56, 58). 28

Amongst the bicultural nations of Indian Territory, there also existed an additional
tier of the educational system or the practice of “sending out” exceptional students and
children of the political elite to boarding schools in the United States. 29 Once in the
States, these students would broaden their cultural perspective and hone their linguistic
abilities and social literacy in order to become cross-cultural mediators, politicians, and
educators. Always, the expectation was that these students would return to serve the
interests of their respective indigenous nations. 30 It is within this context of “sending
out,” moreover, that the Muscogee nationalism underwriting the acculturative education
of the first American Indian female novelist can best be appreciated. By the 1868 birth of
Sophia Alice Callahan, political and economic instability in both Indian Territory and

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28 Or as Amanda J. Cobb aptly observes:
Chickasaws did not provide literacy education for their daughters so they could become
the servants of white women. Bloomfield Blossoms received literacy instruction so they
could become the wives of leaders in the nation and leaders in the community. . . . [T]hey
would be prepared to participate in both Indian and white communities and help
Chickasaws transcend significant social and economic boundaries. (63)

29 For the Cherokee and Chickasaw leadership, “sending out” was a matter of educational expediency that
the creation of the elite seminaries was meant to resolve. Nevertheless, over the course of the nineteenth
century, bicultural families continued to send their children to prestigious schools in the U.S.; see Mihesuah
20-1, 51-2; Cobb 36-7; Owen 90-2; Macenczak.

30 For example, having been sent by the Creek Nation to an Arkansas boarding school in 1859, Chief
George Washington Grayson would later describe this exposure to a nearly all-white milieu as a pivotal test
of his emotional fortitude, social skills, and adaptability:
A feeling as if I was completely isolated from the companionship of any one whom I
might appeal to for sympathy or comfort possessed me, and for a time overpowered me. .
. . But . . . now that I was here, I was going to accommodate myself to the exigencies of
my new environment and make the best of it. (52-3)
In turn, his newly discovered “aptitude for languages” and ability to be “freely accorded entrée to some of
the best families where [he] enjoyed the amenities and hospitality of the refined” would make him a
valuable cross-cultural representative, negotiator, interpreter, and clerk for the Muscogee Nation (54, 126,
147-8). Indeed, as he rather wryly recollects, having provided him with his “sending out” education, the
Muscogee leadership would thereafter assume that his services to his nation were ever ready and willing
(126). From the perspective of the Muscogee Nation, Grayson’s acculturative education was a worthwhile
investment in the future.
Texas had led her family into an extended period of transnational migration. Alice Callahan’s citizenship in the traditionally matrilineal Muscogee Nation was based upon the Creek pedigree of her paternal grandmother Amanda Doyle Callahan. Like her contemporary Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, Alice Callahan’s grandmother had an influential white father and a Native-identified mother, was brought up in a mixed-blood bicultural home, received an acculturative—although by no means commensurate—education that emphasized Christian spiritual conversion, was privy to frontier warfare and Euro-American military aggression at an early age, and eventually married a Euro-American man.31 Widowed during the Muscogee “Trail of Tears,” however, Amanda Callahan made her way into Indian Territory in 1837 with a small son and infant daughter in tow (“Misc.”). Disappearing from historical records, the fortunes of the Callahan family would not appreciably improve until roughly ten years later, when Amanda, her son Samuel, and her new husband Dr. Owen S. Davis appear in the 1850 federal census for Hopkins County, Texas.32 Amanda’s daughter Josephine, who would have been about thirteen years old, is not listed and apparently did not survive to see her mother and brother build a new life in both Texas and Indian Territory (“1850 Census”).33

31 Amanda Doyle’s father, Nimrod Doyle, was a sub-agent and surveyor under Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins, and, by some accounts, Amanda was a student at the Asbury mission school; see “Chattahoochee Trace Historic Markers” and Morton. With the outbreak of the Creek Civil War of 1813-14, otherwise known as the “Red Stick War,” Amanda Doyle Callahan would have seen the horrors of intra-tribal conflict as the ceremonial towns of her ancestors, Coweta and Cussetah, were singled out for vengeance and her nation’s capital burned; see Saunt 252-5; Martin 111, 180-1

32 In direct response to the sufferings of Removal, the divisions between acculturated and traditionalist Muscogees expressed themselves though the outlawing of Christian worship and missionary activity in 1836 and the ostracization of some educated Creeks (Debo 118). This hostility to Christians and acculturation was almost certainly a factor in the Callahan family’s relocation to Texas sometime in the 1840’s (Ruoff, “Editor’s” xiii-xiv). In 1848, the ban against Christianity was officially rescinded.

33 After successfully applying for Creek citizenship as a matrilineal member of Cussetah Town in 1858, Alice Callahan’s father Samuel and his new bride Sarah Elizabeth McAllester moved to the Muscogee
During Alice Callahan’s childhood, her family’s economic success and very survival became dependent upon repeated border crossings that acted as a buffer against the political upheaval of Reconstruction in North Texas and the Muscogee Nation’s Constitutional Crisis that lasted from 1882 to 1883. Nevertheless, sharing the bicultural nationalism of her father who, as Carolyn Foreman observes, “was deeply interested in schools for the Indians,” Alice Callahan by age eighteen was already teaching in the public school system of Okmulgee, the Creek Nation’s capital (315; Ruoff xiv-xv). From the perspective of the preceding generation of bicultural elites, capital of Okmulgee where he established a trading post and cattle ranch (Debo 158; Hill). The couple’s prosperity in the Creek Nation was short-lived. While Samuel moved up the ranks in 1861 to become an adjutant officer of the almost entirely full-blood First Creek Regiment of the Confederacy and then a congressional representative of the Creek and Seminole Nations in the Confederate Congress, Sarah was left to face the chaos sweeping Indian Territory, including ransacking marauders (Hill; Ruoff, “Editor’s” xiv). Fleeing for her life with a toddler and infant in arms, she returned to her husband’s Texas home and, apparently, the shelter of her mother-in-law’s hospitality. One can only imagine whether Amanda Callahan Davis saw something of her own former desperation when she beheld her refugee daughter-in-law and her grandchildren Josephine and James who appear to have been named after Amanda’s husband and daughter who did not survive the hardships and aftermath of Indian Removal. Amanda Davis and Sarah Callahan would make their homes near each other for many years to come. Ruoff’s assertion that “[i]t was twenty years before Sarah could be persuaded to return to Indian Territory” (“Editor’s” xiv) has intimated to some critics that Alice Callahan’s Euro-American mother was prejudiced against Indians, or as Cari Carpenter elaborates: “Callahan’s mother, a white woman, had ambivalent feelings about Creek society; when their home was once raided in her husband’s absence, she swore she would never return to Indian Territory” (36). Rather than dismissing the trauma that Sarah Callahan experienced during her flight from the Creek Nation, critics like Carpenter should recognize that the Callahan family’s return to full-time residency in Indian Territory was not simply a decision but rather a process that required overcoming more than Mrs. Callahan’s poorly supported racism.

34 Also known as the Green Peach War, this political instability had its roots in the establishment of a new American-style constitution in 1867 (Debo 182-3). An indication of the uncertainty that still loomed over the Muscogee political landscape, the confusing election returns from 1883 resulted in Samuel Callahan’s acting as secretary and writing the inaugural address for both the progressive candidate Samuel Checote and then for his close personal friend and conservative candidate Isparhecher, only to become now-delegate Isparhecher’s assistant after it was determined that a third candidate, Joseph Perryman, had won the election (282-4).

35 While taking into account Carolyn Foreman’s assertion that Samuel Callahan “moved with his family back to the Indian Territory” between 1866 and 1867 and LaVonne Ruoff’s counter-claim that the family does not “permanently” move to the Creek Nation until 1885, it is important to keep in mind that the members of the Callahan clan were migrating between the Muscogee Nation and Texas for nearly two decades, and were doing so because of Samuel Callahan’s abiding commitment to his family’s Creek heritage. For example, Amanda Doyle Callahan Davis, her son Samuel Callahan, and his eight children, including a fourteen-year-old Alice, take part in the 1882 census of the Creek Nation and are registered in
moreover, Alice’s desire to complete her education in the United States and “build up” her own school in Indian Territory was the very epitome of intellectual achievement and female patriotism (Foreman, Carolyn 312). Alice also chose a school that, despite its location in Staunton, Virginia, still reflected her national and personal ties within Indian Territory. A prestigious institution that had been conferring bachelor degrees since 1868 (Hamrick 22-3, 27-9), the Wesleyan Female Seminary was affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which oversaw the churches of Indian Territory through the Methodist Indian Mission Conference. Yet, separated from her mixed-blood family and community and placed in close contact with privileged American students from Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, Callahan appears to have become all too familiar with her classmates’ disconcerting curiosity and racial prejudice. Bearing witness to these alienating experiences as a cultural outsider, Callahan weaves into the narration of her 1891 novel Wynema numerous examples of Euro-American condescension towards “foreigners” and, in particular, Indians.

36 For more on the Indian Mission Conference, see Noley 150-8. Alice Callahan’s attendance at a Methodist institution was also, by this time, a family tradition. At some point between 1852 and 1856, Samuel Callahan attended the McKenzie Institute, an academically impressive college in Clarksville, Texas that was overseen by a retired Methodist circuit-rider and minister to the Choctaw Indians during the years of Removal; see Foreman, Carolyn “Appendix” 314; Ruoff xiii-xiv; and Spellman. There were, however, other local factors contributing to the Callahan family’s decision to send Alice to the Wesleyan Female Seminary. Male students were still being sent out to American academies during the 1880’s, and a young Creek woman would have had limited access to the equivalent of a college education in the Muscogee Nation and surrounding Civilized Tribes. Although “the pride of Indian Territory,” Bacone University, which relocated to Callahan’s town of Muskogee in 1885, retained its Cherokee affiliations, with all five of its graduates from 1883 to 1888 being Cherokee, and was not particularly popular with the Creeks; see Reyner and Eder 292-4. From 1851 to 1909, only one Creek/Cherokee student was permitted to attend the Cherokee Female Seminary, and no non-Chickasaws attended the Bloomfield Academy before 1929, despite the 1898 passage of the Curtis Act; see Mihesuah 117 “Appendix A”; Cobb 73. The Presbyterian boarding school that eventually became the University of Tulsa was just developing into a co-educational college and “never exerted a vital influence on Creek life” (Debo 311).
For example, one of the exchanges between the novel’s white missionary-protagonist and her southern friends interestingly resonates with Callahan’s own teaching experience before coming to the Wesleyan Seminary: “To many persons the difficulty of teaching our language to any foreigner seems almost insurmountable, and teaching the Indians seems especially difficult. . . . Thus Genevieve Weir’s far away friend thought. . . . ‘How could she teach them when they could not understand a word she said? Wasn’t she afraid to live among those dark savages?’” (8-9). Reading this scene, one can picture a group of inquisitive seminarians gathering around the flustered future novelist who is forced to defend not only her pupils but her own home, family, and ethnicity as well. Unlike Callahan, her character Genevieve Weir has the luxury of binary distinctions of “us” and “them” and, upon the basis of her Christian benevolence and self-effacing True Womanhood, can magnanimously proclaim her love for Native others: “God made the Indians as he made the Caucasian—from the same mold. He loves the work of His hands and for His sake I love these ‘dark savages’” (8-9). Callahan’s bicultural nationalism, by contrast, makes her both the English-speaking insider and also the “foreign” Indian within this dialogue. As the descendent of “dark savages” and a citizen of an indigenous nation, Callahan is using Christian rhetoric to support her own racial equality with whites who are not superior in God’s sight to her indigenous ancestors and fellow Muscogees. At the same time, Genevieve’s words help to reinforce Callahan’s cultural difference from the supposedly ignorant traditionalist Indians who are the objects of her real-life Christian service and political advocacy. Indeed, Genevieve Weir silences her skeptical white peers by declaring not only her boundless faith in her Native students’ intellectual abilities but also Callahan’s nationalist plans for her own Anglo-American education: “I
intend to teach the ancient and modern languages and higher mathematics before I quit this people . . ., and I will never leave them for fear or dislike” (9).

Unlike the “sending out” education of the preceding generation, however, Alice Callahan’s educational pursuits in the United States were no longer unusual in their geographical trajectory but rather in their self-determination and rationale of bicultural nationalism. Journeying eastward for a polished education, Callahan was endeavoring to realize her “progressive” pedagogical ambitions for a sovereign Muscogee Nation.

Meanwhile, beginning with the opening of the historically African-American Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute to American Indian students in 1878 and the establishment of the Carlisle Industrial Training School in 1879, Native children from outside of the Civilized Nations were also undertaking a daunting journey—or, in all too many cases, a forced removal—from their Native-identified homes and tribal communities and entering federally funded off-reservation boarding schools. The federal Indian reform that promised to produce assimilated American citizens can be broken down into three interdependent goals. The first goal was one that had actually precipitated the Creek Nation’s Trail of Tears or allotment in severalty. That is, with the 1887 passage of the Dawes or General Allotment Act the government now had the authority to divide up tribally held lands, granting “160 acres to each family head, 80 acres to single persons and orphans over eighteen years, and 40 acres to single persons

37 See especially Adams 209-38:
  When parents refused to enroll their children in school, agents normally resorted to either withholding rations or using the agency police. . . . The bottom line was that parents resented boarding schools, both reservation and off-reservation, because they severed the most fundamental of human ties: the parent-child bond. . . . The reservation school, by taking the child for months at a time, was bad enough; the off-reservation term of three to five years was an altogether hellish prospect. (211, 215)
under eighteen‖ (Adams 17).38 The second goal was to dissolve tribal governments and other traditionally authoritative institutions so as to “extend the rule and protection of the nation’s legal system to Indians” (17). The third goal was the establishment of a federally-funded educational bureaucracy that would justify the heavy-handed intrusions already mandated by the earlier goals. By transforming the coming generations of American Indians into individuals, rather than tribal members, who were thoroughly converted to the values inculcated by their Euro-American pedagogues, the federal boarding schools would ensure that these recipients of allotted lands would be ready for the government’s eventual conferring of citizenship and the students’ new relationship to “the criminal and civil laws of the state or territory where they resided” (17). Further underscoring the inter-related, self-perpetuating structure of this new Protestant-Republican ideology, even the federal government’s selling of “excess” tribal lands to white settlers would be excused on the grounds that the profits made thereby could be used to promote “education and civilization” (17).39

The centerpiece of this educational campaign, moreover, was the establishment of off-reservation boarding schools. Policymakers in the 1870’s and 1880’s dismissed the educational potential of the day schools and manual labor schools already deployed within the confines of reservations precisely because these institutions permitted students

38 See also Prucha, “General Allotment Act” 170-3.

39 In 1876, Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes’s was initially defeated in his Presidential bid amid charges of Southern voting fraud. In turn, clandestine concessions to Southern democrats sacrificed Reconstruction and African Americans’ civil rights in return for Rutherford’s 1877 inauguration, signaling the definitive corruption and impoverishment of post-Civil War commitments to racial equality, national unity, and federal authority (Trachtenberg 76-7). The key to reviving and restoring Northeastern idealism would be ironically realized with the 1876 birth of Yankton Dakota author and activist Zitkala-Ša (a.k.a., Gertrude Simmons Bonnin) and the many other Native children of her generation.
to retain their cultural and familial identities: These schools “simply [were] not an effective instrument of assimilation” (Adams 29). As Francis La Flesche illustrates in his autobiographical account of mid-century boarding school education on the Omaha Reservation, students’ reassuringly close proximity to their indigenous community and weekly visits home mitigated the assimilationist practices of mission-school education and actually facilitated students’ strategic adaptation of Christian and Anglo-American values to their own indigenous worldview (1-2, 21, 75-6, 89, 126-30). In addition to impeding Native children’s unconditional surrender to an American identity, the reservation schools were also viewed as an inferior method to achieving English language acquisition (Adams 32). Promising to remove the familial and communal reinforcement of Native children’s indigenous cultural characteristics by completely subsuming children of disparate indigenous nations and tongues within a Eurocentric environment, the off-reservation boarding schools quickly became federal Indian education’s “highest” compulsory institution and the pedagogical model toward which all other classroom experiences would, in the best of circumstances, lead (Adams 55-9). Thus, despite the growing opposition to the racial optimism, costs, and authoritarianism guiding the earliest phase of the federal government’s assimilation program, the number of off-reservation

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40 Asserting in an 1887 report that the English language “which is good enough for a white man and a black man, ought to be good enough for the red man,” Indian Commissioner J. D. C. Atkins singled out reservation schools and their missionary-pedagogues for undermining the federal government’s policy that “it is a matter not only of importance, but of necessity that the Indians require the English language as rapidly as possible”: “It is believed that if any Indian vernacular is allowed to be taught by the missionaries in schools on Indian reservations, it will prejudice the youthful pupil as well as his untutored and uncivilized or semi-civilized parents against the English language. . . . [T]eaching an Indian youth in his own barbarous dialect is a positive detriment to him” (173-4). Because missionaries, with the obvious and integral cooperation of Native converts and progressives, had invested so much time and effort in translating indigenous languages into a written form, missionary-pedagogues were understandably loathe to abandon their indigenous-language textbooks and Bibles for English versions.
schools would continue to swell into the twentieth century (Hoxie, *A Final Promise* 115-45; Adams 308-21).  

Analyzing the key role played by middle-class domesticity in “the imperial project of civilizing,” Kaplan has linked the American Indians’ antebellum status as “domestic dependent nations” to “the process of domestication” in which “the home [understood as nation] contains within itself those wild or foreign elements that must be tamed” (584, 582). Further substantiating Kaplan’s claims, the federal campaign to establish off-reservation boarding schools endeavored to transform American Indian children, on one hand, into sources of political renewal and antebellum nostalgia and, on the other, into exemplars of the superiority of middle-class domestic discipline. No longer the beneficiaries of a post-war power vacuum and beset by an ideological malaise, Republicans like Massachusetts Senator Henry Dawes used Indian reform to re-energize their party platform and re-ignite the antebellum fervor of their Northeastern constituencies (Hoxie 32). Just as the nascent middle class had sought to expand its domestic model through print culture and the discourse surrounding discipline in the home and classroom, the Northeastern Protestant majority was now envisioning a further extension of its mid-century campaign to, in Brodhead’s words, “break in upon the quite different acculturation systems of other American cultures and deliver their children to training on a now ‘universal’ plan” (“Sparing the Rod” 71, 76). Indeed, subordinating not only academics but also familial bonds to a middle-class domesticity restyled as “the

41 See also Adams 58-9: “[A]s Congress continued to build off-reservation schools through the 1890s, a continually greater proportion of boarding school attendance can be attributed to off-reservation schools. By 1900, over a third of boarding school students were in such schools. . . . [B]y the late 1920s, nearly half of boarding school enrollments were in off-reservation schools.”
ministry of salvation” to the world (“Appeal” 333), Catharine Beecher’s idiosyncratic vision of female pedagogy clearly shaped—and could be used to defend on “sentimental” grounds—the manual labor curriculum being deployed in federally-funded boarding schools.42 Dismissing Mary Lyon’s intellectualized view of women’s education and missionary endeavors as doomed to failure,43 Beecher’s 1846 examination of The Evils Suffered by American Women and Children, which promotes the Board of National Popular Education’s campaign to provide western communities and settlements with female teachers, barely alludes to academic subjects—in fact, makes no mention of improving literacy at all—but does fixate upon missionary-pedagogues’ responsibility to convert students and their families to “the domestic arts and virtues”44: “[T]he Christian

42 See also Lomawaima. Complaining in 1870 that the graduates of female seminaries “will be as well prepared to nurse the sick, train servants, take charge of infants, and manage all departments of the family state, as they would be to make and regulate chronometers, or to build and drive steam engines,” Beecher’s solution to this clearly subversive education was her concept of a “Woman’s University” in which “there should be as great an amount [of courses of study] as is required in any of our colleges, yet only a few studies carried to so great an extent as in many sciences pursued by men.... And all should have reference to women’s profession, and not to the professions of men” (“Address” 203, 209). In spite of Beecher’s reassurances that, in her model of female higher education, a schoolgirl would receive “as good a literary training as her brothers,” even vernacular language study that can lead to “effective literacy” is given short shrift and reserved for “some pupils [who] have talents that prepare them to excel in authorship, to such an appropriate and more extensive literary culture could be afforded” (211). As Tsianina Lomawaima has observed, therefore, Catharine Beecher’s ideas of a practical education for women can also be seen to predict the gendered and racialized limitations being placed upon academic study for Native boarding school students at the turn of the century (81-90). That is, Native children, like Beecher’s female students, would be relegated to an education relevant to their “limited” intellectual and physical abilities and “subordinate,” laboring sphere in life.

43 Amanda Porterfield’s intriguing analysis of the Lyon-Beecher debate is particularly revelatory to the decided differences between the curricular models of the elite boarding schools of Indian Territory and manual labor model embraced by the federally funded off-reservation boarding schools: Although Lyon agreed with Beecher that domestic skill and organization were essential aspects of women’s work, she regarded disinterested benevolence rather than domesticity as the chief organizing principle of Christian culture. In contrast, Beecher sought to define both women and Christian culture in terms of domesticity, and developed a “science” of domestic economy. While Beecher’s philosophy is consonant with the effort missionary women made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to replicate American middle-class domesticity as a marker of difference from heathen cultures, it sets her apart from Lyon and Lyon’s commitment to the radical egalitarianism [of] New Divinity thought. (23)
female teacher will quietly take her station, collecting the ignorant children around her, teaching them habits of neatness, order, and thrift; opening the book of knowledge, inspiring the principles of morality, and awakening the hope of immortality” (my emphasis, 78). Yet, what becomes of those “tastes, habits, feelings, and opinions” that originate from the biological parent and the familial, rather than institutional, context (76)? Clearly, a middle-class standard of domestic economy, along with a few passing glimpses into the “book of knowledge,” must necessarily supercede any prior affective ties and cultural predilections established by an “uncivilized” birthmother.45

The promotional rhetoric of the so-called “Friends of the Indians” portrayed Native students as happy, well-adjusted youths who, in addition to being educated in their civic rights and responsibilities as soon-to-be citizens of the United States, would be granted a potentially equalizing pedagogy in Western literature, art, and history (Adams 21).46 Nevertheless, Laura Wexler has forcefully shown that “the sentimental fiction”

44 For more on Beecher’s efforts to train single Northeastern women to become missionary teachers in the West, see Sklar 168-85; Hoffman 33-8, 66-79; and Kaufman. The Board of National Popular Education would eventually send out over four hundred teachers (Hoffman 79). Further underscoring Beecher’s privileging of domesticity as the most appropriate arena for women’s physical and intellectual labors, she donated half of the proceeds from her Treatise on Domestic Economy (1846) to raise funds for the Board of National Popular Education (Sklar ).

45 That is, inscribed in Beecher’s call for women teachers is her own subversive revision of Republican Motherhood: “Providence ordains that, in most cases, a woman is to perform the duties of a mother. . . . She is to train young minds, . . . who will imitate her tastes, habits, feelings, and opinions, who will transmit what they receive to their children . . . . Every young lady might, the moment she leaves the schoolroom, commence the exulted labor of moulding young minds for eternity” (76-7). In other words, motherhood is pedagogy, “the exulted labor of moulding young minds for eternity,” and female pedagogy is a sexless, intellectual, and spiritual form of procreation: a passing on of the teacher’s character and values, like so many genetic traits, to future generations.

46 An example of the kind of educational results being promised by proponents of off-reservation schooling, the 1902 “Autobiography” of Elena Byanuaba, published in the Haskell Indian Training School’s alumni magazine The Indian Leader, testifies to the schoolgirl’s loyalty to the United States’ government (“Uncle Sam is very good to the Indians”), interiorization of domestic training (“I like the sewing work very much”), and ready consumption of sentimental didacticism and sensibility: “I have read these books: ‘Self Help,’ ‘To Have and to Hold,’ ‘Ramona,’ ‘Ben Hur,’ ‘When Knighthood Was in Flower,’ ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ and a few others” (419).
underwriting this sentimentalized assimilation project was “the myth that widespread instruction in domesticity, and vigorous social reform based explicitly and insistently on affective values, were ever really intended to restore the vitality of the peoples that domestic expansion had originally appropriated” (Wexler 18). Supporting her incisive indictment of the education and reform predicated upon Native children’s domestication, Wexler points to “a vast institutionalized pandering to middle-class domestic labor requirements”: “[C]hildren . . . received domestic training not as the future householders and sentimental parents they were ostensibly supposed to become, but as future domestic servants in the homes of others” (18). In actual practice, the manual labor necessary to support the boarding schools took marked precedence over time devoted to language study, mathematics, the arts, and the kinds of cultural and historical literacy that were applicable outside the immediate confines of federal authority: “[T]he new course of study issued in 1900. . . . called for the infusion of industrial context in all areas of the academic curriculum. . . . Thus, in the sixth year of English, teachers were instructed to draw material from the *Farm Journal* and *Poultry Magazine* for their lessons. (Adams 153-4). Obviously, excerpts from agricultural publications—rather than from the *Atlantic Monthly*, Harper’s, or Scribner’s—kept in constant view the federal government’s expectation that successful students would become blue-collar workers, rather than white-collar professionals or artists, and were not intended to cultivate the

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47 See also Lomawaima’s analysis of Native schoolgirls’ “domesticity training” in the Chilocco Indian Agriculture School:

Their domesticity training prepared them not to labor in their homes but as employees of white women or the boarding schools that trained them. . . . An ideological rationale more fully accounts for domesticity training: it was training in dispossession under the guise of domesticity, developing a habitus shaped by the messages of subservience and one’s proper place. . . . School training in acquiescence to federal authority was more important than the details of needlework, laundry, or food preparation. (81, 86-7)
refined effective literacy of a Jane Johnston Schoolcraft or S. Alice Callahan. Indeed, with the primary goal of deracinating these children by stripping them of their Native languages and identities, federal education policy was anything but committed to enabling students’ self-expression through bellestristic poetry or prose. Nor were children invited to articulate anything other than federally mandated ideals and perspectives. Thus, while helping to preserve a politically unified middle-class hegemony, Native students were hardly being granted an equalizing access to the intellectual cultivation, genteele mores, and affective discipline deemed the birthright of the middle-class child. Coming at the cost of Native children’s emotional ties to their own families, language, and culture, the boarding school precluded Native children’s “right to information, self-esteem, and possible life choices” (Wexler 19).

However, despite the cogency of Wexler’s class-based critique of the federal government’s assimilation project, the measure of polished refinement and Euro-American approbation achieved by Zitkala-Ša and the other acculturated students-turned-activists who went on to form the Society of American Indians in 1911 argues that English-only off-reservation schooling did come close—in at least a few instances—to fulfilling its quickly fading promise of equality and integration through education.

Distinguished early on as “an exceptionally pretty girl by Anglo-Saxon standards”

48 Nevertheless, as Professors Carter Revard and Wayne Fields have recently brought to my attention, admirable examples of non-expository prose and even poetry did appear in publications like Poultry Magazine, suggesting that Adams may have been to quick in dismissing turn-of-the-century agricultural publications’ pedagogical potential. At the same time, Revard’s and Fields’s words of caution foreground boarding-school instructors’ still-significant degree of agency as they endeavored to fulfill the constantly changing mandates of Washington bureaucrats. That is, given Zitkala-Ša’s observation that at least a few of her teachers and, later, colleagues “worked nobly for [her] race” (“Indian Teacher” 95), one should not automatically assume that all instruction in English literacy was conducted in a lock-step fashion and with a view to Native students’ laboring destiny.

49 Other prominent members of the SAI included the physicians Charles Eastman (Dakota) and Carlos Montezuma (Yavapai/Apache), the artist Angel Decora (Winnebago), and the archeologist Arthur C. Parker (Seneca). For more on Eastman and Parker, see Deloria 123-26, 145-7; Warrior 5-14.
(Wexler 32), a receptive student, and an extraordinarily talented musician, Zitkala-Ša consequently received the kind of intense cultivation that few other Indian students would know and eventually attended a predominantly white liberal arts college. In turn, as has been the case with the other nineteenth-century American Indian women writers under discussion, Zitkala-Ša’s atypically genteel education also granted her greater access to the cultural discourse of the Protestant majority, thereby equipping her with an empowering comprehension of social and historical criticism. For example, her prize-winning 1896 speech “Side by Side,” delivered during her attendance at Earlham College, skillfully weaves reform rhetoric, Biblical allusions, and sentimental ideology into a subversive appropriation of anthropological and patriotic discourse. Declaring that “[t]he universe is the product of evolution. . . . By slow degrees nations have risen from the mountain foot of their existence to its summit,” Zitkala-Ša begins her oration by displaying her familiarity with the hierarchical view of cultural progress which had underwritten the initial phase of Indian reform and, therefore, her own education (177). Her next rhetorical move, however, is to remind her audience that “the blue-eyed Teuton,” who called “the wild forests of northern Europe” home and contained “the irrepressible germ of progress . . . deeply implanted in his nature,” was nonetheless as “war-like” and “fierce and barbarous” as any Indian has been portrayed to be (177). With this gesture, Zitkala-Ša establishes a basis for critique and ultimately a basis for sympathy between herself and her audience: the American Indian speaker and the Euro-American audience share a

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50 That is, Lewis Henry Morgan and his cadre of late-nineteenth-century anthropologists offered much hope for the speedy advancement—and thus conformity—of American Indians to an acceptance and exploitation of private property. Declaring all cultures to be subject to “the uniformity of progress and the accelerating speed with which it occurred,” this popular evolutionary model linked the very survival of North America’s indigenes to Native children’s forced conversion to capitalism, Anglo-American gender values, and a Christian cosmology (Hoxie, A Final Promise 20; Adams 12-16).
“savage” ancestry. She subsequently undermines Euro-Americans’ self-congratulatory claims of steady advancement to their present “zenith” of democracy and Christian morality. Even as she associates the Anglo-Saxon with the unquestioned supremacy of “constitutional law” over “imperial decree” and praises America’s capitalist expansion, architecture, and print culture as “reveal[ing] marvelous progress,” she subtly suggests that Euro-American “progress” has been inconsistent, devastatingly slow, and utterly incomplete (177). The industrial expansion of the Gilded Age, founded as it is upon the Indian’s “forests [being] felled; his game [being] frightened away; his streams of finny shoals [being] usurped” (178), has given rise to a plutocracy of “toiling sovereigns [who] have established gigantic enterprises, great factories, commercial highways” (my emphasis, 177).

Furthermore, centuries of Christianity and a “long continued development of freedom and justice” have not prevented Euro-Americans from committing cruel acts of intolerance and bloodshed (178). Demonstrating her ability to wield for herself the critical perspectives she encountered in Quaker educational institutions, Zitkala-Ša recounts the deadly superstition of New England’s past and gestures back to abolitionist activism with her lurid depiction of the South’s violent suppression of human rights: “Puritan Boston burned witches and hanged Quakers, and the Southern aristocrat beat his slaves and set blood-hounds on the track of him who dared aspire to freedom. The barbarous Indian, ignorant alike of Roman justice, Saxon law, and the Gospel of Christian brotherhood, in the fury of revenge, has brought no greater stain upon his name than these” (178). Making Native people’s still-evolving relevance to the United States analogous to that of the Northeastern Puritan and the Southern Cavalier, she revises
significant strains in late-nineteenth-century political rhetoric that stressed the Anglo-Saxon origins of American democracy and the necessity of national re-unification (Hannon 180-4; Trachtenberg 76-7). If contemporary political discourse could overlook the Puritan fathers’ overzealous acts of violence, and if the South’s undemocratic legacy could be re-woven into the national fabric, then Native warriors’ killing of “frontiersmen” in what she defines earlier in her speech to be “patriotic” acts of self-defense can by no means justify the exclusion of American Indians from the national polity (178). Thus, Zitkala-Ša’s rhetoric reveals an adept deployment of prevalent social and political themes to meet the needs of her own bicultural context.

Bringing to a close her apology for American Indians’ voluntary integration into the Anglo-American mainstream, Zitkala-Ša increasingly relies upon a Biblically-inflected sentimental discourse (179). For this prize-winning orator, Christian rhetoric becomes the means for establishing a spiritual affinity and then a familial affinity between herself and her audience. That is, according to what Barnes terms “the sentimental scheme of sympathy, others are made real—and thus cared for—to the extent that they can be shown in relation to the reader,” or in this case the listener (4). Thus, in order to defend American Indians’ “new birthright to unite with [Euro-Americans’] our claim to a common country” (179), Zitkala-Ša recognizes that she must first stage her affective ties to middle-class America and “dissolve[] the boundaries of ‘self’ and ‘other’” (Barnes 4). Making good on the assertion that an Indian’s inclusion in the national family is validated by “his [or her] own choosing” and therefore does not interfere with Native self-determination, her speech culminates in a melodramatic, gendered pledge of citizenship: “America, I love thee. ‘Thy people shall be my people
and thy God my God” (179). Just as the Biblical heroine Ruth must use a solemn oath to resist her mother-in-law’s arguments for dissolving their bicultural domestic ties, \textsuperscript{51} so Zitkala-Ša must overcome her listeners’ cultural prejudice by simultaneously dramatizing her solemn commitment to assimilation and her spiritual affinity with the Judeo-Christian tradition. Doubly relegated as a woman and an American Indian to the status of a domestic dependent and denied the rights and protections of full citizenship, she asserts her and her indigenous people’s political claims by assuming the sentimental language of interracial sisterhood.

Nevertheless, Zitkala-Ša also reveals her alienation from Euro-American classifications of heroes and victims. Maintaining her outsider perspective, she appropriates the language and persuasive methods of sentimental literature while also resisting the underlying racial and gender prejudice of sentimental ideology. In the course of analogizing American Indians, Puritans, and Southern “aristocrats,” she subversively equates “frontiersmen” and, by extension, those settlers being enshrined as the vanguard of America’s domesticating mission with not only ostracized “witches” and Quakers but also with unlettered African American slaves. In order for these “frontiersmen” to garner any sympathy, sentimental readers must accept that Euro-American settlers are no better than social outcasts and racialized others. By the same token, Zitkala-Ša’s comparison refuses to treat the white middle-class perspective privileged by sentimental rhetoric as being in any way self-evident or normative. Unlike Quaker exiles who are asserting their right of conscience or abused slaves who are pursuing liberty, white settlers are not being granted any clear or glorious motivation for trespassing on another people’s homeland. Instead, from the perspective of the Indians

\textsuperscript{51} See Ruth 1.16-17.
whom Zitkala-Ša presents as one of America’s historically dominant cultures, the sentimentalized heroes of Manifest Destiny/Domesticity are dangerous destroyers. Indeed, the perceptive social critique inscribed within “Side by Side” supports Laura Wexler’s depiction of Zitkala-Ša as one of the “unintended readers”: “They were readers who read material not intended for their eyes and were affected by the print culture in ways that could not be anticipated, and were ungovernable by the socio-emotional codes being set forth within the community-making forces that literature set in motion” (102). Conveying a profound lack of sympathy for, let alone submissive internalization of, Euro-Americans’ racialized pretensions and hegemonic ambitions, Zitkala-Ša significantly diverges from the sentimental lessons of her privileged education.

Clearly, Schoolcraft, Johnson, Callahan and Zitkala-Ša all received an education combining “effective” and “critical” literacy or “a level of literacy that enables the user to act to effect change” and “a self-conscious attitude toward language and its uses for social reproduction or transformation” (Hobbs 1, 10). Nevertheless, lending support to Mary Loeffelholz’s proposal that female authors’ entire oeuvre be explored as so many responses to the gender values and other societal constraints that have presided over women’s access to education-as-capital (17-18), the texts of all four Native women writers can also be seen to share a strategic deference to sentimental lessons in literacy. Like the lyrical voice shaped—although not exclusively or without resistance—by disciplinary intimacy, these Native authors’ acculturative education and resistant textuality leave “no purchase for readings determined to frame questions in ‘liberatory as opposed to disciplinary’ terms” (23). Sentimental ideology, with its concomitant literature of sensibility, domesticity, and female influence, not only defined Schoolcraft’s
and Johnson’s tutelage by a white parent—in fact underwriting the disciplinary intimacy whereby these women achieved their effective literacy—but was also inextricable from the belletristic, and, not least of all, nationalistic exhibitions which crowned the elite boarding school curriculum of Indian Territory. In turn, Alice Callahan would compose her novelistic defense of Native customs and national sovereignty from within as well as to a bicultural community that had, for more than a generation, blurred sentimentality, Native women’s pedagogy, and patriotism. For the federally funded off-reservation boarding schools of the Dawes Era, meanwhile, the image of Native schoolgirls being transformed through sentimental social values and literature into cultivated and accomplished wives and mothers was regularly mobilized in promotional rhetoric and propagandistic photographs.\(^{52}\) In actual practice, however, students were confined for several years at a time to a highly regimented disciplinary regime that replaced academic literacy with a cost-reducing emphasis upon manual labor renamed “domestic science.” Thus, only an extraordinarily tenacious and talented student like Zitkala-Ša would ever realize the genteel refinement and cultivated self-expression envisioned by the Northeastern reformers as the absolute pinnacle of Native female potential. Ultimately, despite the widely disparate educational experiences of Schoolcraft, Johnson, Callahan, and Zitkala-Ša, all four women can be seen to appropriate the sentimental formulas of self-expression that, over the course of the nineteenth century, were inculcated by parents, missionary-pedagogues, and patrons.

\(^{52}\) That is, notorious before and after photographs displaying “transformed” Native schoolgirls in tight, Victorian-era dresses and stiffly posing with books in hand were distributed by the federally-funded boarding schools; see Wexler.
At the same time, as is denoted by the use of the term “collaboration” to describe these four authors’ engagement with Anglo-American ideology and literary tropes, the very biculturalism that makes possible their authorship also seriously complicates their ability to speak on behalf of their fellow indigenes. To paraphrase Maureen Konkle’s apt assessment of nineteenth-century Cherokees’ bicultural historiography, if these women’s forays into sentimental print culture were not unmitigated failures, neither were they “tidy ‘successes’ over their oppressors” (49). In the case of S. Alice Callahan, moreover, the task at hand is not to elucidate the ways in which selective acculturation informed her strategic deployment of sentimental literary forms but, rather, to propose a critical move beyond the current fixation with her novel’s class and racial condescension and promotion of Christian home missions.\(^53\) Craig Womack’s influential gripe with \textit{Wynema}, which has nearly re-interred the first American Indian woman’s novel in subsequent accounts of its “failures,” has to do with the very real problem of sentimental representations of the “other” and critics’ discomfort with a progressive author who so unapologetically patronizes traditionalist Indians and who subordinates her Creek identity

\[53\text{ Such a reevaluation of }\textit{Wynema} \text{ has been forestalled, for the most part, by Craig Womack’s scathing condemnation of Callahan’s failure to live up to his late-twentieth-century definition of Creek nationalism: “Obviously the novel is not written for Creeks. . . . Callahan’s novel is a remarkably ‘un-Creek’ work. . . . She is a bad Creek writer who has written a marginally Creek novel . . . [h]er novel squelches any Creek voices, or any other Native perspectives” (120). While not “exactly” questioning Callahan’s Creek identity, Womack insists that Callahan’s authorial perspective simply does not qualify as Native (120, 118, 121). On the one hand, while admitting that he is arguing from a negative, Womack persists in categorizing Callahan’s novel according to “its failure to engage Creek culture, history, and politics” without offering the slightest evidence from the either the text or its prefatory material that Callahan was even attempting to write what he terms a “Creek novel” or a tribally specific narrative that primarily depicts and explores “Creek land, Creek character, Creek speech and Creek speakers, Creek language, Creek oral and written literature, Creek history, Creek politics, and Creek government” (121-2). On the other hand, Womack begs the question of just what Creek authenticity signifies when a supposedly “inauthentic” bicultural author like Callahan was living—unlike her present-day detractors—as a citizen of a sovereign Creek nation, was transgressing gender and class boundaries in order to object most vehemently and publicly to allotment and the dissolution of her tribal government, and had a grandparent—and quite possibly an aunt—who perished during the Creeks’ horrendous forced removal to Indian Territory.\]
to a rhetoric of pan-tribal biculturalism and female activism (224-6). Conversely, this dissertation’s reading of Wynema asserts that Callahan’s primary appeal was not to Euro-Americans but to her fellow bicultural citizens of Indian Territory whose bigoted assumptions she simultaneously shares and yet nonetheless attempts to assuage. That is, in the course of urging resistance to pro-allotment rhetoric, she also rejects the Eurocentric denigration of certain Creek cultural traditions. Moreover, by not only subverting the racialized script of Sunday School literature and home missions but by also portraying domestic romance as antithetical to American Indian resistance, Callahan ultimately expresses her own disillusionment with sentimentality’s response to the realities of American Indian genocide.

Thus, although at times all four women are clearly imitating the rhetoric and conventions of certain key genres and texts that are identified as “sentimental,” the poetry and prose examined here transcends any simple acts of parroting and points instead to a perspicacious recognition and thoughtful engagement with the gender, racial, and class assumptions underwriting sentimental ideology. These American Indian women writers build off of the sentimental tropes and narratives identified by Walker, Baym and Tompkins, alternately testifying in a conventional manner to a marginalization that is both gendered and racial; seeking psychological relief through the reassuring domestic fiction that trials lead to a triumphant domestic denouement of reconstituted kinship ties and personal fulfillment; and imagining a spiritual transcendence of their present cultural dilemmas, constraints, and misrecognition via the redemptive power of female sensibility and domestic virtue. Nevertheless, their oeuvres also demonstrate at various moments a critical skepticism of sentimentality that is no less penetrating and frustrated than that
expressed by twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics like Douglas, Wexler, and Bennett. When taken as a whole, the bicultural and often ambivalent textuality of these four women illustrates an invariable, programmatic conformity to none of the current interpretations of literary sentimentalism. In other words, Schoolcraft, Johnson, Callahan, and Zitkala-Ša all demonstrate their right to be deemed “unintended readers.” Critiquing, ironizing, but also pressing against and expanding the ideological limitations underwriting the tropes of sensibility, domesticity, and sympathy, these Native women writers broaden our current understanding of the cross-cultural pertinence and apologetic potential of sentimental literature.
CHAPTER ONE

Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s Sentimental Lessons:

The Native Woman as True Woman

True Womanhood, Disciplinary Intimacy, and the Métis Middle Ground

Born in 1800, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft was the favorite daughter of the cultured Anglo-Irish fur trader John Johnston (1762-1828) and Ozhaguscodaywayquay (c.1775-1843), later called Susan, the influential daughter of an Ojibwe warrior and chief. Despite her brief trips to Ireland and England (1809-1810) and New York City (1824-1825, 1838-1839), Jane Schoolcraft resisted leaving her mother and Métis (or mixed-blood) world, even after her children were placed, against her wishes, in eastern boarding schools (Parker 15-16, 32, 67). Nevertheless, with her husband’s scandalous departure from office, she was at last prevailed upon to move to New York in 1841. In

54 Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s Ojibwe name was Bame-wa-wa-ge-zhik-a-quay and has been variously translated as “Woman of the Stars” and “the sound the stars make rushing through the sky” (Ruoff 82; Parker 1).

55 Despite her chronic bad health, she oversaw the largest home in that vicinity, managed several servants, reared her children single-handedly during Henry’s many absences, and threw lavish dinners which, according to one guest, consisted of “eight varieties of meat, half a dozen vegetables, and eight desserts in addition to bread and butter, water, cider, beer, and wine” (Parker 17; Mason xi). Henry and Jane Schoolcraft moved from the Sault to nearby Mackinac in 1833 (Parker 19).

56 According to Parker, while the charges of corruption were probably trumped up by his political opponents, Henry Schoolcraft did manage to obtain land grants for his in-laws and practiced nepotism in his hiring practices (59, 81).
light of Cheryl Walker’s “composite biography” of nineteenth-century poetesses, one might expect Jane to have capitalized upon her newfound residence in the capital of American print culture and to offset her family’s financial insecurity with her own foray into publishing. She was by this time, however, weakened emotionally and physically by her addiction to laudanum and her homesickness (Walker 79; Kilcup 58; Parker 41-2, 67-8). Refusing to accompany Henry on his promotional tour of Europe, she instead traveled to her sister’s home in Dundas, Ontario (Parker 70). There she died suddenly on May 22, 1842.

Having access to her father’s impressive library and tutelage in Anglo-American manners, history, and literature, Jane began writing poetry as a teenager, with the earliest preserved poems dating from 1815 and 1816. Based upon her surviving manuscripts, it appears that, until 1840, Jane Schoolcraft regularly composed verses demonstrating varying degrees of engagement with Romantic sensibility and sentimentality, including sanctuary poems, complaints, and elegies (Parker 48). While many of these poems were written as discrete texts, others were inscribed within her correspondence and diaries. As Elizabeth Petrino has observed, this lifetime spent collecting and revising poems for a private portfolio was not so much an absolute rejection of publication as it was a necessary and moralistic alternative to early-nineteenth-century print culture’s gender prejudice and promiscuous circulation of female textuality: “The frequent anonymity and pseudonymity of female poets, as well as their commonly perceived status as dilettantes and amateur artists, drove them to exploit another popular venue: the literary portfolio” (35). Additional hints as to why Jane Schoolcraft never pursued anything beyond a
coterie circulation of her work are inscribed within her verses themselves. For example, her “Elegy on the death of my aunt Mrs. Kearny” celebrates her Irish aunt’s encouragement of and engagement with verse as a private spiritual exercise: “Delightful task to her, to praise, / Or prompt, or sing melodious lays” (Lines 21-2). Echoing Jane Schoolcraft’s own sentimental poetic pursuits, her aunt is described as taking an especial delight in talking about, listening to, and producing pious songs and, like a sentimental poetess, renounces her own fame in the process (Newlyn 251-3; McGann 163-4; Walker 36): “But not, to fame’s loud trumpet given, / Her aims looked ever up to heaven” (23-24). Nevertheless, during the winter of 1826-27, she contributed both poems and translated Ojibwe oral traditions to Henry’s weekly coterie publication, the Literary Voyager. She would go on to translate at least eight oral traditions to Henry’s weekly coterie publication, the Literary Voyager. She would go on to translate at least eight oral traditions, most of which were published—with minimal revision and without proper attribution—as part of her

57 Even the ephemera contained in Jane Schoolcraft’s unpublished miscellany provide intriguing insights into her opinion of mass publication and suggest that she saw popular literature as potentially compromising to her moral and poetic standards. Over the course of an acrostic that spells out “ALBUM,” Jane Johnston Schoolcraft offers a scathing critique of gift-books in particular, or as Robert Dale Parker explains: “Albums were popular books that collected a diverse array of writing and pictures, combining the roles of magazine, anthology, and coffee-table book, and often elaborately painted, bound, and decorated with gold” (157). For more on gift-books, see Bushnell 283-4. The first line, “A thing of glitter, gleam, and gold,” suggests an object that is both attractive and, given her despair at her community’s increasing “busy strife . . . / To gain one sordid bit of gold,” perhaps worldly and too showy (“The Contrast” 118, Lines 44-5). The following description of “Loose thoughts, loose verses, unmeaning, old” indicates that these anthologized texts are, at best, tired and irrelevant or, at worst, are promiscuous in terms of their arrangement and moral content (2). The conflated diction of “Big words that sound a thousand fold” suggests that even those verses that resound with significance are nevertheless marred by an overblown diction, while her reference to “Unfinished scraps, conceit and cant” condemns at least some of the collected texts and images as trash, platitudes, and exercises in vanity (3-4). Finally, she defines the poetry and prose combined in the album as unstable, empty rhetoric: “Mad stanzas, and a world of rant” (5). In turn, this negative assessment of popular literature as vapid, hackneyed, and immoral suggests why Jane Johnston Schoolcraft might have relegated her poetic works to private and semi-private circulation, with her translated tales entering the public sphere under her husband’s signature.

58 An oral tradition is an American Indian myth or story passed down over the generations that often recounts the origins of the world or lays down certain moral and/or spiritual lessons. Some oral traditions were the property of particular families and clans, and some myths could be shared only at particular times of year; see Parker, 26-7, 54-8; Feldmann 2-13; Bauman; and Womack 79-105.
husband’s research into Indian oral culture (Parker1-2).

As a result of her genteel refinement and authorial accomplishments, moreover, Schoolcraft did achieve some limited fame as the “Northern Pocahontas” and corresponded with Elizabeth Oakes-Smith, who called her “a warm and generous . . . child of the woods; . . . who has not lost amid the seductions of society, her primitive simplicity and truthfulness of character” (Kilcup 57; Ruoff 82-3; qtd in Parker 33). Margaret Fuller would later eulogize Jane Johnston Schoolcraft in her Summer on the Lakes (1844): “By the premature death of Mrs. Schoolcraft was lost a mine of poesy, to which few had access” (332). After Jane Schoolcraft’s death, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow encountered the Métis woman’s translated, retold narratives in her husband’s publications, including Algic Researches.

Oblivious to the fact that he was captivated by Jane’s, rather than Henry’s, handiwork, Longfellow would go on to incorporate revised versions of her tales “Moowis, the Indian Coquette” and “Leelinaw” into Evangeline and “Peboan and Seegwun” into The Song of Hiawatha (Parker 58-9, 61).

Eager to absolve Jane Johnston Schoolcraft from the stereotypical feminine “meekness” associated with literary sentimentality, Robert Dale Parker has argued that an Anglo-American definition of respectable womanhood was the model of female behavior

59 W.K. McNeil provides a helpful gloss for Henry Schoolcraft’s appropriative editorial practices: “Like most nineteenth-century collectors Schoolcraft considered his texts important but saw little need to dwell at length on the narrators and storytelling situation. He did mention his informants and translators but made no distinction between the two” (13). In other words, Jane Schoolcraft’s name was slipped in among the names of several men and women to whom Henry extended a very general acknowledgment of gratitude, and she was not given credit for the particular tales that she had translated and retold. Consequently, Henry Schoolcraft’s eagerness to aggrandize himself as the white “discoverer” of the Native intellect and humanity inscribed within American Indian oral literature seriously complicates scholars’ efforts to re-envision his ethnographical publications as a noble effort “to undo and break down Anglo misconceptions about Northern Tribes”; see Parker 59; Quiggle 507.

60 “Algic” is a term coined by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft that combines the words Algonquin and Atlantic and that homogenizes the many Algonquian-speaking cultures of the Great Lakes; see Parker 25. For more on Longfellow’s interaction with Henry Rowe Schoolcraft’s anthropological texts, see Jackson.
least available and therefore least congenial to the Métis girl: “[T]he prevalence of the
cult of true womanhood, with its genteel notions of feminine propriety, has come into
question from scholars who challenge its range outside the privileged classes (which Jane
in some ways belonged to), outside white women (a group she belonged to in some ways
and in other ways did not belong to), and outside the American northeast” (17).61

Certainly, the most obvious candidate as role model for Jane Johnston would have been
her own Ojibwe mother. While Jane could, on one hand, long to “break up
housekeeping”—shut up house and go to [her] dear Mother for awhile, to seek that
necessary repose and relief” (qtd in Parker 41), she also knew her mother as an influential
diplomat within the local Native community. Having inherited her father’s authority,
Ozhagushodaywayquay convened a meeting of tribal leaders, prevented an attack against
the territorial governor Lewis Cass, helped negotiate for an American fort in Sault Ste
Marie, and, along the way, earned her financially struggling family a land grant (Mason
xxix; Parker 11-12, 16-17). Exemplifying how a white fur trader’s full-blood wife could
come to the aid of her family and make negotiations possible between Euro-Americans
and Native leaders, the actions of Jane’s mother represent a momentous throwback to the
preceding two centuries of the fur-trade in the Upper Great Lakes. Indeed, the Europeans’
very survival, let alone their ability to enter into diplomatic relations with area tribes,
relied upon marriage with American Indian women and the Métis culture that both sprang
from and mediated the Great Lakes middle ground (White 69, 324; Taylor 379).

61 This discussion’s definition of “True Womanhood” is clearly drawing upon the mid-century constellation
of sentimental traits that Barbara Welter, in her ground-breaking 1966 essay, has termed the “four cardinal
virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Put them all together and they spelled mother,
daughter, sister, wife—woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth,
all was ashes” (44).
Nevertheless, in the course of underscoring Ojibwe womanhood’s empowering cultural relevance and accessibility, Parker underestimates both the psychological impact and also the lasting literary influence of John Johnston and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and their insistence upon a transatlantic model of gentility and sentimental womanhood. When read against the Anglo-American pedagogy deployed within the Johnston family circle, Jane’s adaptation of sentimental literary forms and gender values through her father’s “discipline through love” (Brodhead 70) takes on a decidedly colonizing function. To recognize this requires revising the sentimental script in which a daughter internalizes a loving mother’s lessons in domesticity, virtue, and refined taste: In the standard narrative of Jane Schoolcraft’s bicultural upbringing and education, John Johnston appears as not only a doting father but also a daunting embodiment of elite transatlantic social values. Distinguished from his frontier community by his familial ties to the landed gentry of Northern Ireland and his extensive library of “a thousand well-bound and well-selected volumes, French and English,” Johnston is remembered by his son-in-law as fusing domestic intimacy, belle lettres, and patriarchal authority: “It was his custom . . . to gather his family around the table, and while his daughters were employed at their needlework, he either read himself, or listened to one of his sons, adding his comments upon any passages that required it, or upon any improprieties or deficiencies in emphasis, in punctuation, or personal manners” (qtd in Parker 14). Drawing upon his past personal “connexions with a polished circle of friends and acquaintances” and his “accurate and discriminating” reading tastes, Johnston’s engagement in the camaraderie and nurturance of the domestic sphere models for his children the information, precision, and poise expected of a British gentleman (Parker
238, 45). Even his practice of reading aloud which, in light of Lucy Newlyn’s analysis of Romantic reading practices, would be particularly accessible to his Métis children’s heritage of Ojibwe oral culture, also smacks of the “patrician” and should not be divorced from the early nineteenth-century association of “sensibility, taste, even polish” with the mere ownership and display of books (Newlyn 17, 23; Bushnell 283).

Interestingly enough, while this lesson in transatlantic academic and social literacy is being directed primarily to the Johnston sons, the Johnston daughters, embroidery in hand, are being relegated to a distinctly passive role also in keeping with Anglo-American expectations or those “traditionally ‘feminine’ activities such as . . . attending, listening, sympathizing . . . and echoing” (Newlyn 236). In turn, along with teaching his daughters to read and directing their appreciation of English texts, Johnston is portrayed as instructing them in “the observance of many of those delacacies [sic] in word and action, and proprieties in taste, which constitute so essential a part of female education” (qtd in Parker 13). Unlike the younger girls, moreover, who benefit from the more readily available magazines and newspapers of the 1830’s and ‘40’s and will eventually complete their education in Canadian schools, Jane Johnston’s effective literacy is entirely dependent upon her father’s library and home schooling (13-14).

62 It should be noted, moreover, that it is Johnston’s choice of authors and texts for oral performance, e.g., John Milton’s Paradise Lost rather than, say, John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, that mark this reading aloud as a privileged, class-conscious form of orality.

63 Indeed, the definitive illustration of John Johnston’s disciplinary intimacy becomes Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s genteel accomplishments, or as Henry Schoolcraft recounts: “[S]he not only acquired more than the ordinary proficiency in some of the branches of an English education but also a correct judgment in taste and literary merit. He made it a rule to excite her to throw all her energies into whatever little effort, or essay, she undertook, and thus always to be doing her best” (qtd in Parker 14). Generally conceded to be her father’s favorite child, Jane certainly was the object of her father’s particular attention and accompanied him on business trips to Detroit and Montreal. During the War of 1812, and while her mother and siblings were left behind in Sault Ste Marie, she would even follow her father to Fort Mackinac which was then bracing for an American siege (Kilcup 57; Parker 12-13).
Credited with disciplining Jane’s “spontaneous” poetic “effusions” and prioritizing her poetic pursuits, John Johnston provides his eldest daughter with the masculine recognition and cultivation that, as Cheryl Walker observes of other early-nineteenth-century women poets, grants her the “time and freedom necessary for creative work” and the opportunity for sharing it (79-81). Furthermore, in educating his daughter and spurring her to write, John Johnston also appears to have influenced Jane’s many articulations of the devout resignation that, as Cheryl Walker has observed, becomes a standard feature of the so-called feminine literary aesthetic. For example, over the course of his poem “Woman’s Tears,” Johnston not only models the lachrymose tropes but also advocates the pious submissiveness stereotypically embraced by the sentimental poetess. In an apparent attempt at comforting Jane, a recently bereaved mother, Johnston fetishizes the tears of “woman” in this life and the next, insofar as these tears presage spiritual reconciliation:

But woman’s tears, when meekly shed,
In resignation o’er the infant flower,
Untimely blighted; are drops so precious,
That attending angels collect them in their urns. (Lines 10-13)

Insisting that a True Woman’s mourning will be accompanied by persevering faith or “returning peace,” Johnston also deploys naturalizing similes in order to emphasize the poignantly appealing, poetic potential of not only tears but female sensibility as well:

Woman’s tears, are as the sunbeams,

64 “Woman’s Tears” was published in the “March 28th 1827” edition of the Literary Voyager. Prefaced by the notice of the death of “William Henry, only child of Henry R. Schoolcraft Esqr.” on March 13, 1827, the tributes, poems and letter extracts compiled for this particular volume serve as a memorial to Jane’s firstborn; see Mason 144.
Smiling through vernal showers.

Woman’s tears are as the rain descending

From the murky cloud, char’d with the tempest,

Ere the resplendent bow gives sign of safety,

And returning peace. (1-6)

When completely disassociated from the inexpressible sorrow and bitterness also finding expression through a woman’s weeping, tears become a lovely and spiritually reassuring symbol for Johnston and his daughter’s presumably domestic audience. In turn, as a result of John Johnston’s textually-mediated home schooling, both piety and submissiveness appear integral to Jane Schoolcraft’s self-expression in verse.

Indeed, several months prior to her father’s preserved example of moralistic poeticism, Jane illustrates the influence of his gender and aesthetic values in a poem first published in the December 1826 edition of the Literary Voyager (Parker 108). That is, her “Invitation to Sisters” resonates with John Johnston’s recourse to nature-based imagery and similarly portrays tears as beautiful, contemplative objects:

Come, sisters come! the shower’s past,

The garden walks are drying fast,

The Sun’s bright beams are seen again,

And naught within, can now detain.

The rain drops tremble on the leaves,

Or drop expiring, from the eaves:

But soon the cool and balmy air,

Shall dry the gems that sparkle there,
Thus sisters! shall the breeze of hope,
Through sorrow’s clouds a vista ope. (Lines 1-8, 11-12)

Expressing her desire for an escape from domestic burdens in the happy announcement that “nought within, can now detain,” Schoolcraft subtly compares “the rain drops [that] tremble” and “expire” with women’s tearful trials and sorrows. By the same token, her allusion to these same drops as “the gems that sparkle” around her home suggests that women’s pain is decorative, an aesthetically pleasing aspect of nature, and the stuff of poetry.⁶⁵ Even as she asserts her own creative power to transform her and her sisters’ tears into the poetic metaphors that can, in Petrino’s words, “hide[ poetry’s] origins in pain” (141), Schoolcraft appears to be repeating her father’s literary lessons.

The correspondence between John Johnston’s disciplinary intimacy and a psychologically-directed assimilation program becomes particularly evident, moreover, in his removal of his eldest daughter to Ireland and then England in 1809. While expressing pride in his child’s fluent English and refinement and offering her a more advantageous context in which to further develop her talents as a gentleman’s daughter, John Johnston looked upon Jane’s unhappy stay in her aunt’s Wexford estate as a potentially permanent separation of his daughter from her Ojibwe mother and bicultural domesticity (15-16).⁶⁶ Furthermore, upon her return to the Upper Great Lakes in 1810, ten-year-old Jane was rewarded for her responsiveness to her father’s sentimental lessons.

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⁶⁵ As Elizabeth Petrino has pointed out, poets often used references to “gems” to signify metaphorical language (141).

⁶⁶ Although the Johnstons and Henry Schoolcraft would later tout Jane’s visit to Britain as a kind of formal education, the brevity of her tour suggests that little actual schooling occurred; instead, the desirable finish added to her learning was her experience of being immersed in (and perhaps overwhelmed by) British culture and gentility (16).
by being granted a simultaneously decorative and pedagogical position within the
Johnston domestic circle: “She naturally came to preside . . . over the department of
receiving her father’s guests . . . . And as her younger sisters grew up, she repaid to them,
the kind offices of instruction, which her father, and his European friends, had bestowed
upon her” (Schoolcraft, Henry “An Introduction” 238). Responsible for ensuring that, in
Henry Schoolcraft’s pretentious diction, “[e]verything . . . was done with ceremonious
attention to the highest rules of English social life,” Jane herself had become the
embodiment of the Johnston family’s respectability and her father’s transatlantic cultural
authority (qtd. in Parker 25). 67

Early in his relationship with Jane Johnston, Henry Schoolcraft also assumed a
pedagogical authority over matters of proper female deportment that, by the time the
Literary Voyager was being composed, had also become an editorial authority over
Jane’s poetry and prose. Written during his courtship of Jane and later published in the
demonstrates Henry’s tutelary role in relation to the Anglo-American standards still being
imposed upon his Métis betrothed. Clumsily seeking to flatter Jane by describing what
Henry desires his wife or “‘heavens last best gift’ to be,” his poem does more than detail
Jane Johnston’s fine points and delineates the feminine occupations, personality traits,
and sentiment that Jane is expected to cultivate and maintain (Line 5). 68 For example, he

67 As Brodhead observes in his explication of the domestic-tutelary-complex: “[T]he child imbibes what
the parent stands for in a moral sense along with the parent’s physical intimacy and affection. The child’s
first love for the parent becomes, accordingly, an inchoate form of allegiance to what the parent
represents—a fact this scheme of rearing then exploits (72). In turn, the noted eagerness with which Jane
shared her poetry with her father’s and then her husband’s guests indicates that she looked upon her
creative writing as an extension of her paternally-sanctioned role as hostess (Parker 33).

68 Indicative of Henry Schoolcraft’s own sampling practices and eagerness to participate in the
accomplished literary pastimes of Jane and her family, his poem’s refrain is borrowed from Book 5 of
praises her for fulfilling her social and domestic duties with a style that, while being attractive and doing credit to her family, is nevertheless “modest” and inconspicuous (Line 1): “A taste in dress & each domestic care / Neat but not gaudy, pleasing without glare” (3-4). Of course, some of the characteristics that Henry praises, Jane also claims to admire, as can be seen by his reference to Jane’s being “Improved by reading, by reflection formed / By reason guided, by religion warmed”(9-10) and Jane’s respectful portrait of her devout Irish aunt who is “By reading by reflection taught, / Good will and sense inspired her thought” (Parker 160, Lines 15-16). Nevertheless, Henry Schoolcraft is making clear that he wants a woman who is not too educated or accomplished and, at the same time, will be too enamored with a picturesque seclusion in nature and too preoccupied with her domestic vocation either to outpace or outshine him (Lines 19-22):

In person comely, rather than renowned,

In books conversant, rather than profound,

With too much sense to slight domestic duty

Or sigh to shine a wit, or flaunt a beauty. (25-28)

Henry’s ideal spouse must keep her feelings, intellect, and appearance in check, so that, ever in the background, she can complement her husband’s moods and areas of interest, while never detracting from her husband’s centrality. Henry thus conveys his desire for Jane to participate in his fantasy of mastery in which all other loves and affective ties in

Paradise Lost and reflects Milton’s own reworking of the Song of Solomon when depicting Adam’s words to Eve:

. . . Awake
My fairest, my espous’d, my latest found,
Heav’n’s last best gift, my ever new delight. (Lines 17-19)
his bride’s life are overthrown by his possession of her: “Kind to all others in a just degree / But fixed, devoted, loving only me” (33-34).

However, as demonstrated by Jane Schoolcraft’s 1827 tour-de-force “Response” to her father’s poetic invitation to dinner and cards, Henry had good reason to feel threatened by the Métis woman’s literary abilities. More than capable of “shining a wit” and of displaying a self-assured virtuosity that resonates with Paula Bernat Bennett’s reading of Enlightenment-inspired female poetry, Jane is for most of her poetic rejoinder surprisingly and “explicitly unsentimental, undomestic, ungenteeel” (28). Assuming the voice of the “Woman of Wit” (28), she fuses a metaphor drawn from classical literature to tease her father about his superannuated forays into authorship:

Who rides this Pegasus? The Hibernian

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69 In an infamous letter dated November 1830, Henry Schoolcraft’s insistence upon Jane’s unremitting devotion and submissiveness acquires an even more unsettling “scriptural” authority derived from both Genesis 2.24 as well as from Epistle IV of Alexander Pope’s “Essay on Man”: “Nothing is more clearly scriptural, than that a woman should forsake ‘father & mother’ & cleave to her husband, & that she should look up to him with a full confidence, as next to God, her ‘guide, philosopher & friend’” (qtd. in Konkle 178).

70 Included in Robert Dale Parker’s collection The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky, John Johnston’s “A Metrical Jeu d’esprit as an invitation to a whist party” testifies to the genteel aspirations and literary pursuits of small coteries on the border of the United States’ Northwest Territory:

Dear Day, If you will make a party,
You will receive a welcome hearty;
For I am old and sick and lame
And only fit to take a game.

The table shall be spread at six,
Unless some other time you fix;
You’ll neither meet with frowns or growls,
We’ll leave them to the Bats and Owls.

But to make our party richer,
Be sure you bring down Doctor Pitcher;
And worthy King, a steady man,
Who steers his course by honor’s plan.

If others you can muster up,
To smoke a pipe and drink a cup,
Bring them all most freely on,
And serve your faithful John Johnston. (129)
On the spur of the moment from Mount Helicon:
Forgetting his gout ache, his age and his colic,
He comes whip in hand, like a youth, full of frolic.

Though he whips and he spurs, not like others makes use
Of a spur at the heel, but the quill of a goose  (Lines 1-6)

Schoolcraft’s depiction of her father as a youthful equestrian spurring on his poetic
genius affectionately gives the lie to John Johnston’s apology for being too “old and sick
and lame” to engage in any activities other than cards (“A Metrical Jeu d’esprit” Line 3).
At the same time, she reduces her father’s poetic voice from that of a classically inspired
bard to a jocular arm-chair poet drawing upon more mundane spirits: “Gives wings to his
steed, with mettle him fires, / . . .  a glass of hot toddy his muse-ship inspires” (7-8).

At once wielding a creative energy and uninhibited esprit that not only
participates in her father’s literary fun but also assertively challenges her father’s
spurious poetical pretensions, Jane next unexpectedly ventriloquizes a masculine
bravado. Challenging any ungracious comers to a duel, she puns off her father’s Irish
identity, while calling for a long night of toasting and card-playing:

A warm welcome doubt me? Let the coward who dares

Miscall his attentions:—by the white of his hairs

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71 In a rather charming postscript, however, Jane uses humor to smooth over her playful impudence, while
demonstrating her familiarity with the malapropisms of “Christopher Caustic,” a pseudonym that Robert
Dale Parker attributes to the popular American satirist Thomas Green Fessenden (130-1): “N.B. You will
recognize the addition of the colic to your list of maladies as a poetic licentia or as Christopher Caustic
would translate it, a specimen of poetical licentiousness” (130). As Robert Dale Parker explains, “The joke
is that the Latin phrase ‘poetic licentia’ should be translated as ‘poetic license,’ not ‘poetic licentiousness’”
(131). In turn, one might also add the essential point to be drawn from this note is that Jane was quite adept
at understanding and deploying a level of linguistic sophistication largely unseen in her sentimental verses.
He shall fight at ten paces—I’ll give him the fires,
And I’ll part with my life’s blood or he with his ires. (9-12)

Schoolcraft’s bellicose reaction at an imagined insult to her father’s hospitable sincerity not only parodies the rhetoric of masculine honor but, with the aural rhyme between “ire” and Eire, also indicates her mock-identification with the stereotypical pugnacity of her father’s Irish heritage. Perhaps imitating the voices of the male circle of friends who are addressed by her father’s poem, while also undermining the genteel overtones of his invitation, she recklessly wagers her life rather than suffer the supposed “ires” directed against her father from Eire. Then, just as suddenly as she shifts from the voice of the Woman of Wit to that of the stereotypical Irishman, Jane Schoolcraft transitions into conclusion a consistent with literary sentimentality: “As the tapers burn short and the night speeds away; . . . we’ll moralize thus as they flicker apace, / So fleetly goes time and thus soon ends our race” (18-20). In this embrace of didacticism, Schoolcraft depicts the anticipated mirth and merriment in her childhood home as already having come and gone, or as Anne Mellor notes in relation to Felicia Hemans’s poetry: “[Her] affirmation of domestic felicity is constantly posed against a melancholic emphasis upon its temporal mutability” (130). Playfully defying a True Woman’s deference to patriarchy and parodying the rhetoric of masculine honor only to conform ultimately to the elegiac strain of sentimental verse, Schoolcraft’s “Response” demonstrates that her poetry’s engagement with sentimentality was hardly indicative of any intellectual passivity or timorous submission to her father’s and husband’s authority and gender values.

Consequently, given his apprehensiveness of being overshadowed by a woman’s wit, and Jane’s clear bicultural advantage with regard to her husband’s twinned interests
in belles lettres and ethnography, it appears that Henry endeavored to make his wife’s authorship non-threatening by enclosing it within first her father’s and then his own patriarchal authority.\textsuperscript{72} That is, based in large part upon Henry Schoolcraft’s depictions of his in-laws and his wife’s education, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s poetic self-expression has been interpreted as tantamount to her deference to her father’s disciplinary intimacy and her internalization of his Anglo-American class and gender beliefs. Yet, rather than articulating an objective account of the educational practices and social values that predominated in the Johnston home and that shaped Jane Schoolcraft’s authorial agenda, Henry Schoolcraft’s portrayal of his wife’s mere echoing of her patriarchal tutelage in Anglo-American literature and gentility reflects his own gender and racial anxieties. For example, Henry Schoolcraft’s marginalization of his mother-in-law’s Ojibwe influence represents a racially motivated attempt at safeguarding his middle-class pretensions and political ambitions. In Henry’s assessment of his wife’s writing, sentimental conventionality is the sign of refinement and class-status, while Jane’s Métis upbringing is barely touched upon except as an obstacle that she has had to overcome.

In turn, with the popularization of disciplinary intimacy as the middle class’s affective, literate approach to child-rearing and “the disciplinary private space of . . . [women’s] poetry” (Loeffelholz 22), Henry gains the prejudiced narrative that he needs. Sentimentality’s racial and class biases become most apparent in Henry Schoolcraft’s altered depictions of his Ojibwe mother-in-law. Shortly after his 1822 arrival in Sault Ste Marie, he enthusiastically declares that “all [the Johnstons] possess agreeable, easy

\textsuperscript{72} Substantiating Henry’s veiled competitiveness with his wife’s poetical gifts, Doyle Quiggle provocatively asserts: “At the outset of his career, Schoolcraft was less politically than poetically ambitious” (495).
manners and refinement. Mrs. Johnston is a woman of excellent judgment and good sense” (qtd in Parker 26). By the 1840’s, however, he is instead emphasizing how Jane’s mother was unable to provide her mixed-blood daughter with a respectable standard of “refinement, taste, propriety of manners, purity and delicacy of language, and correctness of sentiment” (qtd in Parker 71). Ozhaguscodawaywayquay has clearly become a negligible presence in Henry’s biographical accounts of his wife, or as he conveys to his daughter shortly after Jane’s death: “Reflect, that your mother herself, had not the advantages of a mother (in the refined sense of the term) to bring her up, that her education and manners were, in a great measure, formed by her father, and that she had many and peculiar trials to encounter on coming into the broad and mixed circle of society” (my emphasis, qtd in Parker 70-1).

Nevertheless, by approaching Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s sentimental oeuvre as her strategic response to Anglo-American disciplinary regimes, the Métis woman’s genteel literary pursuits can be seen to reflect a maternal influence or her Ojibwe mother’s Native-identified commitment to domestic attachments and a politically-telling involvement with United States Indian policy. Indeed, the rhetorical legacy of Métis diplomacy and the role that Ojibwe and Métis women played in creating this bicultural mode of persuasion immediately calls into question Schoolcraft’s supposedly programmatic assimilation to her father’s and husband’s social beliefs. Emanating from a rhetorical situation that Richard White has termed “the middle ground,” the abiding legacy of Métis diplomacy that Ozhaguscodawaywayquay bequeathed to her daughter was predicated upon the mutual dependency of the colonizer and the colonized or “the inability of both sides to gain their ends through force”: 

To succeed, those who operated on the middle ground had of necessity, to attempt to understand the world and reasoning of others and to assimilate enough of that reasoning to put it to their own purposes. . . . Perhaps the central and defining aspect of the middle ground was the willingness of those who created it to justify their own actions in terms of what they perceived to be their partner’s cultural premises. (White 52-3)

Articulated through perceived cultural congruities—which often prove to be “the results of misunderstandings or accidents”—, a Métis rhetoric of selective assimilation had made practicable, for generations, a cooperative Euro-Indian mode of justice, trade, and territorial dominion. Yet, as can be seen from Ozhaguscodaywayquay’s efforts to avert hostilities and the concessions made by the Ojibwes, by 1820 the era of the middle ground in the Upper Great Lakes was quickly coming to a close, with the Americans clearly in a position to dominate by force.

Writing from within an increasingly marginalized bicultural community and domestic circle, Jane Schoolcraft found in sentimental literature an ideal text of Anglo-American “cultural premises” from which to construct her own resistant Métis rhetoric of white/Indian cultural congruities and cooperation. On the one hand, growing up amongst comparatively impoverished Ojibwe and Ojibwe/French Métis families (Parker 12), Jane most likely would have interpreted the genteel conventions and English language of her father’s culture from an exoticizing, outsider perspective. That is, she would approach transatlantic manners and literary fashions as the way that “they,” or privileged white men and women, communicate with each other. However, by appropriating these sentimental literary conventions, she found a means of conveying her emotions of
depression and frustration—often gender- or politics-related—that was not only cathartic but also legitimating and even prestigious. On the other hand, Jane Schoolcraft derived from her sentimental lessons in transatlantic poetic forms and gendered literary conventions the textual authority required to educate her readers in a proper valuation of Métis biculturalism and Ojibwe culture.

Resonating with the resemblances between genteel sentiment and Ojibwe social and spiritual values, Schoolcraft’s poetry and ethnographic fiction translate her indigenous heritage into a form that is simultaneously intelligible and respectable to white audiences, while also subversively reflecting upon her beset bicultural identity and community. Engaging with the sentimental conventions of sensibility, sanctuary, and complaint as well as deploying the popular figure of the Celtic bard, her verses convey a persistent critique of ascendant Anglo-American culture. Adding yet another layer of significance to Jane Schoolcraft’s authorial aspirations, her simultaneous translation of Ojibwe narratives also underscores her commitment to indigenous forms of expression and Ojibwe oral literature’s hope in the fortuitous interventions of a personified, sympathetic natural order. Offering Schoolcraft a decidedly optimistic forum for expressing her hybrid sensibility, Jane’s polished retellings of oral traditions diverge from her father’s sentimental literary models and instead portray Native-identified women successfully resisting and escaping from an antagonistic society. Yet, in-between the lines of her Anglo-American articulations of Ojibwe spirituality and survivance and just beneath the rhetorical surface of Jane’s “Leelinau” prose persona, there lurk the traces of her Métis family’s collaboration with the very Euro-American imperialism that Schoolcraft decries. Never quite relinquishing the condescension predicated upon her
mother’s Ojibwe pedigree and her father’s genteel pretensions, Schoolcraft’s mixed-blood poetics falter when seeking to speak on behalf of her fellow Indians. Thus, reading Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s poetry and prose in light of her maternal Ojibwe legacy, as well as her father’s early-nineteenth-century version of disciplinary intimaey, foregrounds her subversively resistant rhetorical agenda but also reveals the representational limitations and compromising, collaborative consequences inscribed within her sentimental lessons.

Schoolcraft’s Sentimental Critique of American Ascendancy

Persistently weaving Anglo-American signifiers of genteel femininity with a consciousness shaped by Ojibwe values, Jane Schoolcraft’s merging of both her father’s and her mother’s cultural legacy is especially evident in her troubled depictions of ascendant American power. Written in 1820, “Pensive Hours” presents such an ambitious testimony to the emotional traumas inspired by Euro-American encroachment. Offering a mixed-blood revision of transatlantic sensibility and a Romantic consciousness of the benign “life of things” (McGann 125-6), Schoolcraft personifies Nature as both an aspect of and also an inspiration for her bicultural spirituality. Her poem begins by juxtaposing a discourse of Christian piety with her unique familial connection to her Ojibwe homeland. Describing the moon or “vestal orb” and the nearby river with its beaming “breast” as models of a feminine purity and “holy” complaisance, her spiritual rhetoric culminates with the saintly significance of the reverberating rapids or “the Sound of St. Mary’s” (Lines 5-6): “All nature betokened a holy repose, / Save the Sound of St. Mary’s –that softly and clear / Still fell in sweet murmurs upon my pleas’d ear” (8-10). At the same time, resonating with the intimate speech of a family member or friend, the river is
ascribed a reassuring presence whose “sweet murmurs” invoke “voices we know to be kind” and “whispers congenial and low” (10-11, 15). Thus, Schoolcraft engages in a poetic discourse reminiscent of the Celtic strain of Feminine Romanticism that personifies sublime nature as a sympathetic “female friend” (Mellor 96-7).

Nevertheless, from out of this virginal and spiritually resonant landscape there arise contradictory political and spiritual images that threaten to undermine Schoolcraft’s familial identification with the personified environs of Sault Ste. Marie. Reminding the pensive speaker of “war’s silken banners unfurled to the wind” (10), “the Sound of St. Mary’s” also suggests the looming might of a triumphant “foe” or, given the Johnston family’s reversals during the War of 1812, the Americans: 73

Now rising, like shouts of the proud daring foe,

Amidst such a scene, thoughts arose in my mind;

Of my father, far distant—of life, and mankind. (13, 15-16)

At once reassuring and troubling, the moonlit river reflects integral aspects of Jane’s spiritual identity and domestic circle, only, in the very next moment, to resound with the impending approach of an intimidating power that imperils her Métis family’s way of life. The unstable signification of the river rapids resonates with the increasing precariousness of her father’s position as a loyal British subject and her family’s increasingly uncertain social and financial future. 74 Furthermore, as she alludes to an unresolved political crisis which makes her father’s brief return to Ireland even more difficult to bear, Jane’s concerns over her father’s well being simultaneously encode a

73 See Parker 46-7.
74 See Parker 12-13.
repressed spiritual uncertainty that has been exacerbated by victorious American conquest. Her anxious thoughts regarding a “father, far distant” also point to the seeming distance of a God whose silence serves to heighten the dismay produced by the defiant rapids and Jane’s ongoing physical suffering. No longer simply “pleas’d” but also haunted by the murmurs of the St. Mary’s, Schoolcraft yearns “For the speedy return of [her] father beloved” as well as “For the health [she] so priz’d, but so seldom enjoyed” (Lines 40-1).

As revealed by Schoolcraft’s reconciling tears, however, her worries are ultimately resolved through her “Divine meditation” upon a Heavenly Father’s merciful supervision over all aspects of His creation (19-20):

> Since even a leaf cannot wither and die,
> Unknown to his care, or unseen by his eye;\(^{75}\)
> Oh how much more then, will he hear when we mourn,
> And heal the pierced heart that by anguish is torn. (22-4)

Attaining a kind of meditative epiphany in which spiritual succor and endurance become the reward for those that submit to God’s will, Jane masochistically embraces her own “bend[ing]” and suffering “to the end” (25-6). Seconding this pliant trust in divine intervention, moreover, the sudden intrusion of the “night breeze” establishes a coincidence between Jane’s profession of Christian piety and her nature-centered Ojibwe heritage:

> Till roused by my harp—which so tremulously true,
> The soft balmy night breeze enchantingly blew,

\(^{75}\) See Mat. 10.28-31: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. . . . Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore.”
Softer and sweeter the harmony rings,
I fancied some spirit was touching the strings,
And answered, or seemed to my hopes, thus to say,
Let thy soul live in hope, mortal:—watch still and pray. (29-30, 33-6)

This admittedly fanciful notion of a spirit plucking the strings of what is described in an alternate draft as an Eolian harp obviously coheres with the Christian imagery of harp-strumming angels (Parker 111-12). By the same token, this provocative association of the sentient wind, admonishing spirit, and Christ’s own words to the disciples evokes the New Testament’s description of the Holy Spirit as both the Comforter and a breeze-like presence. 76 Schoolcraft’s ostensibly Christian imagination, however, is also romanticizing an indigenous vision of spiritual intervention. That is, using the metaphor of the Eolian harp, she translates an Ojibwe faith in personified Nature’s sympathy for the plight of human beings, or as Robert Dale Parker has observed, “For her, the harp makes audible an animated universe, a pantheistic apprehension not only Romantic (and a few years later Emersonian) but also Ojibwe, evoking the Manito (spirit)-populated daily world of the Ojibwe universe” (47). 77 The spirit of “Pensive Hours,” in turn, inspires Schoolcraft’s speaker to combine a Biblically-derived admonition to “watch still and pray” with not only her creative “fancy” but also with a metaphysical “hope” in Nature’s expression of spiritual comfort. 78 In an alternate draft of this poem, Schoolcraft

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76 This reading was suggested by Prof. Carter Revard; see Jn. 3.8, 14.16-18, 15.26-7; and Acts 2.1-3.

77 According to Jerome McGann, “The eighteenth-century discourse of sensibility seized upon the eolian harp as a non-conscious tool for revealing the vital correspondences that pour through the material world. . . As we know, [Coleridge’s] “The Eolian Harp” advances the thought that nature is ‘animated’ with spirit, even at its non-animate levels” (21-2).
further blurs Christianity, sentimentality, and Ojibwe spirituality: “The allurements of life, and all mankind; / Insensibly receded from my view” (114, Lines 16-17). While this image of withdrawal from the vanity and demands of humankind expresses what Cheryl Walker has termed the “sanctuary” trope and the pious renunciation of mundane ambition and desires typically seen in sentimental verse (Walker 54), this image of isolation at the same time resonates with the Ojibwe vision quest. Like a traditional Ojibwe, Jane’s poetic persona has temporarily withdrawn from society in order to gain spiritual empowerment from both her poetic introspection and her identification with Nature.  

78 See Mat. 26.41: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

79 In an extremely provocative analysis of Métis women’s history and the “tribally based sanctions and precedents for extraordinary female behavior” (54), Jacqueline Peterson, quoting from Anna Jameson’s Sketches in Canada, discusses Ozhaguscodawayquay’s use of the Ojibwe vision quest as an Ojibwe-based explanation for her marriage to John Johnston and her eventual conversion to Christianity:

- She went away to the summit of an eminence, and built herself a little lodge of cedar boughs, painted herself black, and began her fast in solitude. She dreamed continually of a white man . . . . Also she dreamed of being on a high hill, which was surrounded by water, and from which she beheld many canoes full of Indians, coming to her and paying her homage; after this, she felt as if she were carried up into the heavens, and as she looked down upon the earth, she perceived it was on fire, and said to herself, “All my relations will be burned!” but a voice answered and said, “No, they will not be destroyed, they will be saved” . . . . When satisfied that she had obtained a guardian spirit in the white stranger who haunted her dreams, she returned to her father’s lodge. (qtd. in Peterson 59)

Peterson and Robert Dale Parker have both questioned the veracity of this vision that Jameson commits to print like a retold oral tradition. On one hand, Ozhaguscodawayquay is sharing the outcome of her vision quest in 1837 or “many years after the event” and after having assimilated to many aspects of her husband’s culture (Peterson 59). On the other hand, Ozhaguscodawayquay would have been breaking her culture’s spiritual taboos by revealing the content of her vision (Peterson 59; Parker 9), suggesting that she was either increasingly selective about honoring her Ojibwe traditions or was simply creating a good yarn to satisfy a nosy visitor’s curiosity—maybe both. Both critics also point out that Jane’s mother initially objected to marrying John Johnston and fled from her Irish groom, only to be forcibly brought back by her father (Parker 8-9). Nevertheless, by retelling the Ojibwe vision quest so as to vindicate either her own life choices or the patriarchal decisions which she eventually accepted, Ozhaguscodawayquay is able to draw an Irish outsider into the center of her cultural traditions and to credit her unconventional marriage with granting her the ability to “save” her people, referring perhaps both to her diplomatic efforts which averted a potentially cataclysmic American military campaign in the Great Lakes region and her cooperation with Protestant missionary efforts (Parker 9-12, 16-18). With Jane often choosing to translate oral narratives that revolve around the vision quest, her mother’s re-envisioning of Ojibwe tradition appears to have left an indelible impression upon Jane Schoolcraft’s Métis imagination.
By the conclusion of her poem, Schoolcraft’s merging of supposedly opposed cultural values, beliefs, and feelings has become a binary-denying engine: “And my mind ever feel, as I felt at that time, / So pensively joyful, so humbly sublime” (Lines 44-5). Having gained from her meditative exercise the reassurance that her “prayers were heard and approved,” she consequently feels a sense of “peace with [her]self, with [her] God, and mankind” (38-9). Nevertheless, Schoolcraft retains her sense of melancholy.

As a proper feminine aesthetic and as a requisite spiritual discipline, the powerlessness of the suppliant must not be subsumed by the sublimity of her encounter with the divine sympathy that makes Nature comprehensible to humanity and Ojibwe beliefs legible to Christians. Rather, Schoolcraft at her most edifying is hybrid, is simultaneously humble and elevated. Thus, the tensions in “Pensive Hours” between Métis coherence and American conquest, spiritual submission and physical suffering, are resolved through a melding of Anglo-American and Ojibwe spiritual beliefs.

Revising an earlier “Splenetic Effusion” which characterizes her romantic relationship with Henry Schoolcraft as a source of increasing emotional dependency and expressive alienation, Jane’s later poem “The Contrast” directly addresses the ongoing marginalization of the Métis middle ground, while exploring the relevance of this Native cultural displacement to transatlantic sensibility and Euro-American theories regarding the progress of empire. 80 In an appropriation of what Cheryl Walker has termed the

80 That is, Schoolcraft’s “The Contrast, a Splenetic Effusion,” dated “March, 1823,” claims that love has robbed her of an intelligent voice and, hence, has left her without any satisfactory means to communicate her grievances:

Oft in tears I sigh and languish,
Forc’d to bear in silent anguish—
Looks strange—expressions oft unkind—
Without an intercourse of mind.
Constrained to bear both heat and cold—
Now shun’d—now priz’d above all gold. (Lines 27-32)
“sanctuary” poem (52), Schoolcraft initially laments a lost language and longs for a return to the irrevocable simplicity and emotional satiety of her childhood. Recalling a youth shaped by a disciplinary regime in which “each behest / Was warmed by love” (27-8), Schoolcraft idealizes the domestic speech within her mixed-blood home as distinctly doting and affirming:

Whene’er in fault, to be reproved,
With gratitude my heart was moved,
So mild and gentle were their words
It seemed as soft as song of birds. (Lines 23-6)

More than mere hyperbole, these lines reflect the fact that the Johnston family members truly spoke a different language amongst themselves: her mother’s Ojibwe tongue (Parker 19,45; Mason xxvii). In light of her increasingly Euro-American cultural context, moreover, Jane deploys her sentimental reminiscences in defense of the genteel etiquette and piety inculcated by her Métis social and domestic circle:

Thus passed the morning of my days,
My only wish, to gain the praise
Of friends I loved, and neighbors kind,
And keep a calm and heavenly mind. (29-32)

Finding herself relegated to a language of “effusions” or what Jerome McGann defines as “more primal experiences—sensations and emotions that are frankly erotic and often specifically tied to the feelings of the child,” she must express herself through physical signs such as tears and becomes an unwilling receiver of emotions registered as physical sensations, or “heat and cold” (20). Indeed, in her desire for an active, reciprocal exchange of ideas, Schoolcraft testifies to women poets’ frustration with being consigned to a secondary role or what Lucy Newlyn describes as being deemed “sympathetically receptive rather than creative” artists (252).
Crediting her rustic upbringing on the Great Lakes frontier with inspiring her nascent True Womanhood, Schoolcraft recounts how she learned to live selflessly for others’ gratification and approval, while cultivating her spiritual excellence.

In the course of memorializing “all [her] earliest, happy days” (Line 6) Schoolcraft can also be seen to navigate carefully between binary extremes of wild savagery and urban artificiality, balancing her romanticized Indian identity with the unspoiled sincerity and enviable cultivation of a world “far from fashion’s gaze” (5). For example, Schoolcraft posits her childhood home within both “St. Mary’s woodland bowers” and her “father’s simple hall” and self-consciously underscores how “the golden hours” of this clearly privileged upbringing were defined by an egalitarian hospitality and genteel pursuits (117-18, Lines 7-10): “Concerts sweet we oft enjoyed, / Books our leisure time employed” (13-14). Enshrining the Métis domestic bliss of her youth as a refined idyll, Schoolcraft’s poetic nostalgia resonates with what Leo Marx has defined as the pastoral “middle state” or “a moral position perfectly represented by the image of a rural order, neither wild nor urban, as the setting of man’s best hope” (101). Perhaps best read against the metaphorical landscapes of early-nineteenth-century artists like Thomas Cole, this notion of the precarious pastoral was a central feature of antebellum American theories regarding the Early Republic’s vulnerability to a historical pattern of decline or the idea that rural-based republican virtues would eventually degenerate into the chaotic excess of imperial success.81 In her “Contrast,” however, Jane Schoolcraft subverts this

81 Painted between 1833 to 1836, Thomas Cole’s series of landscapes entitled The Course of Empire is especially relevant to Marx’s concept of the middle state and antebellum artists’ skeptical stance toward American exceptionalism. Preceded by the sublime wilderness, teepees, and violence of Cole’s initial painting The Savage State, the rural employments and pastimes of The Arcadian or Pastoral State are joined to a Romantic Greco-Roman idyll of nature-inspired worship and education (Miller 27-8). Nevertheless, the unmitigated bliss of Cole’s pastoral inevitably declines into the over-crowding, decadence, and chaos seen in his final tableau, The Consummation of Empire (25-6). In a later corollary to
republican rhetoric and portrays the ascendency of American culture and power as an
erosion of a Métis rural virtue: “Adieu, to days of homebred ease, / When many a rural
care could please” (47-8). Drawing her inspiration from the “feelings, joys, and pains” of
a nostalgia that clearly participates in the conventions of Romantic sensibility and the
sentimental longing for an escape into childhood, Schoolcraft ultimately narrates her
homeland’s movement from bicultural idyll to Anglo-American over-civilization (Line
4).

Moreover, in contrast to the Anglo-American artists who predicated the middle
state upon the erasure of Indians understood as the symbolic embodiment of savagery,
Schoolcraft signals the decline of her Métis pastoral with the Euro-American
dispossession of carefree, “simple” Natives. Lamenting the erasure of “The cot the simple
Indian loved” and the devastation done to “The long rich green, where warriors played”
beneath the “breezy elm-wood shade” (Lines 37-41), Jane echoes Oliver Goldsmith’s
poignant yearning for the days when “sheltered cot[s]” and “hamlets” were inhabited by
the rural poor and young swains engaged in “sports beneath the spreading tree” and on
the “green” (Deserted Village 10, 65, 18, 72). With a pastoral lexis and nostalgia clearly
drawn from The Deserted Village (1770), she consequently makes the Ojibwe analogous
to Goldsmith’s depiction of the displaced agrarian working class of England and, by

this bleak historical narrative of cyclical decline, Asher B. Durand’s Progress (The Advance of
Civilization) (1853) combines in one landscape the emergence and degeneration of the American pastoral.
Moving from left to right across the canvas, the viewer’s gaze journeys eastward as a foreboding
wilderness replete with mournful, westward-migrating “savages” gives way to a pastoral state represented
by an obscured village, nestled along a wooded bay, with genteel homes, a steepled church, and nascent
commerce. Neither uncouth nor urbane, Durand’s pastoral middle scene is the most aesthetic moment in his
painting. Yet, inhabiting the smallest, vaguest portion of the canvas, this middle state is merely a whistle-
stop on the road to industrial decay (29-31). That is, in the easternmost distance sprawls the urban blight of
the city, with its industrial smog spilling out into and tainting the very center of the horizon. Interestingly
enough, the historical narrative underwriting Anglo-American artists’ and authors’ skeptical representations
of the progress of empire also neatly coincided with the Ojibwe perception of time as being cyclical rather
linear (McNally 55-6).
extension, the similarly dispossessed Irish.\textsuperscript{82} As Katie Trumpener has observed, the impact of the enclosures to which Goldsmith bears witness was even more destructive in John Johnston’s homeland of Ireland where “English conquest and subsequent disfranchising laws had meant the disinheritance of an indigenous feudal class” (19-20). Like so many Romantic Anglo-Irish authors and activists, Schoolcraft engages in “a new degree of imaginative sympathy and community with countrymen more directly oppressed and affected” (32) and casts the Ojibwes as the “simple” or unsophisticated indigenous peasants being dispossessed by colonial “progress.”

At the same time, in contrast to her British poetic models, like John Leyden’s \textit{Scenes of Infancy} (1803), which combine sympathy and racial condescension in the course of depicting the “anguish” of the uncivilized “red Indian, . . . / Nurs’d hardy on the brindled panther’s hide” who has just discovered “The white man’s cottage rise beneath his trees” (IV.135-6, 139-40), Schoolcraft rejects “dispossession” as the common denominator uniting the New World’s disappearing primitives and the Old World’s increasingly impoverished “swains.”\textsuperscript{83} Rather, Jane underscores that Ojibwes, like Romantic poets, “love” cottages, “homebred ease,” and the other conventional signs of virtuous and true “civilization” (Lines 41-2, 47). Furthermore, unlike Oliver Goldsmith’s hysterical vision of hapless white colonists being confronted by “crouching tigers . . . / And savage men more murderous still than they” (Lines 355-6), Jane Schoolcraft’s critique of Euro-American newcomers indicates her decidedly subversive reading of \textit{The Deserted Village}’s concluding verses or the idea that “states of native strength possest / Though very poor, may still be blest” (my emphasis, Lines 425-6). The marginalization

\textsuperscript{82} Robert Dale Parker has noted that Henry Schoolcraft specifically names Oliver Goldsmith as one of Jane’s “favorite” authors (33).
\textsuperscript{83} See Flint 35-6.
of indigenous peoples and erasure of the bicultural middle ground signal both the newfound political authority of the United States as well as a troubling spiritual declension. In Schoolcraft’s poem, Indian removal is merely a harbinger for a degenerate “civilization” that ultimately transforms the Métis pastoral into a chaotic scene of deforestation, avarice, and legal wrangling:

The tree cut down—the cot removed,
The cot the simple Indian loved,
The busy strife of young and old
To gain one sordid bit of gold
By trade’s o’er done plethoric moil,
And lawsuits, meetings, courts and toil. (41-6)

In his reading of Goldsmith’s poem, Leo Marx emphasizes how the loss of the pastoral’s “moral, aesthetic, and . . . metaphysical superiority” through “the hostile policies of the state” culminates in the emigration of Britain’s village swains and “rural muse” to America: “I see the rural virtues leave the land. / Down where yon anch’ring vessel spreads the sail”(Marx 99; Goldsmith 398-9). For Schoolcraft, however, the whites now descending upon the middle ground are not honest, hard-working yeomen desperately seeking refuge from an exploitative economic system but, rather, are the “votaries” of this “world” or an Anglo-American social order “full of strife and fear” (39-40). Indeed, given that they must now relocate themselves, albeit culturally instead of geographically, Schoolcraft and the other Native-identified inhabitants of her lost Métis pastoral most closely resemble Goldsmith’s beleaguered swains. In lieu of another New World to which they can escape and find sanctuary, the displaced Natives of the middle
ground find themselves setting sail, like colonial newcomers, in the suddenly unfamiliar waters of their own rapidly changing homeland: “We trim our sail anew, to steer / By shoals we never knew were here” (47-50). The Old World, under the guise of a new national order, has reproduced its vices and social divisions in the Great Lakes frontier, changing the topography of the cultural landscape.

It is, then, at this particularly poignant moment of uncertainty that Schoolcraft gestures toward some kind of closure through an unconvincing reconciliation with the traumas of a fractured cultural identity:

And with the star flag, raised on high
Discover a new dominion nigh,
And half in joy, half in fear,
Welcome the proud Republic here. (51-4)

Ending with a weak resignation to indigenous cultural displacement, “The Contrast” seemingly functions as a sentimental “complaint” or what Lauren Berlant has described as a rhetorical “safety-valve” and “aesthetic ‘witnessing’ of injury” which ultimately accepts its own powerlessness as a foregone conclusion (242-4). The haphazard quality of these submissive final lines is not uncommon in Schoolcraft’s poetry and arguably reflects her understanding of what constitutes an appropriate voice for English poetry and her anticipation of sentimental white readers like her father and husband. Nevertheless, what makes Schoolcraft’s submissive conclusion unsatisfactory is precisely the polemical critique of Anglo-American culture that precedes it and that marks her text as one in which sentimental conventions are being strategically appropriated rather than strictly followed. Beginning with childhood nostalgia and ending with submissive resignation,
Schoolcraft uses sentimentality not only to encode but also to translate, for her genteel readers, her distaste for the ascendancy of an Anglo-American definition of “civilization” over her Métis community’s bicultural way of life. Merging her father’s textual lessons with her mother’s rhetorical legacy, Schoolcraft emphasizes the *congruities* among her disintegrating Métis milieu, the fragile pastoral, and Goldsmith’s *Deserted Village*, thereby making her marginalized Ojibwe heritage intelligible and sympathetically accessible to an Anglo-American audience. Indeed, as a result of her engagement with transatlantic gender and literary values, Schoolcraft not only provides an affirming account of her American Indian identity but also makes a decidedly perceptive and potentially useful political analogy. That is, she establishes a parallel between the emotional marginalization and vulnerability expressed by the sentimental poetess and the political alienation and endangerment experienced within the indigenous peripheries of Britain and the United States.

Unlike the concluding rhetorical impotency seen in her “Contrast,” Schoolcraft’s “Invocation, To my Maternal Grand-father on hearing his descent from Chippewa ancestors misrepresented” ultimately embraces poetic expression as a powerful bicultural weapon that can be wielded in the defense and preservation of her beset Métis identity. Published in the “March 10th 1827” edition of the *Literary Voyager*, Schoolcraft’s “Invocation” provides a glimpse into the nationalism, class bias, and Euro-American racial ideology shaping Jane’s self-identification as an Ojibwe. Outraged by circulating rumors that her grandfather was really a Dakota and, hence, descended from the Ojibwes’ rivals along their western borderlands, Schoolcraft responds to this presumptuous
appropriation of her family’s past by calling upon Waub Ojeeg himself to revive his prowess both as a warrior and as a noted singer and storyteller (Parker 6-7; Jameson 87):

Rise bravest chief! of the mark of the noble deer,

With eagle glance,

Resume thy lance,

And wield again thy warlike spear!

The foes of thy line,

With coward design,

Have dar’d, with black envy, to garble the truth,

And stain, with a falsehood, thy valorous youth.  

Thy arm and thy yell,

Once the tale could repel

Which slander invented, and minions detail. (Lines 1-8, 29-31)

As she subordinates Pan-Indian alliances to the specific cultural and territorial claims of her Ojibwe people, Schoolcraft manifests a Native nationalism quite common during the nineteenth-century. For the Métis granddaughter, the “garble[d] . . . truth” of Waub Ojeeg’s supposed Dakota descent is a “stain” and an insulting attack upon her people’s authoritative narrative of their own history. By the same token, this seemingly subtle

84 A possible source for the totemic symbolism, images of martial prowess, and commitment to panegyric found in Schoolcraft’s address to her grandfather can be seen in her translated Ojibwe song “My lover is tall and handsome”:

He is swift in his course as the stately Addick [reindeer]. His hair is dark and flowing, as the black bird in spring, and his eye, like the eagle’s, is piercing and bright. Bold and fearless is his heart. . . . His aim is as sure in the battle and chase, as the hawk which ne’er misses his prey. Then aid me, ye spirits around! while I sing his praise. My voice shall be heard. It shall ring through the sky. . . . His noble deeds shall be praised through the land, and his name shall be known beyond the lakes. (212)
threat to Ojibwe cultural sovereignty also takes serious aim at Jane’s own aristocratic, “war-like lineage” (12). Disseminated by “The foes of [Waub Ojeeg’s] line,” the very notion that Jane’s family is of Dakota extraction becomes an assault upon the accomplishments and influence of Waub Ojeeg’s descendants. As Robert Dale Parker notes, the poem “suggest[s] a vulnerability over family and reputation in JJS’ and her mother’s Ojibwe world” (102). Furthermore, the depiction of these foes as “minions” and, in an alternative draft, “base-born souls” who are motivated by “black envy” indicates that there is a class as well as a cultural bias lurking behind Schoolcraft’s impassioned refutation (101, Line 18). On the one hand, these rumors may have been inspired by white settlers’ and Ojibwe traditionalists’ growing resentment of the bicultural advantages, relative affluence, and political influence enjoyed by Jane’s Métis family. On the other hand, within an increasingly Euro-American cultural context that privileges textuality over indigenous orality, carping insinuations regarding Ozhaguscodaywayquay’s Ojibwe authenticity have acquired a newfound credence.

Yearning for her grandfather’s own speech acts that could corroborate the oral history that has been handed down to her, Jane Schoolcraft appears alienated from any legitimizing source of historical authority in an era of American print culture. With her claims to an empowering Native ancestry being undermined and the legitimacy of her privileged Métis social standing consequently under siege, Schoolcraft briefly expresses her frustration through the trope of the Vanishing Indian. That is, her Métis family’s reliance upon tribal memory has left them vulnerable due, at least in part, to indigenous mortality or the fact that their “band” of Ojibwe elders has taken its illustrious deeds into the afterlife:
For they know that our band,
Tread a far distant land,
And thou noble chieftain! art nerveless and dead,
Thy bow all unstrung, and thy proud spirit fled. (13-16)

In turn, as she associates her beset identity with the supposedly inevitable erosion of American Indian presence, Schoolcraft appears to be preparing her readers for yet another articulation of sentimentalized powerlessness and complaint.

Far from conceding defeat, however, Schoolcraft refuses to vanish and chooses instead to revise Ojibwe oral culture and especially the stirring narratives of those warrior-comrades who “are mortal men yet” in order to meet the challenges posed by an extraneous and distorting textual domination (19). No longer asking her grandfather to rise again, she suddenly claims for her own voice the power to defend and perpetuate her family’s honor. It is, moreover, Jane’s strategic appropriation of her father’s legacy or her patriarchal inheritance of Anglo-Irish print culture that both inspires and supports this self-assertion as an Ojibwe-identified woman:

Rest thou, noblest chief! In thy dark house of clay,
Thy deeds and thy name,
Thy child’s child shall proclaim,
And make the dark forests resound with the lay. (33-36)

Schoolcraft’s depiction of her verses as “lays” is altogether telling, given both the popular portrayals of the Celtic bard in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century poetry and novels and also the significance of Celtic antiquarianism to the renewal of marginalized nationalisms in Great Britain, or as Katie Trumpener explains: “Scottish,
Welsh, and Irish nationalists conceive a new literary history under the sign of the bard, a figure who represents the resistance of vernacular oral traditions to the historical pressures of English imperialism and whose performance brings the voices of the past into the sites of the present” (33). With a father known to have been a great reader of Sir Walter Scott, Jane shows herself to be anything but impervious to the bardic literary nationalism that she encountered via her father’s library and that became closely linked with Anglo-Irish elites and literati. Wandering through her Ojibwe landscape and gaining her homeland’s echoing cooperation and assent, Schoolcraft envisions herself composing the lay of the latest Métis minstrel. That is, her poetic assumption of the Ojibwe warrior-singer’s bow “all unstrung” resounds with the Celtic nostalgia of Scott’s Lay of the Last Minstrel (1805) in which “the stream, the wood, the gale” ring with the groans of the Chieftain “forgotten long” who found his cultural immortality dependent upon the song of the mortal bard: “All mourn the Minstrel’s harp unstrung, / Their name unknown, their praise unsung” (V.II, Lines 3, 5, 25-6). Electing to sing of her heroic descent within the retreat of “dark forests,” the retiring Métis minstrel nonetheless sagaciously commits her lays to writing and the page’s promise of cultural and familial preservation.

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85 See also Trumpener 4-5, 10-12, 17-19.

86 Despite being so far-removed from the struggles of marginalized Irish, Scots, and Welsh populations, the Protestant gentleman John Johnston was part of what ironically proved to be an ideal audience for the cultural poetics of the Celtic bard:

Late-eighteenth-and early-nineteenth-century cultural nationalisms found important supporters and advocates not only among those directly oppressed or disfranchised but also among intellectuals who, by virtue of ethnic, religious, regional, or occupational background, might have been expected to oppose them. In Ireland, especially, some of the most impassioned denunciations of English imperialism and some of the most dedicated attempts at literary restitution come from Anglo-Irish antiquaries and novelists. (Trumpener 25)
Notwithstanding her poem’s brief allusion to Romantic literature and nationalist movements, Jane’s “Invocation” does more than testify to her father’s influence upon her reading and writing. Kate Flint, in her overview of British authors’ imagined and real-life encounters with the American Indian, observes that a fascination with “primitive” Native speech acts and their authenticating basis in nature and unvarnished human emotion contributed both to “the pre-Romantic cult of sensibility and . . . Romanticism itself” as well as to Celtic antiquarianism (34-7): “In particular, Hugh Blair’s Critical Dissertation on the Works of Ossian (1763) and Lectures on Rhetoric . . . promote the importance of primitive poetry by foregrounding the characteristics of Indian languages: ‘Bold, picturesque, and metaphorical; full of strong allusions to sensible qualities, and to such objects as struck them most in their wild and solitary life’” (37). Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s appropriation of bardic nationalism consequently represents a pivotal moment in the transatlantic circulation of cultural capital: Coming full circle, the Anglo-American Romanticism shaped by Native orality is here being deployed by an American Indian woman on behalf of her indigenous oral culture. Because she recognizes that cultural memory depends upon what is commonly termed “survivance” in contemporary American Indian Studies, or a both/and approach to cultural survival and acts of resistance, Schoolcraft resorts to a bicultural means of gaining authority over her Ojibwe oral history and culture.  

87 Not only appealing to John Johnston’s literary tastes and

87 Jace Weaver, in his essay “Splitting the Earth: First Utterances and Pluralist Separatism,” provides an excellent definition and provenance for the now-ubiquitous term “survivance”: “Survivance,” of course, is a concept of Gerald Vizenor, who gives the “actual” word new meaning. . . . For Vizenor “survivance” is survival + endurance. . . . In Fugitive Poses, Vizenor writes: “survivance, in the sense of native survivance, is more than survival, more than endurance or mere response; . . . survivance is an active repudiation of dominance, tragedy, and victimry.” . . . So the term is linked not only to endurance but to resistance. (89)
Henry Schoolcraft’s anthropological interests but also defending her Ojibwe heritage and buttressing her Métis pedigree, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s poetry submits to transatlantic literary forms as a means of resisting the colonial domination and transnational economic logic that underwrite her textual discipline at the hands of patriarchal white tutors (23). So as to safeguard her Ojibwe identity as the “the child’s child” of Waub Ojeeg and in defiance of Euro-American culture’s antagonism to her indigenous oral heritage and mixed-blood privilege, Jane Schoolcraft strategically conforms to John Johnston’s poetic discipline and her paternal heritage of bardic nationalism. Her sentimental response to ascendant American authority resonates, therefore, with Mary Loeffelholz’s assertion that the poetry produced under a sentimental tutelary regime “offer[s] no purchase for readings determined to frame questions in ‘liberatory as opposed to disciplinary’ terms” (23). That is, Schoolcraft’s deployment of a subversive discourse articulating her Native-identified dissent from Euro-American domination, whether political or textual, is inextricable from her adaptation to the Anglo-American literary conventions encountered through her father’s discipline through love. By the same token, in contrast to her female poetic peers, Schoolcraft struggles with an authorial “predicament” that is not restricted to a problem of gender—or, for that matter, economic class—but is compounded by racial ideology and, in particular, the domineering notion of impending Native disappearance. Thus, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft produces a sentimental poetry of Native identity that expresses her disapproval of ascendant American culture, that that corrects transatlantic misconceptions about her Native people, and, most importantly, that preserves her mother’s legacy of Ojibwe history and values.
Schoolcraft’s Métis Sensibility

Whether they posit their vision of escape in the glades of a natural setting or in the simplicity and nurturance of childhood, Schoolcraft’s poems often valorize a retreat from the demands and depravity of humanity. As has already been discussed with regard to her “Contrast,” however, Schoolcraft adheres to the conventions of literary sentimentality by ultimately renouncing the notion of sanctuary. That is, she portrays the possibility of emotional refuge as either temporary at best or, as in the case of youthful bliss, irrevocable. As Robert Dale Parker argues in relation to Schoolcraft’s nostalgia and emotional excess, “She wants, as everyone wants, to return to the infant’s imaginary world where there is no difference and no absence. . . .But of course she cannot return . . . except in the yearning of memory” (52). Nevertheless, while Jane Johnston Schoolcraft was composing poems of submissive and pious resignation to pain and loss, she was also penning a prose revision of the poetess’s renunciation of earthly hope and longing for a purely spiritual existence. That is, through her retelling of Ojibwe oral narratives and, in particular, by means of these traditional tales’ personification of her Great Lakes homeland, she articulates a more optimistic perspective upon female experience and offers her heroines the possibility of deliverance in this life from a suffering that is both gendered and racialized.

Insofar as it underscores the isolation of the poetess and inevitably represents the impossibility of her escape, the sentimental sanctuary can become a space of sorrowful introspection that reinforces rather than relieves feelings of liminality and oppression. For example, in a poem inscribed as part of a diary entry dated May 19, 1828 (Parker

88 See especially Walker 54: “The sanctuary poem usually reflects a longing for isolation from the demands of others. However, as such, it is testimony to the strength rather than the weakness of female responses to such demands.”
Schoolcraft lays claim to a secluded refuge but remains trapped by her domestic cares and the “anxious fears” and “dismay[]” inspired by one of Henry’s many politics-related absences (Line 3): “Amid the still retreat of Elmwood’s shade, / I count the long hours and counting mourn” (Lines 1-2). Although the poem’s initial reference to “Elmwood’s shade” may suggest the “retreat” of a wooded sanctuary, Schoolcraft’s clever wordplay simultaneously points to a particular convergence of the public and private spheres or Elmwood, the official residence over which Jane Schoolcraft presided. In turn, her verses suggest that she has sought some kind of refuge from within the shadowy margins of this domestic sphere. Far from prying and judgmental eyes, her emotional shelter or “shade” may be found literally and immediately outside of her home or perhaps somewhere beneath the overshadowing officialdom and polite performances expected of a government official’s wife. Yet, despite being described as a “still retreat,” “Elmwood’s shade” is far from a sanctuary and, rather, becomes a symbol of Jane Schoolcraft’s irrelevant and self-alienating domesticity: “And unobserved, I spend those hours forlorn” (4). In other words, if only her husband were physically and emotionally present to observe and appreciate her efforts as a Native True Woman, then, Schoolcraft implies, her gendered relegation to Elmwood might be somehow made tolerable: “To him I feel forever bound, / To me, he’s more than dear” (7-8).

Resounding with Jane Schoolcraft’s expressions of fear and isolation during her husband’s many absences, the narrative of “The Three Cranberries” centers upon the domestic predicament of three cranberries—one white, one red, and one green—who live as sisters within a single lodge (189). Relegated to a frontier domestic sphere and left defenseless by their husbands, the cranberries must seek some means of escape after
finding themselves threatened by a marauding pack of wolves. The white berry hides in “the kettle of boiled hominy” and is immediately consumed by the wolves; the red berry hides beneath the snow and is trampled to death, but the green berry climbs and clings to “the thick spruce tree” and survives. On its surface, this story appears devoid of any message, except perhaps to say that the world is a very dangerous place for females and that it can be a great advantage to be able to blend inconspicuously with one’s surroundings. Becoming, however, quite suggestive when read as an allegory, the fate of the three sisters invites a more careful reading of the tale’s racial and gender connotations as well as its ambivalent characterization of nature as a source of common ground, danger, and refuge.

Suggesting that nature itself reproves nineteenth-century America’s pseudo-scientific obsession with delineating the differences between redness and whiteness, the natural unity by which the same plant produces white, red, and green berries argues against polygenism, or the increasingly popular theory that human races were the result of separate acts of creation. Nevertheless, if nature establishes a common ground or unity amongst females of varying hues, it also provides a common threat in the form of ravenous predators. Inhabiting a dangerous natural order in which females are the prey, intended and collateral, of those who are stronger and more aggressive, the three sisters must remain ever alert to the strategies of their would-be attackers. Interestingly enough, with the new fallen snow on the ground, the white berry could have easily hidden in the surrounding landscape, remaining sufficiently inconspicuous while keeping abreast of what is transpiring around her. Instead, the white berry ignores nature altogether and seeks shelter in the kettle, a Euro-American trade-good, and in the hominy, an indigenous

89 See Mielke 117-18, 152-7.
foodstuff appropriated by whites. By making her very existence indistinguishable from the commodities that the wolves are determined to claim for themselves, the white berry is oblivious to the approaching danger. Consequently, having literally buried her head in the signifiers of Euro-American domesticity, she is destroyed.

Taken by surprise during a most disadvantageous season of wintry white, the red berry has few options for shelter and hence a much more limited chance for survival than either of her sisters. This negative assessment of redness suggests, therefore, the degree to which Schoolcraft had internalized the nineteenth century’s “Vanishing Indian” ideology. Notwithstanding her unpropitious color, however, the red berry still might have chosen more wisely, that is, a shelter out of reach rather than out of sight of her enemies. Because she has burrowed into her snowy surroundings, the “red one”—like the “white one”—cannot see the predators’ mad onslaught as they head toward the contents of the kettle. Taking refuge in nature thus becomes inadvisable and even deadly if it involves turning one’s back on an insatiable aggressor.

The surviving sister, in turn, inhabits a subject position that is neither white nor red but is the color of hope, vitality, and reflects, interestingly enough, the verdant ancestry and familial unity of white and red. The green berry’s strategy, moreover, combines the best aspects of the white and red sisters’ approaches. That is, the green one

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90 In an intriguing moment of intertextuality, the red berry’s fate of being crushed beneath the snow is reminiscent of Schoolcraft’s translated Ojibwe “Song of Okogis, or Frog in Spring” which laments the oppressive weight of the snow identified as “the white spirit”:

> Robed in his mantle of snow from the sky,
> See how the white spirit presses our breath;
> Heavily, coldly, the masses they lie,—
> Sighing and panting, we struggle for breath. (Lines 1-4)

Robert Dale Parker, in turn, demurs from any racialized reading of the “Song of Okogis” which would, in his opinion, anachronistically cast “the white spirit” as a critique of the European presence in North America (66). Over the course of “The Three Cranberries,” neither the whiteness nor the suffocating weight of the snow is emphasized, and neither is held responsible for the red one’s death.
not only turns to her natural surroundings for refuge but also, as will be seen from Schoolcraft’s poem “To the Pine Tree,” clings to the symbol for a domesticity that is Native-identified and the landscape that Jane associates with maternal nurturance or her “mother land” (10). Unlike the white berry’s devotion to Euro-American domestic goods and the red berry’s self-entombment in nature, moreover, the green berry attains a nature-based sanctuary that, while being beyond her assailants’ ken, still permits her to be vigilantly aware of her enemies’ deeds. Thus, Schoolcraft’s allegorical narrative appears to have offered her the coded means to vent her frustrations with her husband’s neglect and the beset future of her Native people, while exploring a range of possible solutions. In turn, the tale’s most viable alternative to female suffering and, by extension, Native disappearance combines an altogether optimistic Métis melding of white and red subjectivities, or domesticity and homeland-centeredness, along with a wary retreat from and surveillance of would-be aggressors.  

91 In keeping with the melancholy voice of the sentimental poetess who is often “without hope concerning this world” (Walker 44), Schoolcraft’s poetry also redefines her desired refuge as a distinctly spiritual existence or “purely spiritualized world” (118). Conveyed through her elegies as well as her many pious admonitions, this vision of a highly asceticized and otherworldly sanctuary eventually dominates Schoolcraft’s

91 In turn, Schoolcraft’s tale indicates a subtle yet significant dissent from the program of Indian Removal being promoted by Henry’s patrons in the Democratic Party. As Laura Mielke has observed of Andrew Jackson’s 1829 inaugural address, the proponents of Removal made the displacement of Native peoples the necessary precursor to acculturation: “Once the Indians were relocated outside of the corrupting white society . . . ‘the benevolent may endeavor to teach them the arts of civilization, and . . . to raise up an interesting commonwealth, destined to perpetuate the race and to attest the humanity and justice of this Government’” (9). As has already been seen in her depictions of American ascendancy, Jane Schoolcraft harbors little faith in the “humanity and justice” of the avaricious American government whose “votaries” are descending like so many wolves upon her community. At the same time, she insists upon the spiritual validity and psychological importance of Native place-centeredness and, while welcoming missionary-pedagogues to Ojibwe country, rejects the idea that her and her people’s survival is somehow predicated upon their being removed from their ancestral lands.
versified nostalgia. Incorporated into the body of a letter dated “13 July 1840,”

“Welcome, welcome to my arms” illustrates this replacement of earthly rescue with a

fantasy of a spiritualized domesticity that can restore the wifely role and maternal realm

that have been overthrown by the political vicissitudes and Anglo-American social values

of Henry’s public sphere. Desperate for familial fulfillment, Schoolcraft portrays herself

obsessively anticipating the day “When faithful hearts in trust shall beat” and when her

family will “In one strong band of love appear” (my emphasis, Lines 7, 12). Clearly, she

longs for a restoration of the domestic security that she knew before Henry sent her

children to boarding school and he was dismissed from his post:

Desponding hours, of grief away,

Upon that happy, happy day;

To heav’n with one accord we’ll raise,

Our voices, in humble, grateful praise. (5-6, 13-14)

At the same time, Schoolcraft’s intense desire to be reunited with her familial “band” and

to have this domestic circle predicated once more upon “trust” and “one accord” suggests

her own interior struggle. On the one hand, the scandalous charges of corruption used to

foist Henry from his post appear to have only deepened Jane’s distrust of the world

outside of her Métis milieu. On the other hand, her verses suggest that the “trust” or

confidence she once enjoyed with her husband and children has become severely

strained. Weakened by geographical distance, the close-knit intimacy characterizing her

own Métis upbringing has been disrupted, and her family’s affective bond has been
compromised.\textsuperscript{92} In turn, Jane Schoolcraft may not altogether “trust” that a far away Métis wife and mother will still be quite as loved by those now residing in the prejudiced white world.

Her poem’s answer, then, to the public sphere’s triple threat of gossip, distance, and prejudice is an escape into the religious fervor, sympathetic sameness, and all-consuming exclusivity promised by a spiritualized domesticity. Identifying her husband and children as “All that constitute life’s charms,” while blurring her “deep devotion” to family with that to God, Schoolcraft envisions the return of her family with an anticipation of emotional satiety and perfect peace that pious Jane would be expected to seek in Heaven rather than on earth (Lines 1-2). Emotional homogeneity, in turn, becomes the sign of this ideal domesticity. That is, “unisons” of heartbeat and “one accord” of voice indicate her reliance upon a sentimental definition of perfect familial love as sameness in sympathy, emotional intensity, and piety.\textsuperscript{93} Furthermore, in response to her increasing liminality, she imagines an otherworldly domestic sanctuary in which exclusivity is the guarantor of restored familial safety and emotional satiety: “And spend in peace each coming year, / With naught on earth to make us fear; / Blest in each other’s happy smile—” (15-18). Deprived of her former social prominence, maternal responsibilities, and circle of family and friends, Schoolcraft places all her hope in a complete separation from a dangerous Anglo-American-dominated “world”: “Reject the

\textsuperscript{92} Indeed, A. LaVonne Ruoff’s biographical account of Schoolcraft suggests that Henry’s insistence upon removing the children from Jane’s domestic circle was part of his “increasing disaffection with his wife’s Ojibwe heritage”: “As a traditional Ojibwe, Susan reared her children according to tribal values and parenting styles, which emphasized close family relationships and teaching by example rather than by stern reprimands or harsh discipline” (82).

\textsuperscript{93} That is, Schoolcraft’s idealization of “unison” resonates with what Elizabeth Barnes terms “sympathetic identification” or “the idea of sympathy as sameness and similarity as the basis of all love relationships” 17.
world, with all its guile, / Till summon’d to our rest above, / To live in God’s supernal
love” (l. 19-21). Envisioning her family members taking part in her domestic
marginalization, she portrays this loving and living for each other as a pious mirroring of
the afterlife or a spiritual existence based upon “liv[ing] in God’s supernal love” alone.

Resonating with the longing for a spiritualized domestic refuge already seen in
Schoolcraft’s “Welcome, welcome to my arms,” the fathers in two of her translated
Ojibwe tales undertake a literal seclusion from worldly snares. Leaving his wife and
children to support themselves in “a solitary Indian lodge,” the dying patriarch of “The
Forsaken Brother” explains his decision to remove his family from society as an ethical
precaution: “I have contented myself with the company of your mother and yourselves,
for many years, and will find my motives for separating from the haunts of men, were
solicitude and anxiety to preserve you from the bad examples you would inevitably have
followed” (280).

Just as this father had predicted, moreover, “the pleasures and
amusements of society” induce his eldest son and daughter first to falter and then,
ultimately, to fail in their commitment to care for their younger brother (282).

94 “The Forsaken Brother” appears in the “February 13th 1827” edition of The Literary Voyager.

95 Forgotten by siblings in search of social stimulation and spouses (281-2), the title character of “The
Forsaken Brother” nevertheless finds his deliverance in personified Nature or, to be precise, the
compassion shown by a pack of wolves: “[T]he animals themselves seemed to pity his condition, and
would always leave something. Thus he lived, as it were, on the bounty of fierce wolves until spring. As
soon as the lake was free from ice, he followed his new friends and companions” (282-3). By means of the
sympathetic bond that forms between a Native-identified child and a sentient natural order, the abandoned
brother actually lays claim to a refuge in this present life and, eluding his cast-off status, assumes a new
identity as a wolf. Furthermore, this supernatural transformation and integration into Nature grants the
orphan an empowering voice with which to condemn his brother and sister to a lifetime of shame: “The
elder brother, conscience struck, . . . exclaimed in great anguish, ‘My brother, my brother, come to me.’ But
the nearer he approached the child, the more rapidly his transformation went on, until he changed into a
perfect wolf,—still singing and howling, and naming his brother and sister alternately in his song, as he
fled into the woods” (284). Interestingly enough, Jane’s younger brother was, in fact, named Miengun or
“wolf” (Parker 6), which perhaps explains why she chose to translate this particular narrative. Illustrating
Schoolcraft’s Ojibwe identification with the natural order of her motherland, her familial connection to the
story also suggests Jane’s own imaginative participation with the events in this transformational narrative.
Not merely corrupting, society in the “Origin of the Miscodeed” is also intensely violent, for which reason the patriarch Mongazida, who interestingly enough bears the name of Schoolcraft’s great-grandfather, chooses to rear his daughter in the valley of the Taquimenon. Envisioning his beloved Miscodeed being made first a “witness” of her father’s murder and then a captive to a rapacious Dakota warrior who seeks to avenge his own father’s death, Mongazida retreats to a sanctuary-like corner of the Ojibwe homelands (182): “He thought of the bitter feuds of the border lands, yet pleased himself in his own seclusion far from the war path of the enemy” (183).

Rather than eschewing altogether the demonizing portrayals of American Indian males, Schoolcraft projects popular Euro-American stereotypes of Native “savagery” and sexual brutality upon the Ojibwes’ adversaries the Dakotas, once again revealing the cultural prejudices that Jane Schoolcraft has acquired along with her Ojibwe nationalist sympathies. However, with regard to the popular depiction of white women as prized hostages and helpless pawns, Schoolcraft does significantly revise the gendered and racialized implications of contemporaneous captivity narratives and frontier romances. That is, by choosing to retell this particular Ojibwe tale, she takes the opportunity to portray a Native maiden as a True Woman whose cultural identity and innocence mark her as especially susceptible to the horrors of North American border conflicts. Indeed,

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96 The “Origin of the Miscodeed, or the Maid of Taquimenon” appears in volume 11 of The Literary Voyager, which was published at some point during mid-to-late February of 1827. Parker’s introduction to Schoolcraft’s translated oral narratives offers a particularly helpful gloss on the re-naming practices that Jane Schoolcraft employs:

> While the [oral traditions . . . ] take place before historical time, the “Origin of the Miscodeed, or the Maid of Taquimenon” plays with that pattern by referring to more recent, historical conflicts between Ojibwes and their neighbors . . . and by using her great grandfather’s name, Mongazida (or Ma Mongazida), for one of the actors, while also setting the scene . . . far from Mongazida’s home . . . but not so far from Schoolcraft’s home at Sault Ste. Marie. Such changes in what was most likely an old story may have come across to Ojibwe listeners as playful jabs at the tradition and as traditional ways of remaking and sustaining the story. (57)
Schoolcraft can be seen to highlight those aspects of the traditional narrative that coincide with sentimental gender values and sexual anxieties, thereby establishing an Ojibwe girl’s purity and vulnerability as an ambivalent common ground for cross-cultural sympathy. Described at one point as a “sweet enthusiast of nature” (181), Schoolcraft’s heroine displays the exotic vitality of a romanticized “child of the forest” while also embodying the emotional complaisance and flower-enamored naiveté associated with the idealized Anglo-American maiden: “Beauty sat upon her lips, and life and animation marked all her motions. Fourteen summers had witnessed the growth of her stature, and the unfolding of her charms, and each spring, as it came around had beheld her, in her happy simplicity, reveling amid the wild flowers of her native valley” (181). Ever contemplating the “face” of her beloved valley and communing with this forest sanctuary as a source of companionship and familial identity, the Ojibwe maiden achieves a spiritual serenity with which she anticipates the day when her interred body will become a part of her people’s homeland and history: “There . . . were the sacred groves of her forefathers, and . . . she hoped, when the Great Spirit should summon her to depart, her friends would lay her simply bark-enchased [sic] body, under the shady foliage in a spot she loved” (181). Nevertheless, this sylvan refuge proves fleeting, as the heroine’s exceptional loveliness, wholesomeness, and identification with this forest home shape her

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97 Nevertheless, Schoolcraft does stray from the Anglo-American formula of True Womanhood. Depicting her Ojibwe heroine coming of age in a spiritual sense, Schoolcraft sensually describes the valley’s alleviation of the rigors of a ritual fast: “Sweet valley of the Taquimenon, thou didst bless her with the charms of thy fragrance, causing the most profound sensations of pleasure. . . . [H]appy [was] her awakening, as she hasted back . . . to her parents’ lodge, with . . . one more tie to bind her fancy and her heart to the sweet valley of the Taquimenon (181). Perhaps, by participating in the young girl’s spiritual maturation, the personified landscape has brought her into a sexual maturity as well. Schoolcraft may also be suggesting that, while still clearly a “maid,” Miscodeed has, from an Ojibwe cultural vantage point, become the bride of her homeland by some supernatural means.
into the ideal target for culturally motivated sexual violence. Poised to suffer helplessly in a private retreat for her tribesmen’s public acts of bloodshed, guileless Miscodeed is reduced to a domestic symbol of patriarchal honor. Consequently, Schoolcraft’s translated oral narrative offers a subtle, indigenized critique of masculine social values and the seemingly inescapable fatality of being female, in a rhetorical move that predicts the “gothic sentimentality” which Paula Bernat Bennett has identified with women’s poetry composed after the Civil War (Bennett 116). Ironically inspiring masculine exploitation as well as Anglo-American readers’ sympathy, Schoolcraft’s melodramatic portrayal of beset female virtue “call[s] attention to injustice” on the part of Dakotas, in particular, and frontier males in general (Bennett 120, 121).

Despite gesturing toward the unrealized longing for sanctuary expressed in Schoolcraft’s sensibility poems, however, the “Origin of the Miscodeed” differs from these poetic models by portraying a successful deliverance from patriarchal society and violence that is both supernatural and significantly temporal. Eliciting an almost feral chagrin from the Dakota assailant, which only confirms the scenario that the now-murdered Mongazida most dreaded, a clearly metaphysical intervention preserves the Ojibwe maiden’s innocence and freedom: “The eye of the savage leader rolled in disappointment around, as he viewed the spot where Miscodeed, his meditated victim, had sunk into the earth. . . . The knife and the tomahawk were cheated of their prey—her guardian angel had saved her from being the slave of her enemy” (183). The authorial decision to attribute this climactic rescue to a “guardian angel” signals yet another assertion of Schoolcraft’s biculturalism and, merging the spiritual beliefs of her Native and Anglo-Irish heritage, makes the guardian spirits of Ojibwe oral tradition congruous
with Christian angels: “[Miscodeed] had prepared her bower of branches, and fasted to obtain a guardian spirit, to conduct her through life, according to the belief and customs of her people. . . . There, she first beheld that little angel, who in the shape of a small white bird, of purest plumage, assumed to be her guardian angel. . . . for the rest of her days” (181). By the same token, this seemingly spiritualized escape is simultaneously an earthly realization of the heroine’s sympathetic bond with a personified natural order. Achieved by means of a physical integration into her Ojibwe homeland, Miscodeed’s sanctuary is inextricable from the temporal world: “[W]here the maid of Taquimenon had fallen, was a modest little white flower, bordered with pink border which was at once destined to be her emblem” (183). A Native maiden’s legacy of purity and “enthusiasm” for her homeland is not only safeguarded in the past but also perpetuated in the present by a flower or a tangible, enduring aspect of the Ojibwe landscape (181).

Like the conflation of emotional vulnerability with female domestic experience already seen in her poetic engagement with literary sentimentality, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s translated oral traditions explicitly depict the threat of masculine exploitation and violation looming over women’s sexuality. Yet, just as Jane Schoolcraft’s poetry depicts her Ojibwe “mother land” as having a profound impact upon her spirituality and mixed-blood subjectivity, her translated traditional narratives

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98 Interestingly enough, during the early days of their marriage, Henry seconds this coincidence of Native and Christian beliefs, playfully acquiescing to his bride’s Métis perspective. In his 1825 “Private Journal,” the Indian agent ardently gushes: “This may be very bad poetry, but it is good sense. Don’t you think so, my guardian spirit, or rather the guardian spirit of my wife, whom I am sure she has sent to attend me on this journey, answer Yes! Then I will go on with my doggerels—” (qtd. in Parker 29). Calling Jane his “guardian spirit” the strikingly sentimental Henry may have in mind something along the lines of the later Anglo-American “Angel of the House.” He mitigates this kind of Eurocentric presumption, however, by alluding to an Ojibwe concept of spirit-beings who, unlike a domestic “angel,” are free to follow Henry on his travels and with whom Jane can communicate her wishes. Indeed, by asserting that Jane has sent her own spirit-guide to watch over him, Henry indicates that Jane, the pious moralizer, has not abandoned her respect for Ojibwe traditions, despite having interpreted those traditional beliefs in light of her Christianity.
similarly depict a personified landscape that participates in Native-identified heroines’ struggles and facilitates their triumphant escape. Resonating with various sentimental themes, Jane Schoolcraft’s Métis re-envisioning of the Ojibwe oral tradition provides her with an idiosyncratic alternative to her father’s transatlantic sensibility. In particular, unlike her deployment of the sentimental sanctuary trope, the Ojibwe narratives that Jane retells do not relegate the realization of hope and comfort to a retreat into childhood or a purely spiritual existence, nor is the desire for freedom from societal corruption and patriarchal exploitation ultimately renounced as implausible and left unfulfilled. Rather, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s translated oral narratives envision a happy ending for those who are oppressed, predating this fortunate denouement upon a simultaneity of spiritual intervention and Nature-based rescue in this world.

Interestingly enough, by the happy conclusion of the “Origin of the Miscodeed,” the floral “emblem” of a Native True Woman’s realization of sanctuary has also become emblematic of the Métis poetess retelling this story (181). Published in the preceding volume of The Literary Voyager, Henry Schoolcraft’s poetic tribute “To Mrs. Schoolcraft On the Anniversary of Her Birth-Day” describes the miscodeed so as to resonate with Jane herself or as a “Native flower” and “Lover of the calm retreat” (Lines 29-30). Engaging in the sentimental language of flowers, Henry also grants these “blush-lit” blooms a place of honor in the textual crown he weaves to symbolize Jane’s admirably modest, unaffected gentility (28). Moreover, like the floral subject of her poem “To the Miscodeed” who is “first to greet the eyes of men / In early spring,” Jane, the eldest and accomplished mixed-blood daughter, becomes at a tender age her family’s ornamental representative and is particularly charged with greeting her father’s guests (“To the

99 That is, Henry’s poem appears in the “February 16th 1827” edition of The Literary Voyager.
Most suggestive, however, is Schoolcraft’s personifying depiction of her emblematic flower donning a “dress of white, adorned with pink” (12) and the underlying similarities between the miscodeed’s aesthetic harmonizing of “white with red” (10) and Jane Schoolcraft’s own Métis authorial agenda. Like a hint of pink accenting the virginal white gown of the Anglo-American poetess tradition, Jane’s bicultural complexity and originality heighten the aesthetic value of her lyrical self-expression and use of sentimental tropes. Schoolcraft’s translation of traditional Ojibwe tales ultimately represents her embrace of this bicultural aesthetic. Articulating a Native-identified solution to her poetry’s textualized complaints and “aesthetic ‘witnessing’ of injury,” she turns to Ojibwe oral culture and the belief that the marginalized can achieve an actualized, transformative escape through an identification and integration with personified Nature.

The Conflicted Agenda of “Leelinau”

During her period of limited publication in the Literary Voyager, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft would assume two pennames that, like her texts, are “culturally suggestive” (Parker 48) and reflect her creation of multiple authorial identities. Signing all of her poetry, except for two elegies on the death of her son, as “Rosa,” Schoolcraft claims authorship of the traditional narratives “The Origin of the Robin,” “Origin of the Miscodeed,” “Moowis,” and “The Forsaken Brother” under the name “Leelinau.” The use of two pseudonyms may illustrate Schoolcraft’s own awareness that the composition of poems participating in Anglo-American literary conventions and sentimentality differ significantly from her retelling of narratives that were being shared orally—in some cases

100 Jane contributed the retold narrative “Mishosha, or the Magician and His Daughters” under her Ojibwe name: Bame-wa-wa-ge-zhik-a-quay (Mason 71).
only by particular clans and family members—and being gradually reconceived by Ojibwe storytellers long before Jane Schoolcraft set these stories down on paper (Bauman 258). Yet, even such a respectful differentiation between her acts of individual authorship and those of cultural translation still does not explain why Schoolcraft would have chosen the names “Rosa” and “Leelinau” to represent these divergent literary endeavors. The fact that Jane’s Irish father took the penname “Hibernicus” in the Literary Voyager argues that these pseudonyms were read by “a circle of friends who would pretty much know . . . who wrote what” and were thus constructed as playful representations of the contributors’ identity (Mason 84; Parker 61-2). “Rosa,” in turn, associates Jane Schoolcraft, the avid gardener, not only with the cultivated flower and, according to the language of flowers, the symbol of love, but also with the Latinate word for the color pink, a possible symbol of “overlapping” European and American Indian “categories” (Parker 235).101 As has already been observed, pink figures prominently in Schoolcraft’s many poetic associations with the miscodeed or the “modest,” flower “with dress of white, adorned with pink” (“To the Miscodeed” Line 12).

As with her poetic persona “Rosa,” Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s association of her prose with the authorial identity “Leelinau” conveys a multiplicity of private and cultural meanings, many of which may be beyond recuperation. That said, the “Leelinau” pseudonym clearly reinforces the many coincidences between the Ojibwe heroine of the same name and Schoolcraft’s own biography and melancholy aesthetic, suggesting that

101 It is, in fact, such a notion of cultural hybridity that Parker points to in his critical response to Jeremy Mumford’s portrayal of Schoolcraft as somehow separating her Métis identity from her Ojibwe heritage. Robert Dale Parker rejects out of hand Mumford’s assertion that “Rosa” and “Leelinau” are two entirely different personas, with Rosa conveying “a mix of the European and the Indian and Leelinau suggesting something more exotically Ojibwe” (235).
Jane saw and even sought such a connection between herself and the fictional maiden. Furthermore, Schoolcraft’s “Leelinau” persona points to her intriguing experimentation with a maternally-inspired, politically-motivated fictional frame for her translated tales. The oral tradition “Leelinau, or the Lost Daughter” which Henry Schoolcraft first published in his Algic Researches (1839) and then again with slight revision in The Myth of Hiawatha (1852), portrays a young woman whose familial position and sensibility provocatively correspond with Jane Schoolcraft’s own biography and creative preoccupation with melancholy themes and the piney sanctuary of her Ojibwe homeland: “Leelinau was the favorite daughter of an able hunter. . . . [A]mid all the sylvan haunts, so numerous in a highly picturesque section of country, none had so great attractions for her mind as a forest of pines, on the open shore . . . or the Sacred Grove” (my emphasis, “Leelinau” 72). Like Leelinau, Schoolcraft enjoyed the particular affection and permissiveness of an indulgent, “overkind father,” or as Henry observes in an infamous letter to Jane dated November 1830: “With . . . even your sisters and brothers and all about you [made] to bow to you as their superior in every mental and worldly thing, you must indeed have possessed a strength of intellect above the common order, not to have taken up some noxious . . . opinions and feelings, as false and foolish, as flattery and self-deceit can be” (qtd. in Parker 38).103 Echoing Henry’s assertion that the creative freedom allotted to the favored daughter were liable to inspire an unhealthy pride and

102 The complex tapestry of similarities that follows even prompts Robert Dale Parker to deviate somewhat from his scrupulous method of identifying Schoolcraft’s texts: “While no evidence attributes ‘Leelinau’ to Jane Schoolcraft, she may have written or translated it, or an earlier version of it” (58).

103 A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff discusses this letter as an example of the increasing marital tensions between Henry and Jane Schoolcraft, tensions stemming in part from Henry’s desire to monopolize Jane’s affection and loyalty, as well as his disenchantment with his wife’s Métis identity; see Ruoff, “Early Native American Women Authors.” 82-3.
self-possession, the conclusion of the “Leelinau” narrative describes the dreamy
daughter’s eventual escape into a personified Ojibwe landscape as a kind of judgment
upon her parents’ lackluster discipline: “[The] bereaved father and mother . . . were
never afterward permitted to behold a daughter whose manners and habits they had not
sufficiently guarded, and whose inclinations they had, in the end, too violently thwarted”
(84). Consequently, Scott Michaelson has read Leelinau’s disappearance into a fantastic
Ojibwe landscape as Henry’s opportunity to “have the final word on Jane Johnston’s
authority” and an example of his more general project of erasing American Indians’ self-
representation: “First, it is an act of representational violence against Jane Johnston that
Schoolcraft literally makes her pseudonymic incarnation vanish; it disappears from the
world. . . . Second, the moral frame makes clear that Leelinau, and therefore Johnston,
lives in a world of make-believe” (44). Nevertheless, this indictment of Henry
Schoolcraft’s acts of plagiarism, as well as his consignment of the Native mind to a
subjective world of passion and poetic fancy, is predicated upon treating the narrative
under analysis as Henry Schoolcraft’s insidious brainchild. Thus, Michaelson himself
erases Jane Schoolcraft’s quite plausibly active participation in the construction of the
text and overlooks what the heroine’s story might have signified for the Métis woman
who, either as a poetess or as an Indian, was presumed to live in “a world of make-
believe.”

Perhaps the most intriguing coincidence between the lives of the Métis author and
the Ojibwe heroine is, in fact, their common object of contemplation and projection, or
the “forest of pines.” The pine tree becomes for Leelinau both the preferred site for
freely expressing her imagination and also for communing with the personification of her
romantic fantasies, her pine-spirit lover “the chieftain of the green plume” (83). Jane’s poem “To the Pine Tree,” meanwhile, personifies the pine tree as welcoming her and testifying to her unchanging or “ever green” identity as her mother’s child, Bamewawagezhikaquay:

    Ah beauteous tree! ah happy sight!
    That greets me on my native strand 104
    And hails me, with a friend’s delight,
    To my own dear bright mother land. (Lines 7-10)

“To the Pine Tree” recounts the moment when, after having endured a traumatic separation from her Métis home and having suffered a year’s unhappy sojourn in the British Isles, a ten-year-old Jane Johnston at last returned to her “mother land” (Parker 50-1). 105 Revisiting these intense emotions, Schoolcraft’s poem articulates her childhood struggle to assert her mixed-blood, female identity during a decidedly unsympathetic period of patriarchal discipline. 106 Young Jane looks to the pine tree to corroborate her intuitive sense of home-coming and to authenticate the perseverance of her Ojibwe

104 Interestingly enough, Schoolcraft’s topic of enduring national identity and conspicuous use of the word “strand” in “To the Pine Tree” is once again reminiscent of Scott’s Lay of the Last Minstrel and reestablishes the convergence of bardic nationalism with Jane’s Ojibwe heritage:

    Breathes there the man with soul so dead
    Who never to himself hath said,
    This is my own, my native land!
    Whose heart hath ne’er within him burn’d
    As home his footsteps he hath turn’d
    From wandering on a foreign strand? (my emphasis, Canto VI.1, Lines 1-6)

105 Illustrating that Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s literary endeavors were not limited to English, she actually wrote two versions of this three-stanza poem. After composing a first draft using a phonetic version of Ojibwe, she penned her own free translation; see Parker 50-2, 89-90.

106 In Parker’s somewhat simplistic reading, Schoolcraft’s verses not only reflect “the child’s fearsome discovery that she can be whisked away to another land, far from her mother and her ‘mother land’” but also “revel[] in delight at her return” (51).
identity, making the very landscape of the Great Lakes fundamental to her bicultural subjectivity and happiness.

Offering a glimpse into the domestic politics of the bicultural Johnston family, her poem’s insistence upon her extreme joy and sense of cultural and filial belonging in her native land also reenacts her tactful pitting of John Johnston’s desire for his daughter’s emotional well-being against his paternal claims upon her identity. In turn, as her child-speaker directly addresses her father, “The pine, my father! see it stand” (2), Schoolcraft recalls the triumphant moment in which her Ojibwe domestic ties overcame her father’s determination to see her entirely assimilated into his Anglo-Irish world (“Pine Tree” 89, Line 2; Parker 51). Subtly defying the white patriarchal authority that has failed to dictate her cultural and geographical placement, she engages the Anglo-American conventions of her father’s literary legacy in order to express her preference for the New World over the Old:

Not all the trees of England bright,
Not Erin’s lawns of green and light
Are half so sweet to memory’s eye,
As this dear type of northern sky. (Lines 13-16)

In a simultaneously creative and potentially unsettling biographical congruence, Leelinau’s pensive and restless imagination finds relief through her integration into a spirit-infused landscape, a form of escape that is dependent upon her marrying outside of her Ojibwe community.\textsuperscript{107} With her melancholy aesthetic and desire for seclusion and

\textsuperscript{107} Given Ozhaguscodeawayquay’s example of remaking Ojibwe tradition, it is not surprising that Jane Johnston would derive from the “Leelinau” narrative an Ojibwe precedent for her marriage with the outsider Indian Agent, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft.
spiritual sanctuary, Schoolcraft clearly mirrors the fictional heroine’s expression of hyper-sensibility: “From her earliest youth she was observed to be pensive and timid, and to spend much of her time in solitude and fasting. . . . She became melancholy and taciturn” (Schoolcraft, Henry “Leelinau” 77, 80). For example, Jane’s poetic “Answer, to a Remonstrance on my Being Melancholy” depicts her pensive muse as a Leelinau-like “soft maid” who entices the speaker to “woo her back, with many a sigh,” reject sociable occupation, and, instead, “with her walk the haunted groves / Where lovely sorceress, Fancy roves” (144, Lines 6, 3, 11-12). In contrast to most poetesses who, according

108 Delineating the characteristics associated with the sentimental poetess, Cheryl Walker, while mentioning soulfulness and reclusiveness, especially emphasizes melancholy. Inhabiting a cultural period that conflated femininity, sensibility, and poetry, a nineteenth-century woman’s self-expression was underwritten by her acute emotional availability to the suffering of others, the brevity of beauty, and the ubiquity of loss (35-6, 38). Failing to take into account this poetess tradition, Laura Mielke actually dismisses Jane’s poems as “odd” and, in a particularly tortuous reading of the Métis woman’s oeuvre, recasts Jane’s bicultural sensibility as derivative of Henry Schoolcraft’s belief that an “excess of emotion degrades Indians” (143): “The Indian, [Henry] Schoolcraft says, ‘loves, hates, joys, fears, sorrows in excess!’” (146).

109 Schoolcraft’s defense of her melancholy muse resonates with Milton’s 1631 rejection of “vain deluding joys” in favor of Melancholy’s retinue and the haunted bliss of the twilight glade (Line 1):

Thee enchantress of the woods among,
I woo to hear thy evensong;
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,

And when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude ax with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.

These pleasures Melancholy give,
And I with thee will choose to live. (Il Penseroso, Lines 63-6, 131-38, 175-6)

Furthermore, given that John Johnston held Washington Irving’s literary gifts in high esteem (Parker 14), the similarity between the gothic vision of Jane’s sylvan vigils with her magical muse and the eerie inspiration available in “Sleepy Hollow” (1820) is quite intriguing: “The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions; stars shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than in any other part of the country, and the nightmare, with her whole ninefold, seems to make it the favorite scene of her gambols” (368). Interestingly enough, Washington Irving and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft would briefly correspond in 1835 concerning an ultimately unrealized literary collaboration
to Eliza Richards, “rarely visit Heaven’s inversions in their lyrics,” Jane Schoolcraft takes a masochistic delight in a gothic gloom of ghosts and witchcraft that is suggestive of Milton’s *Il Penseroso*, of Washington Irving’s introductory depiction of “Sleepy Hollow,” and of Edgar Allan Poe’s many representations of the “sentimental sublime . . . this primordial realm of elegiac tears, the origin of all mournful sentiment” (Richards 47). At the same time, Schoolcraft feminizes these gothic tropes by re-envisioning them as the natural backdrop for the retiring, “silent joy” of Fancy or the female counterpart to imagination (“An Answer” Line 13).¹¹⁰

Jane Johnston’s Leelinau-like Romantic yearnings and melancholy also appear to have been the desired outcome of her father’s tutelage: “She had permitted her mind to dwell so much on imaginary scenes, that she at last mistook them for realities, and sighed for an existence inconsistent with the accidents of mortality” (Schoolcraft, Henry “Leelinau” 80). John Johnston’s fastidious supervision appears to have instilled in his mixed-blood daughter a desire for intellectual pursuits and a refined lifestyle hard to attain on the Great Lakes borderlands, or as Parker notes: “Jane . . . aspired to an upper-class position that her father, proud of his gentlemanly history, tried hard to prepare her for and that, in another sense, growing up on the frontier, away from schools and white women, and with loyalties to her Ojibwe as well as to her European heritage, she could hardly be prepared for and hardly have confidence that she could achieve” (24). In other words, Jane Johnston was actually being groomed to marry outside of her Métis milieu, and her alliance with Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was looked upon favorably precisely

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¹¹⁰ See Walker and Ellison.
because it offered her the privilege of overseeing the most splendid residence in the vicinity and of displaying the cultural attainments expected of an ambitious federal official’s wife. For Jane, however, this match with Henry was, not least of all, her opportunity to secure the kind of intellectual, literary companionship that she had been craving: “They both read widely, not a common trait far from cities in an age when books were expensive. They both wrote poetry. . . . Their letters—hers especially—show a playful, mutual exoticizing along with a basking in the literary fun that each must have been excited to find possible in the other” (Parker 21).

Of course, further corroborating Jane Schoolcraft’s perhaps unwitting preparation for a marital union with a non-Native man is John Johnston’s traumatic attempt to remove his daughter to the British Isles. Indeed, unlike Leelinau, who escapes into a reality that still coexists with and even impinges upon her native clime, Jane, in spite of herself, was destined to sacrifice all for the sake of her marriage: her close proximity to her mother, children, and her Métis community and her intense sense of spiritual kinship with her Ojibwe homeland. Yet, notwithstanding the reversals of Henry Schoolcraft’s career that precipitated Jane’s eventual relocation with Henry to New York, Jane Schoolcraft continued to identify with “the lost daughter” during this particularly chaotic period of her life, as is demonstrated by her sudden incorporation of the name “Leelinau” into her correspondence with Henry.111 The playfulness with which Schoolcraft assumes the name and associations of the Ojibwe heroine as a kind of wheedling but still charming alter ego can be seen in a brief sample of her marginalia from a June 1840 letter: “My ear-rings are gone, in the Wars of Fate—/ And a pair of red-drops I would

111 See Parker 236: “Jane Schoolcraft’s habit, later in life, [was] signing thoroughly unexotic letters to Henry as Jane Leelinau Schoolcraft (and variations thereof, Jane L. Schoolcraft, Jane J. L. Schoolcraft), or signing notes within her letters simply as Leelinau.”
not hate. Leelinau” (Lines 1-2). By the same token, Schoolcraft’s renaming of herself perhaps testifies to the resilience of her affection and sentimental commitment to her husband. If Jane is still Leelinau, the idealistic dreamer, then Henry is still the supernatural lover who has lured her into the life that can best accommodate her desires. Signing herself as Leelinau, then, becomes not only a means of cajoling her husband but also an effort at recapturing the romance and optimism of their courtship and early marriage.112 Once more exoticizing their roles as lovers, Jane Schoolcraft gestures back to those fanciful yet fateful months when the still-happy couple collaborated on the Literary Voyager.

Interestingly enough, Schoolcraft’s first known use of the name “Leelinau” appears in the maiden volume of The Literary Voyager and introduces a letter addressed to the “Editor of the Muzzinyegan”113 (Mason 5). Directly addressing this “female correspondent,” Henry Schoolcraft encourages her to make good upon the letter’s promise of “‘pretty songs and stories’” (218-19). A gloss for Schoolcraft’s use of the

\[\text{Corroborating the enduring romantic significance of the Leelinau narrative for both Jane and Henry Schoolcraft, Laura Mielke productively highlights how Henry’s poetic Essay on the Indian Character. In Four Parts, which he began circulating in the late 1820’s and continued revising into the 1850’s, actually retells the story of Leelinau as a tribute to Jane; see Mielke 144-9. On the one hand, Henry Schoolcraft describes “Leelinau/Jane” as “the perfectly equipped wife and the perfectly civilized métis woman” whose “accomplishments stem from careful reading, composition, prayer, and family devotion” (148-9). On the other hand, as becomes apparent from Mielke’s synopsis of Henry’s plethoric verse, the Essay’s idealistic account of Jane’s life and happy marriage is merely a paraphrase of her own poetic portfolio and once again illustrates Henry Schoolcraft’s unacknowledged dependence upon his wife’s creative gifts: “[A] beautiful young woman ‘from Ojeeg’s warrior line,’ [she] learns under the attentive tutelage of her Scotch-Irish father to ‘restrain the passions & improve the mind / To gain her maker’s and her father’s love.’ . . . Key to her virtue is the careful balancing of ‘Books’ and the ‘silent walk’ in the woods, as well as ‘the prayer’ and the ‘evening hymn’” (148).

113 Muzzeniegun, along with its variant spellings, is Ojibwe for “a printed document or book” (Mason xviii).

114 In an altogether confusing reading, Robert Dale Parker accepts at face value the letter’s pretext that its author is “a ‘distant relation’ of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s” and argues that, in this first appearance of her Leelinau persona, Schoolcraft merely “transcribes and translates” for a full-blood Ojibwe girl (219). He
Leelinua pseudonym at the end of her subsequent retelling of Ojibwe tales in the *Literary Voyager*, the Leelinua letter suggests that Schoolcraft was experimenting with an epistolary frame for her forthcoming translated narratives, a frame replete with a highly romanticized and highly assimilable full-blood narrator. Indeed, given her familiarity with popular eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature and particularly in light of her reading *The Spectator* (Parker 14-16), it is inconceivable that the fictitious epistolary context of many contemporaneous essays and novels would have escaped Schoolcraft’s perusal. Supporting the Leelinua letter’s composition as a fictitious frame, moreover, is the text’s polyphonic narrative and contradictory themes.

That is, there are textual clues that point to Ozhaguscodaywayquay, and not merely “a very distant relative” (217), as one of the letter’s chief sources, leading critic Philip Mason to conclude that “the letter to the editor . . . was dictated by Mrs. Johnston to Jane” (Mason 171). Offering a much-needed foil to John Johnston’s and Henry Schoolcraft’s influence upon Jane’s authorial agenda, the Leelinua letter suggests that Ozhaguscodaywayquay actively encouraged and even playfully participated in her daughter’s forays into Anglo-American literary self-expression. For instance, the letter even goes so far as to dismiss the derogatory tenor of Henry Schoolcraft’s “patronizing remarks about the narrator’s ‘simplicity and artlessness’” as not being addressed at Jane Schoolcraft’s writing at all (219). Nevertheless, complicating any easy distinction among Jane the narrator, the translator, and the poetess, Henry’s prefatory remarks in a later February 1827 edition of the *Literary Voyager* emphasize the “naïvete” of Rosa’s poetry and make lugubrious apologies for “the limited opportunities of her early life, and the scenes of seclusion” that apparently have diminished “her poetic attempts,” creating an editorial critique surely of a piece with Henry’s assessment of Leelinua’s “simplicity and artlessness” (Mason 84, 5).

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115 See also Konkle 171-2.

116 Needless to say, critics’ failure to look for signs of Ozhaguscodaywayquay’s interest in and fostering of her daughter’s authorial interests has resulted in some rather strained readings of Jane Schoolcraft’s Leelinua letter. For instance, Scott Michaelson dismisses Jane as a mendacious narrative intelligence: Johnston, as Leelinua, argues that with the possible exception of ‘one person,’ the recording of Amerindian tradition is an impossible task. . . But who is the ‘one person’ to whom Leelinua refers in her sketch? It is, quite strangely, Leelinua’s supposed father,
shifts suddenly from a sentimental depiction of Ojibwe parental tenderness to a biographical sketch of the narrator’s father that resonates with the aristocratic pride that Jane’s mother took in her noble descent from not only Waub Ojeeg but also her grandfather Ma Mongazida: “My father was descended from one of the most ancient and respected leaders of the Ojibwe bands—long before the white people had it in their power to distinguish an Indian by placing a piece of silver, in the shape of a medal on his breast” (Parker 217). No simple Ojibwe maiden, the narrator of the Leelinau letter is at key moments an assertive, well-informed, and seasoned observer of European and American diplomacy. Unapologetically lamenting the ascendancy of Euro-American political power, the voice of Ozhaguscodaywayquay can be heard here nostalgically recalling the preceding decades of the middle ground when white and red leaders stood on a more equal footing as trading partners and allies: “[M]y father had one of those marks of distinction [a peace medal] given him; but he only estimated it as being a visible proof of amity between his nation and that of the whites, and thought himself bound by it, to observe a strict attention to the duties of friendship; taking care that it should not be his fault, if it did not continue to be reciprocal” (217). Expressing shortly thereafter a desire to share with readers “all our ancient traditions and customs . . . just as I heard them from my father” (218), the narrator and Ozhaguscodaywayquay once more seem to converge in what appears to be an allusion to Waub Ojeeg’s fame as a storyteller. Indeed, it seems only natural that, in attempting to inscribe a text with a full-blood perspective, Jane

‘descended from one of the most ancient and respected leaders of the Ojibwe bands’. . . . Now Johnston’s actual father, as noted earlier, claimed no Amerindian identity, and this other father, then, is sheer make-believe—a phantom conjured by Jane Johnston in order to assert the bare fact that, yes, some truth, somewhere, exists. (42-3)

By ignoring the possibility of Ozhaguscodaywayquay’s contribution to the Leelinau letter, Michaelson can ignore the viability of Jane’s “access” to Ojibwe culture and her assertion that her people have managed to preserve a fragment of historical truth and a knowable, relevant legacy other than myth (43).
would turn to her own Ojibwe mother, who had instructed her in Native beliefs and traditions.

It is ironic, then, that the acknowledgement of Jane’s maternally-derived access to Ojibwe oral culture definitively signals the Leelinau letter’s divergence from the perspective of an Ozhaguscodaywayquay-like narrator. That is, concluding with a reference to “all the pretty songs and stories my mother used to teach me,” the correspondent unmistakably contradicts her preceding reliance upon her Native father’s authoritative legacy (my emphasis, 218). By the same token, the letter’s many lapses into an assimilationist agenda are difficult to attribute to Jane’s Ojibwe mother who refused to speak any language other than her own (Parker 9). Rather, these increasingly pronounced narrative discrepancies point to a composite authorship involving Jane and her carefully crafted promotion of not only indigenous uplift through acculturation but also her husband’s political aspirations. Deftly wielding her familiarity with the underlying purpose of the Literary Voyager, the Jane-like narrator introduces herself by an eagerness to contribute to the magazine’s apparent project of advocacy: “[A]s you are willing to admit contributors from amongst my countrymen and women, . . . by this means I hope you will be able to form a more correct opinion of the ideas peculiar to the Ojibwas” (217). Although the magazine’s “utility and true meaning” remain unstated, one might conclude from the narrator’s desire to clarify and improve Henry Schoolcraft’s understanding of her people that at least one of the Literary Voyager’s aims is to disseminate a more sympathetic portrayal of Ojibwe culture based upon the translated—and therefore mediated—voices of Native informants (217).117

117 As Philip Mason notes, Henry Schoolcraft had a penchant for creating manuscript magazines, with his earliest attempt undertaken when he was just 16 years old (xx). Mason’s description of the Literary Voyager would read: [Literary Voyager]
By the same token, in keeping with the coincidences linking Jane and the Ojibwe heroine “Leelinau,” this narrator not only desires to educate Euro-Americans in a proper appreciation of her Native heritage but also seeks a receptive audience for her pensive effusions: “And at the same time, my own humble thoughts shall no longer be breathed out to the moaning of the winds through our dark forests;—sounds which have formed a lonely response to my plaints” (217). Interestingly enough, this sudden interjection of Native melancholy becomes contextualized by yet another story or Leelinau’s recent loss of her “fond mother” and “dear father” (217). In turn, even this story-within-the-story is made relevant to the “true meaning” of *The Literary Voyager* and invokes sympathy for Ojibwe families and parenting practices: “I hope Sir, that you will forgive this digression. If you had known my parents personally, I am sure you would have loved them” (336). Yet, rather than simply testifying to the success of Native parenting practices that provide children with a rewarding affective life and a lasting legacy of influence or “good advice” (336), the Leelinau letter points to Anglo-American scrutiny, approval, and charity as the necessary corroboration of an Ojibwe girlhood’s pleasures and respectability. Altering the cultural rhetoric of her mother’s politically resistant reminiscences, the Jane-like narrator credits whites with encouraging the gendered activities and domestic harmony of an Ojibwe home: “Alas! no longer does my kind, fond mother braid up my black hair with ribbons which the good white people gave me,

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*Voyager*’s careful construction is particularly telling with regard to Henry’s ambitions for what he perhaps saw as a trial run for a periodical modeled after the *North American Review* (170): “Written in longhand and consisting of an average of 24 pages, measuring 8”x14” in size, . . . he circulated it to local residents and friends in Detroit and eastern cities. . . . Schoolcraft produced 15 issues” (x-xi, xiv). Interestingly enough, after Jane’s death, Henry would create “a hand-made volume” of her recopied poems (Parker 36-7).
because, they said, I was always willing and ready in my duties to my dear father, when he returned weary and thirsty from the chase” (336).

Initially, then, the Leelinau letter illustrates the bridge-building potential of the coming generation of Ojibwes. By the end of the letter, however, the narrator’s contribution of insider knowledge and anecdotal advocacy is no longer dependent upon translation but, rather, has become a matter of strategic assimilation: “When I can write, I shall not forget to send you all the pretty songs and stories my mother used to teach me—to be put in your paper” (218). Making her retold oral narratives contingent upon an epistolary persona’s learning to write, Jane dramatizes a young Native woman’s struggle to gain an effective grasp of English literacy. Leelinau wants to address the audience of The Literary Voyager directly and in her own words. Furthermore, in the course of creating a narrative context that would authenticate the “pretty stories” appearing under her penname, Schoolcraft recasts the carefully crafted works of her Métis imagination as evidence of Native peoples’ desire for information and “progress” as well as the advantages of adapting Anglo-American lessons in composition and theology.\(^{118}\) Issuing a kind of “Macedonian call” to missionary-pedagogues, Jane places in the mouth of a full-blood Ojibwe girl a yearning for the educational opportunities and Christianity that have defined her own Métis identity and self-expression (219): “My heart danced with joy, and my eyes filled with tears of gratitude, when I first heard what is before us. . . . [Y]ou white people say that there is but one true, great, and good God; . . .

\(^{118}\) Attempting to represent the perspective of a full-blood narrator while promoting her own Métis comprehension of Euro-American reform efforts, Jane Schoolcraft predicts the journalism of the mixed-blood Creek progressive Alexander Posey. Posey, at the turn of the century, would combine traditionalist struggles and resistant rhetoric, his signature este charte English, and pro-assimilation satire in his Fus Fixico letters. For more on the Fus Fixico persona, see Posey.
... I do not know... what I ought to do to please him. But when the man in black comes to teach us poor young ignorant people the right way, I shall know better” (218).119

Nevertheless, this celebration of Anglo-American academic and social literacy comes at a price. That is, the Jane-like narrator’s deference to received white opinion and emphasis upon the salutary effects of increasing contact between Ojibwes and Americans culminates in a startling denigration of Ojibwe oral culture. Whereas the Ozhaguscodaywayquay-like narrator boldly describes her father’s peace-medal as a symbol of his and his people’s pride and self-possession, the Jane-like narration jarringly assumes what Parker calls a “a self-colonizing abasement” and, in this abject mode, recounts the Ojibwe father’s absolute capitulation to the superiority of Anglo-American learning and print culture (218): “He often told me that you had a right knowledge of every thing, and that you knew the truth, because you had things past and present written down in books, and were able to relate, from them, the great and noble actions of your forefathers, without variation” (217-18). Ojibwe knowledge and claims to truth must suffer distortion and impending annihilation since, according to the Leelinau letter, Ojibwe oral culture privileges an unreliable confluence of superannuated authority and memory: “Now, the stories I have heard related by old persons in my nation, cannot be so true, because they sometimes forget certain parts... and if one person retains the truth, ten have deviated, and so the history of my country has become almost wholly fabulous?” (218). Ultimately, then, the Ojibwes’ encounter with Euro-American print culture is portrayed as utterly transformative; that is, as both an ending and a new

119 See Acts 16.9-10:
And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.
beginning for their oral culture. Clearly undermining any respect for the spoken word of
the “old persons,” Anglo-American lessons in literacy nonetheless offer Leelinau a model
and means of preserving the oral history, stories, and traditional beliefs that have
managed not to devolve into the “wholly fabulous.”

Given his title for the Leelinau letter or “Character of Aboriginal Historical
Tradition,” Henry Rowe Schoolcraft apparently valued the text precisely for its harsh
critique of Ojibwe orality and the fact that this negative assessment is being given by an
ostensibly authentic cultural insider. At the same time, it is by no means a coincidence
that the narrator’s deferential attitude toward written language and printed texts appears
so perfectly tailored for an Anglo-American audience. Portraying Native people’s support
for Euro-American Indian reform, the Leelinau letter places its depiction of Ojibwe
adaptability and the promise of Native survival through acculturation into the service of
promoting Henry Schoolcraft’s career or, to be more precise, his role in fulfilling the
federal government’s commitment to providing education as a recompense for lost
Ojibwe lands and sovereignty. Literally pleading for the American policies that Henry is
charged with overseeing and for the missionary work that reflects Jane’s own evangelical
beliefs, the narrator bears (arguably false) witness to her people’s eagerness for cultural
change and for increased interactions amongst Euro-American officials, missionaries, and
Michigan’s Native population. As a result, Henry Schoolcraft is made to appear
successful in “prepar[ing] the Indians of northern Michigan for a peaceful cession of their
land to the U.S.”—not a small point for a manuscript magazine that would circulate first

120 Henry Schoolcraft would even painstakingly translate the Leelinau letter’s critique of Native oral
traditions into the meter and rhyme of his Essay on the Indian Character; see Mielke 145-6.

121 See Parker 21, 26, 39, 69-70, 219.
amongst friends in Sault Ste Marie and then amongst political patrons in “Detroit, New York, and other eastern cities” (Mason xviii, xix).122

Ironically, however, Michigan’s Territorial Governor Lewis Cass, the man whose influence had helped secure Henry Schoolcraft’s position as Indian Agent and whose favor Henry Schoolcraft most wished to cultivate, would prove particularly unsympathetic to Jane Schoolcraft’s Métis vantage point (Mason xxi-xxiv).123 Attempting to disseminate a more positive image of full-blood, traditionalist Indians, Jane portrays an Ojibwe maiden as intellectually ambitious and as willing to adapt herself to Anglo-American learning and mores as the mixed-blood Johnston family members had already been. Nevertheless, this vision of an expanding Métis biculturalism through education would make little headway against Cass’s scathing assessment of assimilation, selective or not, as “an anomaly upon the face of the earth” and “confined, in a great measure, to some of the half-breeds and their immediate connections” (qtd. in Bellin 26, 57). Actively pursuing the removal of the southeastern Civilized Nations to Indian Territory at the same moment The Literary Voyager was being composed and circulated,

122 By 1836, an Ojibwe negotiating party, which includes Ozhaguscodaywayquay’s own brother, will have signed away over 10 million acres of Ojibwe land in exchange for, among other compensations, the annual support of schools and missionaries; see Parker 195-6.

123 The lengths to which Henry Schoolcraft would go in using the Literary Voyager to curry favor with his patron is perhaps best exemplified by the “Acrostic To His Excellency” found in the January 12th 1827 edition:

L.over of letters—mild and able,
E.ver zealous, prompt and stable,
W.ithout pomp, or vain parade,
I n the camp, the court, the shade,
S.tudious, cautious, penetrating,
C.andid, courteous, wit-creating,
A.ctive, quick, by word or brow,
S.ure to plan, defend, avow,
S.uch was Hampden, such art Thou. (58)
Cass in 1827 persists in describing American Indians as without the “principle of progressive improvement . . . almost inherent in human nature. . . . Like the bear, and deer, and buffalo of his own forests, an Indian lives as his father lived, and dies as his father died” (qtd in Bellin164).

Significantly, Jane Schoolcraft never returned to the epistolary frame with which she introduces the Leelinau pseudonym and her endeavor to translate and preserve Ojibwe oral traditions. Notwithstanding the disturbing political implications and even failures associated with Jane Schoolcraft’s attempt at appropriating a full-blood identity, the Leelinau letter nevertheless offers a surprisingly candid glimpse into a complex literary project linking Jane’s prose persona, Ozhagusodaywayquay’s encouragement and facilitation of her daughter’s literary pursuits, and Henry’s own self-seeking political agenda for the Literary Voyager. Describing his “female correspondent” as inhabiting “the position . . . between the European and aboriginal races,” Henry’s oblique association of Leelinau “the lost daughter” with the soon-to-be-lost middle ground best explains the unresolved tensions between Jane Schoolcraft’s obvious pride in the Ojibwe heritage that she commits to the written word and her collaboration with the assimilationist policies that would be used to exploit her Ojibwe community, full blood and mixed blood alike. Symptomatic of American policymakers’ steady erosion of the middle ground and its concomitant network of interracial familial and political alliances, the Leelinau letter reveals how Métis people like Jane Johnston Schoolcraft unintentionally contributed to the demise of Ojibwe power and prestige: “She and her family’s cultural and linguistic knowledge were integrated into her Indian-agent husband’s efforts to admire, aid, and at the same time conquer, steal from, and diminish
her Indian people” (Parker 164, 45). On the one hand, the coming schoolhouse and missionary promise to expand the social and also political advantages of an effective, bicultural literacy currently enjoyed only by the privileged class of the Métis world. On the other hand, this education and evangelism will deplete indigenous cultural resources and further diminish Ojibwe territorial sovereignty. It is not biculturalism’s selective acculturation but, rather, assimilation-as-cultural-erasure that has been bargained for. Hurried by the nascent nation-states of North America into the shadowy margins of a repressed mixed-blood past, the era of being both Ojibwe and European in identity and loyalties is drawing to a close. Bearing witness to an early-nineteenth-century Métis woman’s increasingly beset identity and social milieu, the Leelinau letter represents Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s ostensibly optimistic yet ultimately ambivalent attempt at consolidating her competing commitments to her mother’s Ojibwe nurturance and heritage, her Anglo-American husband’s political career, and her own bicultural literary craft.

Collaboration, Appropriation, and Dismissal: Confronting the Sentimental Legacy of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft

First indicated by her poetic “Contrast” and now further illustrated by her prose “Leelinau” persona, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s bicultural hybridity clearly complicates her attempts to speak on behalf of other Native people. Despite making the emotional and moral consequences of indigenous displacement intelligible to white readers and promoting the educability and adaptability of her Ojibwe community, Schoolcraft betrayed a condescending superiority and aestheticism that, while shoring up Schoolcraft’s literary aspirations, has continued to detract from her accomplishments as a
cross-cultural mediator and sentimental advocate for Native peoples. For example, her “Contrast,” with its vision of the Métis middle ground as a pastoral, is highly mediated by a preoccupation with class and testifies to cultural loss using a discourse that at once obscures and underscores her family’s bicultural privilege. Although often assuming the moral authority to condemn the results of Euro-American expansion, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft takes great pains to represent her own transatlantic gentility and her consequent difference from the happy, unsophisticated Indians. As she sympathetically identifies with the emotions that tie the Ojibwes to their traditional lifeways and cottage-like dwellings, Jane depicts her father’s home as “simple.” Yet, equally committed to laying claim to the refined sensibility of the sentimental poetess and to preserving her poetry’s function as a genteel accomplishment, Jane simultaneously distinguishes her family’s home as a “hall,” thus alluding to her cultured upbringing in the home described by Philip Mason as “for decades . . . the finest house in the whole ‘north country’” (xxvi).

Nevertheless, haunting Schoolcraft’s critique of American expansionism is her own troubled awareness that this Métis grandeur has been secured through the Johnston family’s complicity with the Euro-American appropriation of Ojibwe lands. Even as Jane Johnston Schoolcraft sides with the Ojibwe who are being dispossessed, she also offers an oblique confession of her and her family’s role in particularly aiding the representative of American territorial ambitions in the Great Lakes: Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. Given the symbolic importance of the pine tree to Schoolcraft’s representation of her own Métis identity, it is rather surprising that, in creating an indigenous parallel to the “spreading tree” of Goldsmith’s Lost Village, she makes a metrically awkward reference to the altered “elm-wood shade” that was once a gathering place for sportive warriors (Line 41).
Yet, Schoolcraft’s subtle wordplay underscores how an impressive edifice named “Elmwood,” or Henry and Jane Schoolcraft’s official residence, has now displaced the nature-based lifeways and Native freedom of her pastoral middle ground. Rather than simply absolving herself by virtue of her poetic identification with the liminal victims of Euro-American expansion, Jane actually incorporates a self-indictment of her collaboration with colonial economic and political forces into the very sentimental appeal by which she decries their denigrating impact upon the Métis middle state.

Clearly, then, any examination of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s sentimental rhetoric must inevitably address just how to evaluate this messy, entangled, and apparently compromised voice of nineteenth-century indigeneity. Nevertheless, the nearly unilateral critical preoccupation with the patriarchal and colonial implications of Jane Schoolcraft’s sentimental lessons has permitted the paternalistic pedagogy of John Johnston and Henry Schoolcraft to overshadow the bicultural complexities and resilient Ojibwe subjectivity being conveyed through Jane’s genteel voice. Despite deploying Anglo-American literary conventions so as to inspire sympathy for Native people, revealing her own tutelary ambitions in the course of inculcating a mixed-blood...

124 See, for example, Mielke’s critical fixation upon Jane’s wifely submissiveness:
In a study of American Indian historians of this period, Maureen Konkle emphasizes that the recovery of Jane’s poetry and . . . ethnographic writings has been impeded by Henry’s “effacement” of her contributions to his work. . . . What remains unexplored . . . is the extent to which Henry’s use of Jane’s compositions signals a marriage in which the wife readily submitted to the husband’s control in the name of Christian morality, echoing the individual’s submission to God. . . . Henry’s appropriation . . . indicates not simply his belief in Euro-American intellectual and cultural superiority but also the couple’s mutual vision of a sentimental marriage in the service of the husband’s calling and mutual practice of sentimental authorship in the service of personal devotion. (140-1)

Hampered by a limited comprehension of the Métis woman’s substantial oeuvre, Mielke insists upon reading Jane’s texts as “readily” reflecting her husband’s cultural and literary biases. Envisioning Jane’s fraught engagement with prior and contemporaneous lyricists of Anglo-American sensibility as a programmatic acquiescence to Henry’s “appropriation,” Mielke all but erases Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s agency as a sentimental intermediary laying claim to a beset Métis identity and Ojibwe homeland.
comprehension of Ojibwe culture and the middle ground, and politicizing literary sensibility with its formulaic expression of female endangerment and alienation, Schoolcraft’s rhetorical agenda has been made, by and large, illegible by the compounding masculine appropriation and feminist dismissal of women’s literary sentimentality. Historically, what has been most damaging to Jane Schoolcraft’s rhetoric is its mistaken attribution to her husband’s literary tastes and racial beliefs. That is, Jane Schoolcraft’s reliance upon a sentimental discourse of cross-cultural congruity becomes indistinguishable from Henry’s contribution to the discourse of “Indian Melancholy”¹²⁵ and his fixation with the underlying causes of Native disappearance, or as William Clements asserts: “[H]e perceived the Indian as manifesting deep malaise, characterized by a melancholy as profound as any suffered by a romantic poet” (187). Failing to take into account that “Henry’s” representation of the American Indian was in many cases mediated by and even appropriated from his Métis wife’s writings, Clements misses the fact that there was, indeed, a romantic Native consciousness peaking out from between the pages. Rather than a dolefully displaced and Vanishing Indian, it was an Anglo-Irish-Ojibwe poetess who Clements detects embracing a blissful melancholy and feminine retreat into nature and shaping—by selecting, translating, and retelling—many of the narratives that were published without proper acknowledgement by her husband. At the same time, Clements’s commentary points to an unforeseen consequence of Jane’s use of “women’s genres” and tropes in order to depict her Métis cultural context and Ojibwe heroines. Just as Henry’s notion of the “vanishing” American Indian homogenizes a multitude of diverse indigenous nations and cultures upon the basis of their supposedly

¹²⁵ For more on the literature of “Indian Melancholy,” see Sollors 102-30.
shared melancholy and doomed “mythic” mind, Jane Schoolcraft’s sentimental inter-
textuality portrays culturally diverse women as being essentially alike in their values
(Bellin 135-6). In turn, the assertion that True Women, whether Anglo-American or
Ojibwe, share social and spiritual values in common can make little ideological headway
against an aggressively acquisitive patriarchal culture. No matter how elevated or
presumably cherished these congruous values may be, a sentimental rhetoric of sameness
may be commandeered by the rhetoric of difference. In the case of Jane Johnston
Schoolcraft, the sentimental values espoused by a genteel Native poetess are reduced to a
racialized flaw, a pathological melancholy, in the course of her husband’s patriarchal
appropriation.

Facilitating this subsuming of Jane Schoolcraft’s sentimental advocacy, moreover,
is not only the homogenizing tendencies of nineteenth-century women’s writing but also
antebellum editorial practices. As Lauren Berlant argues with regard to female activists’
assumptions of sameness, “The fantasy that all women are, more or less, alike produces a
meta-symbolic order in which the female sex is defined as that element which needs to be
explicated or contextualized in one or more patriarchal narratives” (238). The rhetoric of
sentimental sameness particularly played into the contextualizing hands of paternalistic
critics and editors who, by means of their appropriative acts, claimed to have fathered the
creative offspring of supposedly “inferior” nineteenth-century women poets, or as
Elizabeth Petrino explains: “This language of paternity or ‘legitimation,’ . . . signifies
both that the critic promotes a poem as if he were conferring a secure identity on an
illegitimate child and that he gives the poem his approval or authorization. . . . [M]ale
editors continued to claim paternity . . . for women’s literary works as a means of gaining
the upper hand in print” (28-9, 33). While Henry Schoolcraft’s biographical notes to his wife’s texts ostensibly point to John Johnston as the paternal potency behind Jane’s Anglo-American sensibilities and poetic style, these editorial acts also permit Henry to assume for himself a legitimating authority over her works’ origins and content. Like Edgar Allan Poe who, in Eliza Richards’s analysis, viewed the poetesses within his literary circle as “sites of poetic ore that he might mine” (41), Henry established his own reputation by reworking and recontextualizing the sentimental efforts of a woman working closely with him. Having arrived in Michigan with hopes of eventually heading “a government department [concerned with lead] mining” (Mason xxiii), he instead discovered in Jane Johnston’s bicultural literacy, gentility, and Ojibwe connections what Joshua Bellin aptly terms “the motherlode” (Bellin 135). Indeed, Henry Schoolcraft’s ongoing compilations of his wife’s poetry and prose, replete with multiple introductions and footnotes, suggests that he aspired to the kind of celebrity and financial success surrounding the posthumous publication of antebellum women’s poetry (222). In lieu of capitalizing upon Jane’s poetical remains, this obsessive, impotent repackaging of Jane’s texts also gives the lie to Henry’s pattern of appropriative misattribution, revealing his creative dependence upon a Native-identified woman’s bicultural influence as well as her literary gifts. As Maureen Konkle points out, Henry Schoolcraft lost his supposed command of Native ethnography shortly after his wife’s death. His Ojibwe in-laws,

126 Robert Dale Parker explains that, in addition to Henry’s posthumous publishing of “a poem, translation, or story now and then, through most of his life,” he compiled at least one collection of Jane’s poetry and one essay discussing her poetic works, only to leave them both unpublished (222-3): “At some point, Henry assembled a collection of her poems (mixing in a couple of his own), apparently intending to publish it. Why he did not publish it, we probably will never know. He probably would have had to shoulder the expense. . . . [A]fter his second marriage, in 1847, he probably would have shied away from spending scarce funds to subsidize a book by his first wife” (221-2).
grieving for Jane Leelinau, their “lost daughter,” would no longer grant the ambitious white husband any more of their cultural resources (180-1).

Nevertheless, sentimental ideology’s homogenizing, self-alienating pitfalls and the overlapping historical patterns of gender and racial prejudice are hardly the only threats to Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s bicultural authorial agenda. Rather, more recent assessments of Schoolcraft’s literary legacy illustrate how critics’ programmatic dismissal of literary sentimentality has discredited and potentially silenced the voices of some of the earliest and most accomplished Native women writers. As will be the case for her literary descendants writing in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft is essentially trapped in a critical double-bind. That is, the Métis woman is doubly marginalized for not only engaging in the sentimental conventions of nineteenth-century women’s writing but also for offering an “inauthentic” Indian voice in the process. As will be discussed more fully with regard to Paula Bernat Bennett’s scathing assessment of E. Pauline Johnson’s Indian identity, a Native woman’s engagement with sentimentality is looked upon as simply too refined, too Christianized—too white to be “true.” Because of literary sentimentality’s provenance in Anglo-American sensibility, the elevated language, emotional excess, and underlying context of class and racial privilege marking Schoolcraft’s texts are deemed utterly incompatible with the stereotypes of “authentic” Indian thought and speech.\footnote{For more on how the perception of class and racial differences shaped the sensibility expressed in nineteenth-century women’s poetry, see Ellison and Manning.} Directly addressing the uninformed presumptuousness with which critics feel free to discount the authority of a Native woman on the grounds of her biculturalism and appropriation of the elite Anglo-American literary conventions of her time period, Robert Dale Parker singles out Mentor...
L. Williams’s scorn not only for the “Johnston girls” and their “devout and prayerful” Christianity but also for antebellum women writers in general who were pathologically “subject” to “sentimental afflictions” (qtd. in Parker 62): “[D]isparaging the way that she supposedly let her Christianity and sentiment contaminate the pure Indian stories and culture that Henry recorded for posterity, Williams’s reliance on a romantically idealized notion of Indian culture as pure and stable, pagan and unfeeling (unsentimentally ‘masculine’) misses that Jane Schoolcraft’s supposedly impure position is itself a stance within Indian culture” (63-4). In the name of unearthing only “authentic” Indian voices, such criticism ironically advocates cultural stagnation as a Native woman’s preferred writing situation and expresses a very limited comprehension of Native people’s life choices. Automatically dismissing sentimental conventions as artifice and an “affliction” upon Native women’s lyrical perspective, critics risk overlooking how ostensibly conventional texts might actually expand the cultural applicability and political significance of adapted tropes and themes, thereby resisting the gender, racial, and class assumptions underwriting sentimental ideology.

Consequently, Robert Dale Parker’s recent recovery efforts, which refuse to impose upon Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s oeuvre a narrow definition of female or Native subjectivity, have productively shifted the critical discussion away from what would have made Jane’s mixed-blood textuality an “authentic” form of political discourse, at least from the perspective of a twenty-first-century critic. Rather, the primary critical issue that Schoolcraft’s poetry and ethnographic prose now raises is what made such bicultural literature and potentially resistant authorship possible in the first place. One path to this subversive self-expression, as seen from Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s life and oeuvre, is
predicated upon a Native-identified family’s and community’s history of adaptation to the perceived cultural values of Anglo-Americans via economic collaboration and selective acculturation. As Betsy Erkkila has argued, moreover, such entanglements, whether sentimental, political, or commercial, do not automatically discount Schoolcraft’s Métis poetry and prose as a site for meaningful protest. Indeed, ostensibly compromising collaborations have historically served to underwrite rather than simply undermine the ability of mixed-blood texts to “subvert, alter, or undo the boundary-building imperatives of American history” (ix). On the one hand, the Eurocentric imperialism that threatens Schoolcraft’s Métis middle ground has also had a formative influence upon her biculturalism and its origins in the fur trade’s transnational exchange of not only material but also cultural capital. Furthermore, the economic forces that she decries are also what she must rely upon in order to distinguish herself and her family after the cultural authority of their Ojibwe pedigree fades.

On the other hand, it is precisely this Métis woman’s superior access to transatlantic cultural capital, including her father’s and husband’s tutelage in Anglo-American sensibility and refinement, that empowers her to commit to writing her sentimentalized account of Ojibwe history and society and to correct Euro-Americans’ perceptions of the indigenous inhabitants of Sault Ste. Marie. Because of her class privileges and cross-cultural collaboration, Jane Schoolcraft is able to resist her apparent powerlessness, to preserve an indigenous critique of ascendant American capitalism, and to talk back to a politically influential Anglo-American audience—including, not least of all, the prolific writer, proto-anthropologist, and first federal Indian agent for the Michigan Territory, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. As demonstrated by her poetic “Contrast,”
Schoolcraft makes a consciously conflicted yet ultimately courageous effort to depict her cultural moment as one in which all Ojibwes, acculturated and traditionalist alike, are prepared to set sail on unfamiliar seas and, hence, to adapt and survive in their new “American” context. The inhabitants of Sault Ste. Marie are depicted as trimming their sails “anew,” that is, again, and once more showing themselves adept at navigating around, rather than away from, the obstacles being introduced by Euro-American newcomers. In other words, the Indians of the middle ground are decidedly not fleeing from the juggernaut of American “progress” because they have a heritage of Métis adaptation and survival—not disappearance. In turn, the social critique and cultural preservation undertaken by Schoolcraft’s poetry and retold oral narratives resist the erasure threatened by her and her Native-identified subjects’ common experience of dispossession, displacement, and physical deterioration. Indelibly shaping her poetry and prose, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s sentimental lessons are nonetheless subverted and transformed into a resistant and resilient indigenous textuality made possible by her Métis hybridity.
CHAPTER TWO

E. Pauline Johnson’s Sentimental Apologetics:
The Native Woman as New Woman

Disciplinary Intimacy and the “Canadian Girl”:
Making Native True Womanhood “New”

Separated by the American/Canadian border as well as by more than half a century, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft and E. Pauline Johnson, the Mohawk-Canadian stage celebrity and poet-advocate, are nonetheless linked by their liminal identity under Euro-American and Euro-Canadian authority respectively, their privileged Métis upbringing, and their strategic use of Anglo-American sensibility and sentimental conventions. Indeed, Schoolcraft’s and Johnson’s proud assertions of their respective Ojibwe and Mohawk descent and their deep attachment to their Great Lakes homelands are inseparable from a common heritage of transnational trade, elevated social rank, and economic privilege. These coincidences of geography, cross-cultural alliances, and social standing are, in fact, traces of a shared historical narrative that, beginning with European contact, would transcend current national borders and would have a lasting impact upon Schoolcraft’s and Johnson’s appropriation of sentimental forms and representation of Native cultures.  

While Jane Johnston and her Ojibwe/Métis family

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While the Algonquian peoples (which include the Ojibwe nation) and the Iroquois League (in which the Mohawks have played a leading role) were rivals long before the appearance of the French, the European superpowers’ competition for control of the Northeastern fur trade exacerbated the rivalries between the Algonquians and the Iroquois. With the American Revolution and War of 1812, however, the Ojibwes’ and Mohawks’ common, albeit often tenuous, support of the British against the Americans would ultimately lead to the cultural and geographical displacement of these indigenous peoples and their descendants. For a general overview of the Great Lakes fur trade and its impact upon the Ojibwe and Mohawk nations, see White and Taylor.
were arbitrarily made subjects of the United States according to transatlantic treaty, Johnson’s Mohawk ancestors found it imperative to emigrate from New York State after the American Revolution, eventually reestablishing communities within their British land grants along Ontario’s Grand River.

Born in 1861 to the wealthy and highly acculturated Mohawk Head Chief George Henry Martin Johnson and Emily Howells, the English-born cousin of William Dean Howells, E. Pauline Johnson spent her first twenty-four years enjoying a privileged, middle-class existence on her father’s estate within the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. The multilingual, mixed-blood grandson of an adopted Dutch-American captive, George Henry Martin Johnson was a controversial political figure who distinguished himself as an outspoken Christian with congenial and even marital ties to area Anglican missionaries.\(^{129}\) Stoking the ire of local Indians and whites alike, he was also a tireless opponent of the illegal liquor and exploitative timber trade on the Iroquois reservation (Strong-Boag and Gerson 36-9, 38-9, 46-7, 50-2).\(^{130}\) When in 1884 her father succumbed

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\(^{129}\) Pauline Johnson’s father was a passionate adherent of Anglicanism who had once considered becoming a minister himself and went so far as to destroy the “idol” of the neighboring Delawares; see Strong-Boag and Gerson 47; Gerson and Strong-Boag, Collected 326. Later justifying her father’s zeal as both Christian and Iroquois in origin, Johnson distinguishes between the respectable “paganism” of the Onondagas, members of the Six Nations, who believe in “‘The Great Spirit” and the backward “heathenism” of primitive peoples who “worship idols [and] are terribly pitied and despised by the pagan Indians” (“Weh-ro’s Sacrifice” 218). In turn, George H.M. Johnson’s “controversial” marriage to the white sister-in-law of the local Anglican missionary definitively strained the Johnson family’s already vulnerable standing within the Six Nations Reserve: “At a time when issues of tribal loyalty were fiercely debated at Grand River, the presence of Emily Howells reminded critics that the Johnson family had a full measure of European blood” via George H.M. Johnson’s adopted grandmother (Strong-Boag and Gerson 47).

\(^{130}\) To further complicate matters, George H.M. Johnson was, in fact, a paid employee of Canada’s “Indian administration,” working as the official interpreter for the Six Nations’ Council (Ruoff, “Notes” 228). Although Pauline Johnson dramatizes how her grandmother’s authority unreservedly overcame traditionalist opposition when the Mohawk Clan Matron named her son Head Chief (“Suppose some one lady in England had the marvellous power of appointing who the member should be in the British House of Lords or Commons. Wouldn’t Great Britain honor and tremble before her?”), the Council actually chooses to compromise with the honored woman so that George Henry Martin Johnson would not have a vote that
to the brutal injuries he had sustained at the hands of enraged white and Native liquor traffickers, finances no longer permitted the Johnson family to remain on their estate, and Pauline Johnson turned to her writing as a means of contributing to her own and her mother’s support (Lyon 137). Although she had been publishing her poetry since the early 1880’s, it was her performance at the Toronto Canadian Literature Evening in 1892 that “initiated a fifteen-year touring career” as a recitalist of her own poetry and prose and that eventually led to her acclaim as “the foremost Canadian woman poet of her era” (Strong-Boag and Gerson 102-3, 106, 120).

The definitive sign of Johnson’s meteoric celebrity, capstone to her initial series of touring engagements, and, according to at least one biography, “the object” of her career on the stage, Johnson’s promotional tour of her mother’s homeland during the social season of 1894 introduced her to what she would term “Thinking London” and “Aristocratic London” (“Biographical Sketch” xxi-xxvii; qtd. in Strong-Boag and Gerson 201). At the time of her arrival, London print culture and society were the epicenter of a transatlantic debate concerning the nature, vocation, and grievances of the modern woman, a debate that only a few months before had been vigorously revived by the controversial British author Sarah Grand who, in her essay, “The New Aspect of the Woman Question,” had coined the term “New Woman” (Nelson xiv-xv): “[T]he new counted so long as he was both Mohawk Head Chief and Canadian official (“My Mother” 36; Strong-Boag and Gerson 48). Meanwhile, representatives of the Seneca, Onondaga, and Cayuga perceived progressives like George Johnson to be interfering with their economic affairs and preventing them from “build[ing] Large houses like the Interpreter himself”; see Strong-Boag and Gerson 37; Ruoff “Notes” 235.

131 For an extended examination of Johnson’s uneven success at supporting herself through her writing, see Milz 127-45.

132 LaVonne Ruoff contends that Johnson was able to overcome her mother’s objections to a stage career by promising “she would perform only until she had accumulated the money necessary to travel to England to find a publisher for her poetry manuscript” (“Introduction” 8). For more on Johnson’s second tour of England in 1906, see Flint 284-6; and Morgan. There has also been some speculation concerning a third and final visit to the imperial capital sometime between 1907 and 1908; see Morgan 322, 338.15.
woman is a little above [the male chauvinist], and he never even thought of . . . looking up to where she has been sitting apart in silent contemplation all these years, thinking and thinking, until at last she solved the problem and proclaimed for herself what was wrong with Home-is-the-Woman’s-Sphere, and prescribed the remedy” (142). At one point describing herself as “an ardent canoeist with an ardent appetite, . . . in love with my two professions [presumably as a performer and a poet], and strongly addicted to tam-o’-shanters, animals, camping, . . . and Ottawa at session time,” Johnson clearly wanted to be recognized as a New Woman who embraced canoeing as a sign of both her indigenous heritage and her belief in women’s access to wholesome exercise and relaxed forms of apparel and who unapologetically expressed a keen interest in Canadian politics (qtd. in Strong-Boag and Gerson 84; 153-4). The success of Johnson’s textual association with the New Woman can be seen, moreover, in the Canadian critic Hector Charlesworth’s 1893 portrait of Canada’s own version of the New Woman or the modern “Canadian girl,” “a lively girl in boating flannels,” who is equal parts refined charmer and imperious primitive or “child of nature” (qtd. in Strong-Boag and Gerson 61). Charlesworth, in fact, ends his tribute to Canada’s New Woman with his pronouncement of E. Pauline Johnson as one of the “most Canadian of Canadian girls” (61). Consequently, having already established her persona as a New Woman before visiting the salons and artistic circles of London, Johnson would capitalize upon the distinct biculturalism of her progressive rhetoric or her defiance of not only gender but racial prejudices as well and

133 From the 1880’s to the 1920’s, female professionals, artists, and activists located an empowering identity and political rationale under the banner of “The New Woman” and promoted various, albeit at times conflicting, social causes including expanded educational opportunities for women; “free” marriage or unions established upon ongoing affection and fidelity rather than religious sanction and legal guarantors of permanence; suffrage; unlimited access to information regarding women’s health and sexuality; women’s dress reform; and a common, unisex standard of sexual purity before and during marriage (Strong-Boag and Gerson 59-60; Caird 196; Nelson 140-141).
would publish her first collection of poems through John Lane at the Bodley Head, a firm which “specialized in ‘New Woman’ fiction” (Strong-Boag and Gerson 144).

Ultimately unable to support herself with her poetry, however, Johnson had to content herself with being promoted as a “poetess” while actually relying upon her many prose publications and tours (77, 137): “From 1892 to 1909, she drove herself ruthlessly, maintaining a second life as the author of almost all her own stage material” (79). During the halcyon days of her early career, Johnson’s commitment to her Mohawk identity and First Nations advocacy became increasingly integral to her writing and stage presence (113). Johnson did not acquire any “distinctive Native garments or ornaments of her own” until 1892, and she did not assume her grandfather’s Mohawk name “Tekahionwake,” variously translated as “Double Wampum,” “Double Truth,” or “Double Life,” until 1894 (110, 116).134 Ironically, in order to underscore her Native identity and kinship ties to the matrilineal Mohawks, Johnson had to privilege racial authenticity and patriarchal descent over her family’s interracial past and the obvious influence of her English mother. Notwithstanding this potentially disorienting social and

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134 This is not to suggest, however, that traditional Mohawk ornamentation was unknown to the Martin-Johnson family. In fact, Johnson’s father and brothers did own traditional Mohawk costumes that are pictured in the National Archives of Canada (Strong-Boag and Gerson 110). Milz, meanwhile, complicates these claims concerning Johnson’s newly acquired indigenous ornaments:

The fact that she had her aboriginal dress made especially for the purpose of performance suggests that she did not already possess a Mohawk garment or did not want to wear it for that occasion . . . . Johnson herself made several alterations and decorated the outfit with her grandmother’s silver trade broaches, her father’s hunting knife, a Huron scalp from her grandfather, and a scarlet blanket on which the Duke of Connaught had stood on his visit to the Six Nations Reserve. (my emphasis, 130-1)

For additional information on Johnson’s Mohawk name, see The Pauline Johnson Archive. According to Strong-Boag and Gerson’s Paddling Her Own Canoe, “That Tekahionwake was adopted largely to enhance Johnson’s professional status is indicated in her personal correspondence, which she usually signed as ‘E. Pauline Johnson.’ . . . [S]he became ‘Tekahionwake’ . . . when seeking letters of introduction. . . . As well, references to herself as Indian tend to accompany special requests, apologies, or expressions of gratitude” (116-17). Gerson and Strong-Boag’s introduction to E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake: Collected Poems and Selected Prose also provides a particularly helpful gloss on the implications of the name “Tekahionwake”; see especially xxxi.
cultural liminality, Pauline Johnson displayed an indomitable spirit and famously
dramatized her cultural hybridity by appearing in Native costume for the first half of a
performance and then donning a Euro-Canadian evening gown for the second half.¹³⁵

Retiring from the stage in 1909, Johnson settled in Vancouver, British Columbia; found
steady employment writing for mass-circulation periodicals; started collecting Northwest
Coast oral traditions; and shortly thereafter began her struggle with inoperable breast
cancer (Ruoff, “Introduction” 15).¹³⁶ Despite her physical deterioration, Johnson strove
valiantly to stay financially afloat and in 1911 managed to publish a collection of her
retold oral narratives, Legends of Vancouver (15-16).¹³⁷ She also edited the selections for
Flint and Feather (1912), a compilation of her poetry collections The White Wampum

¹³⁵ See especially Strong-Boag and Gerson 110, 116; and Milz, “Publica(c)tion,” 130-1. Sabine Milz
interprets Johnson’s eclectic performance of both a First Nations and British cultural identity as an assertive
statement that “she was not intending to represent some kind of Mohawk or, for that matter, Aboriginal
‘authenticity’ but preferred to mix and match according to what would suit the liking of her Canadian,
English, and American audiences.” A December 1897 description of one of these performances illustrates
how Johnson played to but also complicated and defied Euro-Canadians’ superficial distinction between
“authentic” red savagery and white gentility:
In the first part of the programme she appeared in picturesque Indian costume, and in
every gesture, in the glances of her eye, in the varying expressions of her face, and in the
working of the different emotions and passions she was a pure Indian. . . . When Miss
Johnson . . . appeared in a rich and beautiful dress made in fashionable, civilized style,
the impression upon the audience was entirely changed. People then thought she must
surely be at least almost white, in her features and complexion they could see nothing of
the Indian. (qtd. in Gerson and Strong-Boag, “Championing” 49)

¹³⁶ Influenced by her friendship with Chief Joe Capilano, his wife Lìxwelut (aka, Mary Agnes), and their
extended family, Pauline Johnson’s decision to reside permanently in British Columbia is perhaps the
clearest indication of her adoption of a pan-Indian definition of her own indigeneity and her incomplete
integration into the Mohawk Nation and the community of the Six Nations Reserve.

¹³⁷ According to Linda Quirk, Johnson’s triumph over impending poverty with the publication of the
Legends of Vancouver was actually made possible by a collaboration embodying Canadians’ affection for
the Native-identified woman who had become a national symbol:
[F]requently unable to work, [she] became concerned that she would be unable to pay for
the care and treatments that she would need. . . . The professionals and socialites who
formed the Pauline Johnson Trust . . . helped to mobilize Johnson’s friends and admirers
to participate in a remarkably successful enterprise which published and distributed
numerous editions and reprints of . . . stories under the title Legends of Vancouver
between 1911 and 1913. Their efforts provided amply for Johnson’s needs in her final
years.
(1895) and Canadian Born (1903) with some later verses as well. An unfinished collection of her short stories, The Moccasin Maker was published posthumously in 1913.

During her career’s final phase, Johnson was approached by the American publisher of Mother’s Magazine for some “bright, happy stories” in keeping with the “Indian stories and legends” that Johnson had submitted to Boy’s World (Strong-Boag and Gerson 170). In light of this explicit call for Native-identified material, Johnson’s decision to compose “My Mother,” a serialized biography of English-born Emily Howells, may at first appear to be a confusing Anglo-Canadian detour. Financially dependent upon her publication in wholesome periodicals like Mother’s Magazine, Johnson can be easily excused for paying homage to what, by the early twentieth century, were the nostalgic domestic values of her white readers. Nevertheless, this displaced, unconventional female author facing a terminal illness is also deploying a final

138 According to Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson’s extensive critical biography Paddling Her Own Canoe, the literary career that Johnson embarked upon in the 1880’s can be broken down into three generic phases or emphases upon poetry, performance, and prose: While poetry dominated the first of her career, her publication of verse diminished noticeably after her return from London in 1894. For the next ten years, she produced a range of genres: fiction, various sorts of journalism (recreational, juvenile, and general), as well as some poetry, with her output tapering to near silence as the century turned . . . . The final phase, 1906 to 1913, is distinguished by an astonishing output of prose for distinct markets, including armchair travelers who settled down to the London Express, the juvenile enthusiasts of Boy’s World, the female, domestic audience of the Mother’s Magazine, and the urban readers of the Vancouver Province. (137)

139 “My Mother” was first published in 1909 by Mother’s Magazine and then included in the unfinished collection of short stories, The Moccasin Maker; see Strong-Boag and Gerson 230, 16-7. As can be seen from her own hand-written sketch of what she thought the magazine would be willing to accept, Johnson endeavored to combine depictions of “Healthful pursuits in the open air that have proved profitable as brain and body builders to both mothers and children” with a defense of Mohawk cultural traditions in particular and Native mothering practices in general (qtd in Strong-Boag and Gerson 170-1). Consciously or not, moreover, Johnson was contributing in a small way to the anti-modern conflation of Indian ethnography and the preservation of conservative gender values that Philip J. Deloria discusses with regard to the Camp Fire Girls; see Playing Indian 111-15, 120-3.
sentimental defense of her own autobiography—her own liberal beliefs and life choices—that she now interprets as having been presaged by her mother’s experiences and pre-judged by her mother’s conservative values. Furthermore, like that of her mother, Johnson’s official Indian status was established by Euro-Canadian law regarding the disposition of indigenous men’s spouses and children, but she was not deemed a Mohawk according to that indigenous nation’s matrilineal reckoning (Strong-Boag and Gerson 21,48).140 Focusing upon the legitimacy of Emily Howell’s interracial marriage and the sentimental mothering by which Emily “inspir[ed], foster[ed], and elaborat[ed] within [her] children the pride of race, the value of that copper-tinted skin which they all displayed,” Pauline Johnson constructs her mother’s as-told-to memoir so as to resonate with the autobiography of Johnson’s own bicultural authorial agenda, a structure that Paul Eakin terms the narrative of the “relational life” or “those autobiographies that feature the decisive impact on the autobiographer of either . . . an entire social environment (a particular kind of family . . . ) or . . . key other individuals, usually family members, especially parents” (69). According to Eakin, the relational autobiography contains “the story of the story” or “the story of the individual gathering this oral history” which, in fact, conveys the central point and emotional thrust of the entire project: “Far from being relegated to an introduction or an epilogue, as was the case for the classic

140 According to the third article of the 1876 Canadian Indian Act, “The term ‘Indian’ means First. Any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band; Secondly. Any child of such person; Thirdly. Any woman who is or was lawfully married to such person.” Thus, rather than a matter of personal preference, Pauline Johnson’s Native identity was not only seconded by her family members but also decreed to be factual by Canadian law. Johnson’s public self-identification as a Native woman was not, as Bennett would have it, an example of a white woman appropriating indigeneity for financial gain but, rather, an example of a bicultural woman courageously refusing to repudiate her paternal heritage in order to assimilate into the Euro-Canadian majority (Strong-Boag and Gerson 48, 32; Bennett 108).
Native American biographies gathered by journalists and anthropologists, . . . the story of the story structures the narrative we read; the stress is on the performance of the collaboration [between writer and informant] and therefore on the relation between the two individuals involved” (59).\(^\text{141}\)

Consequently, giving her semi-fictional narrative a subtitle that could easily be applied to E[mily] Pauline Johnson herself, or “The Story of a Life of Unusual Experiences,” Johnson merges the public daughter’s and the private mother’s life-stories and even introduces “My Mother” with a glimpse into Pauline Johnson’s enduring consciousness of her mother’s monitory influence: “I have supplied nothing through imagination, nor have I heightened the coloring of her unusual experiences. Had I done so I could not possibly feel as sure of her approval as I now do, for she is as near to me to-day as she was before she left me to join her husband” (23).

More than mere a pandering to her audience, Johnson’s sentimentality provides an intriguing backward glance toward the parental past that continues to impinge upon the bicultural daughter’s identity and vocation.

Over the course of her semi-autobiography, Pauline Johnson explicates her parents’ interracial union and her own writing’s thematic commitments to indigeneity by

\(^{141}\) A key example of what Eakin calls “the classic Native American biographies gathered by journalists and anthropologists,” *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (1824) is marked by an authenticating yet also aloof white voice that exerts an authorial and legitimating presence from within the confines of the texts’ prefatory materials. In the course of collecting and editing the adopted white captive Mary Jemison’s oral account of her life as an assimilated Iroquois (that is, Seneca) wife and mother, James Seaver ensures that his editorship becomes an unseen but ever-present arbiter of all things grammatical, sympathetic, and credible in the body of the text (123-4). In particular, Seaver remains untouched by the pro-Indian perspective shaping Jemison’s autobiographical narrative: “The vices of the Indians, she appeared disposed not to aggravate, and seemed to take pride in extolling their virtues. A kind of family pride inclined her to withhold whatever would blot the character of her descendants. . . . The thoughts of [her warrior husband’s] deeds, probably chilled her old heart, and made her dread to rehearse them” (129). Mary Jemison’s story may be of interest to antiquarians, anthropologists, or “children” seeking information and an opportunity to “improve them in the art of reading,” but her story and point of view are definitely not permitted to alter James Seaver’s condemnation of Iroquois culture and warfare (123). Thus, Seaver refuses to match his Native informant’s “candor” and offer up his own Anglo-American subjectivity for consideration and collaborative revision (129).
relying upon two key aspects of sentimental ideology or a sentimental negation of difference and disciplinary intimacy. Inspiring ambivalent responses from within the Native-identified context of the Six Nations Reserve and also within the Euro-Canadian context of Ontario, Pauline Johnson attributes her early experiences of liminality to Indians’ and whites’ fixation upon her parents’ differences in race and culture—differences that she wants to characterize as ultimately superficial. Within the racial logic of “My Mother,” by loving and marrying a Mohawk prince, Emily Howells Johnson has been translated into an Indian “by the sympathies and yearnings and affections of her own heart” (69). Thus, even as she realistically acknowledges “that

142 Despite their pedigree, prosperity, and propriety, Pauline and her family appear to have been socially isolated from many of the surrounding Iroquois as well as Euro-Canadian families. During a period when the Mohawk legacy of intermarriage, selective acculturation, and cross-cultural mediation was attracting increasing criticism from traditionalist constituencies within the Iroquois Confederacy (Strong-Boag and Gerson 33-7), the Johnson family was made keenly aware of the mounting attacks on the “Christian elite.” For a detailed account of the acts of terror inflicted upon Pauline Johnson’s father and the consequent displacement suffered by the entire family, see also Ruoff, “Introduction” 7. Notwithstanding “her relative impoverishment” and the fact that her husband’s death occurred as a result of injuries received in the line of duty or while he was acting as the official forest warden, Emily Howells Johnson was denied a widow’s pension (Strong-Boag and Gerson 48, 37). Emily’s self-conscious awareness of white antipathy to her interracial marriage and mixed-blood offspring, meanwhile, also significantly alienated Pauline and her siblings from the society of their Euro-Canadian peers. In her 1910 serialized essay, “From the Child’s Viewpoint,” Johnson fixes upon her mother’s lessons in “a peculiar, cold reserve” and “aristocratic” distaste for uninvited familiarity as both a performative remedy for “inherited sensitiveness” and also a means of deflecting both racist aspersions as well as sexual passes (239, 243): “When people spoke of blood and lineage and nationality, these children would say, ‘We are Indians,’ with the air with which a young Spanish don might say, ‘I am a Castilian’” (70). Despite her persistent portrayal of the “exclusive” distinction of indigenous descent via a class-conscious vocabulary of nobility and blood-based privilege (“The Shagganappi” 263), the immediate psychosocial impact of Johnson’s aristocratic upbringing was equivocal at best. Reflecting upon her unsuccessful interactions with Euro-Canadians during her formative years, Johnson recounts not only the resentful mockery and accusations of “stuck-up” and “proudly” from classmates and neighboring children but also the offense that she gave adults through “this [aristocratic] creed” (“Child’s Viewpoint” 239): “I was a very lonely, isolated girl . . . . [E]ven women don’t care for a chilling, haughty, reserved young miss, who is continually on the lookout to snub them for approaching intimacy” (243-4). As Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag have observed, “Despite being generally admired as handsome and cultivated, [the Johnson siblings] ultimately failed to integrate fully into either culture” (“Championing” 49).

143 By the end of the relational autobiography, Emily Howells’ “sympathies, yearnings, and affections” are indistinguishable not only from those of her Native husband but also from her mother-in-law, the Mohawk Clan Matron Helen Martin Johnson. Indeed, Johnson suggests that her mother reached the zenith of sentimental influence and authority when she became synonymous with her husband’s Indian mother:
between the most devoted of life-mates there will come some inharmonious moments,”
Johnson remains committed to producing a sentimental portrait of her parents’ “unison of
sympathy” and goes so far as to claim that “for upwards of thirty years” George and
Emily “never had one single quarrel” (69, 59-60). In particular, Johnson asserts that the
sympathetic bond between her parents negates any clear differentiation between the
cultural loyalties and other “parental traits” bequeathed by George and Emily Howells
Johnson: “George Mansion and his wife had so much in common that their offspring
could scarcely evince other than inherited parental traits. Their tastes and distastes were
so synonymous. . . . Their loves were identical. . . . [M]ost of all, these two loved the
Indian people, loved their legends, their habits, their customs—loved the people
themselves” (70-1). Relying here upon sentimentality’s elision of difference, Johnson
defends her own mixed-blood Indian identity and Mohawk nationalism and, at the same
time, also erases the multiple complications and conflicts intrinsic to the Johnson
family’s biculturalism.

Evelyn, Johnson’s more prosaic and historically minded sister, nonetheless recalls
that cultural friction did inevitably erupt between her parents. Moreover, in at least one
notable case, this conflict was set aside, although not necessarily resolved, in seeming
deferece to Mohawk gender norms. According to Evelyn’s written reminiscence, Emily
Howells Johnson rejected the “long-standing practice for men in the Johnson and Martin
families” to be initiated as Mohawk warriors: “[I]f father wanted to train a boy in such

In many ways she “mothered” him almost as though he were her son. . . . Once he caught
her arm, . . . and turning towards her, said softly: “You are like my mother used to be to
me.” She did not ask him in what way—she knew. . . . In his feverish wanderings he
returned to the tongue of his childhood, the beautiful, dulcet Mohawk. Then recollecting
and commanding himself, he would weakly apologize . . with: “I forgot; I thought it was
my mother.” (81-4)
fashion, it was not going to be her son. As the children according to all Indian laws
belong to the mother, father had nothing more to say . . . no doubt he felt his son would
grow up to be a coward. And likely he mourned at the prospect” (qtd in Strong-Boag and
Gerson 51). A provocative inference to be drawn from this glimpse into the complicated
domestic politics of the Johnson family is that Emily’s insistence upon her children’s
education in genteel Anglo-American mores was ironically supported by both her own
bourgeois gender values and also Mohawk matrilineality. This may explain, in part, how
Pauline Johnson could later portray her mother’s embodiment of middle-class refinement
and sentiment as the synecdoche of her father’s Mohawk values. Echoing the mid-
century middle-class doctrine that “the undivided attention of the mother [is] prerequisite
for proper nurture” (Brodhead 74), “My Mother” highlights how Emily Howells Johnson
maintained an intensely close relationship with her children that would ensure that her
youngest daughter would ever after internalize a maternally-mediated and, as will be
seen, textually-reinforced admiration for her father’s indigeneity and virtue: “She
prayed and hoped and prayed again that [her children] would all be worthy such a father,
that they would never fall short of his excellence. . . . So she molded these little ones with
the motherhand that they felt through all their after lives, which were but images of her
own in all that concerned their father” (74).

Portrayed instilling an appreciation and love for her and her children’s official
Native status, Johnson’s mother also modeled a “love for English literature and music,
together with her genteel demeanor, [that] affirmed social superiority” to the surrounding
Euro-Canadian and Mohawk families (Strong-Boag and Gerson 51, 87). In turn, poetic
discourse becomes Pauline Johnson’s mother tongue insofar as it is the sign of Emily
Howells Johnson’s pedagogical authority and, as such, a part of her disciplinary intimacy. A concomitant result of her at once racially-inflected and racially-conflicted domestic tutelary complex, Emily ultimately gains a formative influence over her daughter’s tastes in poetry and prose, or as LaVonne Ruoff’s observes: “Because she was a sickly child, Pauline spent much time alone while her two older siblings went to school. . . . When her brother entered Brantford Collegiate, Pauline was taught at home by her mother for the next three years. By the time Pauline was twelve, she had read every line of Longfellow and much of Byron, Shakespeare, and Emerson” (“Introduction” 5). Corroborating this critical perspective, Johnson’s relational autobiography concludes with the story of her story or her personally attesting to the influence that sentimental mothering has had upon the authorial imagination now reconstructing her mother’s life:

“Do you ever think, dear,” said Lydia145 . . . , “that you are writing the poetry that always lived in an unexpressed state here in my breast?”

“No, Marmee” answered the girl, who was beginning to mount the ladder of literature. “I never knew you wanted to write poetry, although I knew you loved it.”146

144 During this period of sentimental home schooling, Pauline Johnson also may have become familiar, albeit via Henry Schoolcraft’s publications, with the translated Ojibwe oral narratives of her literary grandmother Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, or as Johnson will assert early in her career: “[H]alf of our authors who write up Indian stuff have never been on an Indian reserve in their lives, have never met a ‘real live’ Redman, have never even read Parkman, Schoolcraft or Catlin; what wonder that their conception of a people that they are ignorant of, save by heresay, is dwarfed, erroneous and delusive” (my emphasis, “A Strong” 183).

145 Johnson uses pseudonyms, “Lydia Bestman” for her mother and “George Mansion” for her father, in “My Mother.” “Best” was the maiden name of Johnson’s maternal grandmother, and perhaps its use here indicates both the author’s disregard for the English grandfather who physically and psychologically abused her mother and also her recourse to Mohawk-like matrilineality, emphasizing her and her mother’s descent from the “Best” family and thereby erasing the Howells lineage. The name “Mansion” is derived from her father’s Mohawk nickname of “Onwanonsyshon” or “He who has the great mansion” given to him after he had built Chiefswood; see Ruoff “Notes” 223, 224-5, 228.
“Indeed, I did,” answered the mother, “but I could never find expression for it. . . . But I did want to write poetry, and now you, dear, are doing it for me. How proud your father would have been of you!” (84)

This final conversation between mother and daughter exemplifies what the preceding anecdotes have been driving at all along: Notwithstanding Johnson’s well-known accomplishments as Canada’s Native New Woman, sentimental sympathy and textualized motherly influence have indelibly shaped her racial consciousness and self-expression.

However, Pauline Johnson’s oeuvre also complicates the more recent, decidedly dismissive criticism that has taken Johnson’s relational autobiography all too literally, so that the mixed-blood celebrity’s perspective becomes indistinguishable from that of her white mother Emily Howells. Indeed, the sentimentality inculcated by the Anglo-146

146 In yet another association of Emily Howells Johnson with mid-century sentimental motherhood, Johnson ostensibly borrows the homely pet name “Marmee” from Louisa May Alcott’s 1868 Little Women.

147 Ignoring Johnson’s emphasis upon poetry in this scene, Anne Collett’s commentary on this final conversation between mother and daughter overly complicates Johnson’s depiction of sentimental maternal influence: “The mother speaks through the daughter on behalf of her husband’s people—quite an extraordinary ventriloquism” (“Miss Pauline” 360). Rather than exploring Native advocacy via ventriloquism, the final scene makes plain that there are aspects of sentimental ideology that have shaped Johnson’s racial consciousness as well as her art.

148 Cheryl Walker has emphasized sentimental ideology’s ongoing legacy and the ambivalence it inspired in the poetic expression of New Women: “In spite of changing conditions . . . women’s poems were not substantially different in attitude from their predecessors. . . . [W]omen of the 1890’s continued to use poetry to create fantasies of power, only to end by rejecting their implications” (117-18). For Paula Bernat Bennett as for Walker, the turn into the twentieth century marks a period of hotly contested definitions of femininity, masculinity, society, and progress; of expanding professional opportunities for women; and, most importantly, a period of artistic transition: “[N]ot only was newness as an aesthetic category still largely without content in this period but the ‘New Woman’ herself was still largely unformed” (186). Unlike Walker, however, Bennett contributes an unflattering analysis of the distinctively sentimental trajectory of minority poetic production during this transitional phase: “[M]inority women both before and after the [Civil War], continued to employ these [sentimental] strategies with little or no critique. . . . [T]hey produced versions of minority women’s subjectivity that are in consequence every bit as historically contingent as the strategies they employed” (83). In light of this critical dismissal of the originality and the subversive potential of minority women’s appropriation of genteel literary conventions, Bennett deems E.
Canadian matriarch provides merely the foundation for the bicultural daughter’s own uniquely subversive “high sentimentality” or Pauline Johnson’s conflation of Natives’ and New Women’s right to self-determination. Appealing to sentimental values and literary tropes, Johnson invokes her readers’ sympathy for Native women but also places sentimental discourse in the service of promoting a First Nations and feminist agenda. In turn, these textual acts of sentimental Indian advocacy illustrate how a self-conscious adaptation of popular sentimental conventions, or what Paula Bernat Bennett describes as “[b]lending the moral goals of antebellum high-sentimental poetry, with the aesthetics, class, and gender assumptions of literary sentimentality” (83), is not tantamount to a minority poetess’s programmatic assimilation to Anglo-Canadian gender, class, and racial values. “Ojistoh” (1895), prominently placed as the initial poem in Johnson’s first and then her final poetry collections (Lyon 140), exemplifies this rhetorical pattern of juxtaposing the tropes of her conservative poetic models with a unique and often audacious articulation of her progressive ideological commitments.\(^\text{149}\) Deploying sentimental themes such as purity, sexual vulnerability, and self-denial that will recur

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Pauline Johnson’s sentimental apologetics an unspontaneous cultural fabrication no different from the sympathy espoused by mid-century white women.

\(^{149}\) Johnson’s textual tributes to Mohawk valor and nationalism continue to serve as a kind of introduction to her poetic oeuvre, occupying the initial pages of her first and final poetry collections. As she strategically implicates her white audiences in what Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson have termed a “Tory” rhetoric of Euro-Canadian obligation to “loyal subordinance” (30), Johnson takes advantage of the patriotic rhetoric whereby Anglo-Canadians identify otherwise threatening Mohawk warriors as “our” Indians and defenders. Mohawks are not merely to be feared but revered and, not least of all, deferentially respected by the whites who owe their very national identity to Canada’s First Nations. Although, as Werner Sollors has pointed out, “[t]he American revolutionaries . . . overthrew and usurped Indian legitimacy—perceived in European terms as the doomed rule of an aristocratic nobility of chieftains—in the name of European republicanism” (102), the nineteenth-century Canadian political identity that Johnson invokes was still largely defined by Tory fidelity to Great Britain’s monarchy and deferential class system and, therefore, could not so easily disregard Native claims to land and nationality based upon the legitimacy of descent. By linking red-blooded Native warriors to blue-blooded European aristocrats, moreover, Johnson heightens the authority and prestige of her ancestors’ role as Canada’s “heroic founders.” See also Kate Flint’s discussion of how nineteenth-century social elites and sentimental poets in Britain analogized chivalric “European aristocrats and the Indian” (92-4).
over the course of her poetic career, Johnson most importantly demonstrates her ability to create a sentimental common ground between her white audience and her explicitly unconventional Native heroines. Like Jane Johnston Schoolcraft before her, Pauline Johnson strategically appropriates the signs and tropes of True Womanhood and thus sheds light on Cari Carpenter’s (otherwise unsubstantiated) claim that Johnson “engage[s] in the political act of asserting indigenous dignity in terms that the reader can believe are her own” (72).

Beginning her ballad-style, first-person narration with an expression of absolute devotion to a fearless and authoritative Mohawk husband, Ojistoh introduces herself using the tropes of virginity and spiritual influence with which mid-century discourse enshrined the chastity of the True Woman: “I am Ojistoh, his white star, and he / Is land, and lake, and sky—and soul to me” (1-5). By the same token, given Johnson’s descent from an adopted “Dutch-American” captive who became, in the words of Johnson’s sister, “Indian in all but blood” (Strong-Boag and Gerson 46), Ojistoh becomes all the more intriguing in that she subverts the racial typecasting that defines the Indian captivity narrative. Portraying a “red” woman as vulnerable to frontier violence as any Anglo-American heroine, Johnson validates, through a common experience of gender oppression, her narrative’s assertion that the Mohawk’s “pure white star” has every right to lay claim to the iconographic significations of “whiteness.” Delving even deeper into the “feminine patterns of thought” typifying sentimental verse, Johnson’s poem also addresses how a wife’s role as her husband’s guiding star ultimately depends upon the

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150 As Barbara Welter observes, “The Ladies’ Wreath”, in ‘Woman the Creature of God and Manufacturer of Society’ [1852] saw purity as her greatest gift and chief means of discharging her duty to save the world: ‘Purity is the highest beauty—the true pole-star which is to guide humanity aright in its long, varied, and perilous voyage’” (my emphasis, 49). The name “Ojistoh” is, in fact, the Mohawk word for “star” (Strong-Boag and Gerson 175, 272).
effacement of her individual desires (Walker 38, 46-7, 50). As the repository of her husband’s and her people’s honor, Ojistoh becomes the object of the Hurons’ desire to “strike [her husband] where / His pride was highest, and his fame most fair” (14-15).

Refusing to be seduced, the Indian wife not only renounces power and wealth, but must also make a sacrifice of her own well-being in order to maintain her allegiance to her domestic identity: “Back I flung the bribe / Into their teeth, and said, ‘While I have life / Know this—Ojistoh is the Mohawk’s wife’” (25-29). In this moment of simultaneously selfless female devotion and defiant Native nationalism, the Mohawk woman’s futile resistance seemingly prepares the reader for the “morbid excess, titillating or terrifying” that Paula Bernat Bennett associates with postbellum women poets’ “gothicized” sentimentality. Too honorable for compromise and too helpless to fight back, Ojistoh is the ideal, sensationalized object of female sacrifice (Lines 30-4): “Thus, fair Ojistoh, we avenge our dead.” (35).

Nevertheless, precisely when her heroine falls captive to the physical force of her enemies, Johnson resists the sentimental scripts of female victimhood and Indian disappearance. Fully cognizant that Ojistoh’s wifely identity is, to borrow Bennett’s language, “an empty signifier as well as a signifier of emptiness,” Johnson’s parodic sentimentality wholeheartedly explores “the darkness that this emptiness created to roust out what [is] lurking there” (126). Confronted with the very real possibility of rape, not to mention murder, Ojistoh exhibits an unforeseen cunning and unabashedly transforms

151 Predicating Ojistoh’s purity upon her loyalty as a Mohawk’s wife also offers a rather pointed, albeit circuitous, defense of her white great-grandmother’s and mother’s propriety in assuming a Native identity. At the peril of their reputations and respectability as “white” women, Catherine Rollston and Emily Howells reject the pressures or “bribes” emanating from Anglo-American society—rather than Huron foes—that would compel them to redeem their white racial privilege by denying their affective ties to Mohawk men.
herself into what her masculine foes intend for her to be: a fallen woman. Seducing her credulous captor with the words “I like thee better than my Mohawk now” (52), she gains the bloody upper hand and achieves her release:

One hand caressed his cheek, the other drew
The weapon softly—“I love you, love you,”
I whispered, “love you as my life.”
And—buried in his back his scalping knife. (56-59)

Perceiving “sexuality and marital purity . . . [to] sit together with difficulty,” Lyon consequently interprets Ojistoh’s actions as this “misadventure [that] gives her the opportunity to express, brutally, if not with political effectiveness, the rage that her acquiescence to [‘the patriarchal model of femininity’] has created within her” (141). Yet, even as she dramatizes the underlying antagonism between feminine passivity and the purity demanded by sentimental ideology, Johnson simultaneously defuses the threat of the Indian woman’s aggression. That is, Johnson’s rhetorical achievement in this poem is how she manages to champion her heroine’s “rage” as a blow for and not against middle-class definitions of female respectability. Inventing a context in which feminine submissiveness actually leads to dishonor, Johnson opens up a new and ironic discursive space for depicting a woman’s sensuality, duplicity, and violence as virtuous—when it is

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152 Johnson’s reference to Ojistoh’s use of her Huron assailant’s “scalping knife” may also suggest a contrast with the infamous Euro-American survivor Hannah Dustan. Unlike the virtuous white victim who submissively awaits redemption or rescue, Dustan erases her “whiteness” as her combined motives of revenge and greed mark her as impure and savage. Dustan, who would be condemned in “the fictionalizations by Whittier, Hawthorne, and Thoreau,” avenges her infant’s murder by killing her Abenaki captor and nine members of his family and then scalps her victims in order to receive a bounty upon her return home (Derounian-Stodola 55, 57; Mather 60).
strategic and temporary. Ojistoh becomes the antithesis of her domestic self so as to rescue and reassert her Native True Womanhood.\footnote{As can be seen from Sarah Winnemucca’s 1885 autobiography \textit{Life Among the Piutes}, Johnson was not alone in valorizing indigenous female purity and virtue by portraying Native women’s recourse to violent self-defense: 

[My cousin] said there were very bad men . . . [who] would throw a rope over our women, and do fearful things to them. . . . I thought within myself, “If such an outrageous thing is to happen to me, it will not be done by one man or two, while there are two women with knives, for I know what an Indian woman can do. She can never be outraged by one man; but she may by two.” . . . My dear reader, I have not lived in this world for over thirty or forty years for nothing, and I know what I am talking about. (228)}

Furthermore, although from the perspective of nineteenth-century gender values Ojistoh’s actions should result in some kind of existential dilemma or self-reproaching identity crisis,\footnote{“Told by the culture at large that they were ‘Angels,’ ‘Doves,’ and so forth, how were women to deal with their dark side, their potential for rage and violence? And how were they to deal with the self-alienation such internal recognitions set off?” (Bennett 126).} the Mohawk heroine appears unshaken by the fact that being either a “white star” or a fickle temptress is ultimately a matter of performance. Not even bothering to excuse her sexually transgressive duplicity on the grounds of self-preservation, the Native heroine defines her act of bloodshed as necessary to her struggle for self-determination: “My hands all wet, stained with a life’s red dye, / But pure my soul, pure as those stars on high— / My Mohawk’s pure white star, Ojistoh, still am I” (68-70). Transforming the significance of her self-portrait in the first two stanzas of the poem, the female warrior now clarifies that it is her own volition that has made her the “chosen wife/ Of my great Mohawk” (10-11).\footnote{As Carpenter aptly puts it, “Ojistoh may be chosen by her husband, but here she chooses him in a dramatic fashion” (71).} No longer a matter of Anglo-American gender values or middle-class mores, Ojistoh is the Mohawk’s “pure white star” because that is what she has fought to be.\footnote{Although much more transgressive in terms of gender and violence, Johnson’s poem is nonetheless reminiscent of the feminist novels from the 1860’s and ‘70’s that William Leach describes as aspiring to}
century depictions of “powerlessness” that “see the central experience of female life as one of limitation or confinement” and that utilize images of “chains, fetters, cages, and prison” (125), Johnson’s poem clearly distinguishes between the gendered captivity enforced by patriarchy and Ojistoh’s choice to live as a devoted wife with the Native man and in the Native private sphere that she claims for her own: “Mad with sudden freedom, mad with haste, / Back to my Mohawk and my home” (my emphasis, 61-62). Moreover, reading Ojistoh’s violent restoration of her self-determined Native-identified domesticity against the rhetoric of marriage reform and Sarah Grand’s assertion that “The Woman Question is the Marriage Question” underscores the subversive, feminist edge to Johnson’s deployment of sentimentality (146). Merging sentimental True Womanhood with the New Woman’s demand for liberation, Johnson rearticulates the unsentimental discourse of her feminist contemporaries like Mona Caird, whose incendiary 1888 critique of “Marriage,” published in the Westminster Review, posits self-possession as the “fundamental principle” shaping “free” unions based upon “love and trust and friendship”: “It need scarcely be said that there must be a full understanding and acknowledgement of the obvious right of the woman to possess herself body and soul, to give or withhold herself body and soul exactly as she wills” (196).

Ending with an affirmation of a seemingly “patriarchal model of femininity” (Lyon 141) that actually proves to be a matriarchal model after all, Johnson’s poem builds off of but also transcends the sentimental conventions of domesticity. Departing

Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s call to reject “all false notions of justice and delicacy” (116). In particular, The Woman Who Dared, Epes Sargent’s 1869 prose poem, depicts a woman who not only succeeds as a wife, mother, and professional but “also packs a pistol to protect herself from male predators. Attacked in the woods by three men, she shoots and wounds all three. ‘She kissed the pistol,’ Sargent writes without a trace of humor, ‘that had been her mother’s / Wiped it, and reverentially put it by’” (116-17).

157 See Nelson 184.
significantly from the legacy of the sentimental poetess, Johnson can be seen to
distinguish herself from “among [the] serious poets at the turn of the century” by
“celebrat[ing] a woman for her aggressiveness or her success at doing ‘unwomanly’
things” (Walker 133). By the same token, as she pushes the boundaries of what could be
considered acceptable female behavior, Pauline Johnson deftly problematizes the
gendered passivity and self-denial of sentimental True Womanhood. Motivated by a
desire to defend the honor of her husband and ultimately to preserve her “whiteness,”
Ojistoh also becomes a Native “founding mother” for Canada’s New Woman who
endeavors to embrace her self-determination and freedom. Just as the “Canadian Girl” is
beginning to exercise her self-will in assuming new roles outside of the domestic sphere,
so the Native New Woman models new expressions of mental agility, moral resolve, and
bodily fortitude that are integral to maintaining female respectability and self-respect
(Strong-Boag and Gerson 82, 84). When appropriated by Pauline Johnson’s sentimental
Indian apologetics, the “newness” of the “Canadian Girl” finds both precedence and
validation in the fierce volition and virtue of Native True Womanhood.

Consequently, E. Pauline Johnson’s mixed-blood poetics reveal yet another
Native iteration upon Loeffelholz’ assertion that “the domestic tutelary complex” gave
rise to a body of sentimental literature simultaneously produced in “obedience to and
defiance of” a parent’s embodiment of “society’s mechanisms of control” (23-4, 28-9). 158

158 Given Carole Gerson’s irritation with American critics’ “dragnet quest for Native American literary
history [which] has appropriated Pauline Johnson into the American canon,” Canadian critics might object
to an analysis of Johnson’s poetry that engages Cheryl Walker’s, Paula Bernat Bennett’s, and Mary
Loeffelholz’s study of Johnson’s American contemporaries and their relationship to the sentimental poetess
tradition (99). Nevertheless, such nationalist quarrels can be countered by the sentimental tradition’s
transnational influence on the English-speaking world and Johnson’s professional dependency upon her
acceptance in American publications. First, critics’ anxieties about the viability of Johnson’s “patriotism .
. . and loyalty to the British Empire” if her texts are placed in conversation with American literature and the
Reflecting her Anglo-Canadian mother’s lessons in genteel domesticity, literary sensibility, and private “fealty” to the Native patriarch George H. M. Johnson, Pauline Johnson’s sentimental poems and prose nonetheless convey a provocative and public homage to her father’s performance of a white or red cultural identity on behalf of the indigenous community. Openly defying Emily Howells’s objections to her daughter’s life on the stage, Johnson’s pursuit of social reform through sentimentality represents a New Woman’s rejection of her mother’s middle-class gender values and renunciation of “the glare of the fierce light that beat upon prominent lives, the unrest of fame, the disquiet of public careers” (“My Mother” 73-4; Strong-Boag and Gerson 59, 62).

Similarly, while ostensibly emulating her mother’s submission to “the laws of Canada,” consequent zealousness with which Canada’s literary borders are patrolled become anachronistic when applied to nineteenth-century women’s poetry, as has already been seen with Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s transatlantic literary collaborations. As Walker has observed, “As long as women’s lives have been less concerned with commerce and the state than with a certain predetermined set of domestic expectations, their poetry has recognized affinities across national boundaries” (26-7). See also Flint 89-90. Second, because American publications at the turn of the century “provided an increasingly crucial market for Canada’s writers,” Johnson’s poetry was first published by the American periodical Gems of Poetry, and she came to derive “her major means of support” from the American publications Boy’s World and Mother’s Magazine; see Strong-Boag and Gerson 78, 100, 209, 166. See also Milz, “Publica(c)tio,” 129-30 for a discussion of how Canada’s nineteenth-century publishing industry was hampered by colonial economics.

Predicting the shape of Pauline Johnson’s own career on the public stage, her father adeptly assumes the outward signs of Anglo-Canadian gentility and Mohawk nobility, performing a white or red identity to international acclaim, or as Johnson recounts in “My Mother”:

His presence was frequently demanded at Ottawa, fighting for the cause of his people before the House of Commons, the Senate, and the Governor-General himself. At such times he would always wear his native buckskin costume, and his amazing rhetoric, augmented by the gorgeous trappings of his office and his inimitable courtesy of manner, won him friends and followers among the lawmakers of the land. . . . Even Bismarck, the “Iron Chancellor” of Germany, heard of this young Indian warring for the welfare of his race, and sent a few kindly words, with his own photograph, from across the seas to encourage the one who was fighting, single-handed, the menace of white man’s greed and white man’s firewater. (71-2)

The simultaneity of Johnson’s literary conformity and resistance under the guise of the dutiful daughter can be seen in an 1892 review of one of her performances that intriguingly blurs the line between the poet on stage and the poem in print: “Miss Johnson on the platform is very different from the accomplished young lady so well known in social circles; when reciting one of her own fiery compositions on the wrongs suffered or heroism displayed by her Indian race, she becomes the high-spirited daughter of her warrior sires and thrills the reader through and through” (my emphasis, qtd. in Strong-Boag and Gerson 70).
which underwrite Emily Howells Johnson’s efforts to “rear [her children] as Indians in spirit and patriotism, and in loyalty to their father’s race,” Pauline Johnson actually deploys her biculturalism in order to reverse the marginalization of Canada’s First Nations and particularly repudiates the patriarchal appropriation of Native women’s bodies and subjectivities, along with indigenous homelands (“My Mother” 70).

Illustrating both Johnson’s internalization of her mother’s sentimental values and her necessary adaptation to the same popular tastes, gender assumptions, and “expectations of male editors” confronting her American peers, many of the poems selected by Johnson for her final poetry collection, Flint and Feather, can be seen to explore themes of social and sexual powerlessness that Cheryl Walker identifies as some of the enduring strains of sentimentality still haunting the imagination of the New Woman (xi, 118-19). Unlike the typical New Woman, however, Johnson revitalizes poetic conventions and otherwise trite narratives with the polemical addition of Native protagonists, contexts, and orality. While elaborating upon sentimental tropes like the “secret sorrow,” “the unattained,” True Womanhood, and “ghostly lovers,” Johnson merges genteel expressions of sensibility, middle-class gender values, and sexual anxiety with an indictment of indigenous displacement and dispossession. Through her translation of First Nations colonial traumas and traditional oral narratives into the sentimental conventions of popular poetry and prose, Johnson also underscores Native peoples’ prior claims upon the lands comprising Canada, celebrates the enduring legacy of Native nobility and valor, and promotes a hybrid, pan-Indian identity that is not defined by Euro-Canadian fiat or exclusive Native traditions. Yet, as was seen with Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s sentimental advocacy, the biculturalism that makes a Native
woman’s political agenda legible is also linked to a certain degree of accommodation with acquisitive whites. That is, Johnson treats the reclamation of First Nation’s cultural territory as a literary project of “unveiling” that should be pursued even without the consent of Native peoples themselves. Furthermore, by championing a pan-Indian identity made empirically evident through a Romanticized notion of spiritual kinship to Native communities and personified homelands, she ironically invites white readers to appropriate this indigeneity via “closeness” with nature. Far from providing a critical impetus for dismissing her representations of Canada’s First Nations, however, Johnson’s oblique complicity with Euro-Canadians’ appropriation of indigenous culture and identity is a reminder of the treacherous shoals of Eurocentrism and gender constraints being navigated by her literary craft and illustrates how discarding bicultural Native voices in the name of cultural authenticity ultimately erases indigenous literary creativity and political ingenuity in the nineteenth century.  

Johnson’s Native Revision of Sensibility

Although seemingly overlooked in the critical assessments of her poetic craft, Pauline Johnson’s “Foreword” to the final compilation of her poetry Flint and Feather (1912) significantly complicates the current classification of her poems according to either their genteel or Native-inspired content.  

Offering her own—literally final—word

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161 See Collett, “Mistress” 130:

She was, in the tradition of the “Renaissance man,” mistress of her craft... [F]or the word “craft” signifies two vessels of diverse substance through which Johnson steers her course in life: the canoe and the poem—representative respectively of physical and intellectual arts. Both are at once frail and resilient. Both require sensitive and often courageous handling.

162 For example, Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag argue that, after “initially follow[ing] the conventions of her day,” Johnson would strike out on her own sometime around 1889 and, having “gained greater control and individuality,” would address Native themes (Gerson and Strong-Boag xxxiii). A close reading of Johnson’s published verses nonetheless demonstrates that, well into the 1890’s, she was still
on the bicultural provenance of her poetry and echoing the sentimentality-inflected rhetoric by which she blurs the cultural inheritance from her English mother and Mohawk father, Johnson seeks to unify her poetic oeuvre upon the basis of her indigeneity and thereby resists any strict classification of her “lyrical” poetry as exclusively Euro-Canadian in character:

Flint . . . is the arrow tip, the heart-quality of mine own people. Let it therefore apply to those poems that touch upon Indian life and love. The lyrical verse herein is as a

“Skyward floating feather,
Sailing on summer air.”163

producing sensibility poems that correspond to the categories of “the unattained,” “the secret sorrow,” and “the sanctuary” that Nancy Walker has described in her seminal examination of nineteenth-century sentimental poetry; see especially Walker 44, 47, 35-6, 38, 88, 49, 118, 54. For Johnson’s variations upon “the unattained,” see “Close By” (1889), “At Sunset” (1892), and “Overlooked” (1895); Johnson’s sanctuary poems include “Penseroso” (1892). Paula Bernat Bennett, in turn, has concluded that “Johnson’s genteel poetry forms the greater part of her poetic oeuvre” and then proceeds to divide her writings between those poems that were and that were “not distinctive . . . enough to keep her name alive”: “Like her performances, Johnson’s oeuvre splits into two, divided between poetry of the sort standard in her day and poetry on Indian themes” (104). Much to her credit, Kate Flint describes Johnson’s oeuvre in less judgmental, more nuanced terms: “[S]he started to write seriously after her father’s death in 1884, composing some works that dealt lyrically with the natural world and others that directly addressed First Nations topics. . . .Johnson’s shift to a poetry that was much more upfront in expressing anger against the injustices experienced by First Nations people dates from the year before her first British visit” (my emphasis, 277, 279). Without directly confronting the categorizing tendencies of her fellow critics, Flint chooses her words carefully and noticeably suggests that Johnson’s sentimental lyrics were simply a less direct expression of the poet’s First Nations advocacy.

163 These lines are taken from Johnson’s 1891 erotic canoeing poem “Re-Voyage,” which, in keeping with her other sensual lyrics, combines an empowering representation of a New Woman’s physical and sexual prowess with the sexual anxieties that Cheryl Walker has identified with turn-of-the-century women’s poetry (126, 41). As Strong-Boag and Gerson explain, Euro-Canadian discourse altered the indigenous resonances of the canoe, making it Canada’s symbol for women’s social and sexual liberation; thus, Johnson’s canoeist-speaker would have been immediately recognized as a New Woman (153-4). Asserting that her now-absent lover surely longs to lie next to her “Again in my canoe, . . .Wave-rocked and passion tossed” (27-8, 30), Johnson’s speaker nevertheless counters these representations of bliss with her claims of loss in what amounts to a very ambivalent narrative of passion:

Ah me! my paddle failed me in the steering
Across love’s shoreless seas;
All reckless, I had ne’er a thought of fearing
Such dreary days as these,
When through the self-same rapids we dash by
And yet that feather may be the eagle plume that crests the head of a
warrior chief; so both flint and feather bear the hall-mark of my Mohawk
blood.

Associating her genteel verse with a Mohawk warrior’s eagle plume, a symbol of martial
prowess, Johnson suggests that her skill in appropriating Anglo-American literary
conventions is more than a mere by-product of her acculturated upbringing. It is, rather, a
badge of honor won in the contested field of nineteenth-century Native education and
progress.\textsuperscript{164} Furthermore, when read against the conclusion of “My Mother” in which
Johnson contends that her poems have met the approbation of her sympathetically-linked
red and white parents, her claims become all the more compelling. Whether she defines
her sensibility poems as an ornamental display doubling as a defiant symbol of
indigenous intellectual adaptability or as the versification of what Emily Howells “always
felt, but found no words to express” (“My Mother” 84), Johnson adamantly desires her
lyrical sentiment to be read alongside of and as part and parcel of her sympathetic
portrayals of Native peoples. Consequently, sentimental values and literary tropes can be
seen to provide a thematic foundation and ideological common ground for both Johnson’s

\begin{quote}
My lone canoe and I. (31-6)

Suddenly renouncing her sexual self-assurance and physical authority—it is, after all, her canoe—the
speaker instead emphasizes her incompetence and short-sightedness in embarking upon this affair.
Furthermore, if the speaker’s paddle is read as a metaphorical pen, then hers is not simply a failure of
physical strength and skill but a failure of imagination. By recklessly embracing passion without imagining
its possible consequences, the speaker finds herself unable to write her way out of vulnerability and
disappointment. That said, however, the way that Johnson re-deploys the opening lines of “Re-Voyage” as
a demonstration of her mastery of the Anglo-American woman’s lyric and, in turn, as a kind of cross-
cultural expression of counting coup indicates that Johnson did, eventually, write her way out of the
sentimental renunciation and gendered insecurity inscribed in her erotic canoeing poetry.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{164} Similarly invoking her people’s ongoing struggle for national recognition and respect, she insists during
an 1897 interview in Chicago that her prolific writing and celebrity are representative of indigenous
cultivation and accomplishment and hence should inspire interest in the history and current struggles of
Canada’s First Nations: “Myself? Well, I am only a Mohawk with an ambition to show that even an Indian
can do something in the world” (“An Interview”).
poetic and also her prose articulations of First Nations advocacy. For example, tracing the sentiment and symbolism shared by Johnson’s sensibility poems and her later prose retellings of Northwest Coast oral traditions illustrates how the gendered frustrations of her refined literary sentimentality become transformed and enriched when placed within the crucible of Native marginalization.

A convention of the sensibility poem, the “secret sorrow” trope valorizes a speaker’s painfully hidden struggle with “forbidden” passion and “heroic” silence and thereby rationalizes suffering as a compensatory source of poetic authorization and subject matter (Walker 88). Johnson, in turn, engages the “secret sorrow” tradition and its standard symbol “the thorn” in her reflections upon her struggles with Christianity and lost love (90-1). While not entirely escaping from the pain of her unnamed burden, the speaker in the Good Friday poem “Brier” (1893) credits Christ with participating in her secret sorrow by “[b]ending back,” “walk[ing] before and crush[ing] the brier” so “that no hurt comes to heart, to soul no harm” (2-3, 7). By the same token, the speaker’s claim that she, like Christ, still suffers from “the thorns” that “pierce [her] feet” suggests that her unnamed sorrow provides her with some unique connection to and understanding of the Passion (8). The final stanza, then, further blurs the line between the speaker’s wounds from “the brier that edges life’s long way” and Christ’s silent suffering:

Because so often you have hearkened to
My selfish prayers, I ask but one thing now,
That these harsh hands of mine add not unto
The crown of thorns upon your bleeding brow. (9-12)
Although the speaker’s “harsh hands” or selfish actions have become the brier that pierces her savior, the speaker’s own sufferings have also made her especially sensitive to the weight of Christ’s thorns of sacrifice. Blurring the meanings of “passion” as both Christ-like selflessness and sensuous desire, the secret sorrow or thorn produces a spiritual insight within the speaker that acquires a salvific force.\(^{165}\)

Breaking away from this recurrent and conventional projection of unspoken heartache upon the “thorn,” Pauline Johnson’s “Fire-flowers” (1894) personifies “A sweet wild flower” as “some gentle spirit sorrow-fed” who, like the sentimental poetess, is compelled to veil her sorrows with what is beautiful, “hid[ing] the scars with almost human hands” (124, Lines 4-5). Passion, loss, and silence become privileged catalysts of an inspired self-expression that blooms only where “the forest fires” have left a “scar” to conceal (2-3). At the same time, this secret sorrow poem conceals within itself a more profound reflection upon First Nations loss and place-centeredness that is illuminated by comparing it with Johnson’s short story “Deadman’s Island.” First published in 1910 by Vancouver’s Daily Province Magazine and later anthologized in Legends of Vancouver (Strong-Boag and Gerson 231), this translation of a Northwest Coast oral tradition provides a historical context for “Fire-flowers” and recounts how two hundred warriors and braves laid down their lives in exchange for the release of the “women and children and old men” taken captive by their enemies: “But in the morning the southern tribes

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\(^{165}\) Notably composed during her career’s focus upon prose production, Johnson’s poem “A Prodigal” (1902) demonstrates her continuing adaptation of nineteenth-century sentimental poetic forms to her spiritually introspective mode. In this articulation of the secret sorrow, Johnson makes explicit the thorn’s association with forbidden passion: “My heart forgot its God for love of you, / And you forgot me, other loves to learn” (1-2). Portraying multiple wounds, regrets, and silences or “a wilderness of thorn” as the price of her passion and substance of her penance, the speaker must journey, however begrudgingly, through the thorns in order to redeem herself: “Now through a wilderness of thorn and rue / Back to my God I turn” (3-4).
found the spot where they fell peopled with flaming fire-flowers” (121, 123). In her final commentary to “Deadman’s Island,” Johnson asserts that the scorched earth and scars, made so paradoxically prominent by Nature’s concealment in “Fire-flowers,” can also be read as human in origin: “I knew that in the depths of the undergrowth on Deadman’s Island there blossomed a flower of flaming beauty; its colours were veiled in the coming nightfall, but somewhere down in the sanctuary of its petals pulsed the heart’s blood of many and valiant men” (124). Given the conventional resonances of the secret sorrow trope, the “forest fires” described in Johnson’s poem appear to represent some destructive romantic desire that consumes all. Yet, placing into a Native context her association of the “secret sorrow” with the concept of “passion” in both its emotional and sacrificial connotations, Johnson makes its clear that not only explicitly masculine violence but also Christ-like, self-effacing courage best reflects the poem’s historical source.

Furthermore, the silent suffering that defines this secret sorrow takes on a political significance in this intertextual reading of “Fire-flowers.” As Johnson’s Squamish storyteller Chief Joe Capilano explains, the culturally-specific resonances of the island and its fire-flowers have been marginalized to the point of silence by the conquest and ascendancy of Euro-Canadian colonists: “‘What glorious men,’ I half whispered as the chief concluded the strange legend. ‘Yes, men!’ he echoed. ‘The white people call it Deadman’s Island. That is their way; but we of the Squamish call it The Island of Dead Men’” (123). For Euro-Canadians, the island is a matter of “litigation” and ownership

166 Johnson actually met the Squamish chief during her 1906 visit to London, or as LaVonne Ruoff recounts:

With two other Northwest Coast chiefs, Chief Joe had come to London to protest both white encroachments on their land and the new game and fishing restrictions that deprived the tribes of needed food. Because the chiefs spoke little English, Pauline, who knew only a little Chinook, was asked to speak to them. Although she left the interview unsure of what the chiefs wanted, she made a fast friend in Chief Joe. (14)
(115); for the indigenous community, it is a matter of history and identity, or as Deena Rymhs observes: “Though the difference is subtle, the linguistic change denotes a movement from the singular to the collective—represented in the change from ‘Deadman’s’ to ‘Dead Men’—and from possessive to descriptive—in the movement from ‘Deadman’s Island’ to ‘Island of Dead Men’” (56).

It is this sympathetic identification between the land and the Native people, the island’s and the people’s common commemoration of lost lives with fire-flowers, that transforms the poem’s last stanza from mere platitude to a promise of Nature’s and Natives’ linked resilience:

And only to the heart that knows of grief,
Of desolating fire, of human pain,
There comes some purifying sweet belief,
Some fellow-feeling beautiful, if brief.
And life revives, and blossoms once again. (Lines 6-10)

By the time that Johnson selected this poem for Flint and Feather, the “sweet belief, / Some fellow-feeling beautiful” that underlies her depiction of the fire-flowers appears to have coincided with what Kathryn Shanley calls Native people’s “place-centeredness,” an aspect of American Indian identity that Shanley defines using Paula Gunn Allen’s discussion of “the symbiotic relation . . . between humans and the rest of creation”: “It is not a matter of being “close to nature.” The relationship is more of identity, in the mathematical sense, than of affinity.’ . . . Allen sees ‘the Earth’ as part of who native people are” (138). Reflecting this concept of Nature being a “part of who native people are,” the personified fire-flowers, “puls[ing] with the heart’s blood” of Squamish
ancestors, are the Native people’s blood relations. Nature’s beautiful expression of kinship and participation with Indian sorrow, in turn, offers hope to a dispossessed and silenced people that “life revives, and blossoms once again.”

In addition to composing reflections upon powerlessness, nineteenth-century women poets, whether genteel nightingales or trailblazing New Women, also invoked a phoenix-like, reconciling power that could spring to life from out of the ashes of limitation. Depicting the renunciation of power in the real world as a source of creative authority, Johnson’s “Shadow River” (1889) hearkens back to this sentimental strategy whereby “poets always salvage something from their dispossessions” (Walker 50). No longer able to distinguish between the twilight landscape and its reflection in “a stream of tender gladness,” Johnson’s speaker takes pleasure in a proliferation of symbolic possibilities and resonances (Line1). As she is surrounded by an indistinct horizon real and reflected, the speaker feels her very identity merge with the drift of stream and sky and become equally illusory: “A bubble in the pearly air, I seem / To float upon the sapphire floor, a dream. (9-10). Her subsequent endeavor to lay claim to this world of illusion and the creative possibilities that exist there, however, is predicated upon an unmistakable resignation to the idea that glory and authority in the real world will never be hers:

Mine is the undertone;
The beauty, strength, and power of the land
Will never stir or bend at my command;
But all the shade
Is marred or made,

\footnote{See Walker 38, 49, 118.}
If I but dip my paddle blade;
And it is mine alone. (29-35)

According to Anne Collett, the speaker’s twilight identity “‘twixt earth and heaven” corresponds to the cultural and political inventiveness wrought by Johnson’s own hybridity as a mixed-blood woman: “[This] image of her twilight existence—not dark and not light, not white and not Indian. . . . can be seen to be not an insipid, amorphous and ineffective light, but an energized zone of confusion, loss and anger” (“Her Choice” 63).\(^{168}\) Glenn Willmott’s more recent reading of Johnson’s poem, in turn, echoes Collett’s efforts to resurrect a Native-identified politics of resistance from in-between the lines of this sentimental lyricism: “She has been dispossessed of her world but not of its representation. So the shift of power to the aesthetic realm is not escapist—. . . but is political. She is salvaging from appropriation, and contrarily claiming for her own, the power to name and thus to assign value and meaning, hence purpose” (117).

Nevertheless, readings that interpret the speaker’s liminality as offering empowerment and a basis for a formidable political discourse ignore the “bubble”-like fragility of this particular hybrid state and, by glossing over of the speaker’s many levels of marginalization and her actual deference to the real, unintentionally succumb to the compensatory logic of the reconciling poem or its assertion that power can be gained

\(^{168}\) Certainly, Collett’s biographical reading of Johnson’s work is supported by the poem’s context of canoeing, a sport championed by Johnson and that “recalled her primitive ancestors yet was closely attuned to the fitness enthusiasms” of the New Woman (Strong-Boag and Gerson 70-2, 74). Nevertheless, as a careful reading of Johnson’s poetry and prose demonstrates, just as her later autobiographical narratives refuse to place her father’s and mother’s ethnicity in opposition to each other, her earlier texts resist the categorization of mixed bloods as something other than Indians. Choosing to define traditionalist full bloods and progressive mixed bloods alike as “Indians” in nationality, she attributes indigenous traits to the Canadian who “has. . . but the faintest dash of native blood” (“A Red Girl’s Reasoning” 191). Although her biculturalism and self-assumed role as a cross-cultural mediator are predicated upon a liminality that is neither Euro-Canadian nor Mohawk (in the strictest legal sense), Johnson never concedes that she is somehow neither white nor Indian.
from renunciation. Indeed, even the authority by which the speaker asserts the shade to be hers “alone” is kept to an undertone. Johnson’s reference to the power of her paddle’s brush-like strokes resonates with her depiction of creative writing as “to paint [a] pen picture” (“A Strong Race Opinion” 178) and suggests the creative influence of her pen. Consequently, she can be seen to transform the darkening waters beneath her canoe into both her inkwell and a page upon which she can exert her creativity over “the shade.” She clearly fails, however, to claim for her writerly craft any of the undertow-like momentum that Collett wants to see, for “not a ripple moves to mar / Shades underneath or over” (Lines 27-8).\(^{169}\)

Rather, the speaker’s claim to the “undertone” conveys an embrace of the constrained, subordinate element in speech and representations that, however it may heighten or complicate the dominant text, whether visual, written, or musical, will never be permitted to usurp the textual center, whether understood here as whiteness and/or masculinity. The parameters of the world of undertone are also very constrained, having been predicated not only upon liminality or the “doubt, confusion and turbulence” of twilight but also upon the reflection of that “shadow world.” That is, her determination of whether “the shade / Is marred or made” by her blade/pen still appears derivative of and yet isolated from the reality that marginalizes the speaker and her illusive power. The speaker claims creative power over only a brief moment of displacement that is, nonetheless, reflected from and dependent upon “the beauty, strength, and power of the land.” The poem’s final lines reiterate, moreover, this decidedly one-sided arrangement

\(^{169}\) For Collett, the “undertone” is rife with subversive power: “The canoe is the vessel of her art, moving her through doubt, confusion and turbulence of this shadow world with an apparent power of its own, a momentum in fact derived from the river’s undertone/undertow” (64).
or the speaker’s renunciation of power in the world in order to lay claim to an equivocal moral and creative authority in the margins:

For others Fame
And Love’s red flame,
And yellow gold; I only claim
The shadows and the dreaming. (36-42)

Despite the confusion and uncertainty of the life lived in-between, the speaker willingly foregoes prestige, passion, and wealth in exchange for an aesthetic world of dreams—instead of actions—that will conform to her beliefs.

First published in 1910, Johnson’s retold Squamish oral narrative “The Lost Island” revisits the possibility of compensatory power within the margins of Anglo-Canadian society in the course of foregrounding the cultural erosion and consequent psychological traumas haunting the indigenous nationalism of colonized Indians. In a profoundly poignant reflection upon the emotional burdens being carried by the dispossessed, “The Lost Island” begins with Chief Capilano’s troubling interiorization of indigenous defeat. Ignoring for the time being how Euro-Canadians have appropriated Native resources and avidly sought to erase Native culture, Chief Capilano places the onus of a lost indigenous heritage upon himself and his people. Seemingly accepting the irrevocability of defeat as the price “we Indians” must pay for having been careless with what mattered most, he mourns: “We Indians have lost many things. We have lost our lands, our forests, our game, our fish; we have lost our ancient religion, our ancient dress” (71). Yet, even as he delineates “those old things” that “will never come again,” the Chief also redefines what has been lost as ultimately superficial markers of
indigeneity that, on one hand, are lost to men and women, young and old, who are nonetheless “Indians.” On the other hand, these “old things” are lost precisely because they are tied to “the yesterdays of the Indian peoples” (71). Consequently, the narrative frame to “The Lost Island” raises at least two complications of modern indigeneity confronting both the text and also acculturated Indians like Johnson herself. That is, Chief Capilano fails to articulate how one should define indigenous identity and nationalism in the present and, consequently, expresses Native people’s mentality of self-reproach without offering an alternative, affirming relationship to the indigenous past.

Like the oral tradition related in “Deadman’s Island,” the tale that follows is predicated upon masculine self-sacrifice for the benefit of the community as well as future generations. The protagonist is an unnamed cultural hero whose great power “to cure the sick and the dying of his tribe” is surpassed only by his prowess in battle: “He could meet his enemies and kill whole tribes single-handed. His strength, his courage, his bravery, were those of a giant” (74-5). Like his ability to heal and kill, the medicine man’s visionary acuity is unmatched, and having been granted access to the will of “the Sagalie Tyee [God],” is made aware of the challenges that future generations of his people will face as their lands become the city of Vancouver (73). Concerned for the well-being of his tribe, the medicine man exerts all of his ritualistic might in trying to prevent the future colonization of his homeland, finally recognizing that “this haunting dream of the coming white man’s camp he could not drive away; it was the only thing in life that he had tried to kill and failed” (75). Indomitable to the end, the old warrior seeks

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170 That is, by including the Chief’s reference to the younger generation of First Nations men and women who have “even lost their fathers’ language,” Johnson alludes to her own limited comprehension of the Mohawk language in which her indigenous father and grandparents were fluent and condemns herself as one of the weak Indians who have permitted their cultural legacy to slip through their fingers.
another spiritual route to defying the imminent Euro-Canadian juggernaut and to protecting the Squamish people’s future. Embarking upon an arduous fast, he pleads with the “Sagalie Tyee” to preserve and conceal his courage and bravery within the landscape of his native homeland: “Weak as a woman, he paddled back to the Indian village; he told them to go and search for ‘The Island,’ where they would find all his courage, his fearlessness, and his strength living, living for ever” (77-8). Chief Capilano has followed in his ancestors’ footsteps and has dedicated himself to searching the waters of the North Arm for the island deliberately lost so as to shield its authenticating, culturally-resistant power from white appropriation: “There is something on that island that I want. I shall look for it until I die, for it is there” (73). Interestingly enough, what the Chief’s tale offers as a kind of resolution to the psychological traumas that have been raised in the introduction is not so much the story itself as it is the storyteller’s ongoing and active response to the narrative.

Chief Capilano’s tale hinges upon certain aspects of indigeneity that exceed the western notion of linear time and that can survive Euro-Canadian domination: namely, place-centeredness and selfless courage. Just as the fire-flowers of “Deadman’s Island” are simultaneously a tangible aspect of nature and also the emblem of silenced indigenous history and promised tribal rebirth, so the crown-like pinnacle of the Lost Island is a tangible, timeless symbol of Native nobility encircled, in its turn, by another visible manifestation of nature or the cloud-like mist betokening the medicine man’s enduring power and self-sacrifice for the well-being of the tribe.171 It should be noted,

171 Distinguished from other islands of the North Arm by a “summit [of] tall pines and firs encircled like a king’s crown,” the island’s varied topography is suggestive of the aristocratic rhetoric that shapes Johnson’s defense of indigenous descent. Blanketing this towering emblem of the First Nations’ noble legacy, the medicine man’s sacrificed power becomes integrated into the very landscape: “He felt all his
moreover, that this narrative’s emphasis upon courage and bravery is not only, or even primarily, a matter of nostalgia for Native warrior cultures, a nostalgia which critics like Paula Bernat Bennett have characterized as the mere reveling in Native “stereotypes” (104). Rather, the indigenous courage of the past is inextricably linked to Native resilience in the present: “Keep living for all time my courage, my bravery, my fearlessness. Keep them for my people that they may be strong enough to endure the white man’s rule. Keep my strength living for them; hide it so that the Pale-face may never find or see it” (77). Predicated upon the loss of indigenous “lands, . . . forests, [and] game,” Euro-Canadian notions of progress are defined in Johnson’s narrative by Native emotions of displacement, grief, and self-alienation: “[I]t will be as if the Indians had lost all bravery, all courage, all confidence” (my emphasis, 74). By associating “confidence” with the medicine man’s never-ending legacy, Johnson foregrounds Native people’s beset belief in their future as a distinct culture and illustrates how the courage and bravery of the indigenous past is, in fact, a necessary and relevant resource for Native psychological perseverance. So long as the Squamish people maintain their belief that there still exists a part of their homeland that is supernaturally shielded from white appropriation—that this island keeps alive for all time the best example of their pre-

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172 Indeed, recounting the medicine man’s most troubling visions of Vancouver, Pauline Johnson slyly differentiates between what, to white readers, will appear as ostensibly positive signs of Native acculturation and the psychological reality of accommodation to Euro-Canadian authority: “The Indians will learn [the white men’s] ways, will live as they do, will become as they are. There will be no more great war-dances, no more fights with other powerful tribes” (74). At first glance, it would appear that the ascendancy of Canadian power will usher in an era of progress and peace. Nevertheless, as Chief Capilano makes clear, becoming as the white people are has not been simply a matter of acquiring new customs but of losing the old traditions as well (71). Similarly, just as intertribal rivalries are only possible when communities have a committed belief in their territorial integrity and cultural autonomy, so intertribal peace under Euro-Canadian rule signals the loss of indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and political consequence.
colonial heroism and power—they can face the challenges of acculturation with the confidence that they have not lost all their bravery, fearlessness, and strength as Indians. Thus, the Lost Island embodies a heroic tribal past, carries it into the present, and, at the same time, veils this participation in Native people’s survivance from the Euro-Canadian gaze.\textsuperscript{173}

Yet, even before hearing the Chief’s story, Johnson’s narrative persona demonstrates a marked readiness to treat the object of his searches not as a fact but as a sentimental metaphor. Participating in the capacity of audience member as well as cross-cultural mediator, Johnson’s inscribed self repeatedly attempts to intervene in the overall significance of the Chief’s narration and to put a sentimentally-inflected Euro-Canadian interpretation upon the story: “‘Why do you search for it?’ I lamented, thinking of the old dreams in my own life whose realization I have never attained” (73). Alluding to the poetic trope of the “unattained,” Johnson here invokes the sensibility of lyrical sentiment and predicates poetic inspiration and creativity upon suffering (Bennett 11; Walker 44, 35-6, 38). Johnson assumes that the island should be read as a sentimental symbol for powerlessness, and she assumes that she already knows how the Chief’s quest must end: in the capitulation typical of the female poetess. From the hyper-textualized vantage point of literary sentimentality, it is ultimately preferable to desist from the masochistic pursuit of unrealized dreams—in this case, an ardent anticipation of cultural renewal—and to reconcile oneself to the melancholy aesthetics of the unattained.

\textsuperscript{173} Though subtle, Johnson’s indictment of whites’ turn-of-the-century penchant for Native ethnography illustrates her recognition of how the psychological resilience predicated upon Native place-centeredness can become yet another valuable resource threatened by Euro-Canadian acquisitiveness. See Deloria, Philip, especially 94-127.
Not surprisingly then, Johnson’s persona suddenly betrays even more Euro-Canadian skepticism when she hears of the Chief’s twilight encounters with the island’s shadow: “‘Don’t say it was the shore that shadowed me,’ he hastened, catching my thought. . . ‘No, it was not the shore’” (73). This confusion of what is real with specious shadows, moreover, points back to the other worldly twilight that inspires Johnson’s poetic reflections in “Shadow River” or how the shadowy water, which so perfectly reflects the true shore that “The borderline / The keenest vision can’t define” (19-20), becomes a metaphor for the imaginary world governed by the marginalized poet’s creative authority and idealism. Johnson’s narrative persona in “The Lost Island,” similarly endeavors to transform the unreality of the Chief’s shadows into a source of consolation and authority: “My whole heart went out to him in his longing for the lost island. I thought of all the splendid courage I knew him to possess, so made answer: ‘But you say that the shadow of this island has fallen upon you; is it not so, tillicum?’” (78). For Johnson’s narrative self, the fact that Chief Capilano can imagine himself to have been touched by the shadow of this island should be enough to redirect his emotions away from the disappointment of not having seen the island itself. Literary sentimentality, therefore, would contain the subversive resonances and cultural resistance of the Chief’s story within a rhetoric of sentimental imagination and compensatory power.

Significantly, however, Johnson lets the Chief have the last word. “Lowering his voice” out of respectful awe when speaking of his brushes with the island, the Chief interprets his shadows as not only reality but also, as such, a source of renewed faith that vindicates his people’s traditional beliefs and intimates the indigenous survivance and

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174 See also Willmott 122-3.
greatness that is to come. These shadows signify, on the one hand, that his true object is, as yet, unattained and, on the other hand, that this strategic and deliberate loss of indigenous culture still perseveres in the present for his people’s future reclamation. Consequently, the Chief will not be satisfied with Johnson’s sentimental willingness to “only claim / The shadows and the dreaming” (41-2). Nor, for the sake of alleviating his current feeling of inadequacy before the cultural and political diminution of Canada’s First Nations, will he renounce “The beauty, strength, and power of the land” (41-2, 30). “Half-mournfully” insisting that he has been anointed by “only the shadow,” Chief Capilano remains committed to viewing cultural renewal as a lived political reality and refuses any reconciliation to colonial marginalization (my emphasis, 78). Instead of making his peace with the psychological traumas of dispossession, he embraces a melancholy that testifies to his firm resolution to cast off, once and for all, the self-reproach borne of a colonized mentality. Because he can foresee a time when the Squamish people will overcome their crises of confidence and will reclaim the political and cultural respect that they commanded “before the white men came,” the Chief chooses unattained reality over compensatory sentimental rhetoric.

This is not to suggest, however, that this hope for indigenous renewal in the future is not itself sentimental. Indeed, the Chief interprets the island, with its shadows, as a sign and guarantor of an authenticating indigeneity that, having existed in the past, still “live[s] for one’s children and grandchildren” (78). As Jerome McGann has observed of

175 Chief Capilano’s ongoing twilight searches, despite their origins in “naming and storytelling,” illustrate that he is not limited to acts of aesthetic representation and thereby actualizes the politically and culturally resistant mentality that Willmott, with his Marxist-inflected sensibility, can only gesture toward: “Aboriginal heritage is an ongoing social formation, . . . an economy that lies ahead of and already in the mysterious interstices of modernity itself—as its possible future” (123).
the Romantic elegy, such a deployment of a sentimental ideology “works to redeem the harrowing logic of ultimate loss,” and in McGann’s analysis of Shelley’s works, is seen to be predicated upon a rejection of passing time as the insurmountable obstacle to reunion: “The point is not to fix a memory of loss forever but to establish all things on a basis of present and immediate life” (150, 153). Consequently, reading a sensibility poem like “Shadow River” alongside of “The Lost Island” does not reveal Johnson’s rejection of sentimentality but her much more nuanced, politicized interpretation of genteel literary forms. Johnson’s later prose retellings of Native oral traditions demonstrate her increasing awareness of how a culturally-specific context that is concerned with racialized and not just gendered powerlessness can be used to transform the “secret sorrow” and the “unattained” from generic aesthetic themes found in genteel women’s writing into provocative cross-cultural symbols of Native place-centeredness and survivance.

At the same time, the unresolved narrative tension between her persona’s interpretation of the shadows as an illusory source of compensatory power and her Native informant’s faith in the intimation of an unattained but nonetheless extant political renewal illustrates Johnson’s recognition of the rhetorical limitations of literary sentimentality. Seeking to replace uncertain resistance with aesthetics and the insupportability of powerlessness with an authorial imagination, Johnson introduces genteel themes of sentimental renunciation and reconciliation that, however they may compete with the equally sentimental faith of the Chief, are shown to be woefully ineffectual before the realities of indigenous loss. These textual efforts at adapting genteel sensibility to the cultural context and concerns of Canada’s First Nations, in turn,
challenge the critical ostracization of Johnson’s participation in literary sentimentality as having been unconsidered in its ideological premises or “not distinctive” in its execution. Putting the hyper-textualized themes and postures of sensibility into the service of her cross-cultural mediation and Native advocacy, E. Pauline Johnson reworks the prescribed forms of literary sentimentality into a means of representing the silenced yet resilient legacy, values, and identity of marginalized Native men and women.

**Johnson’s Ghostly Lovers**

Articulating the dangers posed by women’s sexuality, the theme of “ghostly lovers” shapes many of Johnson’s poems as well as her prose. Waylaying her couples with untimely death and spiritual restlessness, Johnson’s participation with Victorian decadence is nevertheless complicated and politically enriched by her simultaneous, albeit at times allusive, depiction of cross-cultural romance. That is, Johnson consistently problematizes how the emotional investment in a lover from an opposing racial or tribal community proves time and again to preempt indigenous women’s prior attachments to family, culture, and even physical existence. Much more nuanced than any mere apology for indigenous True Womanhood, these spectral narratives juxtapose a Native woman’s death with the disputed possession of her body and thus illustrate Johnson’s ability to translate the New Woman’s demand for sexual self-determination into a First Nations context of literal and psychological dispossession. In particular, this authorial fixation

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176 See Strong-Boag and Gerson 145; and, especially, Walker 118-19: “[G]hostly lovers flit through the poems of many fin-de-siècle females. Death itself is eroticized and erotic love is made morbid. . . . Perhaps some of this was due to the unacknowledged influence of poets like Swinburne, but more likely there was something in the late Victorians that coupled titillation with punishment.”

177 For example, completely overlooking the gothic resonances of these tragic lyrics and oral narratives, Gerson and Strong-Boag categorize them with non-supernatural texts as “stories of separated lovers” and argue that they present a straightforward foil to “the prevailing racist narratives that cast indigenous women as a source of weakness and evil in the meeting of races and communities”: “These heroines fully meet the
upon the troubled love lives and loyalties of Native women demonstrates Johnson’s awareness of how the imposition of Canadian law and social norms upon indigenous marriage rites or the “custom of the country” was working to dispossess bicultural women of their Native identity.

By mid-century, the growing Anglo-Canadian distaste for Native marriage customs and particularly cross-cultural relationships signaled a not-so-subtle alienation of Native-identified wives from their indigenous self-hood and the goodwill of their Native relatives (Van Kirk 223). Native-identified women already married to or intending to become the wives of Euro-Canadian men were suddenly faced with a harrowing choice: concede to a ceremony conducted in accordance with Canadian legality and Christian tradition and, thus, risk outraging the moral and cultural sensibilities of their Native kin; or lay claim to and defend the legitimacy of their indigenous heritage, while braving the uncertain legal status and female degradation associated with white/red unions au façon du pays. Soon, even a Native woman’s choice either to relinquish to or withhold from high standards of true love set by the conventions of the day. The obstacles to their happiness are . . . not created by the failings traditionally attributed to women in Western culture, such as inconstancy, gossip, cupidity, or jealousy” (58).

178 As Kate Flint observes of antebellum race relations, “[I]nterracial marriages between Indians and those of European origin did not invariably carry the stigma that they would later bear (causing a number of states to seek to ban them in the 1880-1920 period). Rather, they were a fact of life in many frontier communities in both the United States and Canada” (96-7). Indeed, interracial marriages established upon Native customs or au façon du pays became “de rigueur” for Euro-Canadians engaging in the western fur trade. The majority of the officers of the Hudson’s Bay Company married Native-identified women and thereby forged affective ties to the surrounding Native communities (Faragher 203; Van Kirk 224). Contrary to popular stereotypes of the backwoods marriages of “squaw-men,” these cross-cultural unions were typically committed and “long-lasting” (Faragher 207). By the mid-nineteenth century, the increasing presence of white women and the looming ascendancy of Anglo-Canadian law and Christian customs led to the stigmatizing of interracial unions au façon du pays as an example of socially deviant behavior or “living in sin” (Van Kirk 225). In Sylvia Van Kirk’s assessment, moreover, while this condemnation was broadcasted by Catholic and Protestant missionaries respectively seeking either to ratify “a natural marriage that had existed before” or to grant legitimacy to what had been little more than fornication, it was a racialized disdain for Native cultures and women, rather than Christian tradition, that motivated the missionaries’ actions (225).
a white marriage partner her identity as an Indian was replaced by Euro-Canadian imperialism. With the 1869 passage of “An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians,” Canadian officials thereafter “denied [official Indian] status to Native women marrying White men” (Strong-Boag and Gerson 21). Compounding, then, the indigenous loss of land and resources to white settlers, Native women were losing their self-possession as members of Canada’s First Nations upon intermarriage, and Native communities were consequently robbed of a significant portion of their female population and mixed-blood citizens (21).

At the same time, Johnson’s indigenized tales of ghostly lovers can hardly be deemed original, at least in a thematic sense. As Werner Sollors has shown, Anglo-American authors since the post-revolutionary period had regularly encoded their political and social concerns in the filial disobedience and thwarted consensual unions of star-crossed Native lovers who often ended up leaping to their deaths or otherwise committing suicide. Johnson can also be seen to capitalize upon the gothic excess within postbellum women’s poetry or an ironic sentimentality “insisting upon the sheer fatality of being female”: “Pious, passive, and physically attenuated, the wraithlike female subjects of these poems die without ever having lived” (Bennett 116). However, far from passively appropriating either the conventional treatment of Native romance in the preceding decades of Eurocentric nation-building or her poetic contemporaries’

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179 In 1867, the same year that Great Britain’s North American colonies united to form the new nation of Canada, cross-cultural marriages au façon du pays were granted a second-class legality as a form of “civil marriage” with the “basic tenets” of “mutual consent, social recognition, and cohabitation” (Van Kirk 224).

180 According to the 1869 “Act,” “[A]ny Indian woman marrying any other than an Indian, shall cease to be an Indian within the meaning of this Act, nor shall the issue of such marriage be considered as Indians within the meaning of this Act.” This language was then repeated in the 1876 Indian Act.

181 See especially Sollors’ chapter entitled “Romantic Love, Arranged Marriage, and Indian Melancholy” in *Beyond Ethnicity*. 
erasure of self-effacing women, Johnson is only too aware of literature’s political implications for Native peoples and particularly indigenous women. Thus, she questions, in her 1892 essay “A Strong Race Opinion: On the Indian Girl in Modern Fiction,” why a strain of literary fatalism has been directed so persistently at Native women. Declaring that the fictionalized Native woman is “too unhealthy and too unnatural to live,” she especially criticizes the prejudiced assumption that Native women are only too willing to sacrifice their people’s well-being and their own reputation for an anticipated union with a white man: “Of course, the white hero never marries her! Will some critic who understands human nature . . . please tell the reading public why marriage with the Indian girl is so despised in books and so general in real life?” (179). As she delineates the stereotypical portrayals of the “Indian girl” that fixate upon the “inevitable doom that shadows her love affairs” (177-79, 182), Johnson sarcastically concludes that there must be some unwritten law of fiction which has decreed, “No, the Indian girl must die . . . her heart’s blood must stain every page . . . whereon she appears” (182).

Johnson’s own narratives of doomed love thus represent a marked departure from her outspoken assaults, expressed early in her career, against the marginalizing representations of Native women’s character and emotions found in Anglo-American literature. This inconsistent fascination with the punishments facing interracial and cross-cultural couples may stem, in part, from her parents’ struggle for acceptance amongst members of their respective Euro-Canadian and Mohawk communities. As the mixed-blood, Native-identified offspring of a bicultural home, Pauline Johnson herself was hardly exempt from discrimination. Miscegenation paranoia appears to have undermined
her own cross-cultural romances, most notably her engagement to Charles Drayton. Yet, rather than simply producing embittered or sensationalist plotlines of doomed love, Johnson also provocatively explores the ambivalent ramifications of cross-cultural romance for the individuals and communities involved. Although not always exemplifying Johnson’s best lyrics or storytelling, her “ghostly lovers” offer intriguing insights into how overlapping cultural prejudice and appropriation inevitably threaten to erase a Native woman’s self-determination and self-expression. Thus, Johnson’s tales of ill-fated cross-cultural romance draw attention to how prejudice, whether cultural, racial, or sexual, not only undermines Native women’s self-possession but also works to undo the potential for a genuine, progressive definition of unity amongst Canada’s European and Indian populations, a unity based upon mutual “love and trust and friendship” (Caird 196).

Signaling her poem’s decidedly conflicted assessment of cross-cultural love, Johnson opens “Dawendine” (1895) with a pair of ghostly lovers whose call and response continue to interact negatively with the landscape. Initially described in neutral language as “uncertain candles,” the northern lights are transformed at the spectral “war-cry” of Dawendine’s lover into the trembling, shivering “icy finger tips” of dead men (Lines 6-7, 9, 11). Similarly, the “soft and tender song” of the long-deceased Indian maid becomes overshadowed by the mournful, blending murmur of “the wailing pine trees” (13, 17, 20). The significance of this reciprocal alteration of sight and sound is explained, in turn, by

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182 See Strong-Boag and Gerson 47, 140-1; Ruoff, “Introduction” 9-10. Johnson’s erotic canoeing poems composed from the late 1880’s to around 1894 portray a passionate but ultimately unhappy relationship with an unidentified blue-eyed man, while Johnson’s well-known engagement to Euro-Canadian Charles Drayton is broken in 1899, apparently due to his family’s racial objections (Strong-Boag and Gerson 140-3, 68). The relationship officially ends after he asks to be released to marry a more socially conventional—presumably white—woman.
the heroine’s emotional entanglement during a particularly melodramatic episode of intertribal warfare: “Dawendine, Child of Dawning, hateful are thy kin to me; / Red my fingers with their heart blood, but my heart is red for thee” (61-62). The victim of a blood feud that forces her to choose between her loyalty to her slain brother and her secret passion for the enemy of her people, Dawendine is sent as an emissary to the very man she knows she should hate and, bestowing upon him the white wampum, must sue for peace: “Loves she well the murdered brother, loves his hated foeman more, / Loves and longs to give the wampum”(45-7). In response to this gesture, the warrior presents the girl with a morbid ultimatum—live with him or be responsible for the destruction of her family. On the surface, then, Dawendine’s role as a cultural mediator appears to have easily resolved her internal conflict. By refusing to follow her heart and embrace her lover, she would not only “fail” him but also fail her kinsmen who are depending upon her to end the conflict (Lines 63-4).

Nevertheless, Johnson complicates this happy ending by stressing how the mother and other relatives sending Dawendine on her peace errand did not intend for their lives to be made secure by the loss of this daughter: “And her kinsmen still are waiting her returning from the night, . . . / But forgetting all, she follows” (65-67). Depicting Dawendine’s choice as an act of “forgetting” rather saving her people, Johnson’s subtle

183 During an 1894 interview in London, Johnson explains the ethnographic origins of her poem in the course of defining what “wampum” is: “This white wampum always signified peace. In a case of murder, the old Indian law of ‘blood for blood’ is invariable, but should an unmarried female relative of the murderer present this [wampum] belt to the avenger he must accept the offering of peace” (“An Interview in London”). Given that “white wampum” is also the title of the 1895 collection in which this poem was first published, one may surmise that wampum, as the symbol of truth and the “history, literature, seal and coinage of the Iroquois” (“An Interview in London”), also represents Johnson’s own attempts at cultural reconciliation through writing and her own affective ties to certain members and aspects of Euro-Canadian culture.
condemnation explains, in part, the heroine’s spiritual restlessness. By the same token, momentarily resisting the looming narrative of masculine bloodshed represented by the “Northern sky” and the familial disapprobation figured by the “wailing” trees, Johnson also emphasizes what the spectral duet signifies for the ghostly lovers themselves and ends with the pair “sing[ing] of love and loving through the starlight evermore” (70). Johnson’s final, reconciling interpretation of the couple’s song offers up an additional, contradictory message: an indigenous woman’s privileging of her romantic desires might involve conflict and loss but can nevertheless prove beneficial to—that is, can actually preserve—her family and culture. The lingering ambivalence of this poem is nonetheless unmistakable.

The acculturated offspring of a Mohawk Head Chief and a sentimental English mother, Johnson would be expected to view a thwarted cross-cultural romance as a tragedy with dire implications for the “shared future” of Canada’s European settlers and First Nations (Gerson and Strong-Boag xxxiii-xxxiv). It was, after all, Emily Howells’

In turn, Collett has suggested that “Dawendine” be read as a Native-identified version of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet: “Both Dawendine and Romeo and Juliet offer an untenable future: the shadows [that the heroine wanders] are a no man’s/no woman’s land from which neither side profits” (“Red and White” 370).

This ultimately positive endorsement of cross-cultural romance, in turn, can also be seen in “The Pilot of the Plains.” Ignoring her community’s pleas and taunts that she should forget her “Pale-face lover” and marry a member of her own tribe (Line 1), Yakonwita patiently awaits her sweetheart’s return, only to hear her lover’s dying cry as a blizzard rolls over her prairie home:

“O! my Yakonwita call me, call me, be my guide
To the lodge beyond the prairie—for I vowed ere winter died
I would come again, beloved;
I would claim my Indian bride.” (25-28)

Upon hearing the ghostly voice, her sympathetic “kinsmen” regret their racial prejudice and concede that the enamored young woman has proven to be a superior judge of character: “Then they wailed, ‘O! Yakonwita / He was Pale, but he was true’” (43-4). In keeping with the narrative pattern of Johnson’s portrayal of cross-cultural lovers, moreover, the vindicated Yakonwita then chooses to follow her ghostly lover into death, leaving her family and friends behind. Rather than an expression of Yakonwita’s cultural self-exile, however, the heroine’s decision enables her to assume a permanent, place-centered role as rescuer to both whites and Indians alike, “Guiding [them] with her lamp of moonlight” (51). Thus, Yakonwita’s departure from her family proves purposeful to her own community and beyond, and the passion that makes a ghost out of the Indian girl is validated.
decision to ignore familial objections and to relinquish her “tribal” identity as an Anglo-American woman that secured the happiness of Pauline’s idealized Mohawk father and that established the author’s own claims to his indigeneity. Yet, Johnson also knows that within a contemporary interracial context, Dawendine’s decision to forget all and follow her heart would inevitably play into the deracinating agenda of Anglo-Canadian law. From this political vantage point, therefore, the poem’s haunting motif offers Johnson much more than mere gothic ambience—provides, in fact, a place-centered solution to a particularly gendered form of Native dispossession. Even if Dawendine should elect to surrender her tribal loyalties in the name of love, the cultural ties of this ghostly lover are not so easily broken. Haunting the landscapes and communities that have witnessed and become emotional participants in their romantic trials, Johnson’s spectral heroines are tenaciously and spiritually linked to their indigenous homelands.

Of course, not all of Johnson’s poetic accounts of “ghostly lovers” conclude with a Native-identified woman fatalistically expressing her sexual self-determination by sacrificing herself, as well as her familial and cultural ties, for love. Nor is death the most formidable obstacle to an indigenous woman’s self-possession. In “The Legend of Qu’Appelle Valley” (1898), an apparently Métis narrator recounts how Death prevented his intended bride, “This queen of all the women of the North,” from relinquishing her people and culture in order to consummate her pledge of marriage to an outsider (Line 20). Unlike Johnson’s other ghostly lover narratives, however, the bereaved speaker does not feel compelled to follow his Queen into the afterlife, but rather retreats from the landscape and the personal and cultural associations that are bound up with his lost love. With the death of his wife-to-be, the narrator divorces himself from his lover’s homeland
and a natural environment that he deems bereft of charm and meaning (77-78, 87-88). Nevertheless, the narrator’s remaining hope for sole communion with his beloved is predicated upon a unique emotional connection and psychological occupation of this land. Even as he suppresses his now-heartsick identification with the valley that testified to his sweetheart’s beauty, the homeland of his lover still echoes with his failed attempt to contact her spirit:

A woman’s voice . . . through the twilight came
Like to a soul unborn—a song unsung.
I leaned and listened—yes, she spoke my name,
And then I answered in the quaint French tongue,

. . .

[R]ound me fell
The far-off echoes from the far-off height—
“Qu’Appelle?” my voice came back . . .
This—and no more. . . . (45-48, 50-53)

In turn, despite his shortsighted assertion that “[his] place / Had been usurped by [his] one rival—Death,” the narrator actually proves to have many rivals (67-8). The ominous, dominating presence of the pale moon rising in the East suggests not just the ascendancy of the cold and “pallid spectre” Death but also the racial ascendancy of coming eastern settlers (55-6). In this poem, the enemy of cross-cultural love is not merely earthly separation but also Eurocentric appropriation. Still bearing the signature of the narrator’s own speech act, the haunted landscape and the ghost story are nonetheless no longer his own: “I listen heartsick, while the hunters tell / Why white men named the
valley The Qu’Appelle. (89-90). Whites, following close upon the heels of Death’s “usurpation” of the Native woman’s beautiful body, ultimately lay claim to the land and story that derive their charm from an unseen Indian woman. Like Death, moreover, these settlers usurp that with which they have no emotional, consensual connection. Yet, because the grief-stricken narrator has retreated into the shadows, the very story that could delineate the place-centered bond between the First Nations population and the valley is being silenced. White men are thus credited with discovering, admiring, and naming the valley, but these newcomers do not properly comprehend that the land is already spiritually occupied by Native communities and still participates in the tragic romance of an Indian woman. Using the trope of “ghostly lovers,” Johnson echoes many New Woman poets in associating passion with loss, but also makes a compelling political statement about Euro-Canadian expansion and Native people’s consequent psychological alienation from their cultural traditions and personal histories.

Published in 1913, “The Ballad of Yaada” revisits the themes of doomed lovers, passion’s cultural costs, and place-centeredness in a narrative that casts the Capilano River as an anthropomorphized partisan in a Haida girl’s tragic love story: “It was Yaada, lovely Yaada, who first taught the stream its sighing, / For ‘twas silent till her coming, and ‘twas voiceless as the shore” (13-14). Very similar to the plotline she articulates in “Dawendine,” Johnson portrays First Nations masculinity as “swift to war and swift of weapon,” and has her heroine’s sexual freedom constrained by inter-tribal violence (163, Line 30). Veiling a surprisingly strong self-will behind a show of submissiveness, diminutive Yaada redeems her lover from his martial acts through her demure domestic preoccupations and complaisance. She, in turn, is reciprocally
influenced by her lover’s “stormy eyes” and, without any ultimatum or familial considerations of any kind, chooses to follow him (19-24). In contrast with Johnson’s other ghostly lover poems, however, the tragedy and haunting so persistently associated with a Native woman’s decision to leave her people is this time brought about by a community’s vehement opposition to cross-cultural alliances. When the Haida women’s recourse to Native spirituality, “their magic power” and “prayers,” fails to dissolve the bond between Yaada and the “Squamish foeman,” the warriors use force to separate the woman from her chosen partner (25-27, 31). Insisting that the young woman’s departure is an act of war, they silence her, refusing to acknowledge the authority of her own heart’s desire: “And her riven heart repeated words that on her lips were burning: / ‘Not to friend—but unto foeman I belong’” (35-36). Transformed by her people’s prejudice into a nearly catatonic captive, Yaada’s release comes about only with her death. Consequently, the personified Squamish homeland of her lover demonstrates a stronger kinship to the Haida woman than her human relations, insofar as the Capilano River’s “soul” comes to empathize with and voice Yaada’s stifled desire for autonomy and compassion: “And the soul within the river, though centuries had slumbered, / Woke to sob a song of womanly tears”(47-48). Yaada’s thwarted passion has made her both a victim but also an integral part of the Squamish landscape to which her heart had longed to return.

As can be seen from the posthumous publication of “The Ballad of Yaada,” the theme of ghostly lovers had become a recurrent source of inspiration for Johnson and, given her prose revision of these spectral poems’ standard plotline, a key fixation of
Johnson’s writerly and racial imagination. In fact, two of the retold oral traditions that Johnson selected for republication in *Legends of Vancouver* elaborate upon the racial implications of “The Ballad,” with its tale of thwarted romance and place-centered sympathy. Seemingly to prevent the ghostly lovers plot from becoming altogether monotonous and stale, Johnson’s “The Grey Archway,” a retold oral tradition that Johnson first published in 1910, demonstrates her most thorough revision of this privileged overplot. With a Haida context and heroine clearly corresponding with the later “Ballad,” the narrative of “The Grey Archway” emphasizes the dangers consequent to defying patriarchal authority for love, while exploring the resilience of a mother-daughter bond that resists the demands of tradition, Eros, and even life itself.

This complex emphasis upon mother-love is first signaled by the old storyteller’s sentimental paean to motherhood and female influence: “Women are the future mothers of the tribe, and we of the Pacific Coast hold such in high regard, in great reverence. The

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186 See especially Linda Quirk’s remarks concerning the poem’s provenance: “Johnson had intended to write a collection of ballads inspired by the Capilano family’s Squamish legends (the source of her *Legends of Vancouver*), but only one of these ballads was ever finished: ‘The Ballad of Yaada.’ It was the last poem she ever wrote, appearing in *Saturday Night* shortly after her death.”

187 Although she has shifted the setting of her narrative from the Capilano to the Tulameen River and does not give her protagonist a name, Johnson’s “Tulameen Trail” (1910) clearly contains the plotline of the later “Ballad of Yaada.” Mired in a world defined by masculine violence, the heroine is wooed and won by her people’s enemy the Tulameen and chooses to follow him to his country (94-6). However, in contrast to the later “Ballad” in which Yaada’s kinsmen steal her away from her lover, the heroine’s father and brother in “The Tulameen Trail” accidentally kill her. As with “The Ballad,” Johnson begins her story by emphasizing Nature’s sympathetic participation in an Indian girl’s sorrow or the Native place-centeredness that both substantiates and inspires the tale:

> The Indians of the Nicola country still cling to their old-time story that the Tulameen carries the spirit of a young girl enmeshed in the wonders of its winding course; a spirit . . . which is contented to twine its laughter, its sobs, its lonely whispers, its still lonelier call for companionship, with the wild music of the waters that sing for ever beneath the western stars. (88)

Interestingly enough, Johnson’s depiction of this haunted, “white-garmented” river (90) resonates with what Cheryl Walker has termed the “nightingale tradition” of nineteenth-century women’s poetry or “the poetess . . . who must use her ingenuity to overcome exile and mutilation. What is significant about this myth . . . is the way it records the burden of woe the nightingale carries and the peculiarly autobiographical emphasis of her art” (22). Like the sentimental poetess, the spirit now inhabiting the Tulameen River overcomes her isolation and her male relatives’ violence and uses her autobiographical song to “giv[e] form to what would otherwise be a shaky sense of subjectivity” (Walker 31).
women who are mothers—o-ho!—they are the important ones, we say. Warriors, fighters, brave men, fearless daughters, owe their qualities to these mothers—eh, is it not always so?” (103). Johnson’s assent to this tribute to the “mothers of the tribe” is complicated, however, by her own status as an unmarried, professional New Woman and by her liminal First Nations identity. The tillicum shares his story only because he assumes that Johnson is also Native: “He gave a swift glance at my dark skin, then nodded. ‘You are one of us,’ he said, with evidently no thought of a possible contradiction. ‘And you will understand, or I should not tell you’” (101). With a wry touch of bitterness at those who wish to interrogate her credentials as a First Nations woman, Johnson presents the reader with a Native interlocutor who deftly defines indigeneity as a combination of preponderant melanin and refined sensibility. Obviously, Johnson takes pride in the storyteller’s acceptance and trust. Yet, her own allusion to the possibility of contradicting his certainty and dismissing this confidence as an indication of unsophisticated credulity demonstrates her insecurity in regard to her bicultural identity. Given that the tillicum’s speech act and its interpretation depend upon Johnson’s Indianness and consequent responsiveness as an indigenous listener, a racialized tension looms over her narrative. That is, “the sympathies and yearnings and affections” by which Johnson defines her mother’s spiritual, sympathetic identification with her father’s Mohawk identity may prove as insufficient for the storyteller as they have for prejudiced Anglo-Canadians and Iroquois traditionalists (“My Mother” 69).

The tillicum’s story, in turn, hinges upon an intense identification between mother and daughter. Eager for Yaada’s happiness and setting aside the patriarchal conventions

188 See Gerson and Strong-Boag, Collected 327: “Tillicum is the Chinook word for friend.”
which require her to give her daughter to a decrepit but nonetheless wealthy medicine man, Yaada’s mother asks that the daughter make her own decision based on love: “[T]he laws of the great Haida tribe prevailed. Its wise men said, ‘Give the girl to the greatest man, give her to the most powerful, the richest.’ . . . But at this the mother’s heart grew as wax in the summer sunshine. . . . Give her to the best man—the man her heart holds highest,’ said the Haida mother” (105). Moreover, as has been seen so many times before in her depictions of a romance not endorsed by tribal opinion or tradition, death appears ready to preclude Yaada’s “happily ever after.” During a supernatural contest that promises to reveal the “innermost heart” of the medicine man, the Haida mother, paying dearly for championing her daughter’s sexual self-determination, is murdered by the old man’s black magic (106-8). In a striking departure from the standard narrative concerning spectral lovers, however, the heroine of “The Grey Archway” privileges her bond with her mother over a life with her lover and, in a reversal of gendered agency, presents her beloved brave with a life-altering ultimatum: “I must go to her, even you cannot keep me here; will you stay, or come with me?” (110). Leaping hand-in-hand into the ocean, the lovers’ spirits, transformed into two fish, still haunt the waters surrounding the archway in search of “the soul of the Haida woman—her mother” (110-11).

Interestingly enough, with this never-ending commemoration of a mother-love story, Nature’s apparent sympathy with Yaada also confirms Pauline Johnson’s Indian identity. Rather than telling the end of the story, the tillicum tests Johnson’s indigeneity by making her feel her way to the conclusion:
I watched the sea and sky for something that would give me a clue to the inevitable sequel that the tillicum, like all his race, was surely withholding until the opportune moment. . . . I looked at the tillicum quickly. He was watching me—a world of anxiety in his half-mournful eyes.

“And those two silvery fish?” I questioned.

He smiled. The anxious look vanished. “I was right,” he said; “you do know us and our ways, for you are one of us.” (111)

By looking to compassionate, complicit Nature, “the sea and sky,” for the resolution to the tillicum’s story and her own identity, Johnson articulates a definition of Indianness that is unifying and nature-based, that emphasizes Pan-Indian similarities, alliances, and place-centeredness. In turn, this understanding of Indian identity predicts Kathryn Shanley’s critical definition of indigeneity: “Place-centeredness . . . figures broadly into American Indian identity. . . . Once individuals or families lose their conscious cultural connections to the natural world and their valuing of kinship and extended family . . . they cease to be indigenous” (139). By the same token, despite finding acceptance via her unfailing connection to sympathetic Nature and her newfound kinship with a confiding Native stranger, Johnson’s narrative persona ultimately resembles the spectral Yaada who at the end of the story remains unsettled and searching. Johnson’s narrator is still clinging to and seeking to apprehend her English mother’s unconventional Indian soul.

Subtly inscribing her own family’s interracial history within the melodrama of her gothic sentiment, Johnson ultimately offers a very personal testament to the resilience of place-centeredness that can defy legal, cultural, and geographical displacement.

Johnson’s depiction of her ability to elicit and interpret Northwest Coast oral traditions as
proof positive of her Indianness, a fixation with identity that, as Deena Rymhs insightfully observes, “might be said to subtend the structure and operation of the [Legends of Vancouver]” (59), signals her resistance not only to the determination of her racial identity based upon Euro-Canadian fiat but also to the Mohawk fundamentalism that has denied her family an indigenous national identity and financial assistance after her father’s death. As Rauna Kuokkanen has observed of the sentimental political rhetoric underwriting Johnson’s prose: “[L]ove that crosses races, bloodlines, nations and discrimination becomes an allegory for politics of inclusive nationalism” (65). At the same time, Johnson proposes not only an alternative, voluntary model of national unity that does not emphasize state/social coercion over mutual affinity but also an alternative, indigenous legacy of female respectability that does not emphasize feminine submissiveness over emotional integrity. Interestingly enough, in order to champion her daughter’s right to give herself to “the man her heart holds highest,” Yaada’s mother must set aside not merely tribal traditions but the patriarchal laws of the Haida “wise men” (105). Johnson thereby distinguishes between the indigenous legality aligned with Euro-Canadian-style patriarchy and opposed to Native women’s sexual self-determination and the matrilineality and matriarchal political power that Johnson so admires in Native cultures like that of the Mohawk (Strong-Boag and Gerson 44-5, 196).

189 Deena Rymhs offers, in fact, a compelling reading of Johnson’s growing adeptness at confronting her own cultural liminality and asserting her indigeneity within the margins of her narrative frame: Though she was a welcome visitor, it is important to keep in mind that Johnson was still an outsider to Squamish culture. . . . At times, the narrator is uncertain in her interactions with the teller, afraid to reveal herself for fear of marking her difference. . . . When the chief queries her about her own cultural beliefs, she describes her responses as “evasive” and “uncertain”. . . . Gradually, the narrator comes . . . to work her subjectivity in the stories. (59)

For more on Johnson’s resentment toward the Iroquois traditionalists who refused her mother a widow’s pension and thus contributed to the family’s inability to continue to reside at Chiefswood, see Strong-Boag and Gerson 34, 48.
Even as her spectral lovers encode the contemporary struggles of Native women caught in the double-bind of Euro-Canadian racial prejudice and gender constraints, Johnson champions indigenous womanhood as both “True” in its sympathetic sensibilities and domesticating virtues and “New” is its assertive self-possession and insistence upon entirely volitional unions. Consistently depicting indigeneity as the vanguard of Canada’s past, E. Pauline Johnson also asserts that Euro-Canadians’ bid for a progressive and united future must be shaped by a distinctly feminine, First Nations legacy of self-determination and cultural tolerance. 190 By the same token, her ironizing portrayal of tragic heroines whose prerogative to give or withhold themselves is met with hostility, violence, and even appropriation dramatizes how prejudice, whether patriarchal or cultural, white or red, erases noble indigenous womanhood and leaves communities and nations trapped in a morass of self-defeating retaliation. Once again reminding Euro-Canadians of the First Nations’ enduring claims and cultural precedence, Johnson’s lyrical portrayals of ghostly lovers re-envision Native peoples’ cross-cultural amity or animosity, their emotional contentment or traumas, as a touchstone for the success or failure of the Canadian Confederation.

Pan-Indian Identity, Unveiling, and Colonial Collaboration

Like Jane Johnston Schoolcraft before her, Pauline Johnson portrays Native dispossession as a geographical displacement from indigenous homelands, a political

190 As Anne Collett has observed, moreover, the time period of Johnson’s celebrity makes her textual visions of an inclusive Canada all the more relevant to contemporaneous political discussions concerning what shape the new nation will take: “Her literary and stage career spanned the years 1884 to 1913—formative years of Canadian nationhood—years in which Pauline Johnson was an active participant in [the] debate that centred upon the constituency of the emergent nation” (“Red and White” 360).
marginalization within a new Eurocentric nation-state, and, not least of all, a psychological alienation from the authoritative articulation of racial and national identity. In turn, Johnson responds to her own, as well as to her characters’, experience of displacement through an indomitably adaptive rhetoric of pan-Indian advocacy, or as Flint observes: “[S]he couches herself as a member of an imaginary, pan-Indian nation” (279). Penning what amounts to an oeuvre-long corrective to the white appropriation of First Nations’ cultural property, Johnson re-inscribes Canadian territory as First Nations homelands in which Native fidelity, courage, and virtue are still commemorated and honored. Consequently, her translation of Native orality into a printed medium as well as into Euro-Canadian literary conventions has been credited with giving rise to an “Aboriginal modernity” that resists Native loss and marginalization as either inevitable or permanent (Willmott 122-3). This response to Native marginalization, however, is also often predicated upon an ironically appropriative project of unveiling. That is, her textual reassertion of First Nations cultural priority and reclaiming of Native homelands paradoxically circulate indigenous narratives and traditions that Native informants themselves apparently desire to keep private or limited to a strictly First Nations audience.

The unique authorial agenda of Johnson’s unveiling aesthetic is best appreciated by once again comparing her expression of genteel sensibility with her sentimental translation of Native orality. The lyrical effect of a “secret sorrow” poem like “Fire-flowers” rests upon the author’s confiding only emotionally provocative figures of speech, while skillfully withholding the whole truth of her loss and suffering from the world—including the reader. By contrast, authorial ingenuity in Johnson’s retold
narrative “Deadman’s Island” is displayed through the speaker’s coaxing the hesitant Chief into her confidence and then divulging all or the legacy of unparalleled heroism hidden just beneath the surface of the Canadian landscape. Even as Johnson’s narrative frames portray the very reception of these so-called “legends” as a privilege bound up in her familial relationship to Chief Capilano, whom Johnson at one point likens to a second father,191 her ability to share Pacific Coast oral narratives is also repeatedly depicted as the reward for Johnson’s successful negotiation of an informant’s cautious interrogation of her biculturalism and a sign of her triumphant conquest, through careful etiquette and strategic silence, of an indigenous storyteller’s “inviolable fortress of exclusiveness (“The Grey Archway” 100)”. At the same time, an indigenous storyteller’s desire to withhold a narrative can signal more than divergent cultural mores or racial exclusivity. In “The Legend of Qu’Appelle Valley,” Johnson ironically contradicts the underlying political message of her poem. That is, the narrator’s multiple references to “paleface settlers” and “voyageurs” whose encroachments make him “heartsick” clearly indicate that Euro-Canadians, with their history of painful acquisitiveness and cultural insensitivity, are, by no means, the intended audience of this tale (Lines 6, 79-90). Similarly, by asserting that her Legends of Vancouver “had never been revealed to any other English-speaking person,” she emphasizes her decision to circulate these retold narratives amongst Euro-

191 “[T]he huge cup my own father always used was [Chief Capilano’s]—as long as the Sagalie Tyee allowed his dear feet to wander my way. The immense cup stands idle and empty now for the second time” (“Deep Waters” 52-3).

192 For Johnson’s portrayal of her, at times, tense and unsure encounters with informants’ suspicions concerning her bicultural identity, see “The Recluse” 22-4; and “The Sea-serpent” 61-2. Examples of Johnson’s strategic wielding of Pacific Coast Squamish customs and deferential manners are demonstrated in the introductory matter of “The Lost Island” 73; the “The Siwash Rock” 12; and “The Grey Archway” 100.
Canadians without the consent and even contrary to the expressed wishes of the original storytellers (“Author’s Forward” vii).

It has recently been observed that one of the most pressing questions confronting the North American Indian of today is, “How do I protect what I now have left from further theft?” (Simpson 487). Paradoxically, Johnson attempts to recover what has already been lost to Native peoples by translating the orality heretofore concealed from Euro-Canadian appropriation into an intelligible, consumable commodity. Although Johnson is clearly educating her white readers in the sympathy and deference with which these narratives and their expression of First Nations advocacy should be received, she makes her anthologized Pacific Coast traditions alluring as cultural objects “jealously preserved” for only the indigenous initiate (“Deep Waters” 48). Notwithstanding his positive interpretation of Johnson’s “appropriation of aboriginal heritage narratives,” even Willmott ultimately finds himself unable to sidestep this issue of Native reticence and, while conceding that “no record remains of any formal understanding . . . regarding the alienability of the stories as heritage possessions,” later notes that the transformation of these narratives into Canada’s “national treasures” uneasily coexists with the indigenous nationalism and activism of Chief Capilano (120-22). Consequently, in the course of decontextualizing these Pacific Coast oral traditions from not only the storyteller’s “performance, context, and social fabric” but also from the network of social relations and tribal regulations governing this pan-Indian cultural exchange (Palmer

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193 For a discussion of the anti-imperialist activism of Chief Joe Capilano, a.k.a. Su-á-pu-luck, see Willmott 75-139.
Johnson risks much more than what Deena Rymhs has termed “the limitations of written language” (65, 67).

For example, in the “Grey Archway,” Johnson reduces her indigenous heritage and identity to a particular belief system and concomitant approach to textual interpretation that bear obvious parallels to Anglo-American Romanticism and sensibility. Depicting as the sine qua non of indigeneity the recourse to a natural order that is sympathetic to human events and, to quote Jerome McGann, “is ‘animated’ with spirit, even at its non-animate levels” (21-2), Johnson invites her Euro-Canadian readers to imitate her mystical hermeneutics. That is, she opens up the possibility that sympathetic, Romantic white readers may, in fact, be able to claim some measure of Native identity depending upon how well they can connect to nature. Indigenous history and spirituality thus become alienated from Native peoples as yet another resource to be exploited in the construction of a new national identity, or as Willmott observes of Canadian society at the turn into the twentieth century: “Diverse modern Canadians were drawn to express a nostalgia not for their own past, but someone else’s—as if, along with

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194 In contrast to Johnson’s self-portrait as the sometimes wily and always authoritative cross-cultural mediator, Andie Diane Palmer, in a recent explication of respectful approaches to sharing Pacific Coast orality, scrupulously privileges the volition of the storytellers themselves and the decision-making process by which they choose to have a part of their cultural legacy made widely available to outsiders (55). In particular, she recommends that the pedagogue foreground “the purposive action of the person who had recorded the song”; his or her “gratitude that this person had recorded the song so that we could hear it”; and, in the case of “restrictions that might have been placed on the recording or auditing of the song[,] . . . the decision that had to be carefully made by the singer to record it” (55).

195 For Rymhs, the potentially problematic aspect of Johnson’s retold narratives is her “intervention” in the meaning of the stories and the resultant interpretive “discrepancy” between the intentions of “the Salish people whose legends she appropriates” and the literary expectations of the anticipated Euro-Canadian reader. Nevertheless, Rymhs ultimately argues that Johnson is cognizant and respectful of how translating and polishing Salish stories for Euro-Canadian literary tastes must necessarily produce a pale, incommensurable substitute for the original oral performance: “Johnson acknowledges that her writing is inherently fragmentary, a mere shadow of the story emptied of the vitality of its telling and teller” (65, 67).
these others’ territorial resources, their very pasts, and even their entirely different way of imagining what the past is, could become their own” (75).

As Betsy Erkkila has warned, unraveling the complexity of minority women’s sentimental representations of resistance also brings to light the problematic aspects of rhetorical hybridity or, for instance, first Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s and now E. Pauline Johnson’s varying degrees of complicity with the Eurocentric appropriation of indigenous cultural territory.196 Endeavoring to place Pacific Coast orality into the service of her pan-Indian advocacy, Pauline Johnson also draws attention to her own authorial prowess as a cross-cultural mediator. In turn, by apparently disregarding her storytellers’ desire to withhold these legends from white consumption, she risks aiding and abetting the Euro-Canadian appropriation of indigenous culture and identity. The very real pitfalls of cultural appropriation are illustrated, moreover, by Euro-Canadian editors’ erasure of Johnson’s attempt to underscore as the “Legends of the Capilano” the provenance of her Legends of Vancouver in a resistant indigenous storyteller and activist (Gerson and Strong-Boag, “Introduction” xxxiii). In comparison with Schoolcraft’s collaborative connections to the individuals and colonial structures depleting Ojibwe self-determination and resources, however, Johnson’s complicity with the Euro-Canadian appropriation of Native cultural capital is much more innocuous and, arguably, unwitting. Indeed, these more subtle traces of E. Pauline Johnson’s compromises with white audiences and publishers bring into sharper focus the fusion of acculturative education, self-promotion, and rhetorical dexterity sustaining her sentimental apologetics, or as Kate

196 Of considerable value in formulating this discussion of Schoolcraft’s and Johnson’s bicultural hybridity is the examination of Harriet Jacobs’ collaborative composition and publication of Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl in Erkkila 32-35.
Flint has argued: “Johnson’s access to the modern media came at a price. . . . [H]er education, her background, and her contacts ensured that she had access to publications . . . But dependence on writing and recitation for her livelihood meant, inevitably, that she had to shape the expression of her views with a broad public firmly in view” (286-7). Despite the generational gap between the Jane Schoolcraft and Pauline Johnson, then, their similarly conflicted lives and texts elucidate the overlapping demands of familial loyalty, cultural identity, political commitment, and economic survival that complicate bicultural women’s bid for effective self-expression in the nineteenth century.


Reared within a Mohawk-identified yet decidedly middle-class Victorian home and tutored by an Anglo-Canadian mother who had surrendered her racial status and reared her children to be loyal Canadian Indians, Pauline Johnson refused to reconcile herself to a racist definition of the Canadian nation-state or the idea that a union of Canada’s European settlers and First Nations must be predicated upon the erasure of indigenous nationality and cultural values. Of course, maintaining and articulating such a perspective within a nineteenth-century transatlantic milieu required “multiplicity,” and Johnson, as Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson have shown, developed an “expertness” at “invoking the unsettling potential of simultaneity” and performing to great acclaim her at times conflicting self-representation as a woman loyal to her First Nations identity and her Canadian nationality: “Like the nation she attempted to call into being, she is complex and contradictory, participating in an identity that is always a process of discussion rather than a stable definition” (Strong-Boag and Gerson 108).
Through her textual portrayals of the enduring legacy of Native valor and the pan-Indian identity made secure through Native place-centeredness, Johnson worked to restore the primacy and relevance of First Nations history and culture. Nevertheless, because Pauline Johnson was educated to communicate in English, rather than in Mohawk, and put “white” poetic conventions into the service of her Native advocacy, Paula Bernat Bennett has chided literary critics and American Indians alike for not simply accepting the fact that the textualized and performative self-expression of a Native woman growing up within the Six Nations Reserve is hopelessly inauthentic (210): “These contradictions are no more ironic . . . than that . . . scholars of Indian literature today identify as a Native American writer a woman whose knowledge of indigenous culture, like the Indian costume she wore, was a patchwork assembled from fragments she herself sewed together” (108). By the same token, just as she privileges the “authenticity” by which female poets reject sentimentality’s confining gender values and empty literary conventions, Bennett praises Pauline Johnson’s poem “The Corn-Husker” (1896) as an example of Johnson’s emotionally restrained and, hence, liberated aesthetics and also as the mixed-blood, acculturated woman’s supposed confession to a vacuous cultural identity: “Johnson makes brilliant use of the image of empty corn husks to suggest the way in which the substance of indigenous Indian cultures was hollowed out by colonization. Her dramatic poems are, I would suggest, these husks . . . [T]hey are . . . images of a way of life that Johnson herself never knew, one whose substance . . . had

197 In contrast to Bennett’s deeply cynical reading of Johnson’s inauthentic costume, Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag have suggested that, rather than a paltry “patchwork” of Euro-Canadian romanticism, Johnson’s Native dress was actually a strategic expression of pan-Indian advocacy: “Despite her insistence on her Iroquois heritage, Johnson’s own buckskin dress . . . was a created artifact that offered her viewers a general sense of indigeneity. . . . By claiming the universal Indian subject, her dramatic persona effectively engaged with the whole history of imperialism in North America” (“Championing” 50).
been wiped out” (106). Finally, Johnson has produced something worthy of critical attention: she has conceded within this poem that the biculturalism and historical distance of the Native New Woman reflect the demise of the authentic “real” Indian (106).

Johnson’s “The Corn-Husker” does momentarily set aside the first-person narration typically seen in her dramatic Native poetry. Nevertheless, the idea that Johnson’s passionate articulation of Native rights and Euro-Canadian wrongs has somehow “cooled” in favor of an autonomous, unpoliticized aesthetic or that she has suddenly resigned herself to an inadequate indigeneity is clearly the product of Bennett’s own critical predilections (186). Although it is not a ballad-style lyric explicitly intended for dramatic performance and simple mnemonic impact, “The Corn-Husker” still displays a subversive edge typical of Johnson’s other works. That is, Johnson transforms an ostensibly objective portrait of an elderly Native woman’s toil into a highly allusive yet, nonetheless, pointed indictment of the physical and emotional burdens that Canadian colonialism has placed upon Native peoples:

Hard by the Indian lodges, where the bush

Breaks in a clearing, through ill-fashioned fields,

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198 Like her critical bias towards an autonomous lyrical expression free from the pecuniary interest of “bourgeois” poetic production, Bennett’s overriding insistence upon “some sort of timeless, incorruptible, minority essence”—the indigenous equivalent of spontaneous domestic realism—irreparably diminishes Bennett’s ability to account for Johnson’s poetic enterprise (Bennett 186, 56, 85, 69). Fixated upon the fact that Johnson produced her texts as a “vocation to meet needs—the need to communicate, to preserve, to arouse sympathy for the oppressed, but also to make a living by commodifying Indian culture for whites” (104), Bennett also faults the monolingual Johnson for having been incapable of producing or, at the very least, translating for other “authentic” American Indians those ritual songs which are “among the relatively few examples of nineteenth-century Indian women’s poetry that have come down to us largely unmediated by Western poetic conventions” (209-10). In other words, genuine Native poetry has to be something untouched by mundane matters of survival and something “other” than adapted Anglo-American literary conventions. Native poetry should be drawn entirely from pre-literate sources, for, taking Bennett at her word, once Native peoples choose to read and write in English, making even the most elite forms of written expression their own, then they cease to be truly Indians. Thus, in delineating the “white” aspects of Johnson’s upbringing, Bennett includes “books” along with “artwork,” “china,” and “Anglo dress” (103).
She comes to labour, when the first still hush
Of autumn follows large and recent yields.

Age in her fingers, hunger in her face,
Her shoulders stooped with weight of work and years,
But rich in tawny colouring of her race,
She comes a-field to strip the purple ears. (Lines 1-8)

Directing her readers’ attention to the “shoulders stooped with weight of work and years,” (6) Johnson’s poem differs significantly from her typical defense of indigenous women’s traditional labor, such as can be see in her unpublished manuscript “The Stings of Civilization”: “That she carries the burdens as well as the babies, that she does the hoeing of corn, drawing of water and chopping of fire wood, is no argument that she is a beast of burden. . . . [S]he accepts it with the cheeriness that the American and the English woman in the same walk or strata of life accepts . . . her birthright of labour” (283). 199 Pointing to the commensurate physical work undertaken by red and white women of the same socio-economic class, Johnson places Native women’s work, as Gerson and Strong-Boag have argued, “at the centre of a healthy network of social relations. . . . Native women appear as full partners in a shared economic enterprise” (“Championing” 60). Unlike her many other articulations of Native women’s toil, therefore, this depiction of an old matron rising early “to labour” alone in “ill-fashioned fields” is far from conveying any “cheeriness,” community, or normalcy.

199 See also “The Iroquois Women of Canada” (1895) 203-5; “Mothers of a Great Red Race” (1908) 223,227; “The Lost Salmon-Run” (1910) 35; “The Sea-Serpent” (1910) 66-69; and “Hoolool of the Totem Poles” (1911).
Yet, with the word “hunger,” Johnson succinctly underscores the fact that this agrarian labor is motivated not by tradition but by extreme want and necessity; that is, by the economic and cultural marginalization attendant upon Native dispossessoin (5). In keeping with her rhetoric of indigenous aristocracy, Johnson asserts that the native woman is an exiled patrician, “rich in tawny colouring of her race,” and, as one born to the purple, is metaphorically connected to the “purple ears” of corn in her hands (7-8). Johnson juxtaposes with these aristocratic allusions, however, a lexis combining marginal subsistence with Native depletion. The woman’s journey into the fields is determined by the harvest season but also by “large and recent yields,” a phrase that merges nature’s cyclically ripening crops with the disruptive yielding up of Native homelands to “might’s injustice” that Johnson makes explicit in the final stanza:

And all her thoughts are with the days gone by,
Ere might’s injustice banished from their lands
Her people, that to-day unheeded lie,
Like the dead husks that rustle through her hands. (Lines 9-12)

As she harvests her crop, the elderly matron “strip[s] the purple ears” and thereby reenacts how the white settlers have stripped away the lands and noble legacy of Native communities in order to obtain whatever is deemed valuable (8).

Thus, Johnson’s “The Corn-Husker” does register a very real sense of complaint. Reminiscent of the self-alienating, colonized perspective seen at the outset of “The Lost Island” and throughout the narration of “The Legend of Qu’Appelle Valley,” the elderly woman’s consciousness is overwhelmed by Euro-Canadian cultural ascendancy and the Eurocentrism that has left “Her people [of] to-day” to “unheeded lie, / Like the dead
husks” (11-12). From the Native woman’s traumatized perspective, her people have been discarded like so much rubbish that remains after the “yielding” and “stripping” of indigenous land claims and are now ignored by the dominant culture. Nevertheless, just as there are “Indian lodges” nearby that are still inhabited by the Native woman’s extended kin, there are present-tense Indians, like Johnson, who have managed to survive and to retain their indigenous identity. However, because they are overlooked in favor of the Native past and the myth of the “Disappearing Indian,” these Indians are not the object of sincere attention and respect.200 Thus, E. Pauline Johnson articulates on behalf of her “Corn-Husker” a subtle yet insistent “aesthetic ‘witnessing’ of injury” that directs her white audience to “heed” or to listen to the very Native peoples and perspectives that have been written off.201

In turn, Bennett’s reading of the poem as Johnson’s much-needed attestation to a “hollowed out” and irretrievable indigeneity enacts the very failure of sympathy that Johnson predicts or a lack of attentiveness to the tenacious cultural survival and resistance of Canada’s First Nations (Bennett 198). Like the Native matron, “all [Bennett’s] thoughts are with the days gone by” and past acts of genocide (9).

Consequently, the twenty-first-century literary critic constructs from Johnson’s depiction of Native melancholy a rather stale, nineteenth-century notion of a “mythic” Native mind or super-culture with which the bicultural Indians of Johnson’s hopelessly compromised

200 See also Gerson 101.

201 Ultimately, then, Johnson’s complaint is made all the more poignant—if not ironic—when read against her own canonical fate as an acculturated Native woman who defended and capitalized upon her own indigenous identity using popular modes derived from nineteenth-century print culture, or as Collett observes: “Tekahionwake has been discarded and dismissed as a Canadian curio of value only to the nostalgic and the ingenuous—memory seekers, defined . . . as either grandmothers or tourists” (“Her Choice” 61).
generation simply cannot compare, let alone effectively depict. Where Johnson’s poem points to marginalized and neglected people presently living within the boundaries of a nation still busily building and defining itself, Bennett instead sees lost indigenous culture or, more specifically, “wiped out” cultural authenticity. She, too, discards the Natives who remain.

Bennett’s skeptical assessment of E. Pauline Johnson’s bicultural authorial acts directly speaks, moreover, to the intriguing issue that Betsy Erkkila has recently raised for further analysis or how racially marginalized authors found it necessary to blur cultural, racial, and sexual boundaries in order to make subaltern protest—understood here as a rhetorical rather than a physical act—legible and compelling to nineteenth-century readers: “Doesn’t the focus on ‘authentic authorship’ . . . tend to reinforce privatized and aestheticized notions of authorship . . . and thus remove [a given text] from the complicated network of power relations—racial, sexual, textual, literary, and political—that are part of its publication history?” (33). Indeed, critical silence or dismissal in regard to mixed-blood authors and their texts illustrates the looming hegemony of nationalist and scholarly discourses that, by continuing to privilege the explication of essential differences over strategic convergences, bury Native biculturalism in the process of unearthing “authentic” Indians and indigenous cultures.

By contrast, approaching the oeuvre of a nineteenth-century Native woman as her responses to “society’s mechanisms of control” enacts the kind of attentiveness to enduring indigenous communities and voices that Johnson’s poem clearly prescribes (Loeffelholz 18). As a result, Pauline Johnson’s genteel verse and ethnographic fiction

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202 See Michaelson.
are shown to be interactive, sentimentality-inflected narratives that resist the gendered submissiveness of her mother’s middle-class tutelage and the Eurocentric biases of Canada’s laws. Indeed, mirroring her depiction of her parents’ sympathetic personalities and harmonious marital union, sentimentality and First Nations advocacy are not mutually exclusive but productively coexist with and reinforce each other over the course of Johnson’s poetry and prose. Deploying themes and tropes drawn from a century’s worth of literary sentimentality, Johnson articulates a much more inclusive vision of Native identity and then privileges the pan-Indian culture that she invokes as the aesthetic and spiritual foundation for Canadian exceptionalism. Sabine Milz’s assessment of Pauline Johnson’s life and works, in turn, offers a particularly apt commentary upon the author’s strategic engagement with Canadian nationalist rhetoric: “Her ‘entanglements in the prejudices of her age’ . . . were always entwined with her significant challenge to the colonization of Aboriginal people and to gender injustices” (135). Endeavoring to support herself as a Native New Woman in a nascent Eurocentric nation, E. Pauline Johnson would creatively comment and also capitalize upon her own liminality, would challenge the cultural as well as gendered implications of First Nations dispossession, and would ultimately leave behind a lasting, relevant critique of Euro-Canadians’ relationship to the Native lands they now occupy.
CHAPTER THREE

Native Woman as Teacher:
Bicultural Nationalism and Pan-Tribal Politics

in S. Alice Callahan’s *Wynema*

“Our More Oppressed Brothers”: Callahan’s Bicultural
Audience and Advocacy

Perhaps no other American Indian author is so thoroughly identified with female pedagogy as Sophia Alice Callahan, the first Native woman novelist. Unlike E. Pauline Johnson and Zitkala-Ša who left sustained semi-autobiographical accounts of their early lives, or Jane Johnston Schoolcraft whose own diaries and correspondence are supplemented by portrayals of her education and adult character provided by her husband and admirers, what little is known with certainty regarding Callahan’s childhood and brief life has either been derived from the biographies of her father, a distinguished Muscogee politician and businessman, or has been culled from the ephemera of Alice Callahan’s participation as a student and a teacher within Methodist educational institutions. Even her 1891 novel *Wynema, A Child of the Forest* is shaped by

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203 Alternately spelled “Muskogee,” this is the official name of the government, people, and language commonly identified as “Creek.” See Womack 28-9 and Ruoff, “Editor’s” xxxi.

204 That is, scholars have come to rely upon descriptions of the course of study at the Virginia boarding school that Callahan attended during the academic year of 1887-88; the temperance articles she edited in the journal of the Harrell International Institute where she taught in 1891 and 1893; some “teacher’s reports” bearing her signature from the Wealaka Boarding School in which she taught from 1892 to 1893; a few letters in which she, not surprisingly, discusses her pedagogical duties and educational goals; and, finally, some very brief journalistic references—no doubt planted by Samuel Benton Callahan—to Alice’s success as an instructor in the Creek public school system in 1886 and to the “honors of rare merit” that she had received as a student at the Wesleyan Female Seminary. S.B. Callahan was closely associated with the Creek national newspaper, the *Indian Journal*, and in 1886 became its editor; see Ruoff, “Editor’s” xiv-v; Debo 285. Another expression of her father’s promotion of Alice Callahan’s teaching career, Samuel Callahan served as the superintendent of the Methodist Wealaka Boarding School during Alice’s tenure.
Callahan’s idiosyncratic vision of what constitutes successful Christian education in Indian Territory and, against the backdrop of increasing threats and violence emanating from U.S. Indian policy, traces the relationship between the missionary-teacher Genevieve Weir and her Native pupil Wynema Harjo. In turn, narrowly Christian and largely Euro-American interpretations of Callahan’s life and values have significantly contributed to the novelist’s tedious critical exile as an “A+” exponent of assimilation (Womack 108). For example, in response to Callahan’s untimely death at the age of twenty-six, the white chaplain of the Harrell International Institute, a Methodist high school serving the City of Muskogee, would eulogize Alice as an exemplar of triumphant Protestantism and pedagogical excellence205: “She was converted when quite young and was ever a consistent Christian and a member of the Methodist church. . . . Her abilities as a teacher have never been excelled in this territory. . . . Sister Alice was not controlled by the frivolities and fashions of this world but lived in a higher and more exalted sphere” (qtd. in Foreman, Carolyn 313-14). Consequently, when coupled with the historical accounts of the luxury and political influence enjoyed by the progressive bicultural elite of Indian Territory, Callahan’s supposedly uncomplicated commitment to Christianity and Methodist home missions has produced a rather colorless portrait of a privileged

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205 Callahan contracted an unspecified illness while filling in for another ailing teacher at the Harrell Institute (Ruoff, “Editor’s” xviii-xix). Pleurisy, commonly given as the cause of her untimely demise, is merely symptomatic of any number of underlying conditions, such as influenza or, most likely given her boarding school education, tuberculosis. Given her rather frequent discussions of medicine in Wynema and the fact that her step-grandfather and two brothers were physicians, she would probably have wanted the proper medical parlance to be applied; see Hill.
schoolmarm whose anecdotal indigeneity was refined away by several generations of intermarriage.\textsuperscript{206}

This image of Alice Callahan, the untroubled Christian proselytizer and defender of Anglo-American social values, however, bears little relation to what has actually been preserved of Callahan’s own subversive voice and surprisingly secular perspective. Furthermore, recognizing that Alice Callahan’s novel was directly addressing Native-identified men and women who were educated, bicultural, and perhaps biracial like the author herself significantly revises current interpretations of \textit{Wynema}’s supposedly assimilationist agenda and reinforces Callahan’s overriding concern with promoting pantribal cooperation. It is, in fact, difficult to imagine that \textit{Wynema} was widely read beyond the confines of Indian Territory, particularly since it appears to have fallen into almost absolute oblivion shortly after its publication.\textsuperscript{207} Indications that Callahan’s foray into published writing was an intensely local affair can be found in her hometown press, including the only contemporaneous critical notice in the June 6, 1891 edition of the Methodist newsletter \textit{Our Brother in Red}:

\begin{quote}
Successfully applying for Creek citizenship as a matrilineal member of Cussetah Town in 1858, Samuel B. Callahan was one-eighth Muscogee, and Alice Callahan, in turn, was one-sixteenth; see Debo 185; Hill; and Ruoff, “Editor’s” xiii. For more on the late-nineteenth-century demographics of the railroad town Muskogee, where Callahan lived while writing her novel, see Debo 285: Most of [“the wealthy whites and mixed bloods”] lived in the eastern part of the country [in the mid-1880s], especially in the northern part of the Coweta District and in the vicinity of Eufaula. They lived in great ranch houses or comfortable town residences, which they built in Eufaula, and later to an increasing extent in Tulsa and Muskogee. They were proud of their Indian blood and sympathetic toward the real Indians, and they formed a closely-knit but kindly aristocracy. . . . Most of all they joined in the great recent development of the ranching industry.

Writing in 1955, Carolyn Foreman re-introduces Callahan and her novel to Oklahoma history, observing that author and text have heretofore “escaped all Oklahoma bibliographers” (306). Even some thirty-five years later, Ruoff points out that she was not aware of the novel’s existence until after her bibliographic study of \textit{American Indian Literatures} was in press (“Editor’s” xliii).\end{quote}

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Wynema, a child of the Forest, is the title of a book just received. It is published by H.E. [sic] Smith & Co., of Chicago, and is on sale at C.B. Gilmore’s bookstore. The author, Miss Alice Callahan, is a teacher in Harrell’s Institute and a Creek Indian by birth. She is an intelligent, Christian lady and we look forward with pleasure to the time when our duties will permit us to read the book. It is certainly cheap at 25¢ a copy.

(qtd. in Van Dyke 123)

Notwithstanding the amateurish tone of this announcement, which inauspiciously posits price as one of the novel’s recommendations, this brief paragraph is also intriguingly parochial in its details, providing an account of author and text that would be relevant and appealing primarily to the community of Muskogee and Callahan’s unique writing situation.208 “Published by H.E. Smith & Co. of Chicago” but “on sale at C.B. Gilmore’s book store,” the first novel written by an American Indian woman is “ignored” by the big-city press, yet is brought down to earth and made significant as a matter of local interest and pride. Wynema is worth reading because S. Alice Callahan is a “Creek,” an accomplished teacher, and a “Christian lady.” Indeed, she embodies the bicultural accomplishments of the Indian Territory’s indigenous Christians and ostensibly reflects the goals of the Methodist Indian Mission Conference, or as the motto of Our Brother in Red asserts: “Christian Education the Hope of the Indian” (Noley 241). Moreover, by

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208 See also Ruoff, “Editor’s” xvii. Furthermore, the tone of this critical notice may be a reflection of modest restraint—if not an intentionally self-deprecating addendum by Callahan herself—since the Methodist newsletter is advertising the novel of a prominent female contributor. Callahan was an editor of Our Brother in Red in 1891, the same year that Wynema was published, and it seems unlikely that either the editorial staff or the mixed-blood community of Muskogee would have required such a formal introduction to S.B. Callahan’s polished daughter-turned-teacher or would have taken such a complacent view of her authorship. For example, an 1888 edition of the Indian Journal hails Callahan’s return from the Wesleyan Female Institute, praising her “persevering effort and close application” (qtd. in Ruoff, “Editor’s” xvi). For more on Callahan’s contributions to Our Brother in Red, see Carpenter 29-53.
writing and publishing a sentimental novel that defends indigenous nations’ right to self-
determination, Alice Callahan becomes the culmination of what, since the 1850’s, had
been a long-standing tradition for female students from the elite mixed-blood families
within Indian Territory. Like the preceding generations of Cherokee “Rose Buds” and
Chickasaw “Blossoms” who published poetry and essays, gave public recitations, and
performed in theatrical spectacles all in the name of bicultural Native nationalism,
Callahan displays her strategic acculturation and political engagement through a
specifically literary endeavor. \(^{209}\) From within this context of denominational
endorsement, local celebrity, and patriotism, the contemporary critic can best account for
a 1911 Muskogee newspaper article which reminisces about \textit{Wynema} having “had a great
run for a year or so, after it was placed on the market” (Van Dyke 123). In short,
although Callahan aspired “to open the eyes and heart of the world” with her portrayal of
American Indians’ beset cultural sovereignty, physical suffering, and tenuous survival,
she nonetheless anticipated a bicultural audience comprised of neighbors, family, and
friends.

Further demonstrating that \textit{Wynema} was most certainly and primarily read by
Callahan’s bicultural social circle of mixed bloods as well as evangelical whites,
Callahan’s dedication definitively extends the critical contours of her intended audience
beyond Euro-American readers. Directly addressing “the Indian tribes of North America
who have felt the wrongs and oppression of their pale-faced brothers,” Callahan offers an
intriguing insight into her pan-tribal aspirations: “I lovingly dedicate this work, praying
that it may serve to open the eyes and heart of the world to our afflictions, and thus

\(^{209}\) See Cobb 45-7; Mihesuah 22, 68-71, 98-100; Hoffman 39-43.
speedily issue into existence an era of good feeling and just dealing toward us and our more oppressed brothers.” This dedication essentially performs a succession of narrative unveilings through which Callahan demonstrates her bicultural fluidity within the discursive constructions of insider/outsider, us/them. Subtly shifting her dedication from the third-person perspective in which she speaks on behalf of those tribes “who have felt the wrongs and oppression of their pale-faced brothers” to the first-person perspective in which she claims this history of wrongs and oppression to be “our afflictions” and pleads with the world at large for justice “toward us.” Callahan displays her self-conscious style of subversive, multipositional expression; evokes her bicultural Native readership; and establishes her text’s argument for pan-tribal cooperation.

Initially assuming a voice that is sympathetic yet external to the indigenous peoples of North America and “their” cross-cultural ordeal, she beckons to a Euro-American readership and appropriates the sentimental spirituality and stereotypes of a genteel “Friend of the Indian.” Indeed, the ironic reference to coercive whites as the Indians’

210 See also Louis Owens’s discussion of the “richly hybridized dialogue” shaping Indian novels: On the one hand, by consciously identifying her- or himself as “Indian” the writer seeks to establish a basis for authoritative, or externally persuasive discourse; on the other hand, the writer must make that discourse internally persuasive for the non-Indian reader unaccustomed to peripherality. . . . The result of this exquisite balancing act is a matrix of incredible heteroglossia and linguistic torsions and an intensely political situation. (14-15)

211 Beginning in 1883, a conglomerate of Euro-American reformers calling themselves the “Friends of the Indian” began to meet regularly together at the Lake Mohonk Conference in New York where they developed a strategy for changing federal Indian policy and solving the “Indian Problem”: “Clergyman, social workers, lecturers on moral topics, government officials who had fought hard against corruption, although some of them had never met an Indian, they were convinced they knew how to bring the first Americans into the mainstream of American life” (Ward 359). What the “Friends” ultimately advocated was a rather familiar proposal to the Civilized Nations of Indian Territory: allotment in severalty and the systematic erasure of indigenous governments and nationalities; see Young 4, 39. In turn, on February 8, 1887, Congress would pass the Dawes Act which promised 160 acres of farmland or 320 acres of grazing land to every head of a family, while also opening up “excess” tribal lands to Euro-American settlement: “Tribal ownership—and the tribes themselves—were simply meant to disappear”; see Ward 386; Prucha, Documents 170-3. The Muscogees and other Civilized Tribes, however, were exempt from the new legislation, “form[ing] an important enclave of communally held lands”; see Prucha, Documents 187-9.
“pale-faced brothers” offers a rather anemic indictment of the racial prejudice, duplicitous promises, and violence underwriting Manifest Destiny. While restating the difference-eliding Fatherhood of God/Brotherhood of Man theology of Christian reformers, Callahan ostensibly reinforces the perception of American Indians as unsophisticated, credulous victims.212

Having promised an uncomplicated, imitative meditation upon American Indian victimry and Euro-American intervention, Callahan jarringly belies both her narrative distance from her Native subject matter and the pitiful political impotence of the American Indian. As she alludes to the genocidal dispossession and cultural displacement of North American Indians as “our afflictions,” Callahan not only includes mixed-blood tribal members like herself in this memorial to American Indian survivance, but also predicates her own textual and moral authority upon an authenticating insider perspective as “one of the oppressed” (ix). Appropriating the gender-defying strategy of sentimental female poets and novelists who transformed the frustrations intrinsic to their marginalized domestic vocation into a fountainhead of literary self-expression and a mandate for extending their spiritual authority, Callahan re-envisions the “afflictions” borne by her fellow Indians as an authorization to command the attention of the world and to inspire a politically effectual “feeling” in her readers. Callahan’s dedication invokes a unity amongst all “the Indian tribes of North America” that is predicated upon displacement and legitimizes her authorial voice as at once catalyzed by and

212 A particularly succinct statement of the liberal theological rationale of the “Friends of the Indian” is delivered by Edward H. Magill at the Lake Mohonk Conference in 1887: “The fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of the whole human family, and our duties toward God and each other, naturally springing from these relations—what fruitful themes are these for the most profitable instruction, and of such a character that all religious sects can heartily unite in them” (285). Of course, the limit to Magill’s call for doctrinal tolerance is precisely the indigenous spirituality of Native peoples, which he classifies as mere “barbarism” (283).
representative of this pan-Indian consciousness. The significance of her self-identification as an American Indian woman is further articulated in the Publisher’s Preface where it becomes central to the proper evaluation of her novel’s design and credibility: “The publishers have no apologies to offer for what literary critics may term the crudeness or incompleteness of the work. . . . We shall claim then, for this little volume this: It is the Indians’ side of the Indian question told by an Indian born and bred” (ix).

Nevertheless, even this binary of Native insiders and Euro-American outsiders proves unstable, and she, with a mixture of bicultural class-consciousness and pedantic precision, more fully elucidates her comparatively privileged sphere within the ranks of the oppressed. 213 Callahan’s dedication concedes that some tribes, some communities, some families, have fared better under Euro-American dominance than others and “prays” for “an era of good feeling and just dealing toward us and our more oppressed brothers.” 214 However she may qualify the “otherness” of the “more oppressed” through what amounts to a common experience of Euro-American domination, Callahan scrupulously underscores that she is speaking on behalf of, rather than as one of, these “brothers.” By the same token, she portrays herself both addressing and representing the

213 Although recognizing Callahan’s shifting perspectives in the Dedication, Cari Carpenter does not take into account Callahan’s and her audience’s class-conscious biculturalism and the impact of Callahan’s bicultural nationalism upon her articulation of sentimental advocacy. Overlooking how Callahan subverts the rhetoric of white female reformers and cleverly marginalizes the Euro-American reader, Carpenter misses Callahan’s promotion of mixed-blood pan-tribal advocacy on behalf of unacculturated Natives and indigenous nations: These shifts make the object of the dedication unclear—is it the Creek or another nation that is “more oppressed”? The sentimental voice that she adopts seems to demand oppressed others who are not the speaker herself, a silenced group/object worthy of the reader’s sympathy. Drawing from the conventions of Child and other white reformers, Callahan adopts the position of the powerful white reformer who denounces the treatment of Indians—a position occupied by her white heroine [Genevieve Weir]. (38-9)

214 Illustrative of how critics have underestimated Callahan’s preoccupation and identification with beset Native communities at the turn of the century, Susan Bernardin even suggests that these “more oppressed brothers” be read as African-Americans and then calls Callahan to task for having failed to follow through with one of her most provocative claims (“On the Meeting Grounds”).
bicultral constituencies of American Indian nations. That is, conveying this textual tribute to oppressed Native peoples in a language and form that would be accessible—not to mention legible—to bicultural Indians like herself, she depicts her writing situation as one in which she writes not only to but also within a community of literate, politically engaged, and self-consciously undefeated Native people. It is here, then, that she most clearly discloses her expectation of a bicultural indigenous audience whose resistant voices and cross-cultural savvy are united with her own. Indeed, Callahan’s words subtly issue a mandate to her fellow mixed bloods to join her by assuming the mantle of Native advocate for those indigenous populations and tribes whose marginalization and lack of “effective” English literacy prevents them from publicly speaking on their own behalf (Hobbs 1).

Consequently, the commonplace critical reasoning that links Callahan’s “use of sentimental and ethnographic conventions” with her “aiming for a primarily non-tribal” and by extension “white” readership simply will not suffice.\(^{215}\) Callahan’s admixture of indigenous nationalism and Anglo-American gentility was conceived, legible, and cogent not merely within the confines of a single, mixed-blood domestic circle or the precincts of a particular educational institution but within prosperous, ascendant communities and social cliques across the Civilized Nations. Within the boundaries of Indian Territory, Callahan’s ideal bicultural readers were legion and, by appealing to their polished attainments and educational ambitions, Callahan had the potential to effect political change. Of course, reading Callahan’s novel in this way means granting the mixed-blood educator and anti-allotment activist sufficient intelligence to recognize the prejudice and hypocrisy lurking beneath sentimental efforts on behalf of the Indian. Moreover, giving

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\(^{215}\) See, for example, Senier 424.
Callahan the benefit of the doubt and acknowledging a subversive logic to *Wynema*’s patchwork of rhetorical reversals and departures from generic expectations makes available a hermeneutic alternative to the popular delineation of Callahan’s “failures” and points instead to the possibility of irony or, at the very least, growing ambivalence in the face of forced allotment, genocide, and denominational betrayal.

Weaving together the biographical details of her life as a bicultural Christian Creek citizen and her commitment to female education and emancipation, Callahan composes a sentimental apology for Native sovereignty and pan-Indian unity, while underscoring the importance of bicultural women’s role as Native advocates. Notwithstanding her narrative’s increasing lack of coherence, due in large part to her idiosyncratic defense of the Sioux and their acts of resistance, Callahan skillfully combines culturally and historically specific allusions with a sympathetically homogenizing representation of Native nationality, thereby constructing an over-arching and maturing rhetoric of pan-Indian cooperation that is not fully revealed until the final phase of *Wynema*. Directly addressing the mounting threats and violence emanating from federal allotment policy, she educates her bicultural audience to interpret the contemporaneous oppression endured by the Sioux Nation as the continuation of the legal abuses and deprivations that culminated in the Civilized Tribes’ many “Trails of Tears” and also as the harbinger of the allotment crisis still looming over the sovereign nations of Indian Territory. At the same time, through her critical engagement with missionary rhetoric and sentimental literary genres, Callahan articulates her nationalist vision for Native women’s acculturative education. Deploying a complicated, polyvocal style that subverts the sentimental genres of Sunday School literature and sentimental romance,
Callahan promotes a definition of acculturation that is both selective and reciprocal between white pedagogue and Native student, while passionately refuting the “progressive” dismissal of traditional Native customs as either incompatible with either Christian values or inferior to Anglo-American mores. With its idealized vision of the Native woman as teacher, *Wynema* provides an extraordinary glimpse into how a turn-of-the-century bicultural educator revised the goals of Christian education and home missions in order to educate her female readers in the vocationally and politically empowering aspects of their indigenous heritage.216

Nevertheless, penning her novel’s final chapters in the aftermath of Wounded Knee, Callahan would find little encouragement to resist federal Indian policy from either the white leadership of the Methodist Church or the missionaries and various female associations counted among the so-called “Friends of the Indians.” Consequently, the suffering inflicted upon the Sioux Nation during the winter of 1890 proves to be the limiting case for Callahan’s articulation of Native protest through subversive sentimental tropes and rhetoric. Suddenly underscoring the tension between her rhetoric of Native advocacy and her novel’s sentimental plotlines, Callahan concludes *Wynema* with a startling reassessment of Christian education and bicultural nationalism. In contrast to its initially positive and surprisingly secular narrative of sentimental missionary efforts in Indian Territory, *Wynema* finally conveys a bitter indictment of missionaries’ and

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216 According to Peggy Pascoe, the “home missions” movement sought to expand women’s moral influence within the public sphere and was linked to other expressions of female activism at the turn of the century like temperance and suffrage (40-1, 46-7): “The members of ‘home’ missionary societies adapted the foreign missionary slogan of ‘woman’s work for woman’ to minister to groups within American borders. . . . [T]hey zeroed in on groups whose behavior seemed to them to raise the spectre of unrestrained sexuality; among them unmarried mothers, Mormons, American Indians, and Chinese immigrants” (6). In 1894, Callahan served as the correspondence secretary for the Methodist Indian Conference’s Offices of Parsonages and Home Mission Society.
biculural citizens’ apathy, attributing this insensitivity to sentimental domestic preoccupations, disciplinary intimacy, and sympathetic identification. Failing to take any initiative in placing her acculturative education at the service of persecuted “wild tribes,” Wynema never fully assumes a pan-Indian perspective and, remaining trapped in her white missionary-teacher’s disciplinary intimacy, is limited by a parochial fixation with elevating the indigenous peoples of Indian Territory. Enclosed within her domestic and pedagogical pursuits, Callahan’s bicultural heroine fails to become the cross-cultural mediator and pro-Indian activist that the novelist repeatedly gestures toward but still awaits by the end of her novel. Yet, notwithstanding her disillusionment with literary sentimentality, female reform, and Euro-American missionary intervention, Alice Callahan can be seen to convey through her conclusion’s double-tongued, visionary predictions of enduring tribal identities and indigenous cultural renewal her tenacious faith in the political effectiveness of a Native-identified female pedagogue.

The Political Maturation of Wynema’s Three-Part Structure

Alice Callahan appears to have written her novel in three phases, with each third containing its own distinctive plotline and thematic elements. The first phase begins with a brief sketch of Wynema Harjo, a little girl whose “ambition for knowledge and for a higher life” is awakened through her interactions with the Anglo-American missionary Gerald Keithly and “wonder-struck” discovery of his neighboring mission school (3). Wynema’s indefatigable desire for institutional education, coupled with her parents’ just as adamant refusal to send to her a boarding school, brings a female Methodist missionary into the Harjo home and is also credited with introducing “civilization among

217 This division of the novel is partially derived from Lisa Tatonetti who has argued that, although the novel was originally intended to conclude with the respective marriages of Genevieve and Wynema, Callahan altered her design in response to Wounded Knee (7).
the Tepee Indians” (3,5). With the arrival of Genevieve Weir, however, the story suddenly shifts its focus away from the increasing acculturation of Wynema, the full-blood prodigy, and explores instead Genevieve’s transformation into an appropriate role model for the students of Indian Territory. With her innate talent for acquiring new languages and acting as a cross-cultural mediator, Wynema is depicted as a teacher “born not made” who organizes her own school in anticipation of having a teacher and quickly acts as her instructor’s pedagogue in Native beliefs and manners (2-3). By contrast, the missionary-teacher Genevieve Weir is depicted as a well-meaning but invariably clumsy cultural outsider who must be converted by her sojourn in a de facto Creek “boarding school.” Leaving behind her family and culture, Genevieve must quickly adapt to a traditionalist home in which she faces challenges not unlike the struggles facing the many Native children who, at the time of the novel’s composition, were being plunged into Eurocentric, English-only institutions. The missionary-pedagogue experiences loneliness, a lack of effective communication in her mother tongue, and subjection to incomprehensible religious rituals and medical practices (6-29). Yet, through the tutelage of the sympathetic Gerald Keithly and under the close scrutiny of her star pupil, Genevieve eventually learns to accommodate Native traditions.218 Even as she is educating Wynema in English literature and Anglo-American social values, Genevieve is herself learning Wynema’s language, selectively accepting and participating in indigenous practices, and gradually becoming a strident supporter of Native nationalism.

Beginning with Chapter 8, the second phase of Wynema uses sentimental marriage plots to portray the positive results of selective assimilation to the language and

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218 Melissa Ryan has suggested that Genevieve and Gerald are really doubles of each other, with Gerald representing the female teacher’s “better self”; thus, Gerald’s lessons in cultural relativism are not so much an expression of patriarchal authority as they are a form of self-correction (31).
mores of another culture. Taking up the story several years into the future, Callahan redefines a true “Friend of the Indian” through Gerald Keithly’s and Genevieve Weir’s fluency in the Muscogee language, well-informed perspective on the political crises facing Indian Territory, and actuation by their respect for indigenous communal values and self-determination (30-1). For instance, as her pupil’s community grows to include “peaceful and law-abiding white settlers”—presumably Euro-Americans who respect tribal authority—Genevieve dismisses the Eurocentric logic by which an Anglo-American name for the prospering outpost would somehow “dignify it” and urges instead an indigenous name suggestive of Creek matrilineal values: “Call it Wynema. That is pretty enough for any town” (35). In the meantime, Wynema accompanies her teacher on a visit to Genevieve’s family and friends in the Southeastern U.S. and is exposed for the first time to an all-white milieu that is not without its negative cultural consequences (35-6). In contrast to the empowering multicultural perspective and self-reliance that Genevieve acquires from her adaptation to the indigenous milieu of Indian Territory, and despite the gentility, intelligence, and self-possession displayed by Wynema, the culture of the Deep South inspires feelings of racial inferiority that threaten Wynema’s happiness. Sharing a common vision for the equality of men and women, Wynema Harjo and Robin Weir, Genevieve’s younger brother, fall in love. Yet, fixated upon Anglo-American stereotypes of the Indian and well-versed in sentimental tales of forbidden love, Wynema shrinks from any public announcement of the interracial couple’s intention to marry (60-4, 67-8). As Callahan’s example of true “Friends of the Indian,” however, Genevieve and her brother neither denigrate nor deny Wynema’s cultural heritage and racial difference (62-3). Coming to the aid of her pupil-turned-sister, the idealized
missionary dismisses out of hand the idea that racial prejudice could ever mitigate her affection for her “little girl,” or as Genevieve replies to Wynema’s faltering confession of her impending marriage: “‘Mind it? Oh, you little rogue! Don’t you know I am delighted with the idea?’ embracing her warmly” (67). By the end of this second installment, both women ultimately find that their opportunities for professional success and romantic happiness are inextricably linked to the biculturalism of Indian Territory.

The final third of Wynema is much less plot-driven and reads like a pastiche of sentimental marriage plots, idiosyncratic representations of the violent prelude and aftermath to the massacre at Wounded Knee, and commentary upon the contemporaneous accounts of the tragedy that unfolded in December of 1890. Having already resolved the romantic dilemmas of her protagonists, Callahan is hard-pressed to develop her domestic romance any further and, while presenting several idealized portraits of Genevieve’s and Wynema’s domestic life, must suddenly introduce new couples whose marital futures are less certain. For example, Genevieve’s sister Bessie is romantically linked to the missionary-educator Carl Peterson who undertakes a peace mission to the Dakota Badlands (75, 77-8). Callahan also introduces the Sioux couple Wildfire and Miscona whose familial commitments are tested by the genocide occurring around them (86-88). Yet, despite these obvious efforts to extend the sentimental romance of the second installment so as to connect her primary focus on Indian Territory with the oppressive federal policies on display in the Sioux homelands, none of Callahan’s new plotlines are sufficiently developed and, hence, fail to invoke anything like the interest and sympathy of her preceding chapters.
A key reason for this underdevelopment, moreover, is Callahan’s schizophrenic movement between sugary accounts of domestic bliss in Indian Territory and her violent scenes of turmoil and death on the Great Plains. Positing Euro-American acts of genocide, rather than pan-Indian religious movements or traditionalist truculence, as the underlying cause for this interracial violence, Wynema’s idiosyncratic version of historical events exonerates the Sioux from the accusations of delusional sycophancy and factionalism circulating at the time Callahan was penning the conclusion to her novel.  

On the one hand, in contrast to her white contemporaries’ demonization of Sitting Bull, Callahan portrays him as a visionary chief who, in trying to rescue his people from the lethal policies of the U.S. government, takes his starving band on a kind of vision quest in search of an indigenous-identified Promised Land: “Then our great chief, Sitting Bull, told us the Government would starve us if we remained on the reservation; but if we would follow him, he would lead us to country teeming with game, and where we could hunt and fish at our pleasure” (96). On the other hand, Callahan refuses to legitimize

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219 James McLaughlin, the Indian Agent of Sitting Bull’s Standing Rock Reservation, and the missionary contributors to the April 1891 special issue of The American Missionary endeavored to put a decidedly cheerful spin upon the last major armed conflict between the U.S. military and the Sioux.; see also Ward 399; Black Elk 593; Ruoff, “Editor’s” xli. Perhaps the most implacable assessment of Wounded Knee comes from the Reverend G. W. Reed, serving at the Standing Rock Reservation: “The Indians of this reservation have no serious, well-grounded grievances. . . . The so-called Indian Messiah has failed to bring deliverance; there was never a better time to present the claims of the true Messiah who alone can save them from their greatest enemies—themselves and their sin” (128-9).

220 Sitting Bull’s continued resistance to federal policy only fueled the ire of James McLaughlin and certain missionaries who perceived the recalcitrant Lakota as a dangerous rival for the hearts and minds of the Sioux. After some initial hesitation, Sitting Bull decided to join the Ghost Dance Movement and was immediately depicted by his enemies as a great leader of the religion, with McLaughlin labeling him a self-appointed “high priest” of the cult in an 1891 letter to the Indian Rights Association. Similarly, Rev. Reed, in his article “Standing Rock Agency—Sitting Bull’s Death,” opines, “The new Indian religion . . . . found in Sitting Indian, as one of its prophets, a wily leader, who was willing and eager to turn the growing interest in the coming Indian Messiah into an opportunity for furthering his own selfish plans” (127). Refuting such biased accounts of the Lakota chief, Callahan accepts the rumor that the resistance leader was leading his people into the Badlands but adamantly rejects the idea that he was selfishly manipulating his people or attempting to foment insurrection with other Ghost Dancers.
Euro-Americans’ gloating descriptions of a new class of collaborative assimilationist Sioux. For example, she depicts Sitting Bull’s chief’s assassination being spearheaded by the white prejudice embodied by Buffalo Bill and his mythical West. Disdaining William Cody, a.k.a. Buffalo Bill, as a self-promoting exploiter of Native peoples, Callahan draws upon contemporaneous accounts of his cooperation with Major General Miles and reworks Cody’s special mission to bring in Sitting Bull as a scene from a carnivalesque Wild West Show (96-7). Coming to attack, rather than rescue, hapless pilgrims on the prairie, Buffalo Bill is depicted leading McLaughlin’s Indian police against Lakota refugees: “[O]ne day we saw a cloud of smoke, and there rode up a crowd of Indian police with Buffalo Bill at their head. . . . Sitting Bull fired several shots, instructed his men how to proceed to recapture him, but all to no avail, for the police were backed by the pale-faced soldiers; and they killed our chief, his son, and six of the bravest warriors” (96). In Callahan’s version of events, the Sioux are being crushed between two dire alternatives: enduring the starvation and squalor of the reservations or risking the violence threatened by Euro-Americans on the Great Plains. Furthermore, the determination to strike back at the U.S. government is not deemed inconsistent with a sincere respect for the God of Christianity: “At the close of his prayer [the missionary]

221 Declaring in January 1891 that “[e]verything is now quiet in the agency, and good feeling prevails among the Indians,” Agent McLaughlin regards the assassination of Sitting Bull and subsequent acts of violence to be a salutary intervention into Indian affairs, especially as he is now able to present the Euro-American public with an object lesson in the difference between “good” and “bad” Lakotas: “[T]he good received therefrom can scarcely be overestimated, as it has effectually eradicated all seeds of disaffection sown by the Messiah Craze . . . , and also demonstrated . . . the fidelity and loyalty of the Indian police in maintaining law and order on the reservation.”

222 In 1885, Sitting Bull joined the cast of Buffalo Bill’s wild west show (Ward 394). Apparently hoping to bring about a peaceful resolution to the impending crisis, Major General Nelson Miles recruited Cody to travel to the Standing Rock Reservation in order to convince Cody’s former employee to surrender himself to military custody. Cody was supposed to guarantee that Sitting Bull would meet face to face with General Miles (Ruoff, “Editor’s” xl; Coleman xxii). After his arrival, however, Cody discovered that McLaughlin has seen to it that his “special mission” was aborted by presidential order (Ruoff, “Editor’s” xl; Coleman xxii).
repeated the prayer taught by the ‘Prince of Peace,’ which he had translated into the Sioux language, and the ['hostile'] Indians with one accord joined with him and closed with a fervent ‘Amen.’ Carl noticed that they were all much touched, and Wildfire’s eyes were moist with feeling” (85-6). When viewed through Callahan’s bicultural Christian perspective, this portrayal of evangelized “rebels” reflects an authorial agenda of legitimizing and ennobling Native acts of defiance. 223

By the same token, it is not until this final, haphazard phase of Wynema that the novel’s narrative arc of pan-tribal unity is fully revealed. Surrendering none of her class privilege as an educated bicultural woman from a politically influential family, Callahan endeavors to elicit sympathy within her bicultural community for the tribes already subjected to the Dawes Act by obscuring the cultural differences between the Plains tribes and the Civilized Nations. 224 For instance, even the name of her indigenous heroine, “Wynema Harjo” points to a hybridization of “wild” and “traditionalist”

223 A corollary to this valorization of American Indian resistance, moreover, is Callahan’s erasure of the helpless victimhood so often associated with the events of 1890. For example, rather than thoughtfully hesitating before the noisy confusion of partisans, policemen, and looming white soldiers, Sitting Bull acts like an undaunted warrior to the very end, “fir[ing] several shots [and] instruct[ing] his men how to proceed to recapture him” (96). Similarly, Callahan rewrites the history of Wounded Knee, staging her own final battle in which Native men and women are given the chance to resist. Callahan consequently crowns her depictions of American Indian resistance with allusions to a spiritual victory that disputes the finality and totality of U.S. domination. Facing certain annihilation, Wildfire expresses the hope that God will grant the Sioux “the liberty above they will never enjoy here” (85). Finally portrayed lying side by side amongst the scattered dead, the chief and his wife are declared “free at last,” while their orphaned daughter survives to carry their legacy into the future (90). For a much more cynical interpretation of Callahan’s depiction of the events surrounding Wounded Knee, see Tatonetti. Reading Callahan’s narrative against current historical research, rather than against the number of biased accounts circulating in the press at the time Callahan was completing her novel, Tatonetti argues that Callahan’s Christianized warriors are an indication of her belief in the “eminent [sic] cultural demise” of Native peoples and that Callahan’s valorization of Native defiance is the “revival of the specter of Indian hostility” (14, 16).

224 This reading of Callahan’s pan-tribal rhetoric is derived from Elizabeth Barnes’ discussion of the homogenizing rationale informing sentimental articulations of nationality: By employing a familial model to construct a more democratic state . . . personal differences are elided in favor of a homogeneous family image. Sameness, rather than difference, offers the key to democratic equality and, hence, to national identity. (16)
indigeneity. Although popular in turn-of-the-century the Indian Territory, “Wynema” is derived from the name given to a female representative of the Modocs, a decidedly resistant tribe relocated to Indian Territory in the 1870’s (Ruoff; “Editor’s” xliii-xliv). “Harjo,” conversely, is a traditional Creek “war-title” which later became a surname (Debo 25). Exercising a significant degree of poetic license in her free association of traditional cultural characteristics, Callahan thus engages in a most fundamental sentimental convention: that of sympathetic identification. That is, she blurs the lifeways of the “wild tribes” with the linguistic and ceremonial signifiers of traditionalist Creek full bloods, thereby making her idealized unassimilated Indians basically interchangeable.

Callahan even goes so far as to present the lifeway of the “Tepee Indian” as representative of the kind of social order that the antecedents of her mixed-blood readers knew before their forced removals from the Southeast.225 Having established that Wynema’s village is located “miles from the nearest trading post,” the narrator’s direct address to traditionalist, “peaceable Indians” reinforces the idea that the white man has yet to challenge the cosmology or disturb the cultural complacence of these sheltered people: “Here you may dream of the happy hunting-grounds beyond, little thinking of the rough, white hand that will soon shatter your dream and scatter the dreams” (1). Yet,

225 For Craig Womack, the suggestion that nineteenth-century Creeks were living in teepees is not only inaccurate but insulting and an example of the worst sort of Eurocentric propaganda (115-16). For other critics including Ruoff and Bernadin, Callahan’s introduction is more of a romantic flight of fancy or a concession to Euro-American stereotypes that demonstrates the author’s distance from Creek tradition and contemporary life (Ruoff, “Editor’s” 105; Bernardin). Nevertheless, by the late 1880’s there were Plains tribes—Kiowas, Comanches, Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Poncas—residing within Indian Territory which were just beginning to attract the missionary efforts of the Methodist Indian Conference; see Noley 175, 179-80, 242-3. Furthermore, there were Creek “full blood settlements” where English was not spoken and to which white and mixed-blood women were traveling in order to teach; see Debo 308-9. Thus, Callahan’s vision of traditional lifeways and home missions in Indian Territory was not drawn out of thin air or based upon Anglo-American fiction, as some critics would like to argue.
by shifting from the impending destruction of a singular dream held by Wynema’s people to the “scatter[ing]” of multiple dreams, the narration signals an expanded relevance and address. Reminiscent of the politicized voice of complaint seen in Jane Schoolcraft’s “Contrast,” Callahan suddenly invokes the nostalgia of a post-lapsarian, bicultural audience whose ancestral homes have already been ravaged by encroaching Euro-Americans and their acquisitive culture: “Here is a home like unto the one your forefathers owned before the form of the white man came upon the scene and changed your quiet habitations into places of business and strife” (1). Asserting that the village of teepees is similar to but, nevertheless, not the same as “the one your forefathers owned before the form of the white man came upon the scene” (1), Callahan appeals to her mixed-blood readers’ sympathies and transforms the habitations normally associated with Plains tribal culture into a reminder of the Civilized Nations’ coherent lifeways before their removal.

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226 As if to further reinforce this connection between “wild” and “civilized” Indians’ experiences of colonization, Callahan pairs the grieving Creek-identified widow Chineka with the bereft Lakota wife and mother Chikena. Both Chineka and Chikena are described as the similitude of an Old Testament woman who mourns an irrational act of violence. Callahan’s peculiar comparison of Muscogean mourning practices with the emotional sincerity exhibited by Eve, the first woman according to Judeo-Christian mythos, also alludes to the first occasion for mourning or the grisly image of brother killing brother and the loss of the peaceable and, hence, “well beloved son” (24). The name “Chineka,” then, is associated with not only the loss of a husband but also the unjust loss of a son, foretelling the pathetic bereavement suffered by the Lakota woman Chikena. In turn, the comparison of Chikena with the Biblical Rizpah points to the women’s similar vigil over the bodies of their dead family members and a much more obscure, yet nonetheless disturbing, congruence: “Like Rizpah of old, on the Gibeah plain, she took her distant station and watched to see that nothing came near to harm her beloved dead” (90). That is, this allusion to Rizpah additionally suggests that the soldiers’ cruelty at Wounded Knee was motivated by a desire for revenge. Just as the Israelites initially saw a Divine judgment at work in the Gibeonites’ execution of Rizpah’s loved ones (II Sam. 21.1-14), the American people would tolerate and even celebrate the massacre at Wounded Knee as Divine retribution for the Lakotas’ defeat of Custer and his Seventh Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Indeed, Callahan’s awareness of a connection between the tragedy of 1890 and Custer’s defeat in 1876 can be seen in her reference to Philip Sheridan’s “terrible ride” (88). Sheridan, who in 1874 forced the Plains Indians onto reservations by sending five columns to ride against the tribes “relentlessly, depriving them of rest, or the opportunity to hunt,” actually orchestrated the disastrous 1876 campaign against the resistant Plains tribes and later swore that “Custer would be avenged” (Ward 283, 298, 304).
Callahan goes on to depict the Lakotas’ painful transition to reservation life as the counterpart to the psychological and physical traumas of the Civilized Nations’ “Trail of Tears” and the political uncertainties still confronting Indian Territory. On the one hand, the Lakotas’ reservation-era struggles with an untoward climate and other environmental hardships are reminiscent of the misery and loss of life suffered by those who had made the arduous and often dangerous journey from Georgia and Alabama to present-day Oklahoma (Callahan 80, 84, 95). Steamboat disasters, unfamiliarly frigid winters, flash floods, disease, and hostile neighboring tribes all took their toll on the Southeastern exiles. Most importantly, the Lakotas’ starvation at the hands of American bureaucrats mirrors the failure on the part of the United States to live up to its promise to provide the Civilized Nations with material support in the land of Removal; a failure which would have a particularly personal meaning for Callahan, resonating as it does with her family’s own history of suffering and displacement. On the other hand, the hostile warrior Wildfire’s description of pre-Reservation culture is just as applicable to the pre-Removal gender roles amongst the Creeks, Cherokees, and other tribes that were displaced from the Southeast (Callahan 80-1; Perdue 15): “In the old days we were free; we hunted and

227 See Foreman, Grant 156-8, 161-3, 164, 174-7, 184-5, 187; Debo 103, 132. Lucy Lowrey Hoyt Keys, an 1855 graduate of the Cherokee Female Seminary, similarly recounts the details of her people’s post-Removal trials in her 1889 memoir: “The difference of climate was a severe tax on their health, and many of them died. Besides this, they were obliged to be always on their guard, on account of the Osages, who were continually continuing depredations, as driving away their horses and cattle, & c. All this led to long and troublesome wars with the Osages” (84).

228 Like the vast majority of Muscogee emigrants, the journey of Alice Callahan’s grandmother to Indian Territory was marked by physical suffering and personal loss. Traveling in the spring and summer of 1837, Amanda Doyle Callahan arrived in the new Muscogee Nation a widow, her white husband having died of “privation and exposure” along the way, and relied upon the charity of a fellow member of Cussetah Town in order to support herself, her four-year-old son Samuel, and her one-year-old daughter. See “Misc. Roll of Creek Self-Emigrants”; Ruoff, “Editor’s” xiii. Underscoring the federal government’s failure to honor the terms of the 1832 treaty according to which material support would be provided to the emigrants for one year (Debo 99), the husband of Polly Fitzgerald requests reimbursement in an 1870 claim for the “transportation and subsistence” that the Fitzgerald family provided Amanda Callahan and her children.
fished as we pleased, while our squaws tilled the soil. Now we are driven to a small spot, chosen by the pale-faces, where we are watched over and controlled by agents who can starve us to death at their will” (80-1). Interestingly enough, despite Euro-American assessments of Native women’s agricultural toil as aberrant and a sign of their demeaning status (Weist 29-33), Callahan does not offer any suggestion of disapproval. Instead, she permits Wildfire to treat women’s cultivation of the soil, and by extension the labor of her Creek ancestors, as normative and even idyllic. Furthermore, while denotatively referring to the immense buffalo herds that were supported by the Great Plains before the explosive growth of Euro-American settlements and rail transportation, the Lakota widow Chikena’s reference to the “plenty of land, plenty of cattle” that her people once possessed also points back to the pre-Removal Civilized Tribes whose noteworthy engagement in raising “cattle” greatly contributed to these nations’ prosperity and influence (Callahan 95). 229 Given the importance of the cattle industry to the fortunes of Callahan’s own family as well as to the Muscogee Nation’s economy, Chikena’s words also allude to the valuable property still held by the Civilized Nations and now threatened by the Dawes Act (Ruoff, “Editor’s” xiv; Hill 322). Indeed, lending further support to Callahan’s analogy between the political crisis looming over the Civilized Nations of Indian Territory and the suffering endured by the Sioux in 1890, Lakota lands, like the still-exempt territory tenuously held by the Civilized Tribes, had not yet been allotted (Ward 394).

It is, then, this congruity between the consequences of allotment for the antebellum Creeks and the turn-of-the-century western tribes that underwrites Callahan’s

229 See Saunt, especially Chapter 6 “New Roles of Women and Men,” 139-63; Martin 79-84, 102-8; McLoughlin 186-7; and Hall.
warning that not even the acculturated heroine Wynema should consider herself exempt from the duplicity and violence whereby the “white brothers” would gladly strip and starve “poor, ignorant, improvident, short-sighted Indians” (52). Urging her pupil-turned-pedagogue to discount the pro-allotment rhetoric aimed at bicultural men and women, Genevieve Weir argues that the traditionalist Indians will “be persuaded and threatened into selling their homes, piece by piece, perhaps, until finally they would be homeless outcasts” (52). Moreover, just as the missionary-teacher educates Wynema to be a more wary reader of federal Indian policy, so Callahan exhorts her bicultural audience to interpret the current allotment crisis in Indian country with both a historical and a sentimental perspective. That is, through her allusive description of the threat

230 By the same token, Wynema complicates any exclusive correlation of “oppressors” with Euro-Americans. For example, Callahan minces no words in condemning the corruption of the Creek government in which her own father served. Recounting the 1825 execution of the mixed-blood William McIntosh, she argues that the contemporary politicians who have been complicit in the mishandling of the nation’s 1889 per-capita payment are analogous to the pre-Removal chief and delegate who surreptitiously conspired with the United States to exchange Creek lands for personal profit. For more on William McIntosh’s violation of tribal law and subsequent execution see Young 37; Perdue, “Mixed Blood” 44; Foreman, Grant 20. In turn, since “not an arm was raised in defense of the poor Indians stripped of their bread-money,” Callahan foresees that the Creek government’s vulnerability to bribery and scandal can only invite the scorn, interference, and exploitation of the United States: “Who can declare with truth that money is not a power which the rulers of the world cannot withstand? . . . [T]he Indians learned a lesson there from, and they were not the only learners” (my emphasis, 33). Substantiating Callahan’s concerns, historian Angie Debo points out that American politicians, who in 1899 had set up their headquarters in Muskogee, were not only pressing the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles to allot their landholdings and terminate their national sovereignty in compliance with the 1887 Dawes Act but were also wasting no opportunity to disparage and demean the character and effectiveness of the various tribal governments (347). At a time when Native self-determination is under attack across North America, Callahan publicly excoriates the unscrupulous character of certain politically influential Creeks—in many cases bicultural mixed bloods—and casts them as oppressors who aid in and abet the Euro-American oppression of Native peoples. An intriguing aspect of Callahan’s historicism, therefore, is that she is able to perform a kind of self-critique, exposing the role that acculturated mixed bloods have played in the U.S. government’s defrauding of the Creek Nation. Urging an end to intra-tribal factionalism and asserting the importance of pan-Indian unity, she condemns the selfish corruption of collaborative bicultural Indians, reclaims the value of indigenous ethics and customs, promotes the intellectual equality of full bloods, and posits oppression as the historical common denominator that binds together all Native peoples.

231 This reading was shaped in part by Janet Dean’s depiction of “Callahan’s reading lesson”: Most notable . . . is a shift in the sense of what reading can and should produce in both white and Native American readers . . . . [N]ot just emotion, but carefully crafted, well-informed positions on the situation for Native Americans in a white dominated society.
posed by the Dawes Act for traditionalists in Indian Territory and “hostiles” on the Great Plains, Callahan urges progressives to read federal Indian policies against the events of the past fifty years or the history of their own families’ dispossession and suffering. At the same time, these sophisticated mixed-blood readers must also sympathetically identify with the plight of their fellow Indians, without regard to class divisions predicated upon blood-quantum, education, or other signifiers of Anglo-American “civilization.” As Wynema’s emotional response exemplifies, Callahan wants her acculturated readers to envision themselves as one of the “improvident, shortsighted” victims of the American politicians’ deception (52): “I dare say I should be one of the first to sell myself out of house and home;’ and the girl hung her head, looking the picture of humiliation” (53). Callahan thus educates her progressive readers to place the sufferings of the Plains tribes within a much more personal context of the land loss and economic hardships that have systematically followed upon the heels of the United States “negotiations” for Indian lands.

Consequently, Callahan’s ambitions as an author as well as an activist can be seen to mature even as her narrative loses much of its former coherence. On the one hand, the final phase of Wynema undertakes an innovative validation of American Indian resistance that overtly struggles against the anti-Indian prejudice being disseminated by federal personnel, Euro-American missionaries, and the American press. On the other hand, while undermining the Euro-American fixation upon Native inferiority and

Sentimental reading produces uncomplicated feeling . . . ; critical reading, in contrast, produces political action. (6-7)
Jaime Osterman Alves, in a very thoughtful and persuasive reading of this same scene, similarly points to Callahan’s pedagogical emphasis upon Wynema’s maturing reading habits. That is, the schoolgirl gradually develops from a naïve child who fully trusts in the “right” sentiments of white print culture to a sophisticated adult reader capable of detecting journalistic duplicity and of savoring “irony and sarcasm” (102-7).
culpability, Callahan not only champions American Indian self-determination but also translates the massacre at Wounded Knee into yet another shameful chapter in what, for the Civilized Nations, amounts to a familiar history of fraud and depredation at the hands of the United States government. It is, moreover, within this context of a common experience of displacement through U.S. allotment policy that Callahan depicts Wynema sharing her home with the elderly Lakota widow Chikena and rearing Wildfire and Miscona’s orphaned daughter as her own. Ending her novel in Indian Territory and envisioning her bicultural heroine sheltering the survivors of Wounded Knee, Callahan ultimately endorses pan-Indian cooperation in the face of American oppression and territorial encroachment.

**Callahan’s Sentimental Subversion of Missionary Rhetoric**

From the very first paragraph of her novel and continuing into her narrative’s final phase, Callahan deploys an intensely fraught, polyvocal style that serves as her novel’s chief detraction as an object of aesthetic value but also provides a surprisingly apt and sophisticated iteration upon sentimental rhetoric. Persistently subverting the sentimentality supporting Anglo-American efforts to proselytize American Indians, Alice Callahan re-envisions how the mutually reinforcing aspects of Native cultural tradition and acculturative pedagogy can actually facilitate indigenous women’s nationalist participation in the political future of their people. A third-generation Methodist and an active participant in the home missions movement, Callahan was clearly well-versed in Sunday School literature, a juvenile sub-genre of sentimental discourse inculcating lessons in manners, ethics, and the importance of personal conversion on the part of those
who are fair- and dark-skinned alike.\textsuperscript{232} That is, in a clear imitation of the saccharine condescension and anthropological curiosity with which Christian children’s tales typically portray the redemption of “foreign” or economically marginalized children from un-Christian settings, Callahan begins her narrative: “In an obscure place, miles from the nearest trading point, in a tepee, dwelt the parents of our heroine when she first saw the light. All around and about them stood the tepees of their people, and surrounding the village of tents was the great, dark, cool forest” (1). Seemingly laying the groundwork for a denouement of spiritual transformation or Wynema’s before and after “reveal” as a Christian Indian, these initial sentences subtly lay bare the overlapping language of piety and racial prejudice, education and ethnocentrism. In the contrast between the “great, dark, cool forest” that literally surrounds the “savage” child and her people and the “light” that she is destined to see, Callahan unveils the current of binary logic running just beneath the surface of this sentimental discourse. Denotatively representing the indigenous characters’ progress toward intellectual, moral, and spiritual illumination, such oppositions of light and darkness neatly dovetail with racially prejudiced discourse and, as Sánchez-Eppler observes, “work to prop repressive imperialistic policies and practices” (189): “Under the racial logic that colors spiritual uplift there can be no wonder that dark things are done by dark people” (211). In her following paragraphs, moreover, Callahan overtly elaborates upon this surreptitious racial content: “Gerald Keithly, [was] a missionary sent by the Methodist assembly to promote civilization and

\textsuperscript{232} Brief, often sensationalized narratives that were distributed by missionary organizations and crafted so as to accommodate a classroom or recreational reading context, Sunday School stories seek to transform boys and girls into evangelists who will spread Anglo-American domestic values as well as the Gospel within their homes and communities (Sánchez-Eppler 206, 218). For more on Sunday School literature see Sánchez-Eppler xxiii, 206, 208, 211-13, 218.
christianity [sic] among these lowly people. Tall, young and fair, of quiet, gentle manners, and possessing a kindly sympathy in face and voice, he easily won the hearts of his dark companions” (my emphasis, 2). Resonating as it does with Harriet Beecher Stowe’s well-known subtitle to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, “Life Among the Lowly,” lowliness and ignorance are the provenance of dark peoples like the Indians, whereas those who are fair-skinned possess the light of gentility and spiritual truth.

Simultaneously, however, Callahan’s hostility to Sunday School literature’s underlying racial rhetoric is revealed through her sudden interjection of a blatantly derogatory and animalistic epithet into the middle of her novel’s introduction: “[T]he men, the ‘bucks,’ spent many hours of the day in hunting, or fishing in the river that flowed peacefully along in the midst of the wood” (1). That Callahan found the term “Indian bucks” personally offensive can be seen in her caustic response to American journalists’ depiction of Wounded Knee: “With a few slight skirmishes, the papers say, only the death of a few “Indian bucks,” the war of the Northwest ended. . . . It is not my province to show how brave it was for a great, strong nation to quell a riot caused by the dancing of a few “bucks”—for civilized soldiers to slaughter indiscriminately Indian women and children” (92-3). Furthermore, after the jarring appearance of this racist terminology, Callahan’s condescending depiction of an indigenous and “idolatrous” cultural milieu quickly devolves into a series of intrusive extra-textual quotations that upset any sense of narrative authority (1). Commandeered by trite Anglo-American expressions and stereotypical phrases that direct the reader’s attention to the Indians’ inferior otherness, the second paragraph fails to maintain even a superficially sympathetic perspective and falters in its attempt to comprehend a cultural landscape devoid of the
Euro-American institutions that disseminate sentimental social values: “Here are no churches and school-houses, for the ‘heathen is a law unto himself,’ and ‘ignorance is bliss,’ to the savage” (1-2). Rather than providing a simple description of the faith held by “happy, peaceable Indians,” the introduction appears to warn the reader against tolerating, much less admiring, Native self-government and disparages Native peoples as ignorant heathens.

And yet, just as Callahan’s seemingly sympathetic introduction is inscribed with an increasingly transparent vocabulary of racial prejudice, so her ostensibly biased commentary upon unassimilated Native culture has, at second glance, a surprisingly subversive edge. On the one hand, Callahan’s quotation from “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College” (1747), Thomas Gray’s sensibility poem mourning the loss of childhood’s carefree optimism, appears altogether consistent with the colonial depiction of indigeneity as “infantile—a cultural stage to be outgrown,” or as Sánchez-Eppler explains: “The nineteenth-century child and the heathen to be converted prove such apt and powerful metaphors for each other because both are viewed as ambivalent embodiments of wildness and innocence” (210-11). On the other hand, the “ignorance” which Gray describes is hardly a matter of either book smarts or Anglo-American social values: “Alas, regardless of their doom, / The little victims play!” (lines 54-5). Childhood in Gray’s “Ode” is marked by a naïve complaisance that ironically leaves the youth vulnerable to heartache and disillusionment. In turn, Callahan’s conflation of this nostalgic poem with her vision of a pre-contact Native village suggests that the Indians’ supposed “ignorance” is best understood as their inability to comprehend—as yet—their culturally tenuous position: “Yet see how all around ‘em wait / The ministers of human
fate, / And black Misfortune’s baleful train!” (58-60). In a decidedly politicized
depiction of the “fate” and “Misfortune” looming over the American Indians, Callahan’s
Natives are steadily surrounded and stalked by a “rough, white hand” or extraneous
ideological forces threatening to deplete their body politic (1).

Consequently, for readers already conversant with the content of Gray’s poem,
Callahan’s assertion that “ignorance is bliss” conveys, at the very least, a coded
ambivalence toward the Euro-American missionaries’ agenda to educate the American
Indian. That is, the “Ode” initially advocates a pedagogical intervention or “to show”
the juvenile mind where life’s dangers lurk, consequently replacing “ignorance” with
worldly-wise cynicism (58,60). Upon further consideration, however, Gray concludes
that it is better not to open the eyes of these “little victims” for fear of “destroy[ing] their
paradise”: “No more; where ignorance is bliss,/ ‘Tis folly to be wise” (98-100). Although
promoted by Gerald Keithly as the means for instructing Native “children in the better
ways of their pale-faced friends,” the schoolhouse in Callahan’s novel is also the sign of a
post-lapsarian fall from cultural innocence into a bicultural awareness of encroaching
white cultural values and the “worse ways” of “pale-faced” enemies (2-3).

Furthermore, contrary to John F. Littlefield Jr.’s assertion that the quotation
“heathen is a law unto himself” was probably “a common anti-Indian expression used in
the late nineteenth century by whites in Oklahoma” (Ruoff 1,105), the clause actually
interjects a forceful apology for Native morality that is derived from John Wesley’s gloss
on the Epistle to the Romans. Excoriating hypocrites who disdain those without the
written Law of God, the Apostle Paul warns that God is an impartial judge: “Indeed,
when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are
a law for themselves, . . . since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts’ (New International Version, Rom. 2.11,14-15). Interestingly enough, Wesley’s Notes on the Bible translates the term “Gentiles,” which obviously encompasses most Euro-Americans and Natives alike, as “heathens,” clearly undermining the racial binaries of Sunday School literature (Wesley). That is, whites, converted or not, become technically “heathen” too. Furthermore, in Wesley’s reading of these verses, by virtue of the presence of God’s “preventing grace” in their lives, “heathens” without an “outward rule” or body of written precepts can still satisfy God’s requirements for their lives: “The ten commandments being only the substance of the law of nature.” Thus, Callahan’s Biblically-based quotation undermines the privileging of Anglo-American social institutions over the morality and cultural practices of those unlettered “heathens” who are, nonetheless, “righteous.” Predicating her positive vision of traditional Native cultures upon not mere sentiment but upon the Bible and John Wesley himself, Callahan also reveals her ideological distance from her fellow Methodist workers. For example, the idealized Indians that Callahan describes are a far cry from the 1899 assessment of the Plains Tribes living in Indian Territory published by the celebrated Methodist missionary J. J. Methvin: “[T]here never was a people, perhaps in whom there was so little upon which to base a hope of building a civilization. No homes or home life, no enterprise, no written language; . . . their religion that of bloody revenge, the conscience and moral instinct dead” (Andele 25). In stark contrast to her contemporaries, Callahan depicts American Indians not as spiritually illiterate fiends but, appropriating Wesley’s words concerning righteous heathens, as “a law unto

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233 For more on the life, popular ministry, and insensitive rhetoric of Callahan’s contemporary J.J. Methvin, see Methvin’s Andele and “Reminiscences”; and Babcock.
themselves—That is, what the law is to the Jews, they are, by the grace of God, to themselves; namely, a rule of life.”

Interestingly enough, although her white missionaries will spread the “Good News” concerning “the love and mercy of a Savior, of the home that awaits the faithful,” and the benefits of acculturative education (2), Callahan is strikingly silent as to the “dark deeds” from which Wynema and her people need redemption, or as Gerald Keithly readily admits, “[T]hese Indians have long ago laid aside their savage, cruel customs and have no more desire to practice them than we have to see them do so” (28). Callahan’s evasiveness on this point, moreover, marks one of her narrative’s most telling departures from Sunday School sentimentality. That is, despite its rather generic, proselytizing introduction, Callahan’s novel is not concerned with a Native child’s conversion to Christianity: Wynema does not feel crushed under the sinful weight of her “aberrant” culture, is never depicted reading the Bible, and at no point in the narrative does she or her family members declare themselves to be Christians. Nor is the reader offered any scriptural prescription for placing his or her faith in Jesus Christ. Rather, Genevieve’s response to her Native pupil’s latent spiritual unrest subverts the Eurocentric overtones of not only Sunday School sentimentality but also disciplinary intimacy: “‘But Mihia [Teacher],’ returning to the subject nearest her heart, ‘you ‘fraid God?’” (7).234

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234 This first dialogic exchange between Genevieve and Wynema also subverts Lisa Tatonetti’s assertion that Callahan’s representation of Christian education in Indian Territory endorses “the most classic form of colonization” or the “release[ of] forces within colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all” (6). Echoing Karen Sánchez-Eppler’s assertion that the endpoint of all mission education must be the “simultaneously converting and reaffirming [of] racial difference” (Sánchez-Eppler 202), Tatonetti ignores Callahan’s bicultural spin on conversion and promotion of pan-Indian nationalism. Indeed, what neither Lisa Tatonetti nor Karen Sánchez-Eppler even stop to consider is a bicultural perspective on this question of God’s cultural orientation or whether Native-identified Christians like Callahan really did accept the Eurocentric bias of Euro-American missionaries and passively conceptualize their God as a “white” deity antagonistically opposed to traditional cultural values. For her part, Alice Callahan contributes a surprisingly acrimonious voice to nineteenth-century American Indian literature’s
Describing Wynema’s spiritual intimidation as the “subject nearest her heart,”

Callahan not only foregrounds the alienating potential of prejudiced religious discourse but also resists this Eurocentric version of mission-school pedagogy. Taking discipline through love from out of the white, middle-class domestic sphere and deploying it in the cross-cultural classroom of Indian Territory, Callahan seeks to redeem the concept of conversation on the repercussions of Euro-American hypocrisy. Introducing the words of a Creek editorialist “Masse Hadjo” as “com[ing] to the front” in defending the Dakota Ghost Dancers, Callahan chooses to articulate without apology or rebuttal a decidedly scathing assessment of white religious rhetoric:

The Indians have never taken kindly to the Christian religion as preached and practiced by the whites. . . . You say that if we are good, obey the ten commandments and never sin any more, we may be permitted eventually to sit upon a white rock and sing praises to God forevermore, and look down upon our heathenly fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers in hell. It won’t do. The code of morals practiced by the white race will not compare with the morals of the Indians. . . . The white man’s heaven is repulsive to the Indian nature, and if the white man’s hell suits you, keep it. I think there will be white rogues enough to fill it (73-4).

Rather than representing the Lakotas’ newfound faith as an escapist response to territorial loss and starvation, Callahan suggests that the Ghost Dance be understood as both an innovative solution to the philosophical obstacles confronting Native converts to Christianity and also a creative act that borrows in part from the Western tradition in order to validate American Indian culture and character. The Ghost Dance Movement is not simply “a religion. . . .adapted to [Native] wants,” but also a divinely ordained “better religion—a religion that is all good and no bad” (75). Yet, this declaration of indigenous spiritual superiority, which so thoroughly complicates Craig Womack’s dismissal of Wynema as a “Christian supremacist tract” (116), also portrays the American Indian embrace of Christianity as an embrace of Euro-American corruption and violence. While ostensibly qualifying his critique of Christianity by limiting his remarks to “the Christian religion as preached and practiced by the whites,” the relativism with which Hadjo allows that “nearly every nation” or race has claimed a “Messiah” ultimately works not only to eradicate any distinction between “the cause of Christ” and the acquisitive agenda of prejudiced Euro-Americans but also to circumscribe the spiritual beliefs that can be deemed legitimately available to Native peoples (73). Arguing that Christian Indians are complicit in the intolerance which condemns their family members as “heathens,” Masse Hadjo dismisses the possibility of either a particularly indigenous comprehension of the Gospel or a distinctively Native American approach to Christianity. Consequently, Masse Hadjo’s commentary also illustrates the relative ease with which a pluralistic theology of separate spiritual paths and Messiahs can become commandeered by a rhetoric of reverse ethnocentrism: “You are anxious to get hold of our Messiah so you can put him in irons. This you may do—in fact you may crucify him as you did that other one—but you cannot convert the Indians to the Christian religion until you contaminate them with the blood of the white man” (74). Masse Hadjo’s editorial, even as it strikes a resounding blow for pan-Indian sovereignty and spiritual syncretism, recapitulates the Euro-American fixation with blood quantum and divisive stigmatizing of bicultural mixed bloods as inherently faithless opportunists. Incorporating this polemical apology for the Dakota Ghost Dance into a novel that is so clearly preoccupied with promoting pan-tribal unity, Callahan acknowledges both the uplifting “viability” of indigenous spiritual innovation and renewal (Senier 434) as well as the perilous volatility of any religious rhetoric that, having been compromised by essentialist discourse, narrowly defines American Indian authenticity and life choices. Even the language of pan-Indian resistance, Callahan seems to warn, can be made to imitate the psychologically demoralizing rhetoric of racially prejudiced Christian missionaries, separating Native-identified peoples into opposing camps.
God through a “strategic relocation of authority relations in the realm of emotion and a conscious intensification of the emotional bond between the authority figure and its charge” (Brodhead 71). For example, persistently universalizing her depiction of God as the “All-Father,” Callahan calls attention to His sentimental authority. In direct opposition to the fire and brimstone commonly associated with the Methodist church in nineteenth-century American Indian Literature, Callahan’s missionary-pedagogue privileges God’s unconditional love, rather than His eternal judgment, as His most compelling aspect: “He loves you when you are bad, and when you are good. . . . He will love you always” (7). Key to this sentimental rhetoric, moreover, is the analogy that Genevieve makes between God’s authority and the affectionate bond between an American Indian child and her parents. Indeed, the all-surpassing love of Callahan’s All-Father is best understood by contemplating the parenting practices seen within indigenous homes: “Are you afraid of your father and mother?” (7). In the course of reiterating the Christian belief that God’s infinite love is greater even than that felt by parents for their children, Callahan validates Native child-rearing practices as

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235 For example, the Pequot Methodist minister and Native rights activist William Apess recalls his precocious responsiveness to angry evangelical sermons on “the everlasting misery of the ungodly,” while finding himself literally surrounded and corrupted by a “hell” of Euro-American vices (9, 12, 19, 25). From Apess’ perspective, the appropriation of Christian rhetoric by avaricious, prejudiced whites has severely strained the possibility of cross-cultural interaction and adaptation for American Indians as well as for “good” missionaries (33). Like William Apess, the Ojibwe missionary and lecturer George Copway recounts how his “deeply distressed” reaction to a Methodist sermon that dwelt upon “the bad place, the judgment, and the coming of a Saviour” is later given new, tangible meaning by the godless violence, vulgarity, and appetites of some white men (49). Finally, the Paiute interpreter, lecturer-activist, and educator Sarah Winnemucca recounts how a Methodist missionary’s sermon leaves the young Paiute girl with a very vivid and dire image of hell’s eternal punishment but apparently without a hint of Christ or an impression of the possibility of salvation (54-5). While rightly observing that, “given Sarah’s experiences, the reality of hell on earth would have needed little explanation,” Sally Zanjani’s summary of Winnemucca’s recalled encounter with “firebreathing” Christian rhetoric as ultimately underscoring “the verities of Paiute belief” overlooks Winnemucca’s perspicacious insight into how Christian doctrine could be manipulated to undermine Native culture and unity (52). While the Paiutes hope for cultural renewal and unity in the afterlife, the missionary predicts a hopeless continuation of the suffering and separation experienced in this world.
emotionally satisfying, effective, and—most importantly—normative, while scrupulously highlighting the absence of corporal punishment from the Native parent-child bond:

‘[W]hen I am bad girl, I feel sorry and go off. . . . Then my ma and pa ought whip me, but they don’t,’ the child replied” (7.) Consequently, what God requires of Wynema is not assimilation to Euro-American cultural standards but, within the context of Wynema’s confession of domestic disobedience, the moral effort to love the “All-Father” and to respect her Native parents: “try to love Him and be a good girl.” Instead of “alter[ing the] cultural priorities” of Wynema’s community (Tatonetti 6), Genevieve actually endorses the authority of Native family values in the course of articulating the All-Father’s affective commitment to humanity. As a result, the missionary-pedagogue earns the trust of Wynema and the other students who are more willing to adapt this white woman’s spiritual lessons and English language to their own worldview: “After this the children seemed to listen to the morning services more seriously and attentively, and before many weeks elapsed were able to join with their teacher in repeating a prayer she taught them” (7). Effective spiritual rhetoric, in Callahan’s narration, does not terrify children and denigrate indigenous cultures, but does affirm the inalterable, irrevocable value of Native people.

Interestingly enough, this scene marks the only portrayal of Wynema’s spiritual beliefs, leaving unstated whether she eventually converts to Christianity. Rather, in an intriguing reversal of the Sunday School genre, it is the missionary Genevieve Weir who is portrayed as having to convert. So long as she refuses to respect and accommodate the culture of her Creek hosts, she suffers alienation and, when she refuses to partake of her hosts’ food, even illness. In an imitation of the condescending gaze and genteel
pretensions of not only Euro-American bystanders but also the preceding generation of
Indian Territory’s acculturated Cherokee “Rose Buds” and Chickasaw “Blossoms,”
Callahan’s narrator offers a rather disdainful account of Native cuisine: “[Sofke] . . . is
rather palatable when fresh, but as is remarkable, the Indians . . . prefer it after it has
soured and smells more like a swill-barrel than anything else” (11). Playing to the
dismissive attitudes of her mixed-blood as well as white readers, Callahan offers a
significant degree of insider’s knowledge about traditional Muscogean foods but
carefully distances herself from the lifeways of the “past”: “We of this age are constantly
talking and thinking of ways and means by which to improve our cookery to suit our poor
digestive organs. How we would hold up our hands in horror at the idea of placing blue
dumplings on our tables!” (my emphasis, 11). The embodiment of this “progressive”
faith in the superiority of Anglo-American domestic norms, Genevieve Weir descends
upon the Harjo home confident that Wynema’s family will necessarily adapt themselves
to her language and diet.

Callahan’s observation that “we are a much more dyspeptic people than the ‘blue
dumpling’ eaters” (11), however, signals her priggish narration’s ultimate reversal as
Genevieve’s diet and cultural prejudice are ultimately found wanting. Substantiating the
underlying healthfulness of indigenous cuisine, little Wynema unabashedly stares at her
would-be pedagogue’s unfamiliar experience of illness (12). Wynema’s mother, coming
to assess the stricken teacher, also intones some disbelief, but for a different reason. Well
aware of her supercilious guest’s disgust with “Indian dainties” and communal eating
practices (11), Mrs. Harjo greets the ailing educator with the question, “What eat?” (12).
In turn, the arrogance and limitations of the schoolmarm’s one-way approach to
acculturation becomes all too apparent: “‘Yes; I do not care for anything to eat,’ Miss Weir replied; thinking, ‘Oh, I shall starve to death here if I am sick long’” (12). Unable either leave her bed or to understand even the most simple questions posited in broken English, Genevieve’s attempted self-segregation from Native language and customs ironically leaves her passively subject to her hosts’ efforts to relieve her distress from their cultural vantage point.

In turn, selective adaptation to her new cultural surroundings is portrayed as the much-needed prescription for the ailing missionary. Humbled by fever, Genevieve accepts, however begrudgingly, her hosts’ traditional Muscogee remedy: “The ‘medicine man’ came in directly and looking at the patient closely, took his position in the corner, where with a bowl of water, a few herbs and a small cane, he concocted his ‘cure alls.’... [T]he medicine was offered to the patient, who made a pretense of taking it” (13). Thrown out of balance physically as well as psychologically by her stubborn adherence to the traditions of her Anglo-American upbringing, the missionary’s strange cultural encounter and half-hearted participation with indigenous custom leads to a much-needed awakening of her own initiative: “After that dignitary, the ‘medicine man,’ had retired, Genevieve used the few simple remedies at hand, known to herself, and to her joy and surprise, was able to resume her school duties on the following day. The ‘medicine man’ was never called to wait upon Miss Weir again” (13). Although Genevieve Weir does not become a true believer in the Muscogee medicine man, she has learned that a combination of cultural compromise and self-reliance are the means for remaining in good health in Indian Territory. Indeed, the idea that something remarkable has occurred
here is indicated by the “joy and surprise” with which Genevieve greets her sudden “healing.”

Of course, for many critics, Genevieve’s “pretense” of participation in indigenous ritual and failure to convert to an unquestioning faith in traditional Muscogee spirituality are illustrative of her continued ethnocentrism and a sign of Callahan’s inability to represent Native culture. What such criticism overlooks, however, is that Callahan requires only partial assimilation from both her red and her white students. Just as Genevieve’s pupils learn to repeat a Christian prayer in English but are not depicted as becoming baptized church-goers, so Genevieve learns to imitate the words and actions of her newfound indigenous community, strategically assimilating to the cultural demands outside of her classroom (7). In spite of the sentimental logic underwriting Callahan’s depiction of reciprocal acculturation, or her impulse to establish consonance and unity in the place of difference, the Native student and her Euro-American teacher become like each other, not by completely assimilating to either an Anglo-American or American Indian cultural orientation, but through their shared partial adaptations and broadened cultural perspectives. Ultimately, then, it is the Euro-American missionary who must

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236 See for example Womack 112; Senier 431; Ryan 33-4.

237 Kara Mollis has similarly argued that Callahan is actually creating a space for cultural differences to be respected:

Instead of endorsing Native Americans’ control and modification of a classical European education, the novel gestures toward education that does not eradicate cultural difference but promotes respect for diverse cultural traditions; this promotion grounded in a connection between cross-cultural respect and the deconstruction of interpersonal barriers (123-4).

The tensions between sentimental domesticity and Indian protest at the close of Wynema, however, complicate Mollis’s ultimate assertion that Callahan redeems sentimentality, and particularly sympathetic identification, from its homogenizing logic: “[S]entimentalism is not fundamentally in contradiction with ethnic or racial pluralism but rather, in the hands of writers such as Callahan, can promote an appreciation for cultural difference ” (124).
come to see “the light.” Penitently confessing that, with regard to the “innocence” and propriety of traditional Creek customs, she “can never see things as they are, in the true light.” Genevieve resolves, “I think if we always do what seems best to us, after investigating to the best of our ability, and praying it all out to the great ‘Father confessor,’ we shall not go wrong” (my emphasis, 28-9). Thus, this “light” of reciprocal acculturation, with its concomitant and divinely mandated cultural relativism and self-reliance, ultimately underwrites the first third of Callahan’s novel and her depiction of the cross-cultural classroom.

Although Callahan’s increasing reliance upon sentimental marriage plots signals that she is no longer contending against the racially biased discourse of Sunday School literature, her novel’s subsequent phases continue to revise the prejudiced assumptions of Methodist home missions, while illustrating the politically and sexually liberating possibilities for the Native woman as teacher. Challenging her Anglo-American contemporaries from within the home missions movement who insist that a conscientious missionary must promote the Dawes Act (Pascoe 46), Callahan celebrates Genevieve’s independent analysis of American promotional rhetoric and depicts a pedagogue whose first-hand observations of life in Indian Territory inspire her to educate her student to value the protection emanating from an indigenous legacy of common land tenure and self-government. In a telling reversal of home missions logic, moreover, the cross-cultural interactions of the mission field become a form of female rescue for Genevieve Weir. That is, Genevieve returns to Indian Territory not to shield Wynema from indigenous “male-dominated social orders” but to save herself from her southern suitor,

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238 That is, as Elizabeth Barnes asserts: “Something is ‘sentimental’ if it manifests a belief or yearning for consonance—or even unity—of principle and purpose” (23).
who “cannot believe in a woman coming out in public in any capacity” and has “long-
cherished [the] hope of owning” her (Pascoe 13, 51, 56-9; Callahan 49, 56). Depicting
home missions as a corrective to the gender constraints of middle-class America,
Callahan predicts Karen Sánchez-Eppler’s analysis of the empowering side to women’s
devotion to missionary endeavors, or as she observes in a gloss upon what Jane Hunter
describes as “the paradox of the missionary experience”: “In practice, missionary work
afforded white American women power, independence, and authority well beyond the
possibilities of normative domestic roles. . . . [M]issionary women ‘extolled the virtues of
the evangelical woman’s sphere at the same time that their lives were celebrating their
surprising and abundant liberation from its bonds’” (220). Within Indian Territory,
Genevieve can assume a public role and exert her female moral authority, while finding
in Gerald Keithly a marital partner who shares her religious and political convictions (49,
56-8, 66, 70). Genevieve Weir does not “rescue” Indian Territory, but Indian Territory
does, indeed, rescue her.

Meanwhile, like Alice Callahan herself, Wynema illustrates the burgeoning
opportunities for an educated bicultural woman to deploy her moral authority against the
deficiencies of Euro-American men and women. Having become a schoolteacher in her
own right and, as such, the arbiter of all things grammatical and genteel, Wynema
exemplifies the “correct . . . use of [English] words” for Genevieve’s little sister Winnie,
whose slang is comparable to Wynema’s broken speech at the start of the novel, and
checks Robin’s lack of polite restraint as he assumes the role of cultural mediator (43-4),
in a reversal of the dialogic exchanges seen in the novel’s initial phase.239 Furthermore,

239 By the same token, Wynema’s pursuit of knowledge, passion for teaching, and genteel literary
discrimination all suggest that the educational systems within Indian Territory have every hope of success
in her passionate defense of the temperance movement and women’s suffrage as the answer to Indian Territory’s ongoing violence and unrest, Wynema singles out the gender prejudice of “the great government of Uncle Sam” for perpetuating the problem of alcoholism within Native communities (44-5). Nor are Wynema’s eloquent, measured, but nonetheless caustic criticisms of Euro-American culture limited to white men. Equally critical of American women’s failure “to gain their liberty,” Wynema faults her supposedly “more civilized white sisters” for not securing their own enfranchisement and providing an “example which [Native women] shall not be slow to follow” (44-5).\footnote{While admitting “that historically women did not speak in the councils,” Craig Womack has famously complained that Callahan ignores the political power enjoyed by Muscogee women, particularly in “traditional culture”: “[S]he has erased at least half the culture. Creek traditional culture involves a delicate balance of women and men wherein clan is based on matrilineal descent and town membership of one’s mother’s town. . . . The councils would literally not be able to exist without women’s clans and women’s towns” (117). Nevertheless, Callahan’s controversial suggestion that female emancipation in Indian Territory was dependent upon women’s activism and social change in the U.S. does have more than a little substance of historical truth. As has already been observed, the bicultural elite of the Civilized Nations adhered to Anglo-American gender values, and the 1867 Muscogee Constitution was modeled after the political system of the United States; see Debo 182-3. In other words, at the turn of the century, the Muscogee Nation had a Euro-American-style government, and Muscogee women did not vote. Womack, consequently, seems unable to decide whether he wants to read \textit{Wynema} against Callahan’s grasp of past or contemporaneous Muscogee culture. Melissa Ryan provides an additionally helpful response to Womack’s objections: Craig S. Womack argues that Callahan overstates the subordination of women in Creek culture. . . . Richard A. Sattler, on the other hand, suggests that Creek women were indeed disenfranchised, though he cautions that the data typically were passed form male Indians to male ethnographers. “Women were expressly excluded from participation in political affairs. They held no exclusive offices and were eligible for none of those held by males. . . . Any man who was known to listen to the opinions or advice of a woman without the interference of the United States federal government. Furthermore, Wynema’s adult refinement, like her precocious English literacy and hunger for virtue, challenges the Euro-American conflation of intellectual enlightenment with blood-quantum, while also undermining the prejudice against full bloods harbored by some bicultural progressives (Mihesuah 80-2). For example, during the first phase of \textit{Wynema}, Callahan makes it a point to contrast her Native heroine’s discriminating and polished literary education with the “spurious matter” consumed by white children in Alabama (the pre-Removal residence of the Callahan family) and particularly emphasizes Wynema’s appreciation for the poetry, fiction, and drama so highly valued by the bicultural Cherokees and Chickasaws (Callahan 23, 61, 67): “It is amusing to see her curl up over Dickens or Scott, and grow animated over Shakespeare, whose plays she lives out; and it is interesting to watch the different emotions, in sympathy with the various characters, chase each other over her face” (23). As Siobhan Senier observes of “the rhetoric of Indian educability” deployed in \textit{Wynema}, “Rather than reinforce evolutionary assumptions about savagery and civilization, it suggests rather that American Indians are, like whites, equally entitled to self-determination” (429).}
Callahan here appears to be playing upon her fellow mixed bloods’ vanity regarding the
civilization displayed by the elite bicultural men and women in comparison to
neighboring white communities. That is, Callahan insinuates that the educated female
citizens of Indian Territory who are impatiently awaiting the actions of “more civilized”
American women are, in fact, more progressive than their laggard white “sisters.” Yet, by
suggesting that even the most acculturated women of Indian Territory are at the mercy of
Anglo-American politics, Callahan’s rather bleak political commentary is more than a
jibe aimed at urging her fellow bicultural women into independent action. Indeed,
complicating Cari Carpenter’s assertion that Callahan’s own participation in the
temperance movement made her “affiliated with ‘American women’ [as] a specifically
gendered and national entity”(35), Wynema’s critique of Euro-American women and an
overbearing U.S. government reinforces the novel’s adherence to bicultural nationalism,
as Callahan pedantically distinguishes her Native heroine from American culture and
women.

Finally, then, Callahan dramatizes the mutually reinforcing aspects of Native
tradition and home missions for Wynema’s pedagogical ambitions. For example, in an
obvious nod to Creek matrilineal tradition, Robin Weir does not become an Anglo-
American-style patriarch who subsumes his Native wife’s identity and ambitions in an
Alabama home but, rather, journeys to Indian Territory in order to live with his wife’s
people (72). Accommodating himself to Wynema’s culture and home, Robin also
assumes his wife’s bicultural nationalism or her life-long desire to bring institutional
education to her community and, with the additional aid of his sister Bessie, helps to

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became subject to ridicule.” . . . Early missionaries, in introducing . . . wifely
subordination, disrupted traditional social roles, and may have brought about the
inequality. (43)
establish “Hope Seminary” for Native girls (77, 94, 99-100).\footnote{This plot development becomes all the more subversive, moreover, given the 1888 federal statute regarding the “Marriage between White Men and Indian Women.” That is, Wynema’s marriage to a Euro-American would have given her dual citizenship or citizenship in the United States as well as in her respective indigenous nation (Prucha, Documents 175).} Resisting the idea that Wynema’s acculturation must inevitably lead to her assimilation to American society and citizenship, Callahan portrays Muscogee matrilineality as a crucial precedent for the affective and professional success of the Native woman as teacher. Although Genevieve and Wynema are both happy mothers, the indigenous pupil-turned-pedagogue enthusiastically combines marriage and motherhood with her pedagogical vocation, whereas the white missionary has clearly resigned her classroom endeavors in favor of traditional middle-class domesticity.\footnote{See Ruoff, “Two Ideas” 129.} By the end of the novel, therefore, Wynema’s empowerment as a bicultural teacher clearly exceeds the constrained options offered her by sentimental Anglo-American values.

Beginning with a depiction of tolerant, reciprocal acculturation rather than Americanizing assimilation as the successful model for mission-school education in Indian Territory, Callahan’s novel systematically reconsiders the mutually empowering aspects of Wynema’s traditionalist “past” and acculturated present. Engaging in a sentimental version of self-definition, Callahan invites her bicultural readers to see themselves, or rather the repressed cultural heritage of their Native alter egos, through the eyes of sympathetic white missionaries, or as Elizabeth Barnes explains with regard to sympathy’s imaginary epistemology: “Self-scrutiny is . . . mediated by the projected sentiments of an objective bystander, but a bystander invested with our own subjective impressions. . . . In other words, we must enter into the sentiments of others before we
can truly understand our own‖ (21). Callahan’s narrative, in turn, spins this mediated self-scrutiny into a fantasy of Native validation as Genevieve simultaneously reevaluates her own Anglo-American cultural values under the gaze of an intrinsically healthy, feminine, and sincere Indian woman. Commandeering more than a century’s worth of Anglo-American rhetoric predicated upon the symbolic resonances of the American Indian, Callahan treats both the white missionary-teacher and the red traditionalist woman as mirror-like “liminars” who enable her mixed-blood readers to contemplate the pros and cons of their present biculturalism and to revise their notions of Native nationality and womanhood (Flint 8-9). Although Callahan, like other bicultural women, is eager to claim for herself the intellectual pursuits, decorum, and comforts seemingly derived from Anglo-American “civilization,” Callahan romantically—and strategically—privileges the customs of her “ignorant and uneducated” people for their unhampered emotional immediacy and spiritual authenticity over the artificial niceties, materialistic etiquette, and, not least of all, social passivity demonstrated by many so-called “True Women.” As Wynema deftly asserts when her earnest feminism is mocked as the mere imitation of her Anglo-American instructor’s

243 Over the course of Genevieve’s trials, Callahan can also be seen to invert the colonial discourse that, as Karen Sánchez-Eppler observes, predicates “assertions of cultural superiority . . . on the comparison of domestic norms” (211). Although describing the practices of the medicine man as “picturesque and weird,” Callahan’s narrative nonetheless insists that “the M.D. of every race has his peculiar modus operandi” which, in the case of the medicine man, should be judged by the fact that Wynema and her mother come from “a healthy people” (13, 16-17). Despite the incomprehensible style of dancing and the terror-inspiring music “for this girl unaccustomed to such sights,” Callahan also defends the traditional busk or green corn dance on the grounds of feminine propriety or Native women’s “more sensible,” “modest,” and “moderate” approach to dancing than that displayed by the typical Southern socialite (20-2). Similarly, the narrator’s comparison of mourning rituals in Indian Territory with New York widows’ genteel performance argues that Native women have a greater sincerity and purity: “Here was no fashionable grief with its dress of sable hue, its hangings of crepe and stationery with its inch-wide band of black, such as Madison Square widows use” (my emphasis, 24).

244 See Halttunen, especially 124-52.
enthusiasm: “I have the greatest respect for [Genevieve’s] opinions; but the idea of freedom and liberty was born in me” (45). Dramatizing the moral and political advantages of adapting, rather than simply dismissing, indigenous social values, Callahan urges bicultural women like herself to exert their moral authority in an indigenized version of female rescue that endeavors not only to elevate indigenous nations but also to defend these nations’ right to cultural and political self-determination.

The Sympathetic Borders of Indian Territory:

Sentimental Romance, Bicultural Nationalism, and Stifled Native Resistance

By the end of 1890, the United States’ readiness to enforce the Dawes Act with violence was all too apparent. What was also made plain in the aftermath of Sitting Bull’s assassination and the Massacre at Wounded Knee was the ideological distance between bicultural Indians who, like Callahan, were committed to Native self-determination and the Eurocentric “Friends of the Indian” whose commitment to Manifest Domesticity and female moral authority had clearly made them unreliable allies. Illustrating, in turn, an indigenous reaction to the un-sympathetic responses of female reformers and especially the official silence of the Methodist Indian Mission Conference regarding the bloodshed in the Dakotas (Noley 242), the final phase of Callahan’s novel is marked by a decided skepticism toward Anglo-American sentiment. That is, the final seven chapters of Wynema dramatize Euro-American missionaries’ almost laughable and utterly inadequate responses to the genocidal policies of the U.S. government. Key, moreover, to this unexpected reconsideration of her indigenous

245 See especially Indian Troubles—Effect on our Missions, an 1891 special edition of the journal The American Missionary, and Melissa Ryan’s discussion of the suffragette Reverend Anna Shaw’s insensitive dismissal of Sioux intelligence and resistance at the 1891 meeting of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, 38-9.
heroine’s constant tutelage in Anglo-American social values and literary sentimentality is Callahan’s repeated portrayal of how a prosaic preoccupation with domesticity actually thwarts the expression of American Indian advocacy. Time and again, the discourse of American Indian protest and pan-Indian cooperation labors to take the textual center stage only to be undercut and subsumed by the generic demands of a sentimental marriage plot. Ultimately, then, her narrative’s lack of discursive harmony reveals Callahan’s increasing ambivalence toward the divided loyalties and self-centeredness of sentimental women and missionaries.

Perhaps Wynema’s most troubling example of sentimentality undermining the articulation of Native protest can be seen in the exchanges between the “hostile” Sioux leader Wildfire and his pathetic wife Miscona. Demonstrating an unprecedented degree of care and intense reflection in constructing a rhetoric of indigenous patriotism and self-sacrifice, Callahan grants to Chief Wildfire an eloquence and political insight unequaled by any other character, white or red:\[^{246}\] “[I]s it right for the nation who have been trampled upon, whose land, whose property, whose liberty, whose everything but life, have been taken away, to meekly submit and still bow their heads for the yoke? Why the very ox has more spirit than that” (85). That is, in the course of offering this tribute to the fallen so-called savages, Callahan also exposes the comparative meagerness of the white oppressors’ supposed “wisdom” and “civilization.” Provocatively critiquing the Methodist journal *Our Brother in Red*, which remained noticeably silent on the subject of U.S. acts of genocide (Noley 241-2),[^{247}\] she challenges the journal’s confident motto

[^{246}\] See also Senier 432.

[^{247}\]
“Christian Education the Hope of the Indian” and questions the value of acquiring a Western education: “Tell me, you who are wiser—are learned in the arts and sciences of all times—tell me, it is right for one nation to drive another off and usurp their land, take away their money, and even their liberty?” (84-5). Suggesting that knowledge without moral discernment has not improved the white man, Wildfire’s words underscore the un-Christian education in legal stratagem, rhetorical cunning, and violent technology that Native peoples have received at the hands of the Euro-Americans. Based upon a cogent analysis of his people’s recent ordeals of removal, starvation, and murder, Wildfire demands some logical guarantee of United States policy transformation and is prepared to embrace armed resistance in the absence of such change (80): “You speak of my wife and children. . . . It is for them I resist. . . . that my sons may not grow up the oppressed wards of a mighty nation—the paltry beggars to whom the pitiful sum of one cent is doled out, when the whole vast country is theirs by right of inheritance” (85).

Despite the persuasive force of Wildfire’s words, however, his logic fails to pierce through the sentimental rhetoric of his wife Miscona who clings not only to her husband but also to a complete denial of the genocide being perpetrated around her (86). Whereas Wildfire is ready to sacrifice himself for the cause of Lakota liberty and human rights, Miscona gives her allegiance to romantic love and values her role as wife above the more abstract concerns existing outside of her immediate affective ties: “If you stay here you will be killed, and what happiness could your devoted wife ever expect to have? When I left my father’s tepee to go with you, you promised to love me and take care of me

247 According to Jaime Osterman Alves, “Our Brother in Red and the Harrell Monthly—two newspapers for which Callahan wrote—disallowed articles of a secular or a political nature” (107), a rule which was apparently used to justify the Methodist Indian Mission’s official silence regarding Euro-American acts of genocide.
always” (86-7). Wildfire’s narrative of Native suffering and the preponderant justice of Native resistance is consequently derailed by the sudden interjection of a marriage plot that manages to accomplish more than either the pleas of white missionaries or the pacifism of the tribal elders. Temporarily breaking up his military camp and suspending his crucial strategizing, Wildfire escorts Miscona back to the reservation where she hopes to “allure him in and keep him” (87). Failing, however, to transform indigenous domesticity into a sentimental snare capable of overcoming her husband’s sense of honor and duty to his people, Miscona and the other Lakota women abandon their feminine sphere, provocatively associated with the reservation, but only in order to deploy domestic pathos once again in an assertion of not just “love” but also female moral authority. Invading the male-identified battlefield, Miscona and her followers continue to argue against armed resistance by risking their and their children’s safety (88-9). Even when she finds herself face-to-face with merciless white forces, Miscona stubbornly fixates on the futility of Native resistance without ever acknowledging the justness of Wildfire’s actions: “It is a lost cause. You will die and I will die by your side, my husband” (89). Perhaps an indication of the depth of Callahan’s anger over the increasing hegemony of federal Indian policy, the violent disposition of the U.S. government makes not only masculine defiance but also the pacifistic assertion of female influence a pointless exercise that inevitably leads to “a submission extorted by blood” (96).

Given Callahan’s earlier advocacy for “woman coming out in public” and assuming a political identity as an activist and voter, however, this depiction of the Lakota women’s self-sacrifice is not only troubling but also inconsistent (49). As willing
to lay down their lives for their sentimental values as the warriors are for the ideals of freedom and human dignity, these women should be the fulfillment of Wynema’s suffragette faith that women will one day be “stand[ing] grandly by the side of that ‘noble lord of creation,’ his equal in every respect” (45). Nevertheless, the outcome of the Sioux women’s public act of protest against the violence that threatens their domestic vocation seems equivocal at best. Bearing with them a contagious lack of disciplined organization and strategy, the Lakota women ultimately bring confusion to the already overmatched warriors, or as Wildfire bitterly cries: “Good and gracious Father, Miscona! You have lost the battle for me” (89). Another way of understanding the fate of these women, in turn, is to recognize that Callahan’s portrayal of Lakota women, and of Miscona in particular, is part of much larger pattern in which Anglo-American sentimentality thwarts American Indian protest and resistance. For example, in a self-conscious gesture, Callahan describes the chieftain’s wife as “fair,” imbuing her with the attractiveness, purity, and phenotype normally associated with Callahan’s white sentimental protagonists (86). “Fair” is the repeated attribute of the white missionary Gerald Keithly, in contrast to the adjectives “dark” and “dusky” applied to Wynema and Lisa Tatonetti similarly recognizes that by making “women . . . central to both the overall plot and the outcome of the massacre,” Callahan’s text “is radically different from the majority of other stories about Wounded Knee (15). Taking matters into their own hands and publicly refusing to remain in the domestic background while their husbands fight and die, “these women no doubt speak to Callahan’s beliefs about female agency. Instead of docilely accepting their husbands’ orders, the Lakota women . . . come together to choose their own destinies” (19).

248 Lisa Tatonetti similarly recognizes that by making “women . . . central to both the overall plot and the outcome of the massacre,” Callahan’s text “is radically different from the majority of other stories about Wounded Knee (15). Taking matters into their own hands and publicly refusing to remain in the domestic background while their husbands fight and die, “these women no doubt speak to Callahan’s beliefs about female agency. Instead of docilely accepting their husbands’ orders, the Lakota women . . . come together to choose their own destinies” (19).

249 Of course, one could perceive in Miscona’s characterization as a sentimentalized Lakota wife Callahan’s strategy for creating sympathy for the female victims of Wounded Knee, a task made especially challenging after the bad press from the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Given Callahan’s allusions to Sheridan’s and Forsyth’s desire to exact revenge for the death of Custer and the decimation of the Seventh Cavalry, she may have been familiar with the antipathy aroused against Lakota women in 1876, after newspapers describing Custer’s “last stand” suggested that Indian women had acted as co-belligerents and included sensational headlines screaming, “Squaws Mutilate and Rob the Dead!” (qtd. in Ward 304). Thus, in Callahan’s fictionalized depiction of events, tearfully clinging True Women posing as Lakota wives actually lose their lives trying to prevent their husbands from going on the warpath. Yet, this sentimental reading still overlooks Callahan’s pattern of pitting domestic romance against Native self-defense.
her people (1-2).\textsuperscript{250} Both beautiful and connotatively light-skinned, absorbed in her domestic concerns, and voicing a mixture of tender entreaties and reproaches couched in submissive dependence, Miscona is Callahan’s indigenized True Woman, or as Tatonetti notes: “Miscona’s tragic speech—that of a classic Anglo romantic heroine—bears little resemblance to what one might expect from a nineteenth-century Lakota woman. . . .\textsuperscript{251}

[T]he implicit patriarchal dynamic of Miscona’s tearful appeal is based on a white, rather than Lakota view of marriage” (18).

Moreover, as a sentimental woman who stubbornly refuses to identify with martial ideals and nationalist causes that transcend or may even threaten to undo her own domestic circle, Miscona illustrates what Peggy Pascoe calls “one of the major limitations of the ideology of female moral authority” or the uncompromising belief that a woman’s influence and “status” are entirely “depend[ent] on her role as wife and mother” (58). On the one hand, the strictures that Anglo-American gender roles place upon women’s life choices and political influence deny True Women, red or white, any tangible power, or as Wynema observes during her impassioned defense of women’s suffrage: “[W]hat can a little band of women, prohibited from voting against the ruin of

\textsuperscript{250} Further underscoring Miscona’s distinctiveness from other Native women in the novel, even Wynema herself, who at one point refers to herself as “a little black Indian,” at most merits Callahan’s approbation as a “witching, mischievous, dark-eyed little beauty” (60, 62).

\textsuperscript{251} For Tatonetti, because Alice Callahan was “an assimilated, Christian, mixed-blood woman from the Muskogee aristocracy,” the novelist was simply out of her cultural depth when attempting to depict an unassimilated female perspective: “Sans faces, sans personalities, and except for Miscona’s hyperbolic entreaties, sans voice, Lakota women are doubly other in the mythic terrain of Callahan’s Dakota” (20). Tatonetti is correct, moreover, in two regards: Callahan fails (because she is not genuinely undertaking) to portray culturally accurate, three-dimensional Lakota women; and what Callahan is trying to articulate through the vehicle of Miscona and her Sioux sisters has its basis in the Euro-American gender values of Callahan’s bicultural milieu. Tatonetti is incorrect, however, in asserting that all full-blood Lakotas are shadowy, dark figures in Callahan’s prose, however they may have appeared to the author’s imagination: “Their only trait is darkness, which as an undifferentiated and slightly ominous marker of race, subsumes every other facet of their identity” (20).
their husbands, sons, and fireside do, when even the great government of Uncle Sam is set at defiance?” (45). On the other hand, political impotence is hardly the only or even the most serious consequence of sentimental women’s domestic fixation. Rather than becoming committed to her people’s well being, Miscona’s relegation to her own hearth begets a stunted, self-centered perspective that inadequately confronts the genocide threatening Native peoples across the Americas. What her ultimately debilitating assertion of female moral authority dramatizes, then, is Callahan’s growing ambivalence toward the political commitments of sentimental women. Ill-equipped to sacrifice her romantic ideals, to look beyond the parochial confines of her domestic attachments, and to “stand grandly by the side” of men thoroughly committed to the fight for Native self-determination, the sentimental wife is simply not the equal of her indomitable Native husband. Unprepared for a life beyond the gendered realm of nurture, Miscona, like Genevieve and even Wynema herself, lacks a truly equalizing mentality that empowers her to envision a vocation, influence, or authority outside of the home or the classroom.

Interestingly enough, it is a distinctly pedagogical articulation of sentimental ideology, or the missionary Carl Peterson’s irresponsible deployment of disciplinary intimacy, that predicts Miscona’s domestic pathos and first tests Wildfire’s willful determination to resist. Having traveled to the Dakotas not simply to aid the oppressed Sioux but also to manufacture a “reconciliation” between his former congregants and the U.S. government (83), Peterson’s pacifist rhetoric insistently demeans the Native warriors by positioning them as dependents or children for whom protection and just

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252 The female characters’ sentimental undermining of Native protest, in turn, complicates Melissa Ryan’s argument that Callahan is linking “female sovereignty to tribal sovereignty” through her simultaneous development of proto-feminist marriage plots and repudiation of allotment in the novel’s second installment (37).
dealing is aroused by abject vulnerability: “Go into the reservation and surrender your fire-arms . . . Place yourselves in a submissive attitude, and the Government will protect you; you will not be starved again” (80). Of a piece with this vision of Native dependency, Carl Peterson’s authority is made analogous on more than one occasion to the deference commanded by Wildfire’s mother. For example, momentarily relaxing his tenacious resolve under the sentimental force of the missionary’s pleas, Wildfire declares that, despite his willingness to give his “right arm” to Peterson, he would not “give up [his] liberty, never, no not to my mother” (83). In his final words with Peterson, the warrior even bequeaths to his white friend a treasured memento associated with the Sioux matron (86). Peterson’s one-sided mediation and presumptuous patronization of the Sioux is established, moreover, upon his affective role as a spiritual and intellectual pedagogue, a role linked to the domestic tutelary complex and middle-class motherhood. Within the emotional economy of sentimental ideology, selfless devotion and intense tutelage should result in the “influence” necessary to introject Peterson’s conception of what is “right” into his former pupils. Thus, he points to his “many years” of faithful service to the Sioux in order to elicit feelings of trust, gratitude, and—not least of all—guilt in light of the warriors’ supposed recalcitrance: “‘I worked among you many years preaching to and teaching your people. I hoped I might, for this reason, have some influence over you. I hoped to win you over to the side of right; but I have failed,’ Carl answered sadly” (83).253

253 See Brodhead 73: “[Disciplinary intimacy] can spare the rod because it has created a nearer and surer enforcer. In its correctional system ‘self-reproach’ or the subject’s self-consciousness itself (appropriately molded by others) becomes ‘the whip that scourges his faults.’”
Peterson later redoubles his emphasis upon the futility of physical resistance with an overt reference to “discipline through love” or by pointing out that his perspective, no matter how counterintuitive to the best interest of the Sioux, is nonetheless based upon love (84). Observing the tears evoked by the warriors’ recitation of “the Lord’s Prayer” in their Siouan dialect, he even becomes so shameless as to conflate the very voice of God with his own naïve confusion of self-defense with revenge: “Remember what I say now—it comes from the Bible you love to hear so well. God says these words: ‘Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay.’” (86). Thus, in light of Carl Peterson’s outraged revulsion at the bloody standoff in the Great Plains and subsequent disillusionment with federal Indian policy, his belated conversion to Wildfire’s political vision underscores how a deployment of sentimental discipline against Native victims of injustice is both misguided and destructive: “I often think with a shudder . . . of the terrible retribution in store for our Government on account of its treachery and cruelty to the Indians. Wrong is always punished. ‘Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay.’ . . . [S]urely will the hand of the Lord be laid heavily upon the United States Government” (102).

Foregrounding Euro-American missionaries’ cultural insensitivity and inadequate attempts at intervention, the final phase of Callahan’s novel also revises the preceding

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254 Indeed, Peterson’s abuse of sentimental authority resonates with Callahan’s repeated depiction of Genevieve’s son or little Gerald Keithly Jr. and his clumsy, overbearing expressions of affection. Like his missionary parents and extended family members, the little boy is intrinsically drawn to Native children and is uncomfortably persistent in his efforts to nurture them. That is, “Gerlie” is so inordinately fond of his mixed-blood cousin and the three orphaned Lakota infants that watchful adults must actually intervene lest he inadvertently harm the objects of his charity: “Gerlie wants to nurse and play with them all the time; but here would not be much of them left if I allowed him to; for he would ‘love’ them to death” (100). As can be seen by Genevieve’s own behavior, the unrestrained affection and authority that the adults model for the little boy easily stifles the infantilized Indian: “‘See how he is kissing and loving [his cousin], now. Let her alone Gerlie, you will make her cry,’ and [Genevieve] caught up her little namesake, almost smothering her with kisses” (100).
depictions of Wynema’s blossoming intellectual and genteel accomplishments under Genevieve’s disciplinary intimacy. That is, the “impatient” passion that urges Gerald to strive for “the boon of [Genevieve’s] love and life-companionship” also ultimately narrows the missionary-pedagogues’ actions to Indian Territory and specifically the educational institution upon which their domestic circle now depends (66). Indeed, conjugal bliss has transformed Genevieve and Gerald into ineffectually sympathetic white settlers.\footnote{Perhaps, then, in his wry response to Carl Peterson’s disgust with settlers who “will not leave [Indian Territory] alone,” Gerald Keithly prepares the reader for the equivocal outcome of his gaining “his heart’s desire” and signals Alice Callahan’s own misgivings over the competing demands of spiritual selflessness and sensual sentiment:  

\begin{quote}
You are too hard for me, Peterson, unless it be that people have the same feeling about the territory as cattle have for hay when it is well fenced in. . . . [C]ows are peculiar animals, desiring what they should not have and refusing what they should have. . . . Thus it is with the white people, I suppose (66).
\end{quote}

Just as the inexorable white settlers, encouraged by the ideology of Manifest Destiny, struggle to obtain what should not belong to them or the lands that were given as compensation to the post-Removal Indian nations, so Gerald endeavors to claim for himself “the little compensation” of Genevieve’s Christian service, asserting his belief that “God will not deprive [him]” of this erotic desire, and thus articulating his version of Manifest Domesticity (72, 66).} For example, Gerald’s first of a minuscule number of statements evinces significantly less concern for the plight of Native peoples: “I notice the Indians living on the reservation in Dakota are in trouble, and I fear, if their requests are not granted, the white settlers will have to suffer for it. I hope there will be no trouble” (71). Apparently, Gerald is most attuned to trouble for pioneer families like his own, since he himself has just observed that the Sioux have been experiencing nothing but trouble since their removal to reservations and their subjection to the Dawes Act. Genevieve, meanwhile, has surrendered her pedagogical “life’s work” and Native advocacy to sentimentalized domestic attachments. Light-heartedly downplaying her former stridency on the issue of Native self-determination, while “attending to the wants of little Master Gerald, . . . the pet and idol of his mother’s heart” (71), she is now nearly silent on
the suffering that she had predicted for the “wild tribes” forced to allot and fails to
comment on the U.S. government’s transformation of the Sioux from a free nation to
“homeless outcasts” (50).

In turn, as the sentimental prioritization of marriage and procreation takes
precedence over the missionaries’ former concern for Native rights, the emotional
preoccupations that deplete Gerald and Genevieve of their sense of duty to the Indians
also relegate Wynema’s sympathetic labors to the borders of Indian Territory, or, more
precisely, to the very city limits of the Town of Wynema (35). Dismissing the
impending genocide on the Great Plains as “this other matter” that distracts her focusing
upon more pressing—and pleasant—news from home, Wynema herself postpones any
further discussion of the Sioux and instead quickly segues from a brief account of her
female seminary’s success to her intended topic of domestic romance: “[Robin] is as
enthusiastic over educating the Indians as I am, and sometimes I tell him he is more so.
And Bessie is the same way. I tell her she will be running away with one of our warriors;
but I rather think she prefers one of your pale-faces” (77). In stark contrast to the stories

256 Interestingly enough, the troubling after-effects of Wynema’s constant tutelage in Anglo-American
gentility and literary sentimentality first become evident as Wynema contemplates a journey to the all-
white context of Alabama. For the first nine chapters of Wynema, Genevieve’s pedagogy, both as an
educator and as a student of reciprocal acculturation, is clearly made possible by the sufferance of the
Harjos and their desire to realize their daughter’s intellectual potential (4). However, as her narrative
progresses, Callahan reveals the tension between Wynema’s loyalty to her parents and the affective
demands of Genevieve’s discipline through love. Deploying “the influence of love” in order to open
“doors that giant force could not set the least ajar,” Genevieve Weir has become her pupil’s “Alma Mater”
and is not too modest to assert a motherly claim (23): “‘My little girl has grown so dear to me that I dislike
to part with her for even a short while,’—and Genevieve placed her hand on her friend’s arm. That stroke
won the battle and Genevieve had her way” (35). As the narration makes clear, Genevieve’s speech and
strategic caress are nothing less than a rhetorical conquest that enables the missionary’s will to supersede
that of either Wynema or her parents. Genevieve portrays herself as not only Wynema’s parentally-
mandated guardian but also, after years of devotion, a second mother in her own right and rescripts “her
way” as a mere restatement of what the Harjos themselves want for their daughter: “Your mother and
father will be glad to have you see something of the world beyond this little village, and I know they would
rather trust you with me than with any one” (35). For Wynema, in turn, loyalty to one mother means
disregarding the hopes and affection of another.
of displacement, starvation, and violence related by the “hostile” Indians, this disruptive portrayal of happy courtship, marriage, and childbearing in bicultural homes heartlessly proceeds “as merry as a marriage bell” (79). As she displays such a startlingly perfunctory pity for the plight of the Sioux, Callahan’s indigenous heroine is clearly still influenced by Genevieve’s example.

Trained in but also trapped by a sentimental pedagogy of female nurture in the home and classroom, Wynema fails to take any initiative in aiding the Sioux until they literally enter into the precincts of her female seminary. Nevertheless, by placing the Lakota widow Chikena within Wynema’s domestic sphere, Callahan establishes a tension between Genevieve’s lingering disciplinary intimacy and the battle-hardened experience and un-sentimental perspective of a traditionalist Native woman. Drawing Chikena into a familial relationship based upon shared emotion rather than blood, Wynema’s attentions seemingly resonate with sympathetic identification and the extension of the middle-class home: “Then Wynema took the old woman’s hand and kissed her softly, remembering the dear ones she had left behind in the burying-ground of the battle-field; and she spoke words of sympathy” (94). Wynema fails, however, to assimilate the Lakota woman to sentimental values and, rather, reinforces Chikena’s cultural separatism. Having once visited Wynema’s seminary home, Chineka clearly prefers to remain in the shelter of a mixed-blood family and, when tactfully asked whether she intends to return to Genevieve’s family where she had resided for “some weeks” (91, 94), explicitly states that she prefers Wynema because she is an American Indian woman (99): “Not yet,” she replied. “I love Wynema, for she seems like my own people to me. You are all very kind to me, but you are not Indian” (99). On the one hand, notwithstanding the kindness
shown her by white missionaries, Chikena remains understandably alienated from those who “are not Indian” and will not forget her own identity and the domestic circle violently taken from her (99). On the other hand, from Chikena’s dissonant perspective, Wynema is clearly distinguishable from her white pedagogues and family members, not merely in the superficial sense of phenotype but also in the deeper, integral sense of cultural and spiritual consciousness. The impact of Chikena’s culturally resistant presence within Wynema’s domestic circle is subtly illustrated, moreover, by Wynema’s decision to adopt the orphaned daughter of Wildfire and Miscona, a couple well-known and beloved by Chikena (91). Callahan is careful to note that, while the male missionaries Gerald and Carl each express a desire to adopt one of the Lakota infants rescued by Chikena, it is Wynema who “wants one for her own,” indicating that the indigenous heroine is finally taking some initiative and stepping out from the shadow of Genevieve Weir (99).

Furthermore, in contrast to Genevieve’s final, naïve refusal to concede that “the United States Government intended things to turn out as they have,” Wynema’s response, only identifiable by her habit of speaking “brokenly when she was touched,” presents one of the novel’s most profound challenges to its bicultural readers (24): “The question that keeps urging itself before my eyes is—is all this right, this treatment of the Indians, this non-fulfillment of treaties, this slaughter of a defenseless people, living in the light of wards of the Government? Can it be right for the strong to oppress the weak, the wise to slay the ignorant?” (102, 24). Suffused with the sentimental rhetoric of “right feelings,” Callahan’s dialogue keeps reminding her progressive readers that economic privilege and access to knowledge carry with them a moral responsibility and nationalistic obligation to
uplift rather than exploit the less fortunate members of the Native community. At the same time, Wynema’s words point to the rising specter of the Dawes Act and the political impotence that it will entail for the Civilized Nations. Yet, expressing herself with interrogative rather than declarative sentences, Wynema is obviously still unused to disagreeing with her Euro-American mentor, and her independent ethical consciousness and Native activism appear to be at a very nascent stage of development.

Indeed, ignoring the lessons of Wounded Knee and legacy of federal Indian policy in general, Wynema naively permits the sympathetic identification espoused by sentimental fiction to subsume Chikena’s cynical words and worldly-wise perspective. That is, the elderly woman’s adamant identification of Wynema as a fellow Indian also means that Callahan’s heroine is not immune to the violence perpetrated against Native peoples. Unlike Gerald and Genevieve, Wynema and her mixed-blood domestic circle are vulnerable to the prejudice that destroyed Chikena’s Lakota family. However, when the Lakota widow publicly applies this grieving perspective upon the bicultural utopia of the Keithly and Weir families, Wynema expeditiously steps in to redirect the novel to yet another consideration of impending matrimony and domestic ephemera: “‘I would like to see you [Carl Peterson] in bachelor’s quarters, caring for a baby,’ she laughed; ‘but I do not expect to do so. Still, if contrary to my expectation, you should happen to raise this papoose, “single-handed and alone,” and prove successful, I shall like to pass over my charge to you’” (99-100). Like the scene that immediately follows of Genevieve and Robin exchanging toddlers so that the older sister lavishes affection on her mixed-blood namesake while the younger brother plays with his Euro-American nephew, Wynema’s suggestion that a Native mother can exchange places with a Euro-American father
amounts to a denial of gender and racial difference altogether (100). In this quintessential moment of sentimental ideology, love and sympathy are an all or nothing proposition, and the affective bonds amongst the characters seemingly elide the existence, let alone the relevance, of differentiation and diversity.  

Wynema’s sentimental marriage plots, therefore, are not only oblivious to but also a blindfold against the racism, political machinations, and mayhem that loom over the future of Indian Territory. Denying the mutability of Wynema’s idyllic biculturalism and the fragility of Indian Territory, the sentimental plotlines evade the ramifications of genocide against the Sioux and downplay the increasing necessity of pan-tribal cooperation and resistance.

Finally, in a decidedly ironic twist, it is Wynema’s very commitment to Native nationalism and her happy fulfillment as a wife, mother, and educator that subsume the pan-Indian, subversive potential of her acculturation. Suffering from what Elizabeth Barnes has called a flawed sentimentality or a “failure of the imagination . . . that would allow [her] to see beyond [herself] and [her] immediate family to conceive the family of man” (82), Wynema disqualifies herself from exerting the political and humanitarian influence that Callahan has clearly envisioned for the bicultural woman as teacher. Engrossed in “educating the Indians” of her own country and the puerile domestic dramas of her Euro-American in-laws, Wynema praises Carl Peterson for his desire to prevent any further bloodshed but excuses herself from taking any serious steps to aid the Native people she condescendingly describes as “crawling off to themselves”: “I know Robin would like to go if it were possible. I should like to go myself if I could be of any service; but I should only be a hindrance” (77). Contradicting Wynema’s self-professed


257 See Barnes 16-17.
inadequacy as a cross-cultural mediator, however, Callahan insists that it is her bicultural pedagogue who is clearly required yet strangely absent from Sioux country. For example, Callahan even adds a Siouan dialect to the list of languages that Wynema can speak, or as Wynema nonchalantly explains: “I learned to speak the Sioux language when quite a child” (94).

Furthermore, on two separate occasions within his dramatic apology for Native resistance, Wildfire points out that Carl Peterson is not really qualified to intervene as a cross-cultural mediator because the Euro-American missionary is hopelessly out of touch with lived Native experience: “You are kind, and you mean well, but you can never understand these things as I do. You have never been oppressed” (85). As demonstrated by her authorial dedication, Callahan defines indigeneity and her discursive authority according to a shared experience of oppression at the hands of Euro-Americans. Moreover, with the impending allotment of her people’s tribal lands and dissolution of her Native government looming, Wynema, like Callahan, is surely one of the oppressed. Yet, safely sheltered within the “pleasant parlor of Hope Seminary” and overseeing her Native schoolgirls and mixed-blood daughter, Callahan’s heroine still lays claim to the privileges that Chief Wildfire believes to be irrevocably denied to Indians (99). That is, arguing that oppression and prosperity are mutually exclusive, Wildfire professes little faith in the future of his people: “Peace! Let those talk of peace who live in quiet homes, who are surrounded by friends and loved-ones, happiness and affection; but peace is not the watchword of the oppressed” (82). Consequently, as the name of her seminary so obviously signifies, Wynema has the ability to offer the beleaguered Lakotas not only sympathy based upon a pan-Indian history of white aggression but also, most
importantly, hope based upon successful cultural adaptation and bicultural nationalism. Thus, Callahan’s allusive vision of Wynema’s opportunity for “cross-tribal and transborder” activism demonstrates what Kate Flint describes as the turn-of-the-century “advantages” of pan-Indian advocacy: “Oppression has the power to bring together as well as to fragment, and . . . despite the necessity of recognizing the particularity of individual tribes and their histories, one must acknowledge that the term ‘Indian’ has a political viability that transcends its currency within thoughtless polarizations” (20). Yet, as Wynema remains unsatisfactorily enclosed within a parochial sphere of domestic and civic attachments within Indian Territory, Callahan’s aspirations for a Native-identified bicultural woman to exert some political influence become greatly diminished. With her heroine’s much-needed abilities as a cross-cultural mediator never invested outside of her own community, Callahan is left to conclude weakly: “[A]nd not the meanest, not the most ignorant, not the despised; but the intelligent, happy, beloved wife is WYNEMA, A CHILD OF THE FOREST” (104).

Sioux Missionaries and the “Happy Hunting-Grounds”: Callahan’s Enduring Vision of Women’s Bicultural Activism

For the contemporary reader expecting, or given the rise of Native literary nationalism, even demanding a rhetoric of indigenous cultural separatism, Callahan’s seemingly contradictory loyalties, coupled with her subversive appropriation of sentimental genres and rhetoric, render her protest novel vulnerable to being misread as blatantly imperialistic, racist, or just plain “bad.”258 Like the complicated life commitments of its mixed-blood author, the text’s apparent faith in the “progress” offered by instruction in Western languages and literature, Anglo-American gentility, and

258 See Womack 107-29.
Protestant Christianity rests uneasily against the novel’s uncompromising confidence in the superiority of an indigenous communal ethos, the viability of traditional Native customs, and the moral necessity of Native national sovereignty. As a result, Callahan’s novel presents a decidedly ambivalent vision of the bicultural Native woman as teacher: What Wynema gains from reciprocal acculturation can hardly be deemed a solution to the political crisis and genocide the novel describes. Notwithstanding her commitment to Native uplift and female pedagogy within Indian Territory, Wynema’s greatest accomplishment as a bicultural teacher appears to be her complete conversion of Genevieve Weir into an Indian by the end of the novel (77, 99-100). Reversing the novel’s depiction of how Wynema’s village came to bear the Native heroine’s name, Wynema insists that her daughter will be named after her white pedagogue, calling Genevieve “the dearest friend I ever had” (76). That is, by virtue of the same Creek matrilineality through which not only Wynema but also Alice Callahan and her family derive their indigenous citizenship, Wynema’s naming her daughter “Genevieve Weir” symbolically translates her missionary-teacher into a citizen of her country. Underscoring the authenticating power that Callahan ascribes to matrilineal descent, Genevieve’s Native namesake is the very likeness of her Euro-American aunt, sharing the same blonde hair and brown eyes, and, in turn, Wynema’s conversion of a white cultural outsider into a Native-identified insider is made to appear complete (15-16, 60). Thus, in an ironic commentary on American Indian and Anglo-American gender and racial values, and in spite of all the information and refinement that Genevieve has imposed upon her pupil, Wynema’s indigenous culture appears more adept—at least symbolically—in transforming whites.
At the same time, the very fact that Wynema’s daughter is Anglo-American in both appearance and name is one of many indications that indigenous identity and nationalism are quickly becoming irrelevant to Wynema’s mixed-blood family. In a dramatic blow to the significance of matrilineality to Callahan’s family as well as to the events of the novel, the sentimental biculturalism of blood relations and de facto family members living in Indian Territory ends up being defined according to the marriages made by the Euro-American Weir siblings: “There, nestled close together, dwelt the happy families of brothers and sisters, growing up happily and prosperously” (103). Consequently, this shift away from a Native-derived cultural orientation suggests that Wynema’s namesake town will not much longer be bicultural, let alone Indian. Like the narrative tension between American Indian protest and marriage plotlines, the increasing Euro-American cultural ascendancy in the Town of Wynema reflects Callahan’s political despair and growing disillusionment with sentimentality after the violence displayed by the U.S. government at Wounded Knee. Pan-tribal cooperation still offers some hope of preserving Native national sovereignty, adherence to treaties, and, at the very least, American Indians’ self-determination and honor. However, as can be seen from the tragedy in the Dakotas, Native resistance can nonetheless be manipulated in order to reward the U.S. government with what it desires: “The great Indian war is over—nothing was done except what was intended to be done to start out with. A lot of defenseless Indians were murdered; the Indian agents and contractors reaped a rich harvest; that’s all” (100-1). Literary sentimentality, meanwhile, would resolve the problem of genocide through marriage plots or by making the whites and Indians fall in love, become family members, and reject physical violence in favor of procreation. Central to this sentimental
project of sympathetic identification, however, is the eliding of differences between Natives and Euro-Americans. As Callahan’s novel dramatizes, this denial of cultural and racial difference can actually complicate the lines of sympathy between Native peoples, undermine the basis for pan-tribalism, and lead to political apathy amongst the bicultural elites who consider themselves exempt from racial violence. Insofar as Euro-American values are presumed to be normative, sentimentality is tantamount to an affective, phenotypic, and cultural vanishing act.

Furthermore, Callahan’s depiction of domestic spaces that subsume Native resistance and survival reflects her growing disillusionment with female reform movements like home missions, temperance, and suffrage as viable solutions to the problems facing Indian nations. Seeking to invert gender inequalities in the Euro-American home by substituting “the moral authority” of the wife for “the patriarchal control” of the husband, sentimental activists introduce the battle of the sexes to an already divisive moment in Native history (Pascoe 33). Making the gender distinctions of the middle-class domestic sphere both the basis for their authority but also the fundamental object of their reformist zeal, the proponents of female rescue and educational uplift produce, in Pascoe’s assessment, “enduring political and institutional dilemmas”: “Because they believed that women’s moral influence stemmed from their positions as wives and mothers, home missions women had to argue for expanding women’s authority in family life without endangering the family as a social institution” (33-4). In Wynema, sentimental women—some notably posing as Lakotas—do, in fact, endanger the American Indian family by refusing to see that, while under attack from the racist policies of the U.S. government, their idealized domestic sphere has little chance of
survival unless some definitive action is taken. Unwilling to validate a masculine expression of authority and force that may threaten their affective lives or alter their domestic circle, these women ironically make the home-basis of their female authority all the more vulnerable by thwarting the possibility of physical resistance. In turn, Callahan’s heartfelt disillusionment before federal Indian policy and ineffectual sentimental advocacy are expressed in the labored optimism of her final lines: “But why prolong this book into the future, when the present is so fair? The seer withdraws her gaze and looks once more on the happy families nestling in the villages, near together. There they are, the Caucasian and American, the white and the Indian” (104). While alluding to the common knowledge that American Indians are, in fact, the rightful heirs of the term “American,” Callahan concedes for the first time that her Native protagonist may one day become an American in nationality and as a citizen living in the proposed State of Oklahoma. Callahan must therefore also envision the successful extension of the Dawes Act with the consequent allotment of her people’s lands and the dissolution of their tribal government and sovereignty.

Adding to Callahan’s distress over the political situation within Indian Territory, it is at this moment in territorial history that the Methodist Church also betrays the trust and service of its Native members. More than a mere coincidence, Callahan’s decision to conclude her novel with two Sioux orphans who become Christian workers offers up a bitter commentary upon the changes taking place within Methodist congregations across Indian country. The increasing Euro-American presence in Indian Territory convinces many Methodist leaders that the needs of indigenous Christians should no longer be paramount to the Indian Mission Conference that, by 1906, will be renamed the
“Oklahoma Conference” (Noley 201, 204). As early as the mid-1880’s, the Methodist leadership’s heavy-handed alienation of its Native congregants is demonstrated by the denomination’s decision to send the white missionaries J. J. Methvin and Milton E. Clark to the already harassed Plains tribes of Indian Territory, after having excluded Native Methodist pastors and lay leaders from either developing or implementing this new evangelistic outreach (Noley 202-3, 243). Nevertheless, in the decades preceding the eventual conversion of the Methodist Indian Mission into a resource for white pioneers, Native voices from within the conference are agitating for the increased ordination of American Indian ministers and missionaries. In an echoing of this resistant rhetoric, two of the infants who are retrieved from the scene of the Wounded Knee massacre are respectively renamed “Methven” and Clark” and become missionaries to the “wild tribes” (Callahan 104). With the Euro-American leadership of the Methodist Indian Mission apparently untouched by even a tragedy the magnitude of Wounded Knee, Callahan takes it upon herself to ordain her own indigenized missionaries and to depict American Indian youths successfully reaching out to their own people.

It is, moreover, with this vision of Native-directed missionary efforts that Callahan offers her final example of subversively suggestive discourse and clearly

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259 No doubt adding to the insult given by the appointment of Methvin and Clark, the white Methodist leadership essentially ignored the fact that the Creeks had for many years been conducting their own “missionary work among the southwestern tribes” (Debo 208-9).

260 For example, an anonymous editorial in the June 10, 1883 edition of Our Brother in Red exhorts: I do respectfully suggest that more attention be given to the rearing up of competent teachers and preachers from among the Natives. . . . No doubt there slumbers among the Native converts in our church of more than six thousand souls the very gifts which under the direction of the Spirit and the encouragement of the Church would speedily set the cause upon a self-sustaining basis and add this one more conference to our great effectual force for saving the world. (qtd. in Noley 201-2)

261 For a discussion of the orphaned infants of Wounded Knee, see Flood.
undermines the inevitability of the “vanishing” American Indian. Defying the challenges mounted against the survival of indigenous nations at the turn into the twentieth century, Callahan predicts that the “so-called wild tribes” will somehow prevail and will continue to be tenaciously independent and culturally separate peoples who, in the eyes of Euro-Americans, infamously—because they successfully—challenge the outside interference of white missionaries: “Methven Keithly became an earnest Christian worker and entered the vineyard of the Lord where it seems barest of fruits—doing missionary work among the so-called wild tribes” (my emphasis,104). Rather than imagining the Sioux orphans descending upon traditionalist communities where they simply, to borrow Tatonetti’s words, “alter” these tribes’ “cultural priorities once and for all” (6), Callahan envisions in Methven Keithly a Native missionary whose work only “seems barest of fruit” to those who would dismiss Native cultures as “wild” and devoid of value. The success of indigenous-identified Christian missionaries, in turn, must be measured by something other than a Eurocentric standard. That is, in keeping with Callahan’s earlier decision not to portray Wynema’s conversion to Christianity and given the author’s contrast between “civilized” soldiers [who] slaughter indiscriminately Indian women and children,” and “savage” Lakotas who, while being justly suspicious of Euro-American “learning,” are nonetheless respectful of Christianity’s God, Callahan does not question the “so-called wild tribes[’s]” need for the aid of Christian workers but does problematize the Eurocentric perspective that has labeled certain cultures and communities “wild,” uncivilized, and spiritually unregenerate (93, 84-6).

Furthermore, despite the nationalistic bias with which Callahan depicts the traditional medicine of the “healthy” Muscogees as superior to the practices of the Lakota
who “badly need[]” the intervention of Euro-American medicine, she implies that the Sioux orphans will have an extant, viable cultural community in which they can invest their energies and education: “Clark Peterson . . . turned his attentions to the practice of medicine, doing missionary work also; for he taught his people how to preserve their health” (my emphasis,104). While Methven Keithly will go on to minister within communities indiscriminately identified as the “so-called wild tribes,” Clark Peterson is depicted as attending to the medical needs of “his people,” provocatively suggesting that he will lay claim to his Lakota identity and serve his tribe. Callahan’s decidedly sanguine prognostications, therefore, illustrate her tenacious belief in a future in which American Indians not only survive but also attain success and, in the case of Wynema’s adopted daughter, even celebrity. Most importantly, with this depiction of American Indian missionaries, Callahan imagines a future in which Native peoples aid and uplift each other on the basis of their common indigeneity and viable tribal identities.

In turn, this final “glance into the future” also provides a strikingly resistant lens through which to view Chikena’s dying prophecy. The consummate example of Callahan’s double-tongued discourse, the Sioux widow’s final admonition to Wynema ostensibly surrenders to the Euro-American ideology of the “Vanishing Indian”:

Farewell! Wynema, thou child of the forest, make haste and seek with me the happy hunting-grounds of our fathers, for not many years of oppression can your people stand. Not many years will elapse until the Indian will be a people of the past. Ah, my people! My people! God gives us rest and peace! (104)
Envisioning the indigenes of North America inevitably disappearing into the realm of myth and anthropology, Chikena seems eager to embrace the alternative or the “rest and peace” of the afterlife. Nevertheless, this reading of Chikena’s supposedly “treasured” prophecy would also suggest that the aged Lakota matron is actually urging her adopted daughter to follow her example and die as quickly as possible—hardly the stuff of cherished memory—and this despite Callahan’s persistently hopeful representation of American Indian survival and cooperation. Conversely, Chikena’s speech can be seen to convey a much more resistant message, particularly aimed at Callahan’s bicultural, progressive readers. That is, addressing Wynema for the first time in the narrative as a “child of the forest,” a romantic way of naming her an Indian, the unconverted Lakota woman finally manages to talk over the novel’s homogenizing sentimentality and urges Wynema to rethink her cultural orientation for the sake of their shared racial identity: “[M]ake haste and seek with me the happy hunting-grounds of our fathers, for not many years of oppression can your people stand” (104). Rather than inspiring capitulation, Chikena’s belated realization of the happy, distinctly indigenous future that Sitting Bull had invoked empowers her with hope and resolve (103). As a result, she urges Wynema to waste no time in remembering and reconnecting with her indigenous heritage, for the very survivance of the Natives of Indian Territory and of the Great Plains hangs in the balance.

Yet, what does it mean for Wynema to find the “happy hunting-grounds of our fathers”? At the very outset of her novel, and in the course of offering a generalized depiction of “Indian” culture, Callahan describes how the “circuitous trail” to the “happy hunting-grounds” has been blazed by “the great warriors” of traditional
communities (1-2). Thus, coming full circle, the path or example that Wynema is told to follow has already been forged for her by warriors like Sitting Bull and Wildfire.

“Opening her eyes and looking far away,” Chikena foresees an era of restoration to Native homelands, material plenty, and spiritual renewal for those who will endeavor to follow the path of cultural warriors and to resist the oppression of their people: “I see the prosperous, happy lands of the Indians. Ah, Sitting Bull, beloved chief, it is the land to which you promised to lead us. There, wandering through the cool forests or beside the running streams we may rest our weary bodies and feast our hungry souls” (103-4).

Indeed, there is nothing about Chikenas’s “dying prophecy” that relegates her vision of cultural rebirth to a compensatory paradise for the disappearing indigene. Rather, Callahan encodes in Chikena’s words a call for her indigenous-identified readers to stand together and against the loss of their land and sovereignty, regardless of the cost.

Ultimately, then, Callahan’s novel is not so much the story of Wynema doing something as it is the story of Wynema becoming someone; that is, an educated bicultural woman who has the subversive potential to defend and aid her people. For Wynema to be simultaneously an indigenous-identified woman or a “Child of the Forest” and also a successful wife and mother within an increasingly Euro-American context, her education must be overseen by true “Friends of the Indian” who are themselves shaped by reciprocal acculturation. However, in order to become the woman warrior that Chikena and Callahan clearly want her to be, Wynema must receive an education that exceeds the sentimental limitations of her white teachers-turned-relatives and her own parochial attachments to Indian Territory. Wynema must properly comprehend and respond to the shared history and Dawes-Era struggles of all “the Indian tribes of North America.”
Inspired to action by her own community’s perceived apathy and lack of cultural cohesion, Callahan offers her slim, easily-overlooked novel in an endeavor to be that effective bicultural pedagogue to which her narrative can only allude. A scant seven years before the Curtis Act would revoke the sovereignty of the Civilized Nations, S. Alice Callahan’s *Wynema* courageously conveys her belief that it is not too late for an educated bicultural woman to make a difference on behalf of the national sovereignty, cultural relevance, and self-determination of all Native peoples.
CHAPTER FOUR

Surviving the Civilizing Machine:

Zitkala-Ša’s Sentimental Critique of Off-Reservation Institutional Education

Regionalism, Elitism, and Strategic Sentimentality

Claiming for herself the “seer’s gaze,” Alice Callahan concludes the first novel written by an American Indian woman with a surprising description of Miscona Weir, the surviving namesake of Chief Wildfire’s sentimental wife (104). Clearly drawing upon the contemporaneous accounts of Zintkala Nuni or “Lost Bird,” a baby girl discovered clinging to her slain mother in the genodical aftermath of December 1890, Callahan also demonstrates a far greater degree of prognosticating power than she could perhaps have ever imagined. 262 Predicting that Wynema’s adopted Sioux daughter would grow up to become a “famous musician and a wise woman,” Callahan dramatically diverges from the models of female vocation being offered by Wynema, Genevieve, and not least of all, the matron and martyr Miscona (104). Miscona Weir is a celebrity in the world beyond Indian Territory and a woman of good sense according to Callahan’s moralistic reckoning; nevertheless, this Miscona-the-younger is decidedly not a wife, a mother, or a teacher. Consequently, this singular characterization of the coming generation of educated full-blood womanhood becomes all the more startling given its resonances with the real-life career of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin. That is, rather than a Lakota orphan of Wounded Knee, it is a Yankton Dakota woman who, within a decade of Wynema’s

262 For more on the life and times of Zintkala Nuni, see Flood. Adopted as an indigenous war-relic by Brigadier General Leonard Colby, who would later become Attorney General, “Zintka” was haphazardly reared by the longsuffering wife, well-connected suffragette, and tragically ineffectual mother, Clara Colby.
publication, would achieve the musical accolades, educated self-expression, and artistic independence that Callahan envisioned for an acculturated Sioux maiden.263

Beneath the shadow of Wounded Knee and its testimony to the U.S. government’s inexorable commitment to Native submission, allotment, and assimilation, fifteen-year-old Gertie Simmons would make the pivotal decision to leave her Yankton Reservation home and return to Indiana for a second three-year enrollment in White’s Indiana Manual Labor Institute.264 Coming of age under the austere authority of off-reservation institutional education, the Dakota adolescent was singled out for her physical attractiveness and rewarded for her voluntary acculturation with an atypical curriculum that emphasized academics and granted her unique pedagogical opportunities.265

263 What is known today as the Sioux Nation is comprised of seven bands or “council fires” two of which, the Yankton and the Yanktonais, form the middle division or the Dakota people. The Santee and the Lakota form, respectively, the eastern and western divisions of the nation. An excellent overview of the historical differences between the Dakota and Lakota can be found in the Smithsonian Institution’s online exhibit Lakota Winter Counts. For her part, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, a.k.a. Zitkala-Ša, referred to herself and her people as “Dakota.”

264 Born in 1876, the same year as Custer’s defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Gertrude Simmons had known only reservation life (Dominguez, “Representative” xiii). For more on White’s Indiana Manual Labor Institute, see Green and “Information.” Posthumously founded through the philanthropic bequest of Josiah White, an orthodox Quaker, White’s Indiana Manual Labor Institute was one of two boarding schools (the other located in Iowa) that were overseen by the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends and that were established to educate “boys and girls without distinction of color, White, Indian, or Negro” (Green 6-7). Looking to buy inexpensive tracts of land, the Quaker trustees purchased the school property from the so-called “Indian Reserve” owned by a chief of the Miami Nation (8-9). At the outset of operations in 1861, however, the Institute actually served only a very few “private pupils” and “other little folks [who] were the children of the employees of the [Institution’s] farm” (“Information”; Green 10). It was not until 1882, and after having contracted with the federal government, that the trustees decided to focus the school’s efforts upon Indian education (“Information”; Green 11).

265 Gertie Simmons’s decidedly genteel education, at least within the context of the federal boarding school experience, illustrates what Devon Mihesuah describes as the “the role that appearance once played and still does play in Indian women’s lives”:

Appearance is the most visible aspect of one’s race; it determines how Indian women define themselves and how others define and treat them. . . . In the past, appearance played a crucial role in status and ease of travel (that is, both physical and sociocultural ‘traveling’) to different cultural groups and societies or ‘worlds’. . . . Consequently, many mixed-heritage white-Indian women had numerous ‘worlds’ open to them, while most full-blood Indian women and those of mixed black and Indian heritage did not. (“Commonality of Difference” 42)
Whereas Superintendent of Indian Education Estelle Reel would belittle the importance of piano lessons for “large Indian girls” who “in all probability . . . will never own” such an instrument, Gertrude’s instructors during the 1890’s excused her from the endless drudgery of so-called “domestic science” so that the vocalist/violinist/pianist could pursue her musical studies without interruption (Hoxie, A Final Promise 195; Rappaport 56-7; Dominguez, “From New Woman”). She genteelly earned her keep in the summer months by giving music lessons to white children, rather than being farmed out to surrounding Hoosier households as domestic “help,” and, owing to the school’s

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With regard to the advantages of being “an exceptionally pretty girl by Anglo-Saxon standards” (Wexler 120), Simmons recounts that, after entering into the unfamiliar brightness and clamorous confusion of White’s Institute, her first boarding school experience is that of being literally elevated as an particular object of affection in what Wexler interprets as the transformation of the Native child into an “ersatz Victorian doll” and “the pet of her female tamer” (Wexler 120). By the same token, Simmons depicts “such trifling” as being much more complicated than any mere mark of institutional favor: “[T]wo warm hands grasped me firmly, and in the same moment I was tossed high in midair. A rosy-cheeked paleface woman caught me in her arms. I was both frightened and insulted by such trifling. I stared into her eyes, wishing her to let me stand on my own feet, but she jumped me up and down with increasing enthusiasm” (“School Days” 50). This attention is not only intimidating, given its uninvited and culturally aberrant overtures, but also conveys a significant degree of condescension, pointing to the limitations that Native women’s physical appearance can ironically place upon their self-expression. For example, even as they ignore the Dakota child’s meaningful stare in order to coddle her, the missionary-pedagogues also infantalize the meaning of her tears: “They misunderstood the cause of my tears, and placed me at a white table loaded with food” (50). Similarly, then, journalistic accounts of the Native student’s later achievements as an orator focus upon her “slight” figure, the “delicate but firm lines” of her “Indian face,” and her genteel poise: “Her voice was clear and sweet; her language was that of a cultivated young woman, and her pronunciation was without trace of a tongue unfamiliar with English. Her manner was real, womanly and refined” (qtd. in Chiarello 6-7). Clearly, the aestheticizing gaze and class-conscious approbation of the Euro-American majority also acted as an obstacle to the articulation of this Native woman’s perspective.

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266 Although Josiah White had envisioned a manual labor curriculum that would “be moderate and alternate with school learning” (“Information”), Native students’ time was clearly preoccupied with satisfying the Institute’s labor requirements, or as Alice Patterson Green, writing under the auspices of the Institute’s trustees, blithely recounts:

The greater part of the work of the Institute was done by the children under able supervision. . . . The reports show that the farm work was thoroughly done. The girls’ work was divided into eight departments and was performed with much precision by the eight divisions of girls who passed regularly each week from one kind of work to another. The extra work belonging to the different seasons, as house-cleaning, whitewashing, canning fruit, drying corn, and gardening, was shared by all. The boys were as carefully instructed in the various lines of farm work as the girls were in the household duties and won the admiration of their overseers for their pluck and steadiness in the heavy work of the harvest season. (11-14)
increasing financial woes, she was already assisting in the “care and teaching of the younger children” by her final year at the academy (Dominguez, “Representative” xi). Her gifts as a writer and orator were also cultivated and encouraged, with one local journalist describing her 1895 commencement address, which championed the expansion of women’s rights, as “never surpassed in eloquence or literary perfection by any girl in the country” (qtd in Dominguez, “The Representative Indian” xii). Thus, Gertie Simmons benefited from a special recognition that would ultimately grant her the privileged status of a “showpiece Indian” and would significantly facilitate her later acceptance by white audiences (Hafen, “Introduction” Dreams xvi).

Defying her mother’s objections to her attendance at Indiana’s Earlham College, an institution much-favored by Quakers, Gertrude would ignite a family conflict that left her, according to a 1901 letter, feeling ostracized “from [her] own people—homeless, penniless, and even without a name!” (qtd. in Fisher 230). She thereafter endeavored to “make a name for [her]self” (230) and, turning to the dialect of the famously indomitable Lakota instead of the Nakota language of the historically conciliatory Yankton Dakotas (Enoch 119), she gave herself the name “Zitkala-Ša” or “Red Bird”

267 The U.S. government appears to have never provided sufficient funds for the maintenance of the Native students at White’s; thus, the Institute was dependent upon the additional support provided by various Quaker aid societies associated with the “Friends of the Indian” (Green 11). When this private philanthropy ended in 1892, the school lost much of its financial footing, and, faced with the impending threat of the federal government’s refusing of “funds for denominational work,” White’s would no longer take part in the Indian education program after 1895 (15). Perhaps an indication of the kind of disciplinary mentality with which White’s Institute typically educated Native children, the school after 1895 would devote its resources to the care of not only indigent boys and girls but also “problem children” from the surrounding counties (“Information”).

268 Accused by a rather spiteful sister-in-law of “desert[ing] home” just as Gertrude’s white father had abandoned her pregnant full-blood mother, she was told that she no longer had any discernable right to her half-brother’s respectable surname of “Simmons” (Fisher 230).
(pronounced “Zint-ka-la-sha” as in “Zintkala Nuni”). Interestingly enough, the creation of this overtly indigenous alter ego coincides with her life’s most assimilated phase (Dominguez “From New Woman”). Achieving some celebrity in 1896 as Earlham College’s award-winning orator, taking second place as the only female competitor in the Indiana State Oratorical Contest, she would become one of the very select Native women invited to teach at Richard Henry Pratt’s Carlisle Industrial School, the flagship of the federally-funded Indian education program (Dominguez, “Representative” xiii). She would also go on to capture the attention of journalists and artists during a trip to New York in 1898 and again in 1900 when she performed alongside of her former Carlisle pupils in a concert tour that included a performance at the White House (xvii). Zitkala-Ša’s journey of cultural integration would reach its climax, moreover, when she precipitously left Carlisle in 1899 and relocated to Boston, the political and activist epicenter of the Indian assimilation program. During this period of professional development at Boston’s New England Conservatory of Music, Zitkala-Ša would capitalize upon her recent successes by embarking upon a successful writing career. As another explanation for her selection of a Lakota name has been unaccountably overlooked. The first appearance of “Zitkala-Ša” in 1898 coincides with Gertrude Simmons’ brief engagement to Thomas Marshall, “a Lakota from the Pine Ridge agency,” with whom she had attended White’s Manual Institute and with whom she was reunited at Carlisle in 1897 (Dominguez, “Representative Indian” vi; Spack, “Dis/engagement”). Therefore, the name “Zitkala-Ša” may have initially signaled her desire to reestablish her Native identity through her fiancé’s Lakota heritage and family. Marshall died suddenly in 1899. This chapter will henceforth exclusively use “Zitkala-Ša,” the name of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin’s bicultural authorial persona. As Barbara Chiarello points out, an 1896 article in the Indianapolis Journal, entitled “How Grades Were Fixed,” suggests that Zitkala-Ša would have actually won the contest had it not been for the low score given to her by a member of the judging committee who took offense at her “reference to slavery as one of the blots of modern civilization” (qtd. in Chiarello 3). Ruth Spack’s excellent archival research into Zitkala-Ša’s reception by the Boston artistic community sheds much-needed light upon the young Native woman’s publishing success: Zitkala-Ša also met significant patrons during her time in Boston, including . . . Joseph Edgar Chamberlin, a columnist for the Boston Evening Transcript and editor of the...
a prize-winning beneficiary of the genteel pedagogy made possible through Anglo-American sentiment and philanthropy, she cleverly appealed to a particularly sophisticated audience comprised of the Northeastern elite and those who aspired to such a social standing. That is, her authorial debut via the Atlantic Monthly signaled her status as a rising composer of prestige literature “at a moment when a hierarchical reorganization of the literary sphere was pushing other writers—including popular women writers—into a newly disparaged condition” (Brodhead, Culture of Letters 153).

By the same token, with the 1900 publication of her educational memoirs “Impressions of an Indian Childhood,” “The School Days of an Indian Girl,” and “An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” Zitkala-Ša was taking advantage of the broadening access to literary professionalism made possible by the Anglo-American demand for tales “set[] outside the world of modern development” or as Richard Brodhead explains: “In the later nineteenth century, regionalism was so structured as to extend opportunity above all to groups traditionally distanced from literary lives. . . . In this respect regionalism made the experience of the socially marginalized into a literary asset, and so made marginality itself a positive authorial advantage” (116-7). Nevertheless, despite being juxtaposed, like other examples of regionalist writing, with now-classic essays and novels that took for granted the “upper-class habitus” of European travel, Zitkala-Ša’s memoirs

Youth’s Companion . . ., who was widely “recognized as the dean of Boston journalists” . . . It was in Chamberlin’s summer home in 1899 . . . that Zitkala-Ša did much of her early writing. . . . Chamberlin wrote to the editors of the Atlantic Monthly as early as August 1899 to encourage them to publish Zitkala-Ša’s writing. (“Zitkala-Ša”)

273 The three installments of Zitkala-Ša’s memoirs, “Impressions of an Indian Childhood,” “The School Days of an Indian Girl,” and “An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” were respectively published in the January, February, and March volumes of the Atlantic Monthly. The first two memoirs, neither of which took up more than 10 pages of the journal, each contain seven sub-sections or vignettes organized around a key figure or event. The last installment, reaching just over five pages in the Atlantic Monthly, contains only four vignettes.
simultaneously exploit and challenge the supercilious assumptions underwriting a
touristic desire to appropriate “other ways of life” (133) and are far from displaying any
dialect-driven condescension towards her Dakota subject matter. Deploying a thematic
element clearly derived from sentimental literature’s “melancholic emphasis upon . . .
temporal mutability” (Brodhead, Culture of Letters 120-1; Mellor 130), her memoirs
initially appeal to literary regionalism’s elegiac vision of eroding traditional lifeways set
against a backdrop of picturesquely rustic vistas: “There were eight in our party of
bronzed children who were going East with the missionaries. . . . Under a sky of rosy
apples we dreamt of roaming as freely and happily as we had chased the cloud shadows
on the Dakota plains” (“School Days” 47-8). Zitkala-Ša’s childhood nostalgia beautifully
memorializes the carefree, prairie-wide freedom that ironically formed the substance of
her puerile hopes for a “red-apple” fairyland in the East. In turn, she reminds the reader
of what has been irrevocably ceded in exchange for the educational opportunities outside
of her indigenous homeland.

274 As Cathy Davidson and Ada Norris observe, Zitkala-Ša’s texts “ran alongside the work of such notable
writers as Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Henry James, Edith Wharton, W.E.B. DuBois, and Kate
Chopin” (xviii). Furthermore, reading Zitkala-Ša’s memoirs against the Atlantic Monthly’s longstanding
engagement with high-brow cultural tourism consequently alters Chiarello’s argument that the editorial
decision to preface her essays with the “European treasure hunts” of the WASP elite was intended to
“contain” the Native woman’s critique of Euro-American education and society (11). Although the
“magazine articles surrounding Zitkala-Ša’s texts did not respond to them” (11), this textual placement also
demonstrates the extent to which the Native woman manipulated the genre of literary regionalism. Securing
the sympathies of a significant segment of the magazine’s readership, she deploys her controversial
“missives” within the framework of touristic longings for the authenticating experience of “premodern
leisure, child raising, and the escape to the past” (Deloria, Philip 124). Consequently, this reading of
Zitkala-Ša’s memoirs does not contradict Gary Totten’s assertion that her writings “are not just expansive
or disruptive (in terms of the canon) but defy the nationalistic agendas and colonizing effects of aesthetic
categories and critical assumptions, specifically in relation to theories of American regionalist writing”
(86). Indeed, a discussion of her appeal to upper-class tastes and prejudices offers additional insights into
how her appropriative strategies ultimately exploit “cultural nostalgia” and challenge “national
forgetfulness,” thereby inscribing “resistance to regionalism” (122).
This cultural elegy is juxtaposed, however, with a stinging critique of Euro-American intolerance that plays to the changing style of the *Atlantic Monthly* or its experimental placement of journalistic exposés alongside of the literary realism and travel narratives expected by its high-brow readership (Brodhead, *Culture of Letters* 152). In a visceral response to white passengers’ objectifying insensitivity, the narrative transitions rapidly from naïve anticipation to wounded wariness, signaling the immediate fulfillment of the Dakota mother’s warning that her little girl will “suffer keenly in this experiment” (44): “Directly in front of me, children who were no larger than I hung themselves upon the backs of their seats, with their bold white faces toward me. . . . Their mothers, instead of reproving such rude curiosity, looked closely at me, and attracted their children’s further notice. . . . This embarrassed me, and kept me constantly on the verge of tears” (“School Days” 47-8). Clearly, the cross-cultural gaze functions as a two-way exchange in this passage, and complacent white tourists, as Zitkala-Ša reminds her curious readers, can also become the objects of a disparaging, anthropological scrutiny.  

Yet, cleverly disguising these crude Euro-Americans as the antithesis of the *Atlantic Monthly*’s genteel readers, Zitkala-Ša describes intimidating paleface men with “rivet[ing] . . . glassy blue eyes” as working-class males carrying “heavy bundles in their hands,” while the harried mothers who coarsely encourage their children to stare are hardly the elegant, parasol-toting vacationers depicted over the course of the typical travel essay: “On the train, fair women, with tottering babies on each arm, stopped their haste and scrutinized the children of absent mothers” (47). Simultaneously claiming a sympathy-inspiring abjection and a well-bred superiority, Zitkala-Ša is both the innocent premodern whose natural sensibilities are fearfully violated by calloused Euro-American

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275 See also Davidson and Norris xxxiv.
prejudice and the scandalized genteel tourist critiquing the uncouth manners of Western white settlers. Over the course of her three-part memoirs, moreover, Zitkala-Ša continues to couch her cultural resistance in a carefully refined yet simple discourse of not merely cultural tourism but also intellectualized snobbery that would sustain her appeal to the values and pretensions of the upper echelons of American society.  

Thus, as she decries the loss of her childhood’s sentimentalized Dakota traditions, she condescendingly dismisses the evangelical piety of her “red[-]hand[ed],” “hard-working, well-meaning” missionary-pedagogues as not just paleface superstitions but also the “ignorant” delusions of physically disciplinary, unhygienic, pencil-chewing, and, therefore, decidedly ungenteeel women (“School Days” 60, 58-9, 67 65).  

In another expression of this high-brow appeal, her portrayal of the damaging potential or “long-lasting death” that “lies beneath” federal education policies depends upon a skillful evocation of the symptoms of “over-civilization” (“Indian Teacher” 99): “In the process of my education I had lost all consciousness of the nature world about me. For the white man’s papers I had given up my faith in the Great Spirit. For these same

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276 Zitkala-Ša’s familiarity with Anglo-American ethnic and class prejudices can be seen during a particularly heated epistolary exchange with Carlos Montezuma in which she likens his jealous behavior and “cruel, unkindly” tone to that of a “low Italian day-go [sic]” (Letter 23 June 1902). See also Spack, “Dis/Engagement.”

277 Indeed, in recounting how her missionary-teachers not only spanked little girls who could not understand the English remonstrances being shouted at them but also gullibly turned to “a large bottle” from which teaspoons of supposed “healing” were dispensed “to a row of variously ailing Indian children,” Zitkala-Ša strikes at the very heart of disciplinary intimacy and domestic science (58-9, 67). That is, as Welter’s and Sklar’s examination of domestic manuals has made plain, “True” women were expected to function as “comforters” and nurses and were supposed to know, at the very least, how to diagnose certain illnesses and employ homeopathic remedies, even if these women had only a cursory comprehension of physiology and germ theory; see Welter 55-6; Sklar 152, 154-5; Beecher and Stowe 85-121. Thus, giving the lie to the sentimental rhetoric being used to justify federal Indian education policies, Zitkala-Ša depicts her female instructors as failing to provide an “‗impressive object lesson’ in the virtues of civilized living” and failing to act anything like the affectionate mothers and competent healers described in the domestic treatises and novels addressed to middle-class audiences (Hoxie, A Final Promise 66).
papers I had forgotten the healing in trees and brooks. On account of my mother’s simple view of life, and my lack of any, I gave her up, also” (“Indian Teacher” 97). Over the course of delineating the spiritual certainty, therapeutic closeness to nature, and coherent familial identity that she has lost through her radical immersion into Euro-American culture, Zitkala-Ša also lays claim to the secular malaise that, as T. J. Jackson Lears has shown, proved particularly troubling to the Northeastern intelligentsia during the fin de siècle (Lears 31-2). Seeking a solution to this modern uncertainty through a combination of high culture and primitivism, the turn-of-the-century anti-moderns alternately engaged a panoply of therapeutic escapes including “romantic literary convention, which elevated simple and childlike rusticity over the artificial amenities of civilization” and “the ‘childlike’ or ‘feminine’ aspects of premodern character” (57). An integral component to anti-modernism, moreover, was both the urbane tourist’s “heuristic encounter with the primitive” via the “Indianness” of the rustic camp and also the newfound acceptance of middle-class boys and girls’ involvement in scouting’s “Native” woodcraft and rigorously gendered “tribal” activities as a necessary antidote against the artifice and unraveling social codes of modernity, or as Philip J. Deloria explains: “The Indian that Americans desired no longer resided completely within national identity. Now, that desire rested in some distant time and place in the form of a pure authentic Indian who meant hope for modern society” (120). Thus, by describing her removal from her emotionally satisfying and coherent Dakota culture as a harsh initiation into modernity’s intellectualized but increasingly hollow faith and anomie, Zitkala-Ša appeals to an elitist penchant for nostalgic Indian role-play.

Deftly pitting escapist leisure culture and

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278 Zitkala-Ša’s rhetoric predicts both Vine Deloria’s assertion that Euro-Americans’ inability “to maintain a sense of stability in their own society” resulted in “the failure or inability of white society to offer a
“modern doubt” against the progressive self-congratulation underwriting American reformers’ endeavor to replace Native cultures with a “semblance of civilization” (“Indian Teacher” 99). Her memoirs reflect the rhetorical aspirations of what Philip J. Deloria has termed an indigenous “bridge figure” or a “pragmatic . . . bold, literate, and astute” spokesperson who “uses antimodern primitivism to defend native cultures against the negative stereotypes left over from colonial conquest” (122).

Arduously accomplished, self-consciously genteel, and fiercely independent, Zitkala-Ša embraced, in Susan Dominguez’s assessment, the urbane lifestyle of the New Woman (“From New Woman”). At the same time, her life choices and texts demonstrate a commitment to what Brodhead has described as the “allowable selfishness” of an “author’s intensely specialized devotion to . . . craft” or the burgeoning field of female literary professionalism (Culture of Letters 169). Moreover, as predicted nearly ten years earlier by Alice Callahan, Zitkala-Ša’s artistic triumphs are marked by her refusal of marriage, motherhood, and institutional pedagogy. Illustrative of the conflicting gender values that defined and ultimately ended Zitkala-Ša’s stormy engagement to the Yavapai-Apache physician Carlos Montezuma, she could praise her would-be husband’s acquisition of a genteel home as an act of bicultural resistance or as so many “feathers” in his “war-bonnet” but also expressed distress at the “appalling” prospect of “keeping a house in running order” and “obey[ing] another” (Letter 1 May 1902; qtd. in Dominguez “From New Woman”). Particularly outraged by her lover’s dangling before her the supposed “allure” of a middle-class “home and supply of daily necessities” (qtd. in

sensible and cohesive alternative to the traditions which Indians remembered” (qtd. in Warrior 7) and also Robert Warrior’s subsequent observation that “the Indian situation at the turn of the century was a battle of community values versus individualistic chaos rather than a battle of one set of cohesive, livable values against another” (?).
Spack, "Dis/Engagement"; Letter [6 April?] 1902), the struggling artist would finally respond to this presumptuous enticement to abandon her career with a sharp rebuff: “Why do you always take so much for granted and do things on impulse? You are arranging your furniture in the house and doing things in the most assured manner. . . . I do not want to marry anyone. . . . I think I prefer to work alone as I have done hither to” (Letter 4 Sept. 1901).

In a letter to her now ex-fiancé dated January 1902, she would similarly defend her decision to refuse the responsibility of rearing the daughter of a deceased friend on the grounds that she must necessarily privilege her art over traditional domestic values: “That would mean my giving up my writing; and that is out of the question” (Letter 25 Jan. 1902). It is not surprising, therefore, that her 1900 publications in the Atlantic Monthly are a far cry from any simple sentimental narrative of a Native woman’s trials and domestic triumph through the lessons gleaned in the assimilative classroom. Rather, her obviously cherished authorial career ostensibly begins with an elaborate explication of her decision to renounce, not only a True Woman’s pious prioritization of motherhood and children, but also an educated Native woman’s “true profession” as a bicultural pedagogue within federal boarding schools. Coming to the realization, during her brief tenure at Carlisle, that her pedagogical destiny has been commandeered by federal bureaucrats who insist that she dupe her students’ “shallow” and “ignorant” benefactors, she refuses to contribute to the “powerless[ness]” of “the few rare [white instructors] who have worked nobly for [her] race” (95). Consequently, she turns the role of showpiece Native upside down and transforms her memoirs into the antithesis of the “exhibition”
pieces that she so despises and that were taken as proof of Native students’ “progress” (95, 96):

To be sure, a man was sent from the Great Father to inspect Indian schools, but what he saw was usually the students’ sample work made for exhibition. . . . Examining the neatly figured pages, and gazing upon the Indian girls and boys bending over their books, the white visitors walked out of the classroom well satisfied: they were educating the children of the red man! (“Indian Teacher” 96, 98)

Furthermore, rather than simply returning to the Yankton reservation “to be nourished by [her] mother’s love” (“School Days” 76), Zitkala-Ša concludes her memoirs by embracing a “long course of study . . . set for herself” in Boston, choosing individualistic self-cultivation as the antidote to her disillusionment as a pedagogical “work[er] for the Indian race” (“Indian Teacher” 98).

However, there was a well-defined limit to Zitkala-Ša’s identification with the “selfish” aestheticism of her Euro-American peers. As can be seen from her memoirs’ merging of regionalism and anti-modernism, she eschewed the notion of an autonomous “art for art’s sake” and inscribed in all of her texts a poignant defense of traditional Dakota values and a spirited critique of federal Indian education policy. Persistently bringing her own ideological commitments to bear upon the prejudice, assimilationist policies, and gender roles that continued to impact her life, she would translate into sentimental discourse her private and representative experiences as an Indian student. On the one hand, the “high sentimentality” of the previous generation of successful women poets and novelists offered her a viable model for the political engagement at which she
clearly aimed. On the other hand, mid-century definitions of gentility, True Womanhood, and proper child rearing were still being used to justify the federal boarding schools’ power to “break in upon the quite different acculturation systems of other American cultures and deliver their children to training on a now-‘universal’ plan” (Brodhead, *Culture of Letters* 26). Understandably, then, Zitkala-Ša was not prepared, for the sake of refining and de-gendering her craft, to relinquish her engagement with sentimental literature’s “overtly extraliterary systems of signification (family values, evangelical piety),” however subversive that engagement ultimately proved to be (Brodhead, *Culture of Letters* 26, 162).279

Chronologically tracing the narrator’s maturation from an often unruly recipient of a traditional Dakota upbringing to a remarkably successful schoolgirl who eventually becomes a boarding school pedagogue at an elite off-reservation institution, Zitkala-Ša’s three-part memoirs not only derive their critical edge from the conventions of sentimental literature but also question the very concepts upon which sentimentality predicates its universalizing scope. Zitkala-Ša’s initial memoir, “Impressions of An Indian Childhood,” blurs the traditional duties of a Dakota mother with various aspects of middle-class domesticity, thereby undermining the federal boarding schools’ justification for separating Native daughters from their “savage” mothers. Yet, even as she defends the lessons of her indigenous domestic education, Zitkala-Ša also recounts her struggles to accommodate her mother’s values, foregrounding a tension between maternal discipline and naturalized freedom. Although integral to the development of her communal identity and artistic self-expression, Dakota disciplinary intimacy, with its effacement of individual desire and interiorization of maternal influence, ironically

279 See also Wexler 102-6.
facilitates the culturally devastating inroads of the off-reservation educational system. Despite this ambivalent portrayal of indigenous domesticity, however, Zitkala-Ša’s second memoir, “The School Days of an Indian Girl,” decries the federal government’s substitution of an anti-sentimental, factory-like disciplinary regime for a Dakota mother’s affective authority. Turning to the sentimental inversions, animalistic metaphors, and performative identities associated with the Domestic Gothic, Zitkala-Ša dramatizes how surviving “the civilizing machine” (66) ultimately requires a split subjectivity or an alternating performance of abjection, accommodation, and resistance that leaves the Native schoolgirl feeling inauthentic and isolated. By the final memoir, “An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” this split subjectivity has brought the narrator to the brink of a nervous collapse and has inspired a seemingly permanent estrangement between the Dakota mother and her displaced daughter.

Nevertheless, attributing to the Dakota matron an enduring psychological authority, Zitkala-Ša conveys her critique of federal boarding schools through an increasingly contradictory tale of thwarted maternal nurture and distorted maternal influence. Even as Zitkala-Ša recounts her painful alienation from indigenous domestic ties predicated upon mother-love, she also problematizes the sentimental prioritization of maternal influence that threatens to enclose her possible life choices within a narrative of inevitable victimization. That is, the narrator’s lacerating attempts to differentiate her own voice and experiences from her mother’s story of domestic betrayal illustrates how maternal influence and filial identification can trap an already troubled Native student in a seduction script offering no remedy for her bicultural predicament. Despite her final memoir’s acknowledgement that the Dakota mother’s experience of indigenous
displacement and the Dakota daughter’s experience of coercive assimilation are emotionally commensurate, Zitkala-Ša strives to free herself from the mutually abject roles of moaning victim and accommodating showpiece Indian. Refusing to be a cog in the civilizing machine and resisting any mirroring of her mother’s helpless suffering, she re-envisions herself as something more than a mere telegraph pole or voiceless transmitter of others’ subjectivity. She will be a dynamo in her own right, who generates an autonomous discourse lightning-like in its power and unruliness.

In spite of the optimistic assertiveness with which Zitkala-Ša concludes her memoirs, however, her literary achievements on the Yankton Reservation from 1901 to 1902 are marked by an extra-literary context of failed filial and Anglo-American sympathy. In turn, “Why I Am a Pagan,” her final and most sanguine piece of prose published in 1902, illustrates how Zitkala-Ša’s weaving of sophisticated sentimental appeals and Native advocacy reinscribes the very performativity that she has endeavored to overcome. As predicted by her 1900 memoirs, Zitkala-Ša’s reliance upon sympathetic discourse evokes the emotional inauthenticity of her boarding school education and, subsequently, her own skeptical anticipation of her white reader’s prejudiced distortions. Thus, disenchanted with her fraught and thankless effort to excel as both a Dakota daughter and a dedicated artist, Zitkala-Ša ultimately chooses grassroots activism over a sentimental literary craft no longer deemed an effective agent of social reform.

**Maternal Discipline and Equivocal Freedom:**

**Zitkala-Ša’s Conflicted Account of Native Domestic Education**

At the very moment that Zitkala-Ša was penning her three-part memoirs, Native education in the United States was being reinvented as a preparatory program for
students’ future employment as menial laborers either on farms or within Euro-American residences (Hoxie, *A Final Promise* 193-5, 200). Operating under the belief that radically separating American Indian children from their family, language, and land could truly “transform” them into acculturated and successful men and women, reformers in the 1880’s such as Massachusetts Senator Henry Dawes supported the establishment of off-reservation boarding schools like the Carlisle Indian Industrial Training School (24, 56, 59). However, when the early reformists’ expectations for rapid assimilation failed for the most part to materialize, critics urged a greater emphasis upon vocational training and a more “realistic” vision for Native people’s destiny in American society (Hoxie, *A Final Promise* 190-3). By the 1890’s, professional educators now called for an on-reservation school system that “would provide an ‘impressive object lesson’ in the virtues of civilized living,” would replace the students’ traditional lifeways as soon as possible, and would enable Indian students to enter “local public schools” (66, 64, 66).

Nevertheless, an unanticipated degree of racial prejudice derailed these integration plans and contributed to the growing doubts concerning Indian children’s capacity to learn (191). Thus, by 1900, the U.S. government’s goals for American Indian education were once more being questioned and revised with the “realistic” goal now being a decidedly peripheral cultural and economic existence (210).

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280 Of course, many scholars have objected to Frederick Hoxie’s reading of the earliest phase of federal Indian education as being “idealistic” and therefore worthy of nostalgic approbation. His 2001 response to these criticisms is, therefore, worthy of consideration: 

[1]It is difficult to escape the fact that the impulse to assimilate Native Americans—the “final promise”—reflects an expansive view of American society and citizenship . . . that quickly disappeared after the turn of the new century. Coupled with constitutional protection of Native religion, respect for treaties, and tribal property, these early reforms, while not necessarily “better,” would certainly have produced a different result. The point of my argument, however, . . . was to show the extent to which Native Americans in the early twentieth century shifted in both the public mind and in the minds of policymakers from the category of potential citizens to something resembling the station occupied by colonized people. (‘Preface’ xi-xiii)
Yet, despite the plethora of educational philosophies that contributed to this debate, one point of consensus was the belief that traditional Native culture was only an obstacle to the intellectual development and cultural assimilation of Indian children, or as Laura Wexler notes, “It was a patriotic service just to intervene between an Indian and his or her tribe” (21). Eager to defend the emotional and ethical education provided by Dakota culture and to expose the demoralization that had followed upon the federal education program’s initial and, in the notable example of Richard Henry Pratt’s Carlisle Indian School, continuing practice of off-reservation schooling, Zitkala-Ša boldly entered into the Indian education melee armed only with her first-hand observations and a skillful appeal to a Northeastern audience. That is, her first semi-autobiographical essay “Impressions of an Indian Childhood” privileges the private sphere and women’s influence so as to locate a genteel and “‗impressive object lesson’ in the virtues of civilized living” within a Dakota context. Poignantly translating her narrator’s principal memories of the familial identity and traditional lifeways that predating her boarding school experiences, Zitkala-Ša ultimately reveals a cultural congruence between the domestic practices of a Dakota mother and the prescriptive forms of nineteenth-century sentimentality, including disciplinary intimacy. In the course of rejecting a race- or class-based definition of sentimentality in order to articulate a Dakota claim to “civilization,” however, Zitkala-Ša also foregrounds the tensions between self-determination and domesticated conformity lurking within the correspondences between Native and Euro-American True Womanhood. Portrayed as integral to the development of a communal identity and artistic self-expressiveness, Dakota disciplinary intimacy, with its paradoxical juxtaposition of heavy-handed maternal discipline and equivocal naturalized
freedom, ultimately proves vulnerable to exploitation by the recruiters and pedagogues of the federal boarding school system.

Three key themes that shape mid-century sentimental representations of the domestic sphere have their parallels in Zitkala-Ša’s memoir: the acknowledgement of domesticity’s fragile vulnerability to extraneous forces; the depiction of female self-realization and fulfillment through genteel domestic values and decorative occupations; and the safeguarding of the domestic sphere through female influence and “universal” sentimental values. First, as Susan Bernardin has observed, the Dakota mother’s eyewitness-account of the domestic patterns destroyed by Native dispossession and removal “introduces a prominent feature of sentimental plots by showing how political and economic forces impinge on the security of the domestic sphere” (220). Interestingly enough, Zitkala-Ša does not simply erase the manual labor and the unvarnished poverty of the early reservation era. Rather, she decisively inverts the Eurocentric charges of racial and cultural inferiority that have been associated with the image of Indian women’s melancholy drudgery by granting her Dakota mother an eloquent voice with which she articulates her resistant perspective: “We were once very happy. But the paleface has stolen our lands and driven us hither. . . . We traveled many days and nights; not in the grand happy way that we moved camp when I was a little girl, but we were driven, my child, driven like a herd of buffalo” (10-11). Far from indicating a self-destructive gloom innate to the Indian race or any hopeless gender inferiority, the mother’s embittered facial features and tears express an otherwise stifled yet indomitable rage against the injustice and brutality of the Euro-Americans whom she describes as “heartless” (9). Indeed, from the mother’s perspective, it is not Dakota culture that transforms Native women into
beasts of burden, but, rather, it is the supposedly superior culture of the “paleface” that “drives” women and children before it “like a herd of buffalo” (10). Furthermore, in as much as this reservation has been imposed upon the Dakota, the uncongenial aspects of the landscape and the hard work demanded of the Indian women on the reservation cannot be divorced from the impact of Euro-American “civilization.” Ultimately, then, Zitkala-Ša transforms the symbolic resonances of an Indian mother’s melancholy toil so

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281 According to anthropologist Katherine Weist, adventurers, traders, soldiers, missionaries, and artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were unanimous in their “descriptions of Indian women as beasts of burden” (29). See also Spack, “Re-Visioning Sioux Women”; and Werner Sollors’ discussion of “Indian melancholy” or the nineteenth-century literary conventions which blurred the emotional traumas of dispossessed Natives with Indians’ supposedly innate depression and self-acknowledged lack of social significance and looming demise (115).

282 Interpreting the earlier scenes of “Impressions” in light of the Biblical allusions found in the memoir’s final vignette, critics have tended to gloss over this image of the abject Indian mother and have exaggerated the idyllic and even prelapsarian overtones to the narrator’s description of reservation life. For example, Roumiana Velikova observes that critics tend to view the references to red apples “as a reminder of Zitkala-Ša’s fall from Indian paradise” (55). Martha Cutter describes the reservation at one point as “this ‘edenic’ world of the mother” and sees the “siege” of this paradise as beginning when missionaries, “who play the serpent” tempt the Eve-like narrator. By far, though, Ron Carpenter and Catherine Kunce have taken this prelapsarian connection the furthest, with Carpenter arguing that “the persona places herself in an Indian setting using structural elements found in Eden: a fertile land with a river, an innocent state, and a single dictum from a creator figure—her mother commands that ‘my little daughter must never talk about my tears’” (5). Kunce, meanwhile, insists that, in an attempt at “unsett[ing] the foundation of racism, patriarchy, and theological hierarchy,” Zitkala-Ša “granted her mother the status of God” and the “marks of a flawed deity of the Old Testament” (75-6). Nevertheless, Zitkala-Ša actually begins with a definitively somber rendering of the reservation era: “A wigwam of weather-stained canvas stood at the base of some irregularly ascending hills. A footpath wound its way gently down the sloping land till it reached the broad river bottom; creeping through the long swamp grasses that bent over it on either side, it came out on the edge of the Missouri. Here, morning, noon, and evening, my mother came to draw from the muddy stream for our household use” (7). Neither prelapsarian nor pre-Contact, the narrator’s Dakota culture is introduced by her traditional home’s “weather-stained canvas,” a detail that reveals the effects of Euro-Americans’ western expansion. With the near-extinction of the buffalo, the narrator’s family has become dependent upon American trade-goods. Zitkala-Ša also suggests that this adoption of dingy canvas, which has lost its initial color and lacks the cultural resonance of buffalo hide, establishes an unsatisfactory departure from traditional aesthetic values, much like her mother’s haphazard removal to a primitive log cabin: “First it was a change from the buffalo skin to the white man’s canvas that covered our wigwam. Now she had given up her wigwam of slender poles to live, a foreigner, in a home of clumsy logs” (40). This theme of exile and aesthetic loss is then followed by an ambivalent description of the landscape with its “long swamp grasses” and the “muddy stream” serving as the Dakota community’s water source. Into this coarse setting, Zitkala-Ša introduces the figure of the silently suffering Indian mother: “Often she was sad and silent, at which time her full arched lips were compressed into hard and bitter lines, and shadows fell under her black eyes. Then I clung to her hand and begged to know what made the tears fall” (7). The narrator’s reference to her mother’s tears immediately argues that, far from being “edenic,” her reservation home has already been distorted by some original sin, and her victimized mother, in contrast to either Carpenter’s or Kunce’s reading, is far from an omnipotent, god-like presence.
that they become indictments of Manifest Destiny, rather than evidence of Native deficiency.

Second, demonstrating her familiarity with sentimental discourse and the expectations of her Atlantic Monthly audience, Zitkala-Ša “redeems” the occupations of reservation-era Dakota mothers by rewarding Indian women’s work with the affective ties and aesthetic pleasure normally reserved for a genteel, middle-class home. That is, she re-envisions traditional labor, through her narrator’s childhood remembrance of Dakota women’s work, as so many signs of female privilege, familial closeness, and decorative domesticity. Recounting how she had to content herself with merely “tugg[ing] beside” her busy mother “with [her] hand upon the bucket [she] believed [she] was carrying,” the child-narrator eagerly anticipates the day when she will take on the responsibility for certain types of physical toil (9). The sense of privilege that the Dakota girl attributes to household labor stems not only from this labor being a tangible proof of physical maturity but also from its being an opportunity for expressing filial devotion, as the daughter truly lessens her mother’s burden. Using the gritty aspects of a Dakota woman’s daily and seasonal tasks as a type of mnemonic device for Native women’s domestic intimacy, moreover, Zitkala-Ša further cultivates her readers’ sympathy. For example, although Zitkala-Ša does not hide the Dakota mother’s struggle to survive, she draws her reader’s attention to the emotional richness of the morning meal and the intense mother-daughter bond that is being nourished by such “ primitive” repasts (12). Similarly, the narrator briefly alludes to the labor-intensive process by which her mother both harvested and “preserve[d] foods for our winter use” only to enter into a description of the expanded domestic circle created by her aunt’s assistance in this toil: “It was
during my aunt’s visit with us that my mother forgot her accustomed quietness, often
laughing heartily at some of my aunt’s witty remarks. I loved my aunt three-fold: for her
hearty laughter, for the cheerfulness she caused my mother, and most of all for the times
she dried my tears and held me in her lap, when my mother reproved me” (34-5). For the
Dakota daughter, women’s traditional labor becomes the welcomed pretext for a female
bonding that crosses generations and, as it relieves the melancholy of the mother and
smoothes over the tantrums of the child, reinforces the mother-daughter bond. As can be
seen from the narrator’s recollections of her mother’s beadwork, moreover, household
production becomes much more than a matter of earning an income but, rather, is an
opportunity for aesthetic self-expression, a source of pride, and a symbol of maternal
affection (90): “[M]y mother spread upon a mat beside her bunches of colored beads,
just as an artist arranges the paints upon his palette. . . . With a proud, beaming face, I
watched her work. . . . I felt the envious eyes of my playmates upon the pretty red beads
decorating my feet” (18-19). In the eyes of the Dakota daughter, even her mother’s
harvesting and drying of pumpkins becomes something graceful and decorative, as the
mother creates what are depicted as festoons of dried pumpkins rings (36-7).283 Thus,
emphasizing the emotionally and aesthetically fulfilling aspects of Dakota domesticity,
Zitkala-Ša neutralizes sentimental fiction’s marginalization of domestic toil and

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283 This indigenized version of decorative domesticity can also be seen at the beginning of Zitkala-Ša’s retold oral legend “The Badger and the Bear”:

Old father badger was a great hunter. . . . Every day he came home carrying on his back some wild game. This kept mother badger very busy. . . . [She] hung thin sliced meats upon long willow racks. As fast as the meats were dried and seasoned by the sun and wind, she packed them carefully away in a large thick bag. This bag was like a huge stiff envelope, but far more beautiful to see, for it was painted all over with many bright colors. These . . . bags of dried meat were laid upon the rocks in the walls of the dwelling. In this way they were both useful and decorative. (61-2)
demonstrates that derogatory assessments of Dakota women’s traditional labor as
degrading and culturally impeding are strictly in the eye of the beholder.

Third, the narrator’s mother models the sentimental process whereby “True”
women are educated by their domestic suffering and thereby empowered to exert their
influence in order to strengthen beset familial circles against extraneous, antithetical
values. Having received a brutal lesson in her people’s uncertain economic and domestic
future, the Dakota mother finds comfort in her neighbors’ remembrance of her deceased
brother’s prowess and generosity (12-13). She, in turn, is motivated by this combination
of loss and legacy to continue her brother’s provision for the elderly and sick (31-2). As
a result, the narrator’s domestic circle is happily expanded to include the regular,
affective contributions of many grandfathers and grandmothers: “I was always glad when
the sun hung low in the west, for then my mother sent me to invite the neighboring old
men and women to eat supper with us” (13). Meanwhile, her mother works to preserve
the precarious private spheres of those less fortunate members of the Dakota community.

Drawing sentimental parallels between Dakota and Anglo-American domestic
values, Zitkala-Ša seemingly confirms the sentimental novel’s reformist message that
middle-class domesticity can and should be universalized. By the same token, Zitkala-
Ša’s articulation of the affinities between Dakota mothering and various articulations of
sentimental ideology subversively revises the racial and class assumptions shaping a
sentimental definition of respectable “civilization” and motherhood. Furthermore,
Zitkala-Ša’s engagement with sentimental ideology reveals not only her knowledge of
sentimental novels but also the acuteness of her cultural insights as an “unintended
reader.” Her defensive portrayal of Dakota female influence illustrates her intuitive grasp
of the discursive network of educational philosophy, gender roles, and social practices being articulated through domestic plot-lines and later used to justify late-nineteenth-century institutions committed to rescuing and reforming racialized others, including infantilized Indians. Thus, as she translates Dakota moral and intellectual instruction into the discourse of sentimentality, Zitkala-Ša portrays Dakota mothering as a variant of disciplinary intimacy and as taking part in sentimental pedagogy’s “construction of [the] superego” (Brodhead, Culture 21).

In Zitkala-Ša’s depiction of Dakota sentimentality, the “merely personal presence[]” of the Dakota mother governs and educates her daughter. For example, in the vignette entitled “The Beadwork,” the mother instills in her daughter a sense of personal responsibility and accomplishment merely through “the quietness of her oversight” (20). The Dakota mother personifies the self-discipline and diligence that the daughter, who is working alongside, endeavors to imitate and master (19-20). The object lessons provided by this disciplinary intimacy are also illustrated by the little Dakota girls’ “delight[] in impersonating [their] own mothers” (21). At various moments throughout the text, moreover, the narrator takes part in her mother’s expressions of sympathy and faith in the unseen without any reflection upon the matter (26). Even when she is not consciously impersonating her mother, the narrator’s interiorized sentimental mother ensures that she will monitor and chasten herself. That is, Zitkala-Ša’s childhood individuality is established by an affinity with the mother’s values and is restrained by an acute sense of shame: “[My mother] treated me as a dignified little individual as long as I was on my good behavior; and how humiliated I was when some boldness of mine drew forth a rebuke from her!”(20). The extremely sensitive conscience shaped by Dakota
sentimentality becomes particularly evident when the young narrator is scolded for fixating on a feast rather than remembering the needs of an elderly woman: “Having once seen the suffering on the thin, pinched features of this dying woman, I felt a momentary shame that I had not remembered her before” (32). Thus, self-reproach, triumphing in the conflict between individuality and interiorized mother values, regulates the narrator’s behavior and sets a precedent for further contests between individual desire and communal values.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to overlook Zitkala-Ša’s many representations of her childhood impatience, willfulness, and tantrums that culminate in her defiant desire to journey to the land of “big red apples” (“Impressions” 39). That is, in an acknowledgement of the tension between maternally-mandated conformity and socially-sanctioned freedom haunting her definition of Native True Womanhood, Zitkala-Ša portrays her Dakota mother’s “discipline through love” as an ongoing process whose incompleteness can be measured by the narrator’s remembered lapses and divergent agenda. Far from being a passive recipient of her mother’s sentimental lessons in domesticity and communally mandated self-effacement, the narrator recounts her relief when she is finally freed from her mother’s “confining” pedagogy in the feminine, ornamental art of beadwork; her impatient interruption of the adults’ supper time conversation so as to hear the “legends” of her elders; and her struggles to honor her mother’s iron-clad prohibition against “intruding myself upon others” (21, 15, 8):

“Sometimes I stood long moments without saying a word. . . . [I]t was all I could do to observe this very proper silence. . . . The old folks knew the meaning of my pauses; and often they coaxed my confidence . . . . ‘My mother says you are to come to our teepee
this evening,’ I instantly exploded, and breathed the freer afterwards” (14). In turn, as has already been predicted by the poetry and prose of Schoolcraft and Johnson, Zitkala-Ša’s indigenized version of disciplinary intimacy ignites an interior conflict between a daughter’s show of acquiescence and her still-resistant mentality, becoming the foundation for a creative self-expression that, to borrow Mary Loeffelholz’s language, “offer[s] no purchase for readings determined to frame questions in ‘liberatory as opposed to disciplinary’ terms” (23). The narrator’s lessons in her people’s ornamental arts offer an opportunity for social prestige, but this traditional pathway to self-expression is also mediated by her mother’s tutelage in a highly disciplined formalism and takes on even a punitive cast, such as when the narrator regretfully “ensnared many a sunny hour into working a long design” (19). Obediently submitting to the “quiet oversight” of her mother’s “practical observation lessons in the art of beadwork,” the Dakota daughter painfully struggles to please her mother by devising patterns that are simultaneously unique to her own imagination and conventional according to Dakota tradition: “My mother required of me original designs for my lessons in beading. . . . My original designs were not always symmetrical nor sufficiently characteristic, two faults with which my mother had little patience. (19-20). Keeping her artistic ambitions strategically simple and reveling in her idiosyncratic deployment of color, Zitkala-Ša consequently learns to vent her individual consciousness within well-defined limits and using subtle, socially acceptable methods (19-20).

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284 That is, according to Hassrick, “Girls who could quill and bead . . . were recognized as potentially good wives. . . . In the same way that men kept war records, so did women keep count of their accomplishments. . . . Contests were occasionally held at which women exhibited their work—moccasins, dresses, storage bags, and the like” (42). Interestingly enough, Zitkala-Ša writes to her then-fiancé Carlos Montezuma that she will bead “cushion covers” for their parlor and also “buckskins” for his “collection” as her version of genteel “fancy work” (qtd. in Dominguez, “From New Woman”).
In a related form of disciplined self-expression, the Dakota mother also goads the narrator to exercise her observational skills and simultaneously practice her etiquette by requiring the little girl to recall the neighbors’ words before and after her mother’s invitation is given: “All out of breath, I told my mother almost the exact words of the answers to my invitation. Frequently she asked, ‘What were they doing when you entered their tepee?’ This taught me to remember all I saw at a single glance. Often I told my mother my impressions without being questioned” (my emphasis, 14). Coinciding at it does with the title of her first memoir, Zitkala-Ša’s reference to “impressions” suggests that these lessons in self-restraint, analysis, and narration have had a formative influence upon her development as a writer. At the same time, even though these supposedly objective recollections are being spun to satisfy her mother’s unspoken command and to meet with the Dakota matron’s approval, these “impressions” are Zitkala-Ša’s own “original” patterning of people and events. Similarly, the impressions that she publishes in the Atlantic Monthly overtly appropriate the sentimental conventions “sufficiently characteristic” of her intended Anglo-American audience but also convey the emphases and singular predilections of a strategically resistant subjectivity (20).

Interestingly enough, this simultaneity of discipline and freedom that arises from out of Dakota “discipline through love” and inspires Zitkala-Ša’s artistry also shapes her narrative’s nostalgic celebration of a Dakota daughter’s “wild freedom” or naturalized expressiveness. That is, she depicts her nascent self-consciousness being made intelligible, even as it is also constricted, by those abstract qualities meeting with her mother’s approval: “I was as free as the wind that blew my hair, and no less spirited than

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285 See also Carpenter 13-15.
a bounding deer. These were my mother’s pride,—my wild freedom and overflowing spirits” (“Impressions” 8). On the one hand, as she likens her physical freedom to “the wind” that rushes through her hair, Zitkala-Ša subtly alludes to the meaning of her mother’s Nakota name Taté I Yóhin Win or “Reaches for the Wind” and therefore recalls her childhood liberty as the embodiment of her mother’s ascribed subjectivity. On the other hand, what begins as a statement of self-definition using natural metaphors swiftly becomes a reflection upon those inner qualities that meet with the mother’s affirmation and affection, just as the image of the little girl racing ahead to demonstrate “how fast [she] can run” ends with the little girl laughing confidently while taking note that she is always within her mother’s field of vision: “Having gone many paces ahead I stopped, panting for breath, and laughing with glee as my mother watched my every movement. I was not wholly conscious of myself, but was more keenly alive to the fire within” (8). Ultimately, then, the child’s understanding of what constitutes her own self is marked by a privileging of the “wild freedom” and spirited “fire within” that are either linked to her mother’s identity or elicit Taté I Yóhin Win’s “pride” and approbation.

This blurring of “wild freedom” with maternal embodiment reappears, moreover, in the narrator’s account of her gleeful escape from the decorative pursuits of her mother’s teepee: “Always after these confining lessons I was wild with surplus spirits, and found joyous relief in running loose in the open again. Many a summer afternoon a party of four or five of my playmates roamed over the hills with me” (21). Despite the Dakota daughter’s perception of this frolicking time spent exploring her prairie home and socializing with her peers as a liberating alternative to her mother’s disciplinary intimacy,

See Davidson and Norris xv; and Susag.
she and her comrades immediately fall into a “delight[ful]” pattern of “impersonating our own mothers” that reflects the internalization of maternally derived lessons in socially sanctioned behavior. For example, reflecting the Dakota cultural emphasis upon the distribution rather than accumulation of wealth (Hassrick 37), the daughters-as-mothers pretend “to exchange . . . necklaces, beaded belts, and sometimes even . . . moccasins . . . as gifts to one another” (21). Similarly, in “imitat[ing] their [mothers’] various manners, even to the inflection of their voices,” the daughters personify a careful adherence to polite conversation, “say[ing] only those things that were in common favor,” and to the “honorific speech” and civil responses required by their oral culture: “While one was telling of some heroic deed recently done by a near relative, the rest of us listened attentively, and exclaimed in undertones, “Han! Han!” (yes! Yes!) whenever the speaker paused for breath, or sometimes for our sympathy” (22). Recounting how, nestled “[i]n the lap” of a decidedly feminized landscape, her playmates would transform themselves into the very picture of the “old women” of the tribe, Zitkala-Ša suggests that the physicality afforded Dakota daughters is, at the most, only a perceived alternative to her mother’s sentimental authority. The culturally acceptable “truancy” of these little Native girls never really challenges and, on the contrary, is actually a naturalized complement to Dakota domesticity and reinforces the maternal character construction of an indigenized “discipline through love.”

287 For more on “honorific speech” and its ramifications for Dakota nationalism, see Kelsey 133-4.

288 By the same token, in her depiction of buckskin-clad, moccasin-footed Dakota girls happily imitating their mothers’ communal ethics and manners, Zitkala-Ša inverts the Euro-American notion of “Indian play” at the very moment when increasing numbers of white boys and girls were being encouraged to dress up like Indians and perform the tasks and rituals of “authentic” Native peoples: “Primitivist Indian play, grounded in ethnographic detail resuscitated archaic imitational skills that were the special province of children. Children imitated the meanings locked in Indianness, one of which was the idea that a person could make significant connections with the world by mimicking it” (Deloria, Philip 117). On the one hand,
Finally, though, it is through this juxtaposition of rigorous maternal discipline and equivocal freedom that Zitkala-Ša lays the groundwork for her increasingly subversive deployment of sentimental critique. On the one hand, while federal Indian education policies sought first to strip students of their loyalties to their traditional culture and then to replace tribal customs with “an ‘impressive object lesson’ in the virtues of civilized living,” her depiction of Dakota sentimentality raises the all-important question of how civilization and education are to be defined in the first place. Appropriating sentimental ideology in order to impede the erosion of Dakota culture via the displacement and coercive assimilation of Indian children, Zitkala-Ša articulates a Dakota version of True Womanhood and maternal education and thereby appeals on the basis of “emotional and
psychological sameness” to the homogenizing sympathy of her sentimental readers (Barnes 92). That is, testifying to Indian women’s lived experience of domesticity and “discipline through love,” she makes it impossible to separate Dakota children from their mothers without destroying the domestic bonds, conservative gender values, and disciplinary intimacy that Northeastern reformers nostalgically revered and were purportedly inculcating through the boarding school system.

On the other hand, however, even as she defends the lessons of her domestic education, Zitkala-Ša also sympathetically recounts her often haphazard adaptation to her mother’s traditional values, thereby inscribing her memoirs with her resistance to the societal “mechanisms of control” figured by the overlapping gender values of her Native heritage and white middle-class sentimentality (Loeffelholz 28-9). In turn, rather than being “tricked by the Quaker missionaries into leaving her mother,” Zitkala-Ša describes her yearning for the freedom promised in “the orchards of the East” and how, in stark contrast to the many Native children who were reluctantly separated from coerced mothers and communities, she happily won her heart’s desire through her rebellious tears and stubborn pleas (Kelsey 128; Zitkala-Ša, “Impressions” 42, 44). Operating under the mistaken belief, acquired from her bilingual playmate Judéwin, that she would be escaping from her mother’s “confining” domesticity into an expanded landscape of imitative play, the narrator and her little friends willingly leave their Dakota mothers behind: “Under a sky of rosy apples we dreamt of roaming as freely and happily as we had chased the cloud shadows on the Dakota plains” (“Impressions” 41-2, “School Days” 47).289 Ironically, then, the off-reservation boarding school system subtly gains its

289 Similarly, Zitkala-Ša will later steel herself to a return to White’s Institute by again envisioning her three-year matriculation at the Indiana boarding school as a merely momentary departure: “I rode on the
insidious influence over the narrator by first taking advantage of this Dakota daughter’s
domestic discontent and preference for the nature-based complement to her mother’s
maternal discipline. With its inculcation of a culturally-mandated communal identity
through the effacement of individual desire and interiorization of maternal influence,
disciplinary intimacy ultimately leaves the Dakota matron’s domesticity vulnerable to
coopition and dissolution.

**Off-Reservation Education as Domestic Gothic**

Just as the Quaker boarding school recruiters successfully separate mother and
child by exploiting a Native girl’s nature-based alternative to indigenized domesticity, the
off-reservation schooling system would further capitalize upon Dakota “discipline
through love” and the constrained self-expression that it engenders in “The School Days
of an Indian Girl”: “By daylight and lamplight, I spun with reeds and thistles, until my
hands were tired from their weaving, the magic design which promised me the white
man’s respect” (76). Metaphorically describing the arduous course of study that led up to
her composition of the prize-winning speech “Side By Side,” Zitkala-Ša alludes to the
boarding schools’ typically onerous education in Euro-American domestic production but
also points the reader back to those sunny prairie afternoons lost under her mother’s quiet
lessons in beading work.\(^{290}\) That is, as she spins and weaves “reeds” and “thistles” into a

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\(^{290}\) At the same time, spiders, of course, also “spin,” and Zitkala-Ša may be drawing a parallel between this
period of self-alienating accommodationist effort and the antics of Iktomi, the Dakota trickster, whom she
describes in *Old Indian Legends* as “a spider fairy” and “imp”; see especially “Iktomi and the Ducks” 3-4,
“Iktomi’s Blanket” 22-4, and “Iktomi and the Fawn.” Intensely self-centered, fixated with the
superficialities of dress, and ever willing to exchange—via “magic power”—his own nature and station for
that of another, the spider fairy inevitably contributes to his own undoing: “[S]o long as he is a naughty
fairy, he cannot find a single friend. No one helps him when he is in trouble. No one really loves him.
“magical design,” her scholarly efforts hearken back to her childhood attempts at creating “original designs” that would meet with her mother’s formalistic demands. Applying the same kind of obedient industriousness required by the Dakota mother in an attempt to win the friendship of “a cold race whose hearts were frozen hard with prejudice,” the narrator describes her academic ambition as a nightmarish, unending distortion of Dakota disciplinary intimacy. Indeed, the image of the schoolgirl weaving with “thistles” resonates with the thorn that impedes Adam’s toil after eating the apple and also with sentimental poetry’s conventional symbol for interiorized regret. Zitkala-Ša thus endeavors to translate the punitive repercussions and painful self-discipline whereby she has acquired her effective literacy into the Biblical and sentimental tropes familiar to her intended readers.

Similarly, Zitkala-Ša comes to rely upon a discourse of sentimental inversions, animalistic metaphors, and performative identity that Paula Bernat Bennett has associated with the “Domestic Gothic” or the late-nineteenth-century recourse to gothic motifs in order to represent the oppressive psychological impact of Anglo-American domestic ideology (Bennett 121-2, 128). Over the course of a narration altogether consistent in its aversion to off-reservation schooling, Zitkala-Ša depicts the federally-funded boarding school as not only the absolute antithesis to but also an inversion of Dakota “discipline through love.” Replacing the easy organic routine of tranquil morning repasts in the open air, quiet maternal object lessons in necessary skills and manners, and communal suppers...
capped by the exhilarating legends of tribal elders, the “paleface day” rushes on at a frantic pace that disregards the physiological demands of childhood and “nature” (65).

This systematic educational methodology creates a “whirring,” “buzzing” milieu more in keeping with the production floor of a factory than a schoolroom and is defined by a distinctly mechanized “iron routine” replete with clanging bells, shrill commands, and the efficient regimentation of even the most mundane tasks, such as “eating by formula” (54, 52, 53, 65, 49-50, 66). Pitting industrialized modernity against the pre-modern sensibility of her Dakota upbringing, Zitkala-Ša describes the boarding school as an impersonal pedagogical dynamo, an assimilation factory, or, as she most aptly puts it, “the civilizing machine” (66).\(^{292}\)

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\(^{292}\) Interestingly enough, Zitkala-Ša grants such a prominent place to this metaphor of the “civilizing machine” that she actually neglects to lay bare other notoriously objectionable aspects of the boarding school experience such as the unhealthful sleeping, bathing, and dietary arrangements or the overwhelming curricular emphasis placed upon agricultural labor and household production. On the one hand, these omissions permit her to erase almost completely those onerous duties from which she, as a showpiece student, became increasingly exempt. On the other hand, Zitkala-Ša actually appears to be gesturing backward to the antebellum vitriol leveled against women’s institutional education. That is, adding to sentimental portrayals of the formative influence flowing naturally from maternal nurture within the home and the pseudo-scientific paranoia concerning the deleterious intellectual over-stimulation inspired by educators’ efforts to decrease the knowledge gap between men and women, conservative commentators also took exception to boarding schools’ factory-like atmosphere and one-size-fits-all requirements. As Mary Loeffelholz has demonstrated, using Catharine Sedgwick’s 1843 introduction to The Poetical Remains of Lucretia Davidson, this perceived link between the rise of industrial capitalism and the relentless work hours and demands for public exhibitions shaping both masculine education and female pedagogy would prove foundational to the domestic-tutelary-complex (21-2):

Sedgwick attributes the hectic compression of schooling in the United States “to the demand for operatives in every department of society in our country,” as if the education of middle-class girls along with that of their aspiring professional brothers . . . was unhappily modeled on the labor requirements and working conditions of the factory. It is this misguided educational emulation of the factory operative, in Sedgwick’s view, . . . that accounts for “the miseries of the more favoured classes of our females”—their “feebleness of purpose, weakness of execution, dejection, fretfulness, mental and moral imbecility!” (qtd in Loeffelholz 21).

Justified upon the grounds of promoting racial, rather than gender, equality and relying upon a coercive, onward-driving discipline, Zitkala-Ša’s “civilizing machine” clearly resonates with the “compression,” repression, and noxious effects of the antebellum bogey of factory-like boarding schools. For Zitkala-Ša, the off-reservation educational system, with its explicitly pretentious mission to utterly transform Native children and to achieve this “racial uplift” in as little as three years, produces ailing, dejected, and even dying students just like the female seminaries targeted by sentimental social critics. Indeed, according to the chronology of her memoirs, the “illness” that unfit her either “to continue [her] college course” or “to strain [her] eyes in searching for latent good in [her] white coworkers” is a consequence both of her toiling
Furthermore, as she articulates the off-reservation schooling system’s devastating impact upon Native girls’ self-image, Zitkala-Ša combines her description of a relentless assimilation factory with a central trope of gothicized domesticity or the internalization of animalistic metaphors. Managing the pedagogical assembly line, a cadre of nameless women standing aloof from their pupils in a “halo of authority” deploy a stern, never-ending surveillance, verbal threats, and corporal discipline that subject the narrator and her “chums” to a series of “unjustifiable frights and punishments” (65, 59). Failing to respond appropriately to the unfamiliar “mutterings” of a man saying grace, the narrator is initially intimidated by the non-verbal reprimand of a paleface woman’s gaze (53). Shortly thereafter, this “keen surveillance” is followed up with harsher penalties: “[A] shrill voice called us. . . . Her words fell from her lips like crackling embers, and her inflection ran up like the small end of a switch. I understood her voice better than the things she was saying.” (57-8). Under the disciplinary regime of the assimilation factory, the maternal tenderness and spiritual nurture so highly esteemed by sentimental print culture become the belated afterthought of manager-pedagogues intent upon immediate conformity through psychological intimidation and physical force.

In turn, Zitkala-Ša’s narrator traces how the domesticating discipline of the off-reservation school leaves her feeling like a “dumb. . . brute” (“School Days” 66). Upon entering the school, the narrator is “as frightened and bewildered as the captured young

“by daylight and lamplight” over her studies and also of the emotional strain brought on by the public exhibition of her oratorical abilities (76, 81, 96). At the same time, just as Sedgwick deflects criticism of “middle-class women’s increasingly normative confinement to the home” onto the “excessive public exertion” entailed by the boarding school, Zitkala-Ša holds the unsentimental discipline of the off-reservation school responsible for the “feebleness of purpose, weakness of execution, dejection, [and] fretfulness” subsequently suffered by Native school children and erroneously attributed to indigenous childrearing practices and lifeways (Loeffelholz 21-2; Sedgwick 55).
of a wild creature” and later alludes to her happy childhood in the “Western rolling
lands” as an “unlassoed” life (45, 65). After a single day of boarding school discipline,
however, she re-envisions herself as “only one of many little animals driven by a herder”
and, finding the most latent expressions of resistance to be futile, submissively assumes
the paleface day’s “harness” (56, 66). Heavy-handed pedagogy and consequent
animalistic analogies are not limited to the disciplinary regime of White’s Institute,
moreover, but actually follow the student-turned-showpiece-Indian as she accepts a
teaching post at Carlisle: “Though I had gone to and fro, from my room to the office, in
an unhappy silence, I was watched by those around me. On an early morning I was
summoned to the superintendent’s office” (“Indian Teacher” 85). Still subjected to the
punitive surveillance of white pedagogues, who are now the supposed peers of the self-
described “Indian teacher,” Zitkala-Ša recounts in her final memoir how her emotional
non-conformity is subsequently chastised by Col. Pratt’s own racially condescending
humor: “For a half-hour I listened to his words, and when I returned. . . I remembered
one sentence above the rest. . . : ‘I am going to turn you loose to pasture!’ He was
sending me West to gather Indian pupils for the school, and this was his way of
expressing it” (85). Rather than being internally imagined by a disgruntled child, the
analogizing of domesticated animals and assimilated Natives is here explicitly articulated
by the champion of off-reservation schools.

Nevertheless, the most disturbing psychological trauma unleashed by boarding
school education is the narrator’s necessary assumption of a performative identity as a
means of survival. The “three little ones, Judéwin, Thowin, and I” each embody a
particular response to the civilizing machine (47). For example, Judéwin and Thowin
respectively represent an accommodationist and an abject subjectivity. Not surprising, given her role as a de facto boarding school recruiter in the previous memoir, Judéwin acts as a well-meaning bilingual go-between, who warns her friends when some unpleasant policy or disciplinary action is about to impact their lives (54, 57). \footnote{While critical consensus has singled out the Quaker missionaries, who promise the narrator red apples and a ride on the “iron horse,” as Satanic tempters in Zitkala-Ša’s skillful reversal of Biblical rhetoric, comparatively little attention has been paid to the diabolical slight-of-hand displayed by a bilingual school recruiter who subtly emphasizes the manual labor ideology of the boarding school or the principle that rewards like apples are reserved for those “good” children who labor for them: “Yes, little girl, the nice red apples are for those who pick them” (my emphasis, “Impressions” 42). How, then, does the gullible child-narrator ever become convinced that these palefaces are generously offering her the fruit and free run of their school’s orchard? The answer lies in the peer pressure exerted by other Dakota children and, in particular, the excited exaggerations of Judéwin who already “knew a few words of English” (“School Days” 39, 54): “Judéwin had told me of the great tree where grew red, red apples; and how we could reach out our hands and pick all the red apples we could eat. . . . [W]hen I heard of the orchards of the East, I was eager to roam among them” (41-2). If the Quakers are being depicted as the serpent, then Judéwin, the ecstatic proselytizer for apple consumption, is Eve, who lures her companion to take of the forbidden fruit. Exasperatingly exclaiming that her daughter’s head has been turned by Judéwin’s “fill[ing]” her playmates’ “ears with the white man’s lies,” Zitkala-Ša’s mother recognizes the dangers of Judéwin’s naïve translation of the missionaries’ promotional rhetoric and incomplete grasp of the momentous step being taken by Indian children and their families (“Impressions” 40-1). Poor, bedeviled Judéwin is, therefore, a de facto recruiter for the boarding school, a role shaped by Zitkala-Ša’s own repressed memories of having been drafted into first White’s and then Carlisle’s agenda of matriculating more Native students (“Indian Teacher” 85). It is within the increasingly fraught context of the Dakota mother’s eroding influence as an exemplar of traditional Dakota values, moreover, that bilingual Judéwin plays the pivotal role in convincing the narrator to welcome the missionaries and their promises of apples in the East. That is, Zitkala-Ša juxtaposes the return of her older brother from the Hampton Institute with the subtle introduction of patriarchal authority into her previously matriarchal domestic sphere (Dominguez, “Representative” xxiii) No longer influencing her son and daughter to behave as generous, ruly members of their Dakota community, the Dakota mother submits to her son’s lessons in Anglo-American culture and gradually renounces her traditional lifeways. Zitkala-Ša, therefore, obliquely testifies to the damaging, disruptive potential lurking within the biculturalism displayed and disseminated by boarding school students like Dawée, bilingual children like Judéwin, and, not least of all, showpiece Indians like herself.}
your eyes and talks loudly, you must wait until she stops. Then, after a tiny pause, say, "No.‖ The rest of the way we practiced upon the little word ‘no.’” (57-8). Nevertheless, Judéwin’s pragmatic accommodation to the civilizing machine also makes her implicated, however indirectly, in the paleface women’s disciplining of others. That is, as the narrator hides from the teachers’ shears, she recognizes Judéwin as being among the women and children sent to search for her (59). Similarly, although she could not have known the outcome of her clever effort to outsmart the paleface woman, Judéwin’s furtive English lesson ironically delivers up her helpless playmate for harsher retribution: "Judéwin heard enough of the words to realize all too late that she had taught us the wrong reply. ‘Oh, poor Thowin!’ she gasped, as she put both hands over her ears” (57-8). With a subjectivity defined by this forlorn suffering, the “tremulous,” “frightened,” and “feebl[e]” Thowin comes to represent an abject reaction to the stern, English-only policies and corporal discipline of the boarding school (58-9). Intimidated into a silence broken only by her pathetic attempt to acknowledge her powerless acquiescence, this victimized schoolgirl suffers the most, despite offering the least resistance, in an ironic attempt to placate her white pedagogue with “the only word at her command, ‘No’” (58).

Responding to the civilizing machine with a defiant hostility that sets her apart from either Judéwin or Thowin, Zitkala-Ša’s narrator assumes the identity of a resistant warrior who uses both her physical strength and increasing English comprehension to achieve her rebellious ends. Passionately rejecting Judéwin’s pragmatic counsel

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294 In turn, bilingual Judéwin’s response to her failed act of subversion poignantly illustrates the emotional burden carried by child-sized cultural mediators (58). Unsuccessful in her attempt to shield her friends with her superior language skills, Judéwin not only sympathizes with her classmate but also covers up her own precocious ears that can apprehend both the spoken reprimands of factory discipline and also the impending physical consequences of Thowin’s failure to satisfy the matron’s English commands.
concerning an impending haircut and exclaiming, “No, I will not submit! I will struggle first,” the narrator is all too aware that this “struggle” will probably end in defeat but is unwilling to relinquish her Dakota cultural orientation (54). “[K]icking and scratching wildly,” she responds like a warrior who has been captured by the enemy (55-6). Interestingly enough, Zitkala-Ša’s portrayal of the sudden halt to this resistance or how she “lost [her] spirit” when she “felt the cold blades of the scissors against [her] neck, and heard them gnaw off one of [her] thick braids” likens the initial inroads of the civilizing machine to the Philistine’s cutting off of Samson’s hair (56). Moreover, just as Samson’s’ hair grows back, much to the regret of his Gentile captors, so too does the narrator’s morale and defiance gradually return, as the child learns to navigate the disciplinary machinations of the school and becomes adept at deploying the English language: “Within a year I was able to express myself somewhat in broken English. As soon as I comprehended a part of what was said and done, a mischievous spirit of revenge possessed me” (59). Recognizing the subversive possibilities of her rapidly-increasing English comprehension but comparatively lagging conversational abilities, the child wrathfully reacts to her disciplinary relegation to kitchen duties by deliberately misconstruing the command of a “rough[]” and offensive paleface woman (59-60): “I bent in hot rage over the turnips. I worked my vengeance upon them. . . .[T]he order was, ‘Mash these turnips,’ and mash them I would!” (60). Shattering the bottom of the jar and removing from the menu a vegetable that she admittedly “hated,” the narrator dauntlessly confronts the repercussions of her own subversive act and thus doubly reasserts her

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295 See Judges 13.3-5; 16.15-22; and Velikova 59. Just as the Gentiles sought to tame the destructive might of the Jewish warrior by stripping him of the culturally-specific sign of the Nazarite vow that distinguished him in the eyes of his community, the boarding school matrons domesticate the child-warrior only after first alienating her from the Dakota social codes of courage and dignity.
identity as a resistant warrior. Standing “fearless and angry” before the outraged teacher, Zitkala-Ša recounts how she “whooped in [her] heart for having once asserted the rebellion within [her]” and “triumphant[ly]” accepted the boarding school matron’s “scolding phrases” as something that she had “earned,” like so many distinctions in battle (60-1).

And yet, although she may have pictured herself as a warrior, Zitkala-Ša reminds the reader that she was still a little girl who had been taught by her Dakota mother to behave respectfully, who still longs for the sympathy and approbation of those with whom she lives, and who does not indiscriminately vandalize school property: “I felt triumphant in my revenge, though deep within me I was a wee bit sorry to have broken the jar” (60-1). Furthermore, inscribed in this audacious moment of rebellious self-expression and tenacious self-fashioning are the institutional self-effacement and internalized censure that will go on to undermine Zitkala-Ša’s assertion of a coherent, resistant subjectivity. Ostensibly acquiescing to her instructors’ demands, the schoolgirl evades corporal punishment by strategically concealing her more advanced understanding of English or by playing dumb. Her defiance is now mediated, therefore, by her acclimation to the pedagogical dynamo and her internalization of its racial assumptions. In turn, because it requires this alternating performance of abjection, accommodation, and resistance, surviving the civilizing machine ultimately gives rise to a performative identity that becomes entangled in a pattern of self-reproach and isolation. As the narrator become immured in the mechanization of the “iron routine,” with its inversion of the Dakota mother’s sentimental lessons, she assumes the position of Thowin and Judéwin who have now disappeared from the text. Thus, even as the child surreptitiously
condemns her pedagogues’ “neglect,” ignorance, and superstition from within the shadowy margins of the institution, her “bitter[ness]” is subsumed by an abject compliance with the school’s discipline: “[A]s it was inbred in me to suffer in silence rather than appeal to the ears of one whose open eyes could not see my pain, I have many times trudged in the day’s harness heavy-footed, like a dumb sick brute” (66). Similarly, although the schoolgirl will persevere in “actively testing the chains which tightly bound [her] individuality, like a mummy for burial,” this resistance is now preceded by and couched in a Judéwin-like display of accommodation: “Though I was sullen in all my little troubles, as soon as I felt better I was ready again to smile upon the cruel woman” (67).

This juxtaposition of abjection, accommodation, and resistance will later reappear at moments otherwise representative of Zitkala-Ša’s seemingly triumphant participation in off-reservation schooling. Indeed, over the course of her memoirs, this split subjectivity becomes emblematic of the liminality endured by the Native student. Thus, having just delivered her award-winning speech, “Side By Side,” with its melodramatic plea for interracial compassion and its final sentimental pledge of assimilation, the anxious co-ed sees her exalted expression of accommodation countered by the exclusionary stereotype of the abject Indian woman: “There, before that vast ocean of eyes, some college rowdies threw out a large white flag, with a drawing of a most forlorn Indian girl on it. Under this they had printed in bold black letters words that ridiculed the college which was represented by a ‘squaw’” (79). “[A]lready burning” inwardly from the “slurs against the Indian” that had been hurled against Earlham and its female

296 “America, I love thee. ‘Thy people shall be may people and thy God my God’” (179).
representative before the competition had even begun, the narrator is reminded once again of how unsympathetic palefaces, whether pedagogues or “rowdies,” want her to perceive herself: that is, as a silent and submissive victim (79). Nevertheless, refusing to relinquish her hard-won composure before this “worse than barbarian rudeness,” she stifles her bitterness by smiling upon the raucous crowd, much as she had smil[ed] upon the cruel matron at White’s Institute (79, 67): “I glem[d]ed fiercely upon the throngs of palefaces. My teeth were hard set, as I saw the white flag still floating insolently in the air” (79). As it had when she was a boarding school student, the college coed’s repressed resistance finds victorious expression through her show of pragmatic accommodation: “There were two prizes given that night, and one of them was mine! The evil spirit laughed within me when the white flag dropped out of sight, and the hands which hurled it hung limp in defeat” (79-80).

This moment of supreme vindication, in turn, is immediately undercut by Zitkala-Ša’s suggestive censure of her competitiveness as an expression of wickedness emanating from “the evil spirit” who, according to boarding school discipline, oppresses recalcitrant students (my emphasis, 79, 62-3). Having internalized the punitive spiritual rhetoric of her white pedagogues, the narrator increasingly condemns the resentment underlying her retaliatory acts of resistance.297 The narrator’s triumph at the state oratorical competition is consequently dampened by the transgressive inauthenticity of her resistance or the

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297 Fear and extorted submission, rather than God’s love and self-sacrifice, are the foremost impressions left by the boarding school’s lessons in religious literacy: “I never knew there was an insolent chieftain among the bad spirits, who dared to array his forces against the Great Spirit, until I heard this white man’s legend from a paleface woman... Then I heard the paleface woman say that this terrible creature roamed loose in the world, and that little girls who disobeyed school regulations were to be tortured by him” (62-3). Indeed, it is only after a child is at the brink of death that another boarding school matron belatedly impresses upon the suffering student her faith in “Jesus the Christ,” rather than in the tortures suffered by unruly students at the hands of the devil (66-7).
repressed anger belied by her smiling performance and embrace of assimilation. Seeking relief from both the scourging resentment of injuries which she has been taught to deem sinful and also the dominant culture’s incessant, compromising demand for dissembling, she retreats into the dark seclusion of her room: “Leaving the crowd as quickly as possible I was soon in my room. The rest of the night I sat in an armchair and gazed into the crackling fire. I laughed no more in triumph when thus alone” (80). Rather than celebrating how her combination of strategic accommodation and tenacious self-regard have finally overcome her peers’ “scornful yet curious” attitudes, Zitkala-Ša is haunted by the insincere performativity that she has deployed as a defense against the disparaging demands of a Eurocentric milieu and chastises herself through self-exile (76, 78).

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298 A survey of the gossipy columns of The Earlhamite during Zitkala-Ša’s college years indicates that musical performance was the lonely co-ed’s means of meeting and mingling with her peers. Over the course of her initial semester in the fall of 1895, Zitkala-Ša took part in at least three concerts worthy of mention in the college paper; see “Personals and Locals,” “Hallowe’en Party,” and “Music Recital.” Despite these musical attempts at engaging with her classmates, however, Zitkala-Ša recalls, “During the fall and winter seasons I scarcely had a real friend, though by that time several of my classmates were courteous to me at a safe distance” (76). Corroborating Zitkala-Ša’s description of her social marginalization at Earlham College, her former classmate Chalmers Hadley remembers, “Her relations with other students were pleasant but somewhat distant” (14). Peering deeper into his remarks, however, his highly romanticized recollections of her having “once” chosen to sit “near” him; of her choosing to “walk alone” because she was “intent on avoiding the fluffy dandelion heads which she did not wish to injure”; and of her supposed preference for sitting alone “in darkness” owing to her great concern for sparing the moths all reinforce Zitkala-Ša’s assertion that prejudice kept her classmates “at a safe distance” (Hadley 14; “School Days” 76). That is, Hadley admits that the Native student’s every action was scrutinized and that she spent a good deal of her semester alone and in the dark. Based upon the amount of hearsay that Hadley collected and then recollects, his overwrought cultural prejudices have him convinced, both in the mid-1890’s and in the 1940’s, that all of the responsibility for making friends with the overwhelmingly white student body rested solely upon the Indian maid, and that, insofar as she failed in this task, it was by choice (14).

299 Self-exile as the ultimate finale of the boarding school’s inculcation of a split, performative identity will become, moreover, a recurrent theme in Zitkala-Ša’s writing. For example, the ostracized Dakota evangelist of “The Soft-Hearted Sioux” (1901) ultimately exiles himself to the darkness of a prison cell after killing a neighbor’s steer and accidentally taking the life of a white rancher. Abjectly submitting to being “bound . . . hand and foot” by paleface justice, the culturally homeless student repeatedly lacerates himself with the internalized authority of his dying father or the memory of the final words of that “old gray-haired skeleton” (123): “Your soft heart! your soft heart will see me die before you bring me food!” (124). At the same time, the soft-hearted missionary remains a boarding school accommodationist who ultimately fixates upon his Eurocentric education in Christian rewards and punishments without ever attempting to reconcile his faith in Christ with his longing for his people: “Will the loving Jesus grant me pardon and give my soul a soothing sleep? or will my warrior father greet me and receive me as his son?
Zitkala-Ša’s perhaps most poignant representation of boarding school performativity comes at the very outset of her following memoir “An Indian Teacher Among Indians.” Physically and emotionally exhausted by her years spent in an unrelenting grind of assimilative study and achievement, the narrator discovers to her dismay that the “domestic” surroundings of her new teaching post at Carlisle are about as unprepossessing and ungenteel as her own travel-worn appearance: “I made myself known, and was shown to . . . a small, carpeted room, with ghastly walls and ceiling. The two windows. . . were curtained with heavy muslin yellowed with age. . . For several heart throbs I sat still looking from ceiling to floor, . . . trying hard to imagine years of contentment there” (81-3). Already self-consciously aware of her “frail and languid” appearance and caught up in a sudden crisis of self-doubt, the newly arrived Indian teacher is taken off-guard by the entrance of “no other than [her] employer,” Richard Henry Pratt (83). He, in turn, utterly demoralizes his new “little Indian girl” by blatantly appraising her: “His quick eye measured my height and breadth. Then he looked into my face. I imagined that a visible shadow flitted across his countenance as he let my hand fall. . . I was aware that my car-smoked appearance had not concealed the lines of pain on my face” (83-4). Momentarily rallying her waning energy in response to this untimely blow to her self-confidence, Zitkala-Ša spiritedly tries to laugh off her wounded spirit: “Will my spirit fly upward to a happy heaven? or shall I sink into the bottomless pit, an outcast from a God of infinite love?” (124-5). Clearly, by concluding her protagonist’s speculations with this reference to the “infinite love” of Christianity’s God, Zitkala-Ša deliberately underscores the boarding school’s debilitating fixation upon irrevocable punishment rather than inexhaustible redemption. Nevertheless, no cautiously optimistic faith or strategic adaptation of Christian rhetoric underwrites the defiance whereby the failed missionary suddenly assumes the steely resistance of a Dakota warrior: “It is the guard. . . .He tells me that tomorrow I must die. In his stern face I laugh aloud. I do not fear death” (124). Rather, it is the promise of a more thorough realization of self-exile or the sweet relief promised by an escape from this world’s excruciating tangle of colliding cultural traditions: “My heart is strong. My face is calm. My eyes are dry and eager for new scenes. . . . Serene and brave, my soul awaits the men to perch me on the gallows for another flight. I go” (125).
pride but, ultimately taking Pratt’s unspoken criticisms to heart, focuses instead upon how she might redeem herself through some show of accommodation: “For a short moment my spirit laughed at my ill fortune, and I entertained the idea of exerting myself to make an improvement” (84). Nevertheless, no longer able to sustain her never-ending performance of whatever her pedagogical authority figures want her to be, the narrator finally breaks down under the pressure of the civilizing machine and sinks into an abject resignation to her own inadequacy: “[A] leaden weakness came over me, and I felt as if years of weariness lay like water-soaked logs upon me. I threw myself upon the bed, and, closing my eyes, forgot my good intention” (84). Resonating with her Dakota mother’s words of warning concerning the duplicitous paleface, Zitkala-Ša’s hard-won triumph as a “showpiece Indian” turns out to be little more than an enervating performance or a “sickly sham” (9).

**Seduction, Sympathetic Identification, and Telegraph Poles:**

**Zitkala-Ša’s Sentimental Anxiety of Influence**

Concluding the poignant account of her “School Days,” Zitkala-Ša recollects how her brooding self-exile in the darkness of an Earlham dormitory is only exacerbated by the scourging memory of her filial disobedience and her mother’s imagined disapproval: “In my mind I saw my mother far away on the Western plains, and she was holding a charge against me” (80). By the final memoir “An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” moreover, this alienation between mother and daughter has reached a state of crisis as the constant interplay of repressed resistance, strategic accommodation, and abject suffering brings the narrator to the brink of a nervous collapse. Unable to find expression for her disillusionment with assimilationist pedagogy, the abject narrator instead projects her
stifled rage against white authority onto her mother’s presumed backwardness and “superstitious” defiance. Rejecting her mother either as “an image of future maturity” or as the monitory embodiment of sympathy’s “psychological and emotional sameness” that can overcome class and cultural divides (Barnes 25, 92), the schoolgirl-turned-teacher clearly believes that the psychological traumas and academic progress acquired from her boarding school experiences have made her not only significantly different from but also superior to her “simple” mother (97). Repeatedly excusing the growing estrangement between mother and daughter as the logical outcome of the Dakota matron’s having “never gone to school” (89), the narrator becomes overtly critical when recalling her mother’s fierce act of supernatural resistance or her attempt to place a “curse upon those who sat around the hated white man’s light” (94). Skeptically observing that it was only “as if an invisible power” had emanated from her mother’s fingers, she characterizes the mother’s underlying belief in cosmic retribution as a senseless superstition and an impressive but ultimately fruitless performance: “She sprang to her feet, and, . . . sent a curse. . . . Long she held her outstretched fingers toward the settler’s lodge, as if an invisible power passed from them to the evil at which she aimed” (94). By the same token, like the narrator’s allusion to not only the “hated white man” but also the collateral women and children seeking shelter around his fire as those falling under her mother’s indiscriminate curse, this vignette’s closing reference “to the evil at which [her mother] aimed” expresses the narrator’s ethical dissent from her mother’s unique solution to the problem of Euro-American aggression. That is, Zitkala-Ša’s narration suggests that both the white encroaching objects of her mother’s imprecation and also her mother’s vengeful objective of blight and destruction are, in fact, worthy of condemnation as “evil.”
Nevertheless, countering her final memoir’s depiction of thwarted mother-love, Zitkala-Ša simultaneously attributes to this Dakota matron an enduring, rather than waning, female influence. That is, the narrator finally resolves to renounce the Eurocentric prejudice, authoritarianism, and duplicitous rhetoric of off-reservation schooling not merely because of the civilizing machine’s devastating impact upon her own life and educational ambitions but also because she has taken to heart her “mother’s stories of encroaching frontier settlers” and shares her mother’s unbridled outrage: “At this stage of my own evolution, I was ready to curse men of small capacity for being the dwarfs their God made them” (my emphasis, 96). By the same token, the narrator’s unbelieving dismissal of divine justice has already been predicted by her mother’s story of forced removal and subsequent infant mortality: “With every step, your sister, who was not as large as you are now, shrieked with the painful jar until she was hoarse with crying. . . . My poor child, how I cried with her because the Great Spirit had forgotten us!” (my emphasis, 10). Indeed, a mirroring identification with the Dakota mother’s feelings and story persists throughout Zitkala-Ša’s memoirs, despite the narrator’s acculturated achievements and explicit rejection of her mother’s superstitious vindictiveness.

Key to this maternal influence, moreover, is the almost preternatural power with which the Dakota matron’s spoken words and emotions continue to be internalized and actualized by the increasingly skeptical narrator. Even after the narrator willfully and repeatedly chooses the orchards and opportunities of Eastern boarding schools over her mother’s sentimental authority, the abiding influence of the Dakota mother acts as the impetus behind the student’s resistance and accommodation to off-reservation schooling.
While her willful daughter comes to realize the Dakota matron’s worst fears of uncomforted fear, grief, and suffering (41, 44), Taté I Yóhin Win heroically struggles to support her children in their acculturative education and, as a consequence, ironically elicits a stony, rebellious silence from her assimilation-weary daughter: “[S]he offered me the only printed matter we had in our home. It was an Indian Bible, given to her some years ago by a missionary. . . . ‘Here, my child, are the white man’s papers.’ . . . The dim yellow light of the braided muslin burning in a small vessel of oil flickered and sizzled in the awful silent storm which followed my rej

tection of the Bible‖ (73). In turn, just as the student-warrior defies the paleface pedagogue by taking the command “Mash these turnips” to a destructive extreme, so the rebellious daughter expresses her displeasure with her mother’s apparent acculturation to Euro-American beliefs by returning to the boarding school where she will embrace the “white man’s papers” with a vengeance and to the supposed exclusion of the Dakota mother and her values: “For the white man’s papers I had given up my faith in the Great Spirit. For these same papers I have forgotten the healing in trees and brooks. On account of my mother’s simple view of life, and my lack of any, I gave her up also” (97). On the one hand, the mother’s conciliatory and assimilated beliefs are the repressed substance of Zitkala-Ša’s now-positive reaction to boarding school discipline and her apparent success as a showpiece student and teacher. On the other hand, both mother and daughter can be described as having been “deluded” or, to put it another way, seduced by the “white man’s papers,” whether these papers are understood as the Bible with its supernatural embodiment of the power of God or as English literacy with its “magical” promise of “the white man’s respect” through academic achievement (73, 76).
When read against the adolescent schoolgirl’s defiant response to her mother’s brief endorsement of cultural accommodation, Zitkala-Ša’s anxiety of influence and lacerating attempts to differentiate her voice and experiences from that of her mother relate directly to the nineteenth-century pattern of inscribing a tragic seduction story onto the dominant plotline of a domestic romance: “As recounted within the daughter’s story, the mother’s history not only reenacts her own victimization, it implicates her daughter in the seduction” (Barnes 101). Given the fact that Zitkala-Ša’s staunch commitment to studying at Earlham College was met with a family member’s cruel reminder that her white father had similarly “deserted” her mother, it is perhaps not surprising that the author would later associate her educational experiences with the notion of seduction and her mother’s unhappy conjugal history. That is, looming over Zitkala-Ša’s memoirs is the implicit fear that the mother’s story of domestic victimization will somehow repeat itself in the life of the daughter. For example, rather than simply launching into a tribal history of “what the paleface has done,” the barely composed matron, sounding more like a spurned woman than a patriotic Dakota, warns her daughter never to trust the white man’s intentions or yield to his false allure: “‘Mother, who is this bad paleface?’ I asked. ‘My little daughter, he is a sham, --a sickly sham! The bronzed Dakota is the only real man’” (9). Voiced by a woman who, after three marriages to white men, was left abandoned and dependent upon her own resources to support her mixed-blood children, these words express both a mother’s poignant self-reproach for ever having trusted the

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300 That is, in her exploration of the “devastating consequences of maternal influence” or its “seductive effects” within the domestic novel, Barnes revises Nina Baym’s contention that domesticity had replaced seduction in the novels of nineteenth-century female authors, arguing instead that “seduction plots were not overcome but rather sublimated into subtler, conventionally safer, yet ultimately more sinister forms”: “The eighteenth-century woman’s story of betrayal . . . ostensibly expurgated from the nineteenth-century plot, is reintroduced in the domestic novel through the figure of the mother. In the narrative legacy handed down from mother to daughter lies the history of seduction long ago made familiar to readers of sentimental fiction.” (100-1)
paleface and the foreboding that her daughter will suffer a similar fate. That is, ostensibly commenting upon the white man’s “defraud[ing]” the Dakota of their homeland, this allusion to dissembling versus authentic masculinity also conveys the sexual dangers facing indigenous women. Consequently, by disregarding her mother’s harsh words and independently striking out on her own adventure to the “Red Apple Country” (47), the narrator ironically reaffirms her maternal resemblance and blurs her mother’s seduction narrative with her own story of paleface pedagogy and disillusionment.

However, even as she subtly confirms her academic career’s unintended mirroring of her mother’s domestic betrayal, Zitkala-Ša also underscores the distinctly non-sexual but just as perilous dangers facing the Indian schoolgirl. For example, after being shown a histrionic illustration of “the king of evil spirits,” replete with “a scaly tail,” “bearded cheeks, like some I had seen palefaces wear,” and “horns,” the credulous little schoolgirl has a nightmare in which the devil bursts into her mother’s cabin and almost catches her with his “outstretched claws” (64). Expeditiously embracing her daughter who has

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301 See Dominguez, “Representative” viii-ix.

302 Despite Zitkala-Ša’s authorial decision to erase her father’s race and conspicuous absence, she nonetheless can be seen to allude to Felker, a man reputed to have been “a worthless fellow” (qtd in Dominguez, “Representative” viii), as the implicit object of her mother’s diatribe against the white man and boarding schools: “The missionaries smiled into my eyes and patted my head. I wondered how mother could say such hard words against him” (my emphasis, 42). This grammatically skewed movement from a description of three solicitous missionaries to an incredulous reconsideration of her mother’s “hard words” concerning one singular male takes on a decidedly autobiographical significance when read in light of Taté I Yóhin Win’s reported outrage over Felker’s style of punishment, or as Zitkala-Ša self-consciously explains in a letter dated June 1901: “Once my father scolded my brother; and my mother took such offense from it—that eventually it resulted in a parting” (qtd in Fisher 231). While it remains unclear whether Zitkala-Ša is euphemistically describing corporal punishment as “scolding,” her private correspondence nevertheless supports a link among the “sham” masculinity of the paleface, Felker’s objectionable method of teaching his stepson a lesson, and her mother’s prescient distrust of the unsentimental disciplinary regime of off-reservation schools.
toppled to the floor in fear and exhaustion, the Dakota mother, with belated maternal
tenderness, appears to make the devil and his use as a disciplinary device literally
disappear (62-4). Yet, there is more to this dream than any simple vanquishing of
Christian mythos by Dakota spirituality or even the decidedly sentimental hope for a
restoration to the intimate religious lessons of a maternal authority figure.303 Rather,
because the Dakota mother does not fully comprehend her daughter’s psychological
rather than sexual endangerment at the hands of paleface pedagogy, she inadvertently
wounds the narrator with her perceived “quiet indifference” to her daughter’s terror and
screams for deliverance: “Then in rushed the devil! He was tall! . . . He did not speak to
my mother, because he did not know the Indian language. . . . He did not fear [my
mother], but followed close after me. . . . But my mother . . . seemed not to know my
danger. . . ., looking quietly on the devil’s chase after me” (63-4). Clearly, the
disciplinary system of the civilizing machine, with its English-only policy and disregard
for the prior claims of a Native parent, is here represented by the devil who does “not
fear” and even refuses to acknowledge the presence of the Dakota mother who speaks
only her indigenous tongue (63-4). Consequently, the Native daughter’s psychological
trauma is exacerbated by its apparent incomprehensibility to the mother who “had never
gone to school” and who appears unable to sympathize with a fear that is unlike her own
(89).

In turn, the mother’s unintentional cruelty is mirrored by the daughter’s later
inability to comprehend her mother’s trepidation concerning her grown daughter’s
continued residence amongst the palefaces. Zitkala-Ša’s final memoir illustrates, in turn,

303 For a positive gloss upon this hairbreadth escape from the punitive spirituality of the boarding school, see Bernardin 224.
how a sentimental emphasis upon maternal influence and filial sympathy can actually trap the already beset Native student in a seduction script that is inadequate to the psychological nuances of her bicultural predicament. Revived by “old friends” such as the sunflowers, the “cloud shadows,” and the mischievous wind who is “determined to blow [her] hat off, and return [her] to olden days” (88, 86), the homecoming narrator is suddenly brought back down to earth by her mother’s statue-like gaze: “I had expected her to run out to greet me, but she stood still, all the while staring at the weather-beaten man at my side” (88). The man in question, a drowsy and “trusty driver,” is not tall but “stooped,” with “brick red” skin, “bloodshot” eyes, and “unkempt flaxen hair [hanging] shaggy about his ears” and “tuft[ing]” a “protruding chin” (87). In a parodic inversion of the narrator’s nightmarish encounter with “the king of evil spirits,” however, the anxious mother perceives in this rumpled, “fumbling” paleface the unwelcome reappearance of the devil incarnate and the realization of her long held apprehension that her daughter might also be exploited by “a worthless fellow” (89): “At length, when her loftiness became unbearable, I called to her, ‘Mother, why do you stop?’ This seemed to break the evil moment, and she hastened out to hold my head against her cheek. ‘My daughter, what madness possessed you to bring home such a fellow?’ she asked” (89). Zitkala-Ša leaves to the reader’s imagination what awful visions of inevitable domestic victimization must have stopped the loving mother in her tracks. And yet, for all of her anxiety and repeated warnings, the mother remains unaware of how, despite the narrator’s apparently uncompromised sexuality, her daughter is nevertheless in the psychological clutches of a white devil.304 “Awed by [Pratt’s] wondrous height and his strong square shoulders” and

304 Interestingly enough, in a letter dated March 30, 1900, Richard Henry Pratt writes of his and his pedagogical colleagues’ continuing efforts to prevent Zitkala-Ša from becoming “a poor squaw . . . married
captivated by his humiliating gaze (83), the browbeaten narrator stifles her suffering and acquiesces to her employer’s relentless demand “to search the hot prairies for overconfident parents who would intrust their children to strangers” (85). Poised to spread her employer’s message of killing the Indian to save the man and to begin anew the cycle of coercive assimilative pedagogy and displacement, the narrator clings only to “the hope of seeing [her] mother” and finding “nourishment” and strength in her “mother’s home” (85-6). Yet, regaling her eastward-returning daughter with both her seduction anxieties and, for one last time, her story of “the cruel paleface who caused the death of your sister and your uncle,” the Dakota mother offers her child no means to resist this abject narrative order other than either to curse or to “beware of the paleface” (93).

Thus, even as Zitkala-Ša critiques the off-reservation schooling system for undermining the domestic bonds and influence predicated upon authoritative mother love, she also critiques the sentimental prioritization of maternal influence and filial identification for enclosing her possible life choices within a never-ending story of victimization that is incapable of adequately apprehending or relieving her liminality: “The sentimental world of familial intimacy, though seductively alluring, suggests the disturbing possibility that . . . there is no way out of the house of mirrors” (Barnes 114). For example, intrinsic to the final memoir’s sympathetic outpouring for telegraph poles is an underlying analogy predicated upon the Dakota mother’s tearful, originary account of wounding or “what the paleface has done” (10). That is, in her initial memoir, the child-

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305 See Adams 52.
narrator assumes that the “moaning” telegraph pole has been “hurt” by the paleface as her mother and people have been. It is not until “An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” however, that Zitkala-Ša fully develops and identifies with this figure of the living thing transformed into a senseless messenger. With the advantage of “look[ing] back upon the recent past” and “see[ing] it . . . as a whole,” the narrator’s concluding paragraphs of “retrospection” now liken Native children to a “small forest of Indian timber” and describe Zitkala-Ša’s own education and its alienating consequences as part and parcel of an overall mechanism for manufacturing these trees, firmly grounded in their respective homeland and traditions, into something serviceable to the Anglo-American mainstream: “Like a slender tree, I had been uprooted from my mother, nature, and God. I was shorn of my branches, which had waved in sympathy and love for home and friends. The natural coat of bark which had protected my oversensitive nature was scraped off to the very quick. Now a cold bare pole I seemed to be, placed in a strange earth” (97). Alluding to the floating of hewn timber down rivers and streams, the Native student’s abject suffering, described at one point as “years of weariness lay[ing] like water-soaked logs upon [her],” is just one of the many steps taken to transform Native boys and girls into the otherwise mute transmitters of other people’s ideas (84). Therefore, as she argues that despoiled telegraph poles are the proper sentimental figure for browbeaten Native students like herself, the fully-matured narrator seems to concede that the Dakota mother’s experience of indigenous displacement and the Dakota daughter’s experience of coercive assimilation are emotionally commensurate, are, in fact, an example of history repeating itself.

306 See also Ladino for a Foucauldian reading of this deforesting civilizing machine.
What Zitkala-Ša ultimately longs for, however, is the freedom to exceed, once and for all, the mutually abject roles of moaning Dakota victim and accommodating showpiece Indian. That is, she wants to be something other than a telegraph pole who alternately transmits the Eurocentric messages of Richard Henry Pratt to Indian country and her mother’s history of domestic betrayal and racialized dispossession to the classroom encounters of the East: “Now a cold bare pole I seem to be, planted in a strange earth. Still, I seemed to hope a day would come when my mute aching head, reared upward to the sky, would flash a zigzag lightning across the heavens” (97). No longer content with being a cog in the civilizing machine and resisting any mirroring descent into her mother’s helpless suffering, Zitkala-Ša re-envisions herself as something more than a mere “lightning rod” for others’ opinions.  

She will be a dynamo in her own right who generates a discourse that is lightning-like in its power and unruliness, or as she asserts in a March 1901 letter, “I won’t be another’s mouthpiece—I will say just what I think.” Furthermore, transforming her three-part memoirs into the realization of this anticipated autonomy and the maiden lightning strike of “a long-pent consciousness” (97-8), Zitkala-Ša further distances herself from her mother’s narrative by presenting her own unique account of the dangers facing a rising generation of Native students. Subjected to a “Christian” charity that bureaucratically privileges the “self-preservation” of whites over the well-being of indigenous children (94-5), Indian students like herself have been left to the mercy of men and women whose ignorance, racism, and even substance abuse make them unfit to care for—let alone instruct—their pupils. Now audaciously expanding her critique to include the sophisticated “city folks” as well as the

307 See, for example, Jeanne Smith’s interpretation of this renegade telegraph pole: “Capturing both the personal anguish and the potential power of her between-worlds condition, she envisions herself as a conductor, . . . a lightning rod to galvanize and direct the anger and frustrations of her people” (57).
“clumsy” lower classes who are credulously content with ogling “the children of savage warriors [appearing] so docile and industrious” (95, 98) she leaves it to the “Christian palefaces” reading the Atlantic Monthly to answer truthfully whether the boarding school system she has described offers “real life or long-lasting death” to “the children of the red man” (98-9).

The Failed Promise of Sympathy

Zitkala-Ša’s 1900 memoirs end with a decidedly triumphant, forward-looking impulse, as the narrator takes the nascent steps necessary to establishing her own self-generating discourse. Moving past her jaded disillusionment with the civilizing machine, her matured perspective empowers her to separate her further education from the federal government’s Indian assimilation project. Consequently, Zitkala-Ša embraces self-cultivation and a commitment to her artistic craft as the foundation for a liberated subjectivity. Seeking a “vent for a long-pent consciousness” (97-8) through artistic development, she breaks free from the abject voicelessness inspired both by factory discipline and maternal influence and portrays herself pursuing “a long course of study” in Boston. Zitkala-Ša nevertheless remained primarily concerned with weaving sentimental appeals and Native advocacy into social art. Exemplary of the mounting tension between her “selfish” commitment to artistic autonomy and her enduring loyalty to her Dakota culture, by the winter of 1901, Zitkala-Ša was finalizing her plans for a long-term residence in the West which would permit her to combine her professional ambitions with her neglected domestic obligations: “Is it within a single person’s power to be loyal to a feeble helpless mother and still not the better able to appeal to a thousand

308 Ironically, by managing to have the office of the commissioner of Indian Affairs provide the expenses for her Boston education, Zitkala-Ša actually deploys federal funds to support an experimental alternative to the federally-supported civilizing machine; see Spack, “Dis/Engagement.”
mothers—or parents or in short the world—for being kind to those nearest first? I am going to combine the two” (qtd in Spack, “Dis/Engagement”). During this period of impressive artistic productivity between March of 1901 and December of 1902, she would publish not only Old Indian Legends but also three short stories and an additional autobiographical essay all bearing the impress of Zitkala-Ša’s endeavor to compose her fractured subjectivity into a sentimentalized unity of Anglo-American literary success and indigenous cultural commitment. Although Old Indian Legends is far from being devoid of its own subversive edge, with retold narratives like “The Badger and the Bear” and “The Toad and the Boy” which respectively ridicule the ineffectual interventions of the so-called “Friends of the Indian” and the hard-hearted pretensions of boarding school matrons, even this resistant anthology of Dakota orality attests to a sentimental “near kinship” of races predicated upon “earnestness,” “sincerity,” and similarity “at heart” (xv-xvi). Explaining in her “Preface” that she has translated these narratives into

309 Perhaps feeling convicted by her own insistence that “old folks have a claim upon” Native students, she further explains, in a letter dated February 20, 1901, her plans to teach in reservation schools while composing a polished collection of translated Dakota oral narratives: “As for my literary plans—I do not mean to give up my literary work—but while the old people last I want to get from them their treasured ideas of life. This I can do by living among them. Thus I mean to divide my time between teaching and getting story-material.”

310 Fourteen additional translated oral narratives, no doubt the literary remains of Zitkala-Ša’s unrealized ethnographic ambitions, were left in manuscript form; see Hafen, “Introduction” xii, and Dreams and Thunder.

311 That is, in “The Badger and the Bear,” a family of displaced and starving badgers must rely upon the furtive charity of a greedy bear’s “earnest” and “long-faced” “ugly cub” whose perceived inferiority to his fellow bruisers makes him sympathetic to his pitiful neighbors’ plight (69). Able to offer the badgers only a small piece of “tough meat” that will not attract the “father’s notice,” the ugly cub is pleased with his efforts and happier still to return “quickly . . . to his father again” to partake of his family’s ill-gotten gains (70). Ultimately, then, the badgers’ only true opportunity for justice—that is, the return of their home and food—is brought about by the appearance of the Dakota cultural hero, the “Blood Clot” avenger (71-4). Similarly, justice in “The Toad and the Boy” is ultimately obtained through the intervention of a fellow Dakota. In a reversal of the federal boarding schools’ rhetoric of Native inferiority, a “badly puffed out” toad wishes to keep the “pretty” Dakota baby that she has stolen and “taught to call [her] ‘mother’” and lies to the boy about his origins, urging him to squash his tearful sympathy for his inconsolable Native mother
America’s recently acquired “second tongue” of English, Zitkala-Ša “demands a little respect” for the shared literary “relics of our country’s once virgin soil” which she now vouchsafes to both “the blue-eyed little patriot [and] the black-haired aborigine” (my emphasis, xv-xvi). At the same time, she, like her contemporary Pauline Johnson, is reminding her adult white readers of the precedence of Dakota cultural values that challenge the hegemony of “the last few centuries” of English-speakers’ presence in North America. Indeed, over the course of Zitkala-Ša’s retold oral legends and other short prose, a recuperated notion of “kinship” whether across races or within a beset indigenous community is made contingent upon a compassionate focus upon character, a respectful recognition of America’s many tongues, and the bicultural mediation of an American-Indian woman.

Fixating upon cross-cultural sympathy and a recuperated, coherent national identity, Zitkala-Ša would dramatize the challenges surrounding reintegration into the Dakota community, beginning with the March 1901 publication of her short story “The Soft-Hearted Sioux.” Having spent nine years vainly “hunt[ing] for the soft heart of Christ” amongst the white pedagogues of a federal boarding school, an impressionable “soft-hearted” brave returns to his people well-versed in whites’ condemnation of the Sioux as violators of the sacred command that “it was wrong to kill” and followers of the damning rituals of their serpentine “sorcerer” or medicine man (110-11, 112-3, 117). In (125, 122-3). Despite having “reared a large family of little toads,” the toad is incapable of demonstrating anything like the sincere devotion of a “Dakota woman” and even attempts to imitate the spiritual pathos of a “real mother” with materialism (124-5): “Not knowing that the syllables of a Dakota’s cry are the names of loved ones gone, the ugly toad mother sought to please the boy’s ear with the names of valuable articles. Having shrieked in a torturing voice and mouthed extravagant names, the old toad rolled her tearless eyes with great satisfaction” (125-6). Finally, a hunter, who has never forgotten the plight of the bereaved parents, discovers the boy and reunites Dakota mother and child (126-7).

312 See also Smith 47-8.
turn, the understandably suspicious but withal merciless medicine man wields his own intractable antipathy to the cultural mores of the whites and, deftly reversing the boarding school’s Eurocentric rhetoric, convinces his people to ostracize the would-be missionary and his destitute family (117-18). Illustrating the cultural liminality suffered by returning students, Zitkala-Ša’s narrative ends with the accommodationist missionary’s exile from not only his Dakota community but the Euro-American mainstream as well, as he is executed for the accidental slaying of a white rancher (117, 121-5). By contrast, her subsequent stories “The Trial Path” and “A Warrior’s Daughter” underscore the ability of traditional Dakota culture to reclaim the exiled, while also ironizing the contemporary social divisions which undermine Dakota culture’s redemptive potential.

For example, at a time when Native activists like Carlos Montezuma were inventing political organizations that would actually exclude women, Zitkala-Ša’s “A Warrior’s Daughter” champions the political significance of indigenous women through an idiosyncratic

313 While notable tribal leaders from Red Cloud to Geronimo had all encouraged their students to take advantage of the educational opportunities being made available to them, acculturated students were also the objects of censure upon their return from school (248-55, 257-60, 276-83), or as David Wallace Adams explains: “The pressure exerted on returned students could be intense. In some communities, ridicule and ostracization, traditional methods of social control in native society, were unmercifully employed to force returnees back into the tribal fold” (278). Increasing the cross-cultural cultural burden carried by Native students, as early as the mid-1880s, white politicians and journalists were only too willing to condemn the returned boarding school alums for their “pagan” recidivism, pointing to these so-called “backsliders” as the convincing proof that Natives were irrevocably inferior and that the very concept of Native education was a fraud (Adams 285-6).

314 “The Soft-Hearted Sioux” and “The Trial Path” were both published by Harper’s in 1901, respectively appearing in the March and October volumes. Having killed his blood-brother in a fit of jealous rage, “the dreaded man-killer” in “The Trial Path” is redeemed from his new status as a traitorous foe through a combination of nature-based spiritual mediation, figured by a “wild pony” (130-1); the guilty man’s assumption of the familial responsibilities of the “friend and brother” whose life he has taken (133-4); and a startling show of mercy. Indeed, without the unexpected compassion shown by the murdered man’s “old warrior father,” which elicits “[a] murmur of surprise” from the spectators and sways the grieving mother and daughter to claim the exile as their “only son, and . . . much-adored brother,” the “desolate” culprit, like his victim, would be lost forever (132-4, 129). Published by Everybody’s Magazine, “A Warrior’s Daughter” appeared in April of 1902.
retelling of a Lakota historical narrative. Giving cultural credence to Zitkala-Ša’s assertion that a Native woman is “as capable in serious matters and as thoroughly interested in the race—as any one or two of you men put together” (qtd in Spack, “Dis/Engagement”), Tusee avenge her father’s death and rescues her captured lover by transforming into a fierce seducer, reminiscent of Johnson’s poem “Ojistoh,” who lures her lover’s arrogant tormentor to his destruction and literally carries her beloved brave away from danger (141, 143, 149-51): “The sight of his weakness makes her strong. . . . Stoop beneath his outstretched arms grasping at the air for support, Tusee lifts him upon her broad shoulders. With half-running, triumphant steps she carries him away into the open night” (152-3). In a telling autobiographical allusion that reinforces the complementary relationship between Tusee’s domestic virtue at the outset of the story and her atypical expression of Dakota valor by the narrative’s dramatic conclusion, the warrior-daughter’s response to her lover’s “grasping at the air for support” points to the sanctioning, disciplinary presence of the Dakota mother Taté I Yóhin Win or “Reaches for the Wind.” Of a piece with her redemption of her mother’s domestic toil at the

315 Conducting research across Sioux reservations some thirty years later, Lakota ethnologist Ella Deloria actually includes two versions of the same story, “A Sioux Captive Rescued by His Wife” and “Stake Carriers,” in her collection of retold oral narratives (Rice 3-4; Deloria, Ella 30-46).

316 Interestingly enough, in the two narratives that Deloria provides, the woman in question is decidedly a wife, rather than a daughter and sweetheart, and never gains the upper hand by using her sexual wiles. Rather, the wife-turned-warrior goes undetected in the enemy camp and even kills several of her foes by pretending to lull a baby to sleep (31-2, 40), a strategy that Zitkala-Ša also includes in “A Warrior’s Daughter”: “A bent old woman’s figure, with a bundle like a grandchild slung on her back, walks round and round the dance-house. . . . Whispering between her teeth a lullaby for her sleeping child in her blanket, she searches for something forgotten” (151-2).

317 As Julian Rice observes in his introduction to Ella Deloria’s narratives, “Neither woman goes on to be a warrior,” and one of Deloria’s informants actually emphasizes at various points the heroine’s audacious actions and unusual ferocity (17, 15-16). Nevertheless, for both storytellers, the heroine’s actions are altogether praiseworthy in a woman who loves her husband and has been brought up as a Lakota (17).
beginning of “Impressions of an Indian Childhood,” Zitkala-Ša’s short story asserts that Dakota women, whether traditional mothers or unconventional warriors, are far from being abject beasts of burden and instead embody a physical and spiritual fortitude that will carry the beaten and exiled back to their tribe and that will sustain their culture well into the future.

However, despite her two-year period of literary achievement in Indian country, both the content and also the context of “Why I Am a Pagan,” her final, briefest, and most sanguine piece of prose published between 1901 and 1902, brings to light Zitkala-Ša’s fraught and often thankless endeavor to excel as both a dedicated artist and a Dakota daughter. Declaring her spiritual independence from both “the pale-faced missionary and the hoodooed aborigine,” Zitkala-Ša’s personal essay culminates in an indictment of the “bigoted creed” that has been espoused by Euro-American reformers and then transformed into “the new superstition” of joyless Native converts (“Great” 105-7). Emphasizing not Christ but hell and God’s separation of humanity into “the Christian dead” and “the sinful ones” (“Great” 106), prejudiced missionaries drill their Native converts to “mouth” the importance of “avoid[ing] the after-doom of hell-fire” rather than inspiring them to embrace the notion of “Infinite Love” (105-7). Despite the

318 “Why I Am a Pagan” was published in the December 1902 issue of The Atlantic Monthly.

319 Zitkala-Ša’s portrayal of prejudiced missionaries echoes her April 1901 rejection of “the so called missionaries and teachers in Indian schools” as “pigmies [sic]” who “blaspheme under the English language! They are intolerant, resentful—spiteful all under the words [of] Christ’s teachings!” (qtd. in Spack, “Dis/Engagement”). The result is “wordless” and “downcast” church-members who are still subject to “the mere optical illusions” which, in her “Preface” to Old Indian Legends, Zitkala-Ša associates with some of her people’s “old beliefs” (“Great” 106; “Preface” xvi). That is, to the Dakota mother, the Bible is a magical object imbued with preternatural, protective powers, or as she explains to her daughter: “Knocking out the chinking of our log cabin, some evil hand thrust in a burning taper of braided dry grass, but failed of his intent, for the fire died out and the half-burned brand fell inward to the floor. Directly above it, on a shelf, lay the holy book. . . . Surely some great power is hid in the sacred book!” (106).
vehemence of these concluding remarks, however, Zitkala-Ša’s essay is far from being polemical in tone and, in fact, amounts to a celebration of the spiritual resources whereby her faith is renewed (107). Overcoming the “dogma” that threatens her “keen sympathy with [her] fellow-creatures” (104), she wanders through “the natural gardens where the voice of the Great Spirit is heard in the twittering of birds, the rippling of mighty waters, and the sweet breathing of flowers” (107). Lounging against a prominent stone outcropping, Zitkala-Ša is reminded of a Dakota legend whose fanciful narrative is now overshadowed by a respect for the truth “[i]nterwoven” with her people’s old beliefs or the “subtle knowledge of . . . a kinship to any and all parts of this vast universe” (102-3). Furthermore, as she takes in the tireless movements and song of the Yellow Breast, which according to her retold narrative of “The Tree-Bound” “insist[s] . . . ‘Koda Ni Dakota!’ . . . ‘Friend, you’re a Dakota!’” (77), she reflects that indigenous self-determination is not a matter of might but of “spirit” and feels empowered enough to make a play on words: “[B]oth great and small are so surely enfolded in His magnitude that, without a miss, each has his allotted individual ground of opportunities” (my emphasis, 103).

Appropriating the terminology of allotment, or the very legal jargon by which Native tribes have been forced to part with “excess” lands, Zitkala-Ša resists the hopeless rhetoric of indigenous disappearance and fixates instead upon the irrevocable “opportunities” or individual gifts and abilities guaranteed by God, or as she declares to Montezuma in a letter dated April 12 1901: “[I]f the character was not in you—savage or otherwise—Education could not make you the man you are today. It was not that you were Indian—nor that civilization was an irresistible power—but because in an unusual

Thus, the Dakota matron confuses the magical, fire-fighting power supposedly hidden within the literal pages of the Bible with the transcendent power of God (106, 101, 103).
measure the Spirit of a Universal God was [and] is in you!” (qtd in Spack, “Dis/Engagement”).

It is, moreover, with this notion of an unequal yet nonetheless universal manifestation of “the loving Mystery round about us” (101) that Zitkala-Ša revises the concept of sympathy. Although, like eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sentimental authors, she “imagin[es] diverse individuals connected in a sympathetic chain” and describes this unity using the language of kinship or “familial feeling” (Barnes 2, 16), she nevertheless envisions a harmonious unity within as well as across the races of humankind that values diversity and compassionately accepts limitations: “[E]ven here men of the same color are like the ivory keys of one instrument where each resembles all the rest, yet varies from them in pitch and quality of voice” (104). Perhaps ever mindful of the split subjectivity she herself acquired through the boarding school experience, she sympathetically acknowledges that some may become “shadows” or “echoes” of a prejudiced white mainstream but only “for a time” and due to the dis-ease brought on by Native displacement and the demands of Anglo-American modernity. As fellow creatures imbued with the Great Spirit, each is worthy of respect: “Still I would not forget that the pale-faced missionary and the hoodooed aborigine are both God’s creatures, though small indeed their own conceptions of Infinite Love” (107).

Complicating, however, this paradoxical celebration of freedom and fusion, Zitkala-Ša’s self-liberation through her nature-based union with the Great Spirit is not entirely or even primarily a matter of religious inspiration. Written in response to a series of deliberate misreadings, her sentimental manifesto is actually penned within an extra-literary context of failed filial and Anglo-American sympathy. As early as the fall of
1901, Zitkala-Ša was already setting aside her ambitious plans for a reservation-based cottage industry of translated oral narratives due to an emotional “unfit[ness] to work on [her] stories” (Letter 15 Aug 1901). This authorial depression can be attributed, in turn, not only to the discouraging tirades of her ailing mother but also the unexpected criticism emanating from Northeastern activists. On the one hand, as she unflatteringly depicts her mother as one of the “hoodooed aborigines” (106, 101, 103), Zitkala-Ša suggests that the Dakota matron’s conversion to “the new superstition” has contributed to the many angry exchanges, which, according to an August 1901 letter, leave the Dakota daughter feeling “as if all hell [were] set loose upon [her] heels.” Even as she endures the alternating demands and erratic rebukes of Taté I Yóhin Win, moreover, Zitkala-Ša must also deflect the increasingly hostile attacks of Richard Henry Pratt. Clearly echoing the expressions of hurt and disappointment seen in her correspondence, Zitkala-Ša’s “pagan” essay briefly alludes to this discouraging reception of her authorial advocacy: “[T]he copy of a missionary paper brought to my notice a few days ago. . . a ‘Christian’ pugilist [who] commented upon a recent article of mine, grossly perverting the spirit of my pen” (107). Strategically delaying his attacks upon his one-time protégé until after Zitkala-Ša had played a considerable role in the successful national tour of Carlisle’s “all-star band,” Pratt the “pugilist” would use his “pull” within Indian reform circles and Carlisle’s publication apparatus to discredit Zitkala-Ša’s critique of off-reservation schooling. These attacks would culminate, moreover, with a front-page critique of her most recent

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320 See also Spack, “Dis/Engagement.”

321 See, for example, Zitkala-Ša’s letters to Carlos Montezuma dated 11 Aug 1901, 15 Aug 1901, and 4 Sept 1901.

short story, boldly entitled “‘The Soft-Hearted Sioux’—Morally Bad.” Even before seeing this official response, however, Zitkala-Ša had already received word that Pratt had denounced her as “worse than a pagan” (Spack, “Dis/Engagement”; Davidson and Norris xix). Consequently, “Why I Am a Pagan,” Zitkala-Ša’s final piece of sentimental prose to be published in 1902, functions as more than a poetic vision of a compassionate, cosmic kinship impervious to human bigotry: It is also an elaborate, high-minded response to Pratt’s ad hominem attacks. It is, in fact, an answer to “why” she has parted ways with the spiritual values of Pratt and his pedagogical methods.

By the same token, even as Zitkala-Ša appropriates the term “pagan,” her concluding sentence also questions whether this terminology adequately represents her spiritual philosophy: “If this is Paganism, then at present, at least, I am a Pagan” (my emphasis, Davidson and Norris 265-6).323 Once more appealing to the highbrow literary pretensions of the Atlantic Monthly, Zitkala-Ša interweaves with her “pagan” preference for God’s “natural gardens” and spirit-based kinship a coy homage to Emerson’s much earlier paean to nature and championing of spiritual autonomy.324 Turning to a solitary

323 In reality, Zitkala-Ša’s religious affiliations varied greatly over the course of her life, or as Cathy Davidson and Ada Norris observe, “We can do little more than attempt to keep up with her rapid moves between Catholicism, paganism, Mormonism, and Christian Science” (xv).

324 That Zitkala-Ša was, in fact, an avid reader of Emerson can be seen in her reference to his essay “Experience” in a May 1901 letter to Montezuma (qtd. in Spack, “Dis/Engagement”) and the fact that the title page to her 1921 American Indian Stories displays the quoted lines “There is no great; there is no small; in the mind that causeth all,” which are clearly derived from the poetic aphorism introducing Emerson’s essay on “History”: “There is no great and no small / To the soul that maketh all” (Emerson, “History” 113). This language is then repeated in “Why I Am a Pagan”: “Both great and small are . . . surely enfolded in His magnitude” (“Great” 103). Zitkala-Ša’s depiction of solemn Native converts as mere distorted shadows of a genuine subjectivity is also entirely in keeping with Emerson’s notion of intellectual “self-reliance” and the discourse of his 1838 “Address”: “You shall not be a man even . . . You shall not dare after the infinite Law that is in you, and in company with the infinite Beauty which heaven and earth reflect to you in all lovely forms”(my emphasis, 68-9).
communion with the landscape, “[w]hen the spirit swells [her] breast,” and describing her subsequent apotheosis as the feeling that she and her “heart . . . lie small upon the earth like a grain of throbbing sand” (Zitkala-Ša, “Great” 101), she articulates an indigenized version of what Emerson in 1836 calls “an original relation to the universe” and its concomitant emotional healing and growth through a momentary diminution of self: “In the woods, we return to reason and faith. . . . Standing on the bare ground—my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space—all mean egotism vanishes. . . I am nothing; . . . the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me” (Emerson, Nature 3,6). Overtly displaying her appropriation of antebellum transcendental philosophy, Zitkala-Ša plays to the nostalgic sympathies of a highly cultivated faction of Northeastern reformers. Most importantly, though, she transforms the terms of Pratt’s critique from a contest between Pagan versus Christian thought to the emergence of an artistic, literature-infused religious liberalism from out of the confines of a Calvinism-infused evangelicalism.

Finally, notwithstanding her elegant appeals to the elite audience of The Atlantic Monthly and her declarations of a compassion and respect for all “God’s creatures,” there still remains the traces of a less celebratory motivation behind her composition of “Why I Am a Pagan.” As she confesses to Montezuma, “[J]ust the hate of [Pratt] frees me to work again when I would most like to fold my hands” (qtd. in Spack, “Dis/Engagement”; Letter 4 Sept. 1901). Glorying in the impending outrage over “Why I Am a Pagan,” she imagines how “Carlisle will rear up on its haunches at sight of [her] little sky rocket! ha ha!” (Letter 1 May 1902). Thus, beneath the idealistic surface of her Emerson-esque spiritual independence, there lies an undercurrent of passive-aggressive rage and
resistance to the prejudiced distortions that threaten to silence her. In short, while Zitkala-Ša’s literary craft was supposedly fundamental to her liberation from the civilizing machine, this final essay’s ostensibly naïve expression of sentimental faith and Native advocacy bears the tell-tale marks of the repressed emotions and performative identity from which she has been endeavoring to extricate herself. Grappling with a writing situation in which previous acts of self-vindication have proven futile and even painful, Zitkala-Ša seems trapped by her calculated claims to a superior sensibility. She appears poised, therefore, to take yet another momentous step away from her pedagogical past.

Indeed, in the spring of 1902 and only a few months after declaring that her absolute commitment to her authorial craft must prevent her from rearing the child of an old friend, Zitkala-Ša would marry a worker for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and thereafter precipitously redirect her Native advocacy away from belles lettres. Relocating by the end of the year to Utah with her new husband and fellow Yankton Dakota Raymond T. Bonnin, she would there undertake an arguably more pragmatic, “grassroots” approach to improving reservation life (Davidson and Norris xx; Dominguez, “Representative” xvi). Shortly after her marriage, Zitkala-Ša also embraced a more traditional domestic role of rearing children and caring for the elderly.

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325 According to a rather fanciful article reprinted in the June 13, 1902 edition of Carlisle’s school paper, The Red Man and Helper, Bonnin was a graduate of the Haskell Indian Training School, “the grandson of the old French trader, Picotte,” and “among the foremost of the Yankton tribe in civilized attainments” (“Zitkala Ša”). He was also, interestingly enough, Zitkala-Ša’s former classmate at White’s Institute; see Dominguez, “Representative” xxiii and “New Woman.”

326 See for example, Zitkala-Ša’s “A Year’s Experience in Community Service Work Among the Ute Tribe of Indians,” an editorial published in the American Indian Magazine, that recounts her leading role in providing food and “practical demonstrations in domestic science” (334) through the creation of what Susan Rose Dominguez calls the first Indian-run community center on a reservation (“Representative” xxv).
While actively supporting her husband’s work among the Ute Nation through her own pedagogical efforts aimed at the women and children of the Uintah-Ouray Reservation, she would bring up both a biological son and also an adopted Ute child, open her home to a displaced “grandfather,” and return to her mother’s home on the Yankton Reservation as frequently as possible. On the one hand, replacing both her sentimental appeals and “selfish” artistry with a newfound emphasis upon a more practical approach to Native activism, Zitkala-Ša’s “silent” years spent working on a Utah reservation suggest a subtle yearning to return to the maternal object lessons and communal ethic which shape her childhood “Impressions” and which she associates with her mother’s Dakota domesticity and Native True Womanhood. On the other hand, much as she had feared during the heady days of her literary celebrity, Zitkala-Ša’s commitment to her authorial craft becomes eclipsed by marriage, motherhood, and institutional pedagogy. During this ten-year period of dramatically increased familial and educational commitments, Zitkala-Ša would publish no new writing (Dominguez “Representative” xxv, xvi-xvii, xxi). Fully cognizant of how severely her duties as wife, mother, “granddaughter,” and activist had limited her ability to develop her artistic gifts, she poignantly expresses her regret in a 1913 letter to Montezuma: “I can hardly stand the inner clamor—to study, to write—to do more with my music, yet duty first! Rip Van Winkle slept twenty years! but my sleep was disturbed in half that time. I wonder if I may sleep again” (Letter 13 May 1913).

Correspondence between Zitkala-Ša and Carlos Montezuma ceased after the announcement of her plans to marry Bonnin and her subsequent inability to return Montezuma’s engagement ring, which she had lost; see Letters [6 April?] 1902; 23 June 1902; and 10 July 1902. Zitkala-Ša’s first letter of renewed friendship stresses her desire for “forgiveness for my gross stupidity of former years” and claims that she “was not worthy because [she] did not recognize true worth at that time”; see Letter 13 May 1913. Like her abject apology, Zitkala-Ša’s fears of future somnambulism appear rather exaggerated: at the time, Zitkala-Ša had already been collaborating with a local music teacher on the libretto and score for an opera based upon The...
Finally, in 1915, or about two years after she had traveled East to place her son Raymond Ohiya in an Illinois boarding school, she would be invited to join the contributing editors of the American Indian Magazine and then, in the following year, is elected secretary of the Society of American Indians. Now it would be Raymond Bonnin’s turn to follow his wife to Washington, D.C. where she would take a leading role in the fight to ban peyote use and, not least of all, would resume her authorial career (Davidson and Norris xxii-xxv).

Nevertheless, even this return to full-time literary activity would be marked by a continuing disengagement from the blending of Native advocacy, sentimentality, and creative prose that had defined the height of her highbrow celebrity, or as Hafen observes: “Zitkala-Ša’s attention turned from storytelling to expository writing and political activism, to speech-writing and congressional testifying” (―Introduction‖ Iktomi vii-viii). Interestingly enough, this relinquishment of

Sun Dance, a plains tribe ritual, and had taken some serious steps in furthering her pursuit of a “diploma in Piano Music”; see Davidson and Norris xxi-xxii; Letter 13 May 1913; Letter 23 June 1913.

It should be noted that Zitkala-Ša’s son was not placed in an Indian boarding school but, instead, attended the Spalding Institute, a boys’ school run by the Benedictine Sisters; see Davidson and Norris xxi-xxii.

After relocating to the nation’s capital, Raymond Bonnin would enlist in the army, and in 1918, Zitkala-Ša would become the editor-in-chief of the American Indian Magazine, resigning from this position in the following year. The couple would go on living in Washington, D.C. and working as Native activists until Zitkala-Ša’s death in 1938; see Dominguez, “Representative” xvii; Davidson and Norris xxv-xxvi. For more on Zitkala-Ša’s campaign against peyote, see her editorial “Chipeta, Widow of Chief Ouray with a Word About a Deal in Blankets” and her pamphlet “The Menace of Peyote.” Robert Warrior, in turn, offers up a scathing critique of the SAI and what he sees as Zitkala-Ša’s participation in a pro-assimilation campaign against indigenous religious self-determination; see Warrior 5-14.

Although poetry was never Zitkala-Ša’s strong suit, she did publish three poems in the American Indian Magazine, two of which can be classified as sentimental. That is, while “The Red Man’s America” (1917) is an obvious parody of “My Country ’Tis of Thee,” “The Indian’s Awakening” (1916) combines the compensatory logic of a sentimental elegy with a critique of off-reservation schooling. Positioned within the magazine so as to respond to Carlos Montezuma’s incendiary assertion, “The Indian’s prognosis is bad—unfavorable, no hope” (30), Zitkala-Ša’s poem focuses upon a visionary pony ride through the cosmic “realms” and “domains” of the Great Spirit during which the speaker discovers “[a] village of Indians, camped as of old” (Lines 29, 43, 38, 37, 45-9, 63-6). The speaker is then urged by a “sedate” spirit-being to “mourn” no longer the “fearful sad end” of Native people because Indians are immortal “souls, forever and aye” and have carried on a spiritual journey toward greater wisdom and a more exalted
sentimental prose was actually predicted as early as 1900 by an intriguing passage in Zitkala-Ša’s pedagogical autobiography. That is, at the close of her second memoir’s vignette entitled “Iron Routine,” she hints that her appropriation of literary sentiment continues to exacerbate the psychological inauthenticity acquired from her boarding school traumas. Broaching a kind of apology for her memoir’s seeming preoccupation with “[t]he melancholy of those black days,” Zitkala-Ša insists that her narration is far from emotionally excessive and represents a restrained echo of an inner ocean of tempestuous feeling: “These sad memories rise above those of smoothly grinding school days. Perhaps my Indian nature is the moaning wind which stirs them now for their existence (Lines 73, 72, 70, 77-82, 85-6). Thus, like a century’s worth of sensibility poems and sentimental prose that endeavored to keep the family circle united “on a basis of present and immediate life,” “The Indian’s Awakening” articulates a hopeful assertion of cosmic harmony and indigenous renewal by suturing what Native communities have had “sundered [from them] to a transcendent order or ‘God’” (McGann 153; Bennett 115). At the same time, though, this vision of perfected Native lifeways in the afterlife is offered as a sentimental resolution to the boarding school traumas that predominate in the poem’s first four stanzas. Crying out in anguish, “Oh, what am I? Wither bound thus and why? / Is there not a God on whom to rely?” the speaker of “The Indian’s Awakening” attests to a spiritual despair that directly engages with Zitkala-Ša’s 1900 memoirs and illustrates the enduring significance of Native students’ performativity and isolation to Zitkala-Ša’s œuvre. “A Sioux Woman’s Love for Her Grandchild” (1917), in turn, melodramatically recounts how a Dakota woman anxiously searches for her missing granddaughter and refuses to flee before Custer’s troops: “Sacrificing life than leave behind her lost one / Greater love hath no man; love surpassing reason” (Lines 53-4); see John 15.13. Pointing to the poem’s “off-rhymes and choppy rhythms” and deployment of high sentimentality “almost sixty years after the style went out of vogue,” Paula Bernat Bennett assumes that Zitkala-Ša’s intended audience was white and dismisses Zitkala-Ša’s sentimental rhetoric as an anemic attempt at “mak[ing] those who oppress aware of what they do”; “Zitkala-Ša addressed [her] poems to the dominant population, using the latter’s own faith in the universality of its ‘moral sentiments’ against it. But this strategy no more escapes co-option finally than does the outright adoption of bourgeois values by other minority writers” (83-5). What Bennett’s analysis fails to recognize is that Zitkala-Ša was contributing to a journal whose audience was not merely or even primarily the “dominant population” but was comprised of literate, educated Indians. Furthermore, “A Sioux Woman’s Love for Her Grandchild” was published even as the Native editors of the American Indian Magazine were struggling to wrest Native history from the “dominant population” so as to tell, as the title to one contemporaneous editorial put it, “The Truth About the Massacre at Wounded Knee”; see Davidson and Norris xxv-xxvi. Using Christ’s own words, Zitkala-Ša defends the morality and domestic commitments of one of the “squaws” denounced by 1876 journalists as savage co-combatants and mutilators. Like her allusion to Christian scripture, moreover, Zitkala-Ša’s poetic style appears to be part of an authorial strategy not only to translate Native oral history into the language of the “dominant population” but also to elevate that history according to her Native peers’ sentimental lessons in literacy. That is, more than nostalgically genteel, her poetic style can also be seen as an attempt to rally her Native readers with the underlying reminder that their history is as noble as any Anglo-American self-sacrifice memorialized through the florid discourse of sentimentality. Finally, then, Zitkala-Ša’s closing assertion that “Greater love hath no man” than this Sioux woman can be read as a polemical swipe at her male colleagues in the SAI who would marginalize Native women’s acts of resistance.
present record. But, however tempestuous this is within me, it comes out as the low
voice of a curiously colored seashell, which is only for those ears that are bent with
compassion to hear it” (“School Days” 67-8). As she re-envisions her written self-
expression as a diminutive, exotic, and, as such, desirable object for her white audience,
Zitkala-Ša points back to the very beginning of her second memoir “School Days” in
which she recounts Euro-American train passengers’ uncouth fascination with a small,
intimidated Indian child’s colorful blanket and intricately beaded moccasins (47-8).
Moreover, as in this earlier vignette, Zitkala-Ša is clearly troubled not only by her
childhood memories of whites’ simultaneously calloused and objectifying attitudes, but
also, from her adult authorial perspective, of her now becoming the object of this same
dominant culture’s unreliable sympathy. Thus, once again, she changes the subject and,
deflecting her readers’ condescending curiosity, answers back with her own critical gaze.

Knowing that she must trust in the sympathetic judgment of her intended
audience, she defines her ideal readers as those who, seeing beyond the adult narrator’s
“morbid” fixation with factory-like discipline, will lower their own prejudiced
assumptions, metaphorically described as bending their heads, in order to catch the
lisping outcry of a child. That is, attentive to the small, “low voice” of the narrator’s
abused childhood self, such readers will have “compassion” upon a still-suffering and
bitter subjectivity. By the same token, however, the image of her intended readers
holding up Zitkala-Ša’s prose to their ear as if it were an exotic “seashell” suggests that
even the most compassionate of audiences will fail. That is, the sound emanating from a
seashell is obviously nothing more than an auditory version of the hoodooing “illusions”
with which Zitkala-Ša is clearly impatient (“Preface” xvi). Mistaking the roaring echo of

\[331\] This reading was inspired by the observations of Prof. Carter Revard.
the blood rushing through their own heads for the narrator’s voice, sympathetic Euro-American readers, imagining what they would feel in the Indian child’s stead, may very well miss the mark and hear only what they want to hear. It is no accident, therefore, that Zitkala-Ša would return to publication through a journal catering almost exclusively to the values, challenges, and achievements of a Native audience. Long disenchanted with the power of Anglo-American-style sympathy to ameliorate her alienation from her Dakota mother and to overcome racial divisions, Zitkala-Ša chooses grassroots activism over a sentimental artistry no longer deemed an effective engine of social change. In place of her bourgeois appeals to an elite white readership, she ultimately embraces less melodramatic, albeit highly polished, editorials composed for cultivated and politically aspirant indigenous people like herself.

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332 As Cathy Davidson and Ada Norris observe, the American Indian Magazine was read primarily by “its Indian members and leadership” along with the SAI’s “associate” non-Native members, but was only “to some extent” accessible to Euro-American readers who were not already affiliated with “the first national pan-Indian political organization run entirely by Native people”; see Davidson and Norris 164, xxv.
Between 1815 and 1816, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft began preserving her forays into the genteel poetry of her Anglo-Irish father’s culture, signaling the start of an authorial agenda defined by the strategic appropriation of sentimental themes and tropes. One hundred years after the dawn of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft’s authorial accomplishments, Zitkala-Ša appeared to have resolved the conflict between her desire to appeal to a refined Northeastern audience and also to vent her individualistic perspective concerning the beset future of Native students and reservation Indians. That is, her 1916 return to published authorship as an editorialist for a Native-run magazine suggests that she has renounced altogether her sentimentality-inflected belles-lettres prose as well as her highbrow literary ambitions. Laura Wexler, in turn, has read Zitkala-Ša’s biography as exemplary of “the achievement of antisentimentalism in women writers” and points to Zitkala-Ša’s “renunciation of sentimental fiction” as a necessary response to the “racist” legacy of sentimental ideology (124-5). Nevertheless, such celebratory assessments of sentimental literature’s irrelevance by the turn into the twentieth century not only ignore the historically specific reasons why Schoolcraft’s literary descendants continued to merge Anglo-American sentiment with American Indian advocacy even as rival literary models were being popularized but also noticeably distort the narrative of Zitkala-Ša’s activism through authorship. The poetry and prose composed by turn-of-the-century American Indian women demonstrates that sentimental literature remained a valuable resource and textual legacy for authors who were primarily motivated by their
persevering social, rather than merely artistic, commitments and who were appealing to a high-minded readership as motivated by pathos and the evangelical impulses of social reform as by aesthetics. Even when no longer synonymous with the well-bred literary pretensions of Anglo-American society’s upper echelons, sentimentality still represented a well-recognized rhetoric of female political engagement and a genteel form of social protest on behalf of the marginalized. Furthermore, Native women were particularly sensitive to how a sentimental preoccupation with domestic concerns, such as proper childrearing and educational practices, had already shaped the Anglo-American campaign to assimilate indigenous “domestic dependent nations” and therefore continued to respond to literary domesticity as a crucial and potentially powerful form of political rhetoric with which to engage and to subvert.

Indeed, Laura Wexler’s celebration of Zitkala-Ša’s “antisentimentalism” is at the very least premature given that Zitkala-Ša’s disengagement from sentimental literature was anything but permanent: In 1921, Zitkala-Ša would publish the work for which she is best known today or her American Indian Stories comprised of the sentimental three-part memoirs, three short stories, and personal essay all written between 1900 and 1902, along with two new stories and an expository essay composed shortly before publication (Domínguez, “Representative” xvi). Zitkala-Ša’s publication of a retrospective prose collection significantly coincides, moreover, with the historical moment in which sentimentality’s appeal to female literary consumers was no longer a politically equivocal matter of mere “emotional remediation” (Wexler 124). While living and working in Washington, D.C., Zitkala-Ša became convinced that a turning point in Native rights was
heralded by the victorious conclusion to the First World War.\footnote{Enthusiastically pointing to the “undaunted self-sacrifice of America’s aboriginal son,” her editorials for the \textit{American Indian Magazine} wield the “sterling quality of [the Native soldier’s] devotion to America” as both “an invaluable source of encouragement to the Indians” who overwhelmingly volunteered for service and also as an inescapable rebuke to the reputed “Home of Democracy”: “[W]hen shall the Red Man be emancipated? When shall the Red Man be deemed worthy of full citizenship if not now?” (“Indian Gifts” 338; “Secretary’s Report” 187-8; “America” 340). Moreover, it is within this rhetorical vein of agitating for “American citizenship for every Indian born within the territorial limits of the United States” that she lauds the 1919 peace proceedings in which “little peoples,” marginalized races, and “mothers” the world over are suddenly demanding a recognition of their sacrifices, their entitlement to an equitable “adjustment” of their “wrongs innumerable,” and, not least of all, “the right of self determination!” (“Editorial Comment” 191-2). In a partial fulfillment of Zitkala-Ša’s predictions, an act of Congress passed in November of 1919 would qualify only those Native males who had actually served in World War I and had received an honorable discharge to apply for full citizenship; see “Citizenship for World War I Veterans.” The complete enfranchisement of American Indians would not be achieved until the 1924 passage of the “Indian Citizenship Act.”} In turn, having anticipated the enfranchisement of Native veterans in 1919 and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, she would revisit the political utility of nineteenth-century Anglo-American sentiment as part of an altered rhetorical strategy aimed at taking advantage of the creation of a new female voting bloc. Redirecting her activist energies in order to win over her fellow “American women”—laying claim to this national identity after her husband fought for and earned the right of citizenship—Zitkala-Ša began to appeal explicitly to white middle-class women who had been transformed from mere sympathizers attempting to exert their moral influence over a fundamentally masculine political system into voters with the ability to effect political reform in their own right. Cultivating a relationship with the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, she convinced the leadership of this “umbrella organization for mostly white women’s advocacy and suffrage” to establish a National Indian Welfare Committee

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in 1921\textsuperscript{334} and also utilized the GFWC’s network of state chapters to spread her message of universal American Indian citizenship (Davidson and Norris xxvii).\textsuperscript{335} 

Zitkala-Ša’s expository essay “America’s Indian Problem,” the final textual selection for \textit{American Indian Stories}, was first presented as a speech at the June 1921 national convention of the GFWC (Dominguez, “Representative” xx-xxi). Making domestic imagery central to her appeal for women’s united political action, she addresses her intended audience as politically savvy housewives and nurturers (185-6). For example, she analogizes American Indian citizenship as the welcoming of historically generous Native peoples into Euro-American women’s homes and to a place around the nation’s kitchen table: “Now the time is at hand when the American Indian shall have his day in court through the help of the women of America. The stain upon America’s fair name is to be removed, and the remnant of the Indian nation, suffering from malnutrition, is to number among the invited invisible guests at your dinner tables” (“America’s Indian Problem” 185-6). Because she recognizes that universal Native citizenship will be attained through the cooperation of her white audience, Zitkala-Ša deploys a rhetorical

\textsuperscript{334} As can be seen from Zitkala-Ša’s activism in Oklahoma after universal American Indian citizenship had become a reality, her establishment of the GFWC’s National Indian Welfare Committee was more than a matter of momentary rhetorical expediency. That is, she would use her position as a “research agent” for the GFWC in order to investigate and expose the legal chicanery and acts of violence being used to defraud Oklahoma’s indigenous population, particularly after oil had been discovered on allotted lands. Zitkala-Ša would go on to co-author a report of her findings, \textit{Oklahoma’s Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery}, that was published by the Indian Rights Association in 1924. See Kilcup 294-5; and Davidson and Norris xxvii.

\textsuperscript{335} While twentieth-century advocates of indigenous cultural sovereignty like Robert Allen Warrior have excoriated the members of the Society of American Indians for both “aim[ing] most of [their] work at . . . supporters from the many white reform organizations” (13) and for naively promoting indigenous people’s subsummation as assimilated citizens of the United States, such critiques tend to downplay the juridical impact of the Dawes Act, with its dissolution of tribal governments, and the decades of political red tape arrayed against the possibility of nationalistic grassroots reform emanating from “constituencies in local American Indian communities” (13). As Zitkala-Ša explains in her expository essay “America’s Indian Problem”: “[In theory of law the Indian has not the rights of a citizen. He has not even the rights of a foreign resident. . . . All the machinery of the government has been set to work to repress rather than to provide adequate means for justly dealing with a large population which had no political rights” (193, 195).
strategy that is both nostalgic in its reliance upon domestic pathos and also innovative in its flattering appeal to the newfound political power of female voters.\footnote{However, even as her 1921 acts of expository activism rally the “Womanhood of America” to “[r]evoke the tyrannical powers of Government superintendents” and to intervene on behalf of oppressed Indian orphans who are without protection, guidance, or education because of a perverse bureaucratic paternalism, Zitkala-Ša’s rhetorical strategy diverges significantly from the domestic pathos of mid-nineteenth-century sentimental appeals (“Americanize” 243-4; “America’s Indian Problem” 195). While sentimental authors made the devotion par excellence of middle-class nurture the normative basis for their readers’ sympathetic identification with racially and economically marginalized mothers, Zitkala-Ša underscores the superiority of an indigenous “discipline through love” that recognizes the affective influence of fathers as well as mothers and honors the spiritually-derived individuality of the child: “Poor little Indian orphans! Who in this world will love them as did their own fathers and mothers? Indians love their children dearly. . . . Indians do not believe in corporal punishment. . . . Appreciation of the spiritual reality of the child places the Indian abreast with the most advanced thought of the age—our age” (“Americanize” 243). Rather than predicking her sentimental appeal upon her white audience’s emotional condescension, Zitkala-Ša instructs her women readers to admire American Indian parenting and to resist along with her the irreparable loss of such progressive cultural values.}

Zitkala-Ša’s retrospective return to sentimental advocacy underscores, moreover, the abiding allure of sentimental literature’s tutelary ambitions. Refashioning her subversively sentimental memoirs and stories written at the turn of the century into an extended preface to her most recent forays into creative and expository writing, she provides her readers with a Native woman’s first-person, tribally-derived narration of Native rectitude and Euro-American repression. By the time they have read their way to “A Dream of Her Grandfather” and “The Widespread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman,” the two new short stories that immediately precede “America’s Indian Problem,” Zitkala-Ša’s readers have already been inculcated with the author’s lessons in Dakota disciplinary intimacy and the traumas of the “civilizing machine”; the ostracization faced by returning boarding school students and the reconciling potential of traditional Native social and gender values; a familial as well as tribal narrative of “what the paleface has done” and Zitkala-Ša’s resilient efforts to keep faith with her people and her God. Strategically appropriating the didacticism of her sentimental models, she reverses the racialized roles of quiescent subaltern and morally authoritative instructor.
and assumes, in the process, the mantle of a cross-cultural pedagogue. In a textual moment resonating with the pedagogical pretensions and cross-cultural mediation that shaped the works of Schoolcraft, Johnson, and Callahan, Zitkala-Ša envisions herself erasing her readers’ prejudiced perceptions by having them internalize her strategically sentimental lessons in Native domestic values, customs, and history. That is, at the climax of “The Widespread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman,” the answer to Chief High Flier’s plea for treaty-based justice comes in the form of a million mirror-images of Zitkala-Ša, the “prominent American” medicine woman: “Lo, his good friend, the American woman to whom he had sent his messages by fire, now stood there a legion!” (179). In turn, Zitkala-Ša’s notion of becoming a “legion” of women or of replicating herself through her readers makes perfect sense within the context of Native women’s rhetorical appropriation of disciplinary intimacy. Echoing sentimental literature’s

337 At the same time, this indigenized version of sentimental pedagogy, one of many such examples stretching back over a period of one hundred years, demonstrates that Native women writers’ appeal to what Wexler terms “the sentimental reflex” was not predicated upon but, rather, overtly defied Anglo-American authors’ “impoverishment of the sense of history” (124). For instance, her 1921 pamphlet “Americanize the First American” anticipates her readers’ apathy, couched in a squeamish refinement, with the curt rebuke that, however “unlovely,” these “facts . . . are history” (244). Similarly, Zitkala-Ša’s essay “America’s Indian Problem” actually begins with a brief yet expansive narrative of European colonists’ and Euro-American bureaucrats’ acts of duplicity and violence: “History tells that is was from the English and the Spanish our government inherited its legal victims, the American Indians, whom to this day we hold as wards and not as citizens of their own freedom loving land. A long century of dishonor followed this inheritance of somebody’s loot” (185-6).

338 That is, Zitkala-Ša’s preceding short story “A Dream of Her Grandfather” offers a thinly disguised self-portrait of a bicultural Dakota woman whose “humanitarian work” takes her to “the very seat of government” and whose “hope for her people” is renewed after she receives her long-deceased grandfather’s supernatural abilities: “It was a vision! . . . She heard distinctly the Dakota words . . . proclaimed to the people. ‘Be glad! Rejoice! Look up, and see the new day dawning! Help is near!’” (157-8). Outraged that a stranger has been granted an allotment of his people’s meager resources, Chief High Flier endeavors to obtain the aid of “a prominent American woman” who, in turn, bears a striking resemblance to Zitkala-Ša’s medicine-woman alter-ego (“Widespread Enigma”174-5, 172-3). That is, believing this American woman to have the shamanistic power to receive his summons, the superannuated warrior refuses to allow his precious, dictated words of protest to be subverted by “the hands of bureaucrats” and ritualistically sets his letter aflame in an act of spiritual defiance that merges the visionary medicine woman of “A Dream of Her Grandfather” with the “prominent” female activist of the following tale (176).
merging of domestic values and didacticism, this fantasy of introjected indigenous values portrays white female voters not only being inculcated with a Native woman’s sentimentalized American Indian advocacy but also acting upon Zitkala-Ša’s now-internalized political ideals.

Nevertheless, Zitkala-Ša’s 1921 recourse to sentimentality inevitably invokes a high degree of caution, if not skepticism. That is, Zitkala-Ša’s new literary material ironically underscores the powerlessness of twentieth-century American Indians in order to extricate Native people from their political dependence upon white sympathy. Left to languish in the exile of a prison cell, Chief High Flier, like the alternately defiant and idealistically conciliatory narrator of “Why I Am a Pagan,” paradoxically fights “as he never fought before” to maintain his “faith in good people” (177-9). Yet, in contrast to the passive-aggressive resistance underlying Zitkala-Ša’s “paganism” and the narrative denouement of Zitkala-Ša’s final memoir “An Indian Teacher Among Indians,” this “voiceless man of America” is not redeemed by his own expression of a resistant American Indian consciousness “flash[ing] a zigzag lightning across the heavens” (97). Rather, Chief High Flier is vouchsafed an ecstatic vision of the Anglo-American sympathy now emanating from the Statue of Liberty: “It was she, who, though representing human liberty, formerly turned her back upon the American aborigine. . . . At this moment her torch flamed brighter and whiter till its radiance reached into the obscure and remote places of the land. Her light of liberty penetrated Indian reservations” (179-80). In a strategic concession to her intended audience, Zitkala-Ša sets aside an individualistic Native ethos so as to win over a great “galaxy” of supportive female voters (179). Lady Liberty’s incandescent torch raised high over Indian country
replaces the singular lightning bolt emanating from a rebellious telegraph pole as the new figure for Zitkala-Ša’s authorial acts. The uninhibited energy of emancipated Native subjectivity is suddenly subsumed by the searing white light of “human liberty” and the epitome of American political idealism—represented by the figure of a Euro-American woman (179).

Ultimately, then, American Indian Stories is of a piece with the ambivalent literary history of nineteenth-century American Indian women writers, a history that is far from offering any unqualified, convincing testimony to the politically redemptive or racially uplifting power of Anglo-American sympathy. That is, like Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, Pauline Johnson, and Alice Callahan, Zitkala-Ša is still strategically deferring to a pedagogically authoritative model of how previous generations of white, genteel women had translated their lessons in domestic values into a respectable form of public expression and social protest. As can be seen from the preceding narrative of nineteenth-century Native women’s acculturative pedagogy and resistant textuality, sentimental ideology was used to justify both home schooling and institutional methods for instructing Native women in Anglo-American literacy and middle-class mores. Consequently, sentimentality also provided a discursive foundation for the fomenting of unforeseen cultural repercussions including imperialistic collaborations and American Indian resistance. The “international mercantile and colonial power relations” that became the tearful grist of the sensitive politician and romantic poet also gave rise to bicultural, Native-identified literary consumers who, despite being so “persistently” associated with Anglo-American sensibility that indigeneity came “to stand for emotion itself” (Ellison 102), could nonetheless appropriate the discourse of empire for their own
personal and political ends. Deploying the language of sensibility, Native women not only engaged in a transatlantic discourse that legitimized their domestic experiences and gendered frustrations but also transformed the socially acceptable rhetoric of genteel literacy and feminine melancholy into a political commentary upon the marginalization of indigenous communities. In a striking revision of the standard narrative of Native pedagogy in which “authentic” indigenous women are deemed racially, culturally, and even geographically alienated from Eurocentric print culture, all four Native women can be seen to have strategically deployed the purity, piety, and domesticity of True Womanhood in defense of the respectability of indigenous cultures, the morality of Native womanhood, and the progressive adaptability of the American Indian intellect.

Endeavoring to make Native cultures and women legible through sentimentality, Schoolcraft and her literary descendents attribute to the indigene not only the objectifying deservedness of others’ sympathy but also the capacity to act and think as members of indigenous societies in which sympathy and “feminine” virtues are already practiced. Ultimately, then, these Native female authors demonstrate their perspicuity as unintended readers or their recognition of the importance of similarity and familiarity to nineteenth-century notions of equality and respect.

Nevertheless, all four authors must also struggle against the limitations, ideological and cultural, inherent to their sentimentalized articulation of Native advocacy. Indeed, as can be seen in their at times troubling deference to sentimental rhetoric, Native women’s acculturative pedagogy and resistant textuality leaves “no purchase for readings determined to frame questions in ‘liberatory as opposed to disciplinary’ terms” (23). On the one hand, there lurks within the texts of all four authors a tension between their
apologetic vision of Native survivance and a sentimental defense of bicultural nationalism. That is, while Schoolcraft, Johnson, Callahan, and Zitkala-Ša all lay claim to a specific tribal affiliation, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft and E. Pauline Johnson maintain a much more complicated faith in the cross-cultural pertinence of True Womanhood and sympathy, due in large part to the impact of their complicated but also closely-knit mixed-blood domestic circles and the disciplinary intimacy by which they were instructed in sentimental literature and social values. Although, like Callahan and Zitkala-Ša, Schoolcraft and Johnson refuse to reconcile themselves to Native disappearance, both authors adapt sentimental tropes and plotlines so as to articulate the possibility of an amicable and even consensual union of Native communities with a white body politic that acknowledges and respects indigenous cultures. By contrast, ever mindful of their respective nation’s intimidation and dispossession at the hands of the United States government and depicting acculturation as the product of an institutionalized education conducted by unrelated and typically unsympathetic white pedagogues, Alice Callahan and Zitkala-Ša demonstrate a marked ambivalence toward the very sentimentality underwriting the tropes and arguments that they deploy. Haunted by reformers’ insistence that education in English and Anglo-American mores must inevitably lead to a deracinating plunge into the white mainstream, Callahan problematizes the racially infantilizing and culturally homogenizing tendencies of Eurocentric sentimental ideology, while Zitkala-Ša melodramatically attests to the self-alienating futility of Native students’ efforts to accommodate Euro-American demands for assimilation.
On the other hand, their engagement with sentimental literary conventions and social values clearly compromises these authors’ ability to serve as effective cross-cultural mediators and to give voice to their own resistant subjectivity. For example, the well-bred pretensions and difference-eliding tendencies underwriting Anglo-American sensibility clearly complicate Schoolcraft’s and Callahan’s efforts to speak on behalf of dispossessed traditionalist Indians. Emphasizing their bicultural social status and emulating the sympathetic condescension, as well as the culturally and emotionally homogenizing analogies, of their genteel literary models, Schoolcraft and Callahan legitimize their resistant authorial acts in Anglo-American terms and upon the basis of either a white audience’s or the mixed-blood elite’s literary pretensions. By the same token, however, despite these authors’ critique of an ascendant, hard-hearted Euro-American presence, these women have unmistakably distanced themselves from their fellow Indians now made into the traditionalist objects of their representational largesse. Then there are also the commodifying and culturally appropriative impulses sparking Anglo-Canadians’ interest in Native ethnography that imperil Pauline Johnson’s portrayals of enduring indigenous cultural claims and the legacy of Native valor and female virtue. Financially dependent upon the successful reception of her short stories and poems, Johnson not only merges the much-needed remuneration of bourgeois art with the literary activism of sentimental social art but also compromises with her Euro-Canadian audiences and publishers. Consequently, even as she invents an affirming pan-Indian identity that, rather than emanating from Euro-Canadian jurisprudence, is based upon place-centeredness and a spiritual kinship with indigenous communities, Johnson
romanticizes indigeneity and transforms its veiled oral traditions into a textual form consumable by Canadians eager to become “Native” to their nascent nation.

For Zitkala-Ša, finally, the struggle to free herself from the split subjectivity she acquired from off-reservation schooling is hampered by her reliance upon a sentimental critique of boarding school pedagogy and Euro-American prejudice. Desiring to find a vent for her unruly, tempestuous defiance, she overtly decries the devastating impact that federal education policy has had upon her mother’s disciplinary intimacy and influence, while subversively inscribing her lifelong dissatisfaction with Anglo-American style domestic values and her longing to escape from her mother’s mirror-like modeling of victimization. Instead of bearing witness to her transformation from a voiceless telegraph pole to a dynamic lightning rod, however, her 1921 prose collection reveals that she continues to stifle her inner rage and frustration in order to flatter her intended audience and inspire the sympathetic activism of white female voters. As she champions Native customs, social values, and human rights through a strategic deployment of sentimentality, she struggles to overcome the prejudices of Anglo-American print culture through a performative privileging of sympathetic appeals over individualistic self-expression. Zitkala-Ša’s oeuvre, therefore, provides a poignant final chapter to the record of often-disillusioned but nonetheless indomitable Native women who took up the pen and responded to a hundred years of Manifest Destiny using a hyper-literary, highly mediated pattern of aestheticized emotion and social critique.

As Simon Ortiz poignantly affirms in his influential tribute to how “Indian women and men have carried on their lives and their expression through the use of the newer languages . . . and . . . have used these languages on their own terms”: “This is the
crucial item that has to be understood, that it is entirely possible for a people to retain and maintain their lives through the use of any language. There is not a question of authenticity here; rather, it is the way that Indian people have creatively responded to forced colonization. And this response has been one of resistance” (256-7).
Consequently, when sentimental discourse is being placed in the service of “advocat[ing] for their people’s self-government, sovereignty, and control of land and resources; and also . . . [of exposing] racism, political and economic oppression, sexism, supremacism, and the needless and wasteful exploitation of land and people,” then Native women’s messy and ambivalent appropriation of sentimental tropes and genres can and must be read as an expression of resistance (259). Even as critical attempts to locate and privilege “authentic” voices risk erasing nineteenth-century Native women’s dynamic, strategic methods of survivance through their adaptation of transatlantic literary conventions, sentimental American Indian literature offers a strident rebuke and ongoing alternative to the “self-fulfilling prophecy” of “nostalgic” anthropology, or as Craig Womack explains: “Only cultures that are able to adapt to change remain living cultures; otherwise they become no longer relevant and are abandoned. . . . Literature . . . allows for this kind of creative change” (42). Similarly, in the course of contextualizing Jane Schoolcraft’s literary legacy, Robert Dale Parker argues that any reduction of American Indian identity and literature into a kind of “pure” cultural stasis actually marginalizes Native authors’ beset efforts to assert an intelligible and potentially empowering voice in the midst of a hostile dominant culture: “Schoolcraft wrote poetry in her time and of her time, like any other poet, and that participation in her own changing and Métis world can enhance rather than diminish the value that her work promises for our recovery of lost literary,
Indian, and American history” (27-8). Despite the Eurocentrism of their sentimental lessons in literacy, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft and her bicultural literary descendants commandeered the social purposefulness of a domineering white discourse and, through their self-consciously genteel acts of authorship, challenged the rhetoric of indigenous inferiority and disappearance during a particularly bleak period of Native history.
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