

EXAMPLES FOR THE WORLD: FOUR TRANSITIONAL
SIOUX WRITERS AND THE SIOUX
LITERARY RENAISSANCE

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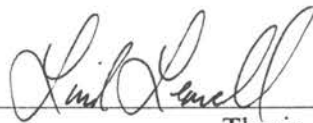
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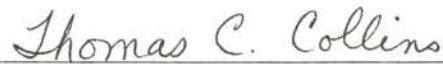
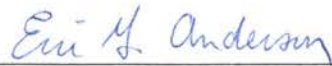
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PREFACE

Transitional era Sioux produced some of the most prolific and most influential writers among American Indians of the time. They, as an individual Indian nation, deserve a closer analysis in respect not only because of the sheer number and range of works--from autobiography to opera--they produced, but also because of the depth and quality of their writings. While American Indian writings should not be judged solely based on their adherence to EuroAmerican literary traditions, their contributions to those traditions should be acknowledged. Charles Alexander Eastman, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, Luther Standing Bear, and Nicholas Black Elk all contributed to the tenor of Modernist American literature, perhaps more accurately labeled Transitional American literature for all writers from approximately 1890 to 1955.

This study examines Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, and Black Elk as Sioux writers who were affected by and who in turn affected Modern American literature and the writers, especially other American Indians, who followed. While examining them as Sioux writers, arguing in effect for acknowledgement of the Sioux Literary Renaissance, I examine the effect their cultures--both Sioux and EuroAmerican--and their individual choices had on their writings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation began as an essay for Dr. L.G. Moses' history course over American Indians. Dr. Moses introduced me to Eastman and Standing Bear's works, which I combined with my interests--spurred by Bonnin's *American Indian Stories* which my husband bought for me and by my longstanding respect for *Black Elk Speaks*--in autobiographical writings. My initial interests in these writers were as autobiographers alone, but I realized during the course of my research in the last two years that these four writers were not alone in their endeavors as Sioux writers and wrote so much more than just autobiography. So my research broadened and deepened as I began to examine, and appreciate, their other texts, with continued guidance by Dr. Moses, who helped me to see them in a context among other writers, Indian and nonIndian, of the period. For his encouragement and dauntless assistance, I am most appreciative.

I would also like to thank Dr. Eric Anderson, whose guidance and suggestions helped me stay focused as we worked through drafts of this dissertation. His knowledge of current scholarship, his tireless assistance, and his continued support and encouragement kept my ideas in perspective and my computer keyboard clicking.

My appreciation also goes to Dr. Leonard Leff, who took the time to provide written feedback on parts of this dissertation before the defense, and Dr. Linda Leavell, my academic advisor, who offered prudent, scholarly advice and saw me go from literal birthing pains to dissertation defense.

Kirtland Card from the University of Nebraska Press was also genuinely helpful in providing me with information and sales figures regarding the books written by these four Sioux writers. Linda Van Hamme, Director of Research at the Akta Lakota Museum at St. Joseph's Indian School, was also helpful in providing me with some of the few available materials written contemporaneously by Indians about these writers and their works. The Mid-America All-Indian Center in Wichita, Kansas graciously allowed me the use of their library, for which I am grateful.

Of course, most important to all my scholarly efforts have been my husband, James Cooper, and my son, Harley Cooper. They provide the healthy balance needed to keep me sane and productive. Their love and support has always been the balm I need to counter the stresses of graduate school, as well as the fire I need to persevere.

I would also like to express my appreciation to other professors who have passed on needed words of wisdom which have also carried me through my scholarly endeavors: first, Dr. George Keiser, who once told me that it never matters with whom I study because only I can determine the direction and quality of my scholarship--a statement which gave me the fortitude to resist those who would change me into their kind of scholar instead of the scholar that I am; and, second, Dr. Linda Austin, who reminded me that those who persevere succeed.

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"The white man sees so little, he must
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ABBREVIATIONS FOR TITLES

AIA	<i>American Indian Autobiography</i> , Brumble
AIL	<i>American Indian Literature</i> , Ruoff
AIS	<i>American Indian Stories</i> , Bonnin
BES	<i>Black Elk Speaks</i> , Neihardt
BEP	<i>Black Elk's Sacred Pipe</i> , Brown
DT	<i>Dakota Texts</i> , Deloria
DWC	<i>From the Deep Woods to Civilization</i> , Eastman
IB	<i>Indian Boyhood</i> , Eastman
ICL	<i>Indian Child Life</i> , Eastman
IHC	<i>Indian Heroes and Chieftains</i> , Eastman
ISC	<i>Indian Scout Craft and Lore</i> , Eastman
IT	<i>Indian To-Day</i> , Eastman
LSE	<i>Land of the Spotted Eagle</i> , Standing Bear
MIB	<i>My Indian Boyhood</i> , Standing Bear
MLS	<i>Myths and Legends of the Sioux</i> , McLaughlin
MPS	<i>My People the Sioux</i> , Standing Bear
NAA	<i>Native American Autobiography</i> , Krupat
NAR	<i>Native American Renaissance</i> , Lincoln
OID	<i>Old Indian Days</i> , Eastman
OIL	<i>Old Indian Legends</i> , Bonnin
RH	<i>Red Hunters and the Animal People</i> , Eastman
SI	<i>Speaking of Indians</i> , Deloria
SOI	<i>Soul of the Indian</i> , Eastman
SOS	<i>Stories of the Sioux</i> , Standing Bear
STS	<i>Sister to the Sioux</i> , Elaine Eastman
WE	<i>Wigwam Evenings</i> , Eastman

CHAPTER ONE

An Introduction

Redefining a Type Through Example

According to Deborah Sue Welch, "the conscience pangs of White America peaked in 1881 with the publication of Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor* denouncing U.S. Indian policy" (76). Yet, if the public felt guilty over government policy and the subsequent mistreatment of Indians on reservations, they had not overcome the stereotypical views of Indians as savages and worthless heathens, and seemed to devour every word about conflict between Indians and the government, with the press keeping a persistent eye on militant, and even not so militant, activities on the reservations. Indians were newsmakers. Not only did military leaders like Custer write articles for eager newspapers and magazines, newspaper correspondents also followed military troops whenever possible (Brady 346 and Moses 19-20), and harassed Indian agents for news, inflating situations beyond their real scope to appease a bloodthirsty reading audience (McGillycuddy 202). By the time 3000 troops amassed on Pine Ridge Reservation in 1890 to quell the Ghost Dance Craze, as newspapers had labeled it, the general nonIndian reading public was undoubtedly preparing itself for gory details (Mooney 850).

Why should we have expected anything else? Most EuroAmericans¹ had frequently treated Indians as less than human since contact. Perhaps

¹ In reference to those Americans who descend from any Western culture, primarily those known as European descendents, I will primarily use the term

subconsciously, though, EuroAmericans had always known otherwise, given the fact that they had tried to ease their consciences by making an attempt at being fair with treaties for land rights and by sending missionaries to help and enlighten. But the only Indians most EuroAmericans knew were fictional, like those in *The Last of the Mohicans*, or on display, such as at a wild west show or in a live exhibit at a museum, wearing loincloths and war paints, as if that was always how all Indians dressed. Captivity narratives, which often provided gruesome details to justify nonIndian views of Indian "savagery," were also popular. All of these stereotypical images worked their way into the fabric of everyday life for the general American public. As western movies became popular, images of Indians became so stilted, in addition to being inaccurate, that all Indians were fashioned as plains Indians.²

In contrast, most transitional period Indians, especially the four Sioux³ writers of this study--Charles Eastman (*Ohiyesa*), Gertrude Bonnin (*Zitkala-Sa*),

EuroAmerican. I choose to use the term primarily to highlight cultural influences. I will also use the word nonIndian to refer to anyone other than American Indians, where appropriate. Other terms commonly used, such as whites, Anglos, and Caucasians, will not be used here because of their inaccuracies, as well as because the terms white and caucasian refer to race, not culture. However, when I quote a source which has used one of the other terms, I will repeat that source's term instead of inserting my own in order to preserve the tone and context of the quotation.

² While movies have been examined for their racist depictions of Indians, cartoons have been relatively overlooked. Even the Algonquian Indians in Disney's *Peter Pan* (1953) dress like plains Indians and sing that interestingly racial song, "Why Is the Red Man Red?" Friz Freleng's cartoon short, *Sweet Sioux* (1937), would be labeled as racist by many, but it does provide some interesting twists by inserting recognizable EuroAmerican symbols and characters into Indian life, such as when a war party circling settlers' wagons becomes a carousel.

³ The word Sioux has been translated variously as "a French corruption of the Algonquian *nadowesiih* 'little adders'" (M Powers 23) and as "a French word [which] means 'cut-throat'" (MIB, 2). As Raymond De Mallie points out in *The Sixth Grandfather*, the designation for Sioux of all dialects and bands was the sign for cut throat in common plains Indian sign language (318, n. 20). All agree that

Luther Standing Bear (*Ota K'te*), and Nicholas Black Elk (*Hehaka Sapa*)--saw themselves and the lives they led as examples of being American Indians in Modern America, even though Deborah Welch asserts such a hope was an ideal only of the youthful and naive. These writers were not just "visible example[s] of what...Indian[s] could accomplish if given the opportunity for advanced education" (Welch 14), but also written and heard examples of Indians as real human beings who found value in their cultures. And I do mean *cultures*, plural, because there are subtle variances between their three Sioux cultures--Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota. I also want to call attention to the fact that three of these writers, Eastman, Bonnin, and Standing Bear, were also part EuroAmerican, a fact which undoubtedly influenced them from early on in their lives. Even Black Elk, the full-

the word was used as a derogatory word by enemies of the Sioux to describe the Sioux, with the French, Europeans with the earliest contact with the tribe, accepting the term without question. Edward Lazarus, Marla N. Powers and William K. Powers are the only historians I have found who offer a Siouan word--*Oceti Sakowin*, meaning Seven Fireplaces, Seven Fire Circles, or Seven Council Fires (M. Powers 24 and W Powers 11)--for the seven major tribes who spoke the three dialects--Nakota, Dakota and Lakota, although all three still refer most often to the nation as Sioux. According to Lame Deer, an Oglala Lakota, the Sioux also have called themselves the *Ikce Wicasa* or the Nature Humans (175). Joyzelle Godfrey, a contemporary Yankton Sioux, says it is most simple to call the Sioux Nation the *Oyate*, meaning the People (18). While most of the Sioux on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations prefer to call themselves Lakota, not all of the four writers this dissertation addresses are of the Lakota speaking branch. Charles Eastman is a Santee, or Dakota, Sioux. Gertrude Bonnin-Simmons is a Yankton, or Nakota, Sioux. Black Elk is Oglala, or Lakota, and Standing Bear is probably Brule, or Lakota, as well. In fairness to the two nonLakotas, and because of the relative obscurity of the terms *Oceti Sakowin* (pronounced *oh-set-ee shah-koh-een*) and *Oyate* (pronounced *oh-yah-tay*), my primary references in this dissertation to the writers and their culture will use the word Sioux, with the specific use of terms like Lakota, Santee, Yankton, Brule, and Oglala, where appropriate. To introduce the terms' use, I will only use *Oceti Sakowin* and *Oyate* when I can clearly remind the readers that they are Lakota for the Sioux nation as a whole.

blooded Sioux who remained with his band of Oglala Sioux most of his life, adopted elements of EuroAmerican culture, especially Catholicism, into his life.

Perhaps it is coincidence that Sioux writers began publishing so much material about their culture soon after the Wounded Knee Massacre. While the Sioux were one of the last Indian nations to be fought in the Indian Wars and to be forced into reservation life, they were one of the first, and perhaps most vocal, group of Native voices to address Indian issues to nonIndian audiences in print. Even though "civilized" tribes, like the Cherokees, had their own publishing media, many of which were printed in both Native languages and English, they were largely addressed to intratribal audiences. In contrast, Sioux writers like Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, and Black Elk primarily sought out larger, nonIndian audiences, particularly EuroAmerican children with whom they hoped to influence the future, for their stories.

Why did the Sioux possess some of the strongest as well as the most prolific literary voices of this era? Were they, the Oyate, writing out of political motives, attempting to influence current and future generations of both Indians and nonIndians by impressing them with the values of traditional Indian cultures? Did they write with the hopes of preserving the Oceti Sakowin cultures as the anthropologists were doing? Did any of them act out of actual literary ambition? Or did their writings come out of a firm belief that their stories are important to the sum of human knowledge since personal narratives of various sorts were and are important to the shaping of Indian cultures? And why, given all the writing and publishing Indians did during the first half of this century, do most literary scholars assert that the Native American Literary Renaissance (Lincoln 8) did not begin until the late 1960s--less than five years before the second military confrontation with Indians at Wounded Knee?

The American Indian Literary Renaissance may have started with N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* in 1968, but the Sioux Literary Renaissance began almost immediately after their subjection to permanent reservation living.⁴

How can I assert there was such a phenomenon as the Sioux Literary Renaissance? As Kenneth Lincoln defines it in his seminal book, *Native American Renaissance*, "without question a renaissance or 'rebirth' springs from roots deep in the compost of cultural history, a recurrent past" (41). Lincoln also points out that Indian literature has such a richly fertile (and recurrent) past. While most Indian literature before 1900 was orally based,⁵ "once these oral works were translated into English and printed in books, America began to recognize, belatedly, the long presence of Native American literatures" (42-3).

Lincoln, however, focuses on *Black Elk Speaks* as the text most responsible for combining oral and written literary traditions. As Lincoln states it, "Black Elk dreamed and lived a tribal 'life-story' that Neihardt transcribed with poetic license and fixed in history. The oral 'sending' of words came through a new voice, a printed text" (82).

⁴ See Kenneth Lincoln's *Native American Renaissance*. Of course, this literary distinction comes from an acceptance of nonfiction, especially nontraditional nonfiction, as literature.

⁵ Lincoln cites non-oral, as well as oral forms of Indian literature: "visualized inscriptions, carvings, paintings, and etching constituted native 'writing' north of Mexico. Pictographs and petroglyphs were inscribed in stone all over the North American landscape. In addition, there were ritual codes embedded in artifacts portraying tribal forms of literature: Algonkin birchbark scrolls, Iroquois shell-beaded wampum belts, Sioux winter count pictography on buffalo skins, Northwest cedar totem poles, Southwest sandpaintings, pottery and weaving designs almost everywhere. But for the most part, basic to common Indian life, oral cultures lived mouth to mouth, age to age, as the people passed on a daily culture. Their literatures survived as remembered myths and rituals, song-poems and narrative tales, legends and parables" (NAR 42-3).

Yet Sioux writers had written extensively before *Black Elk Speaks* was ever published, bridging and combining the traditions long before Black Elk and Neihardt. Beginning with articles by Charles Eastman which were first published in 1893 to Black Elk's last cooperative work *The Sacred Pipe* in 1953, Sioux writers published extensively, producing twenty-seven books specifically about their or other Indian cultures. Considering the fact that book publishing by all Indian tribes, including the Sioux, about all manner of subjects produced about 75 books from 1890 to 1955, it is clear that the Sioux, or Oceti Sakowin, produced, as a tribe, the most written materials--including articles published in popular magazines such as *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Monthly*--in particular producing the most information as a group about their particular nation's culture. In fact, more Oyate writers *initiated* the production of their books, as opposed to a EuroAmerican amanuensis prompting the text's creation, than did writers from any other Indian nation. No other contemporaneous tribe was so represented in print. It is little wonder, with this proliferation of information, nearly a third of which was produced by the Sioux, that the image of Sioux life became, for modern America, the quintessential image of life in Native America.

These writers and the images created by their stories--autobiographical, anthropological, and literary--helped shape the future of America: its identity; its developing appreciation for nature, and for alternative religions and medical practices; its awareness of history (both written and oral) as a moving force in the present; and its sense of being a polycultural country. Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, and Black Elk all shared a common goal: to educate and preserve. These four writers are more than just Transitional Sioux writers; they are transitional historians, guides, and Indian writers, with an even more important impact on the artistic milieu of their time and ours. As such transitional influences, as the

primary writers of the Sioux Literary Renaissance, and as active participants in Modernist literary development, they deserve to be studied in detail.

Why have these early Indian writers been ignored as literary Modernists? How can I justify my claim that a Sioux *Literary Renaissance* occurred? Scholars must first appreciate Indian writings as literature and understand the cultural and personal forces which created these writers and helped forge their texts.

While many critics, such as Louis Owens, see EuroAmerican and Indian cultures as having "completely alien set[s] of assumptions and values" (14), Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, and Black Elk find bridges of interstitial commonality which support their individual approaches to dealing with modern American life. Yet scholars like Owens also blend all 500 or so Indian cultures together, assuming that all Indians read texts the same way (14). Such a belief in pan-Indianism was a goal for Eastman and Bonnin, but, like Owens, they tended to see other Indians through a particular tribal point of view. While Owens, who is of Choctaw-Cherokee-Irish descent, has three different cultural perspectives from which to draw his views, Eastman and Bonnin envisioned a common Indian culture through a decidedly Siouan lens (Welch 111).

Cultural influences play significant roles in all four writers' lives and their writings. All four were born into traditional Sioux living, although Bonnin was removed from its influences at eight years old, a few years earlier in age than both Eastman and Standing Bear, who were both teenagers when they left their tribal bands for boarding schools. Black Elk, too, left his tribe briefly as a young man, returning to stay a couple of years later after performing in America and Europe with a wild west show. All four writers maintained aspects of their Sioux identities, and all four writers utilized traditional Sioux literary techniques, blended, of course, with EuroAmerican considerations of craft and tradition, in their writings.

Standing Bear, the one with the least EuroAmerican schooling excluding Black Elk who had the benefit of a EuroAmerican literarily trained amanuensis, is the most rudimentary writer of the four. Because of his lack of literary training, Standing Bear's writing shows Siouan influences more blatantly than those of the other three. But even Black Elk's collaborator, John Neihardt, does not prevent such Sioux literary techniques as multiple voiced corroboration or repetition from surfacing in *Black Elk Speaks*, even though he takes liberties with other parts of the text.

Both Eastman and Bonnin also successfully combined EuroAmerican and Sioux literary techniques, using one literary tradition to modify another, just as other literary Modernists reached back into previous literary traditions, such as folktales and mythologies of other cultures, to amplify or alter reader expectations. As Kenneth Lincoln points out, two special "aboriginal" issues of *Poetry* magazine featured interpretations of American Indian works by such noted writers as Carl Sandburg, Lew Sarett, and Amy Lowell (Foreword xvii). The transitional Sioux writers also anticipate more contemporary Indian writers, such as N. Scott Momaday and James Welch, by choosing to incorporate into their works, both in their autobiographies and in their recounting of tales, such elements of Indian oral traditions as breathing life and personality into inanimate objects and animals. Eastman and Bonnin are also the only two of the four who write fictional short stories, utilizing Sioux literary touches such as invoking ceremonial elements and "piling meaning upon meaning, until accretion finally results in a story" (Allen *Sacred Hoop* 79).

Perhaps these Sioux writers have been overlooked as Modernist scholars because their ties to traditions and the past were not as distant as most Modernist writers' ties were, so that what High Modernists had to reacquire, mythical ties to the past such as Eliot's legend of the Fisher King, the Sioux never lost. As Paula

Gunn Allen points out, "American Indians are tribal people who define themselves and are defined by ritual understandings, that is, by spiritual or sacred ceremonial shapings," which in turn shapes their approaches to writing (*Sacred Hoop* 79). To struggle with literary texts and ideals in the process of forming new literary concepts was laudable to the Modernists, so the relative ease with which many Modern Indians, such as Eastman and Bonnin, slipped into combining cultural values into literary texts (even though they personally struggled with incorporating EuroAmerican values into their lives) could have been one prejudice against them.

Yet, as Monroe Spears points out, literary Modernism required "the self-conscious awareness of a break with the past" (7). Such a break manifests two feelings--emancipation, or a sense of freedom, and disinheritance, "a loss of tradition, belief and meaning" (7). Does the fact that Indians were forced to remove themselves from their cultural traditions mean they struggled less with the assertion of new values in their lives?

Paul de Man insists that "modernity exists in the form of a desire to wipe out whatever came earlier, in the hope of reaching at last a point that could be called a true present, a point of origin that marks a new departure" (148). Yet, he warns, "as soon as modernism becomes conscious of its own strategies...it discovers itself to be a generative power that not only engenders history, but is part of a generative scheme that extends far back into the past" (150). Early Indian writers created and established forms that were a departure from traditional Indian literary concepts, establishing a point of origin that *does* extend "far back into the past." Most obviously, then, Indian writers were ignored by EuroAmerican writers and scholars because the Indian pasts, their literary traditions, were different, perhaps alien. But, as Henry Louis Gates, Jr. reminds us, "Europeans and Americans neither invented literature and its theory nor have a monopoly on its development" (xiv).

Like other Modern scholars, Spears believes the individual's development somehow repeats, in a fairly close parallel, the development of the larger culture, moving, as it were, from primitive to sophisticate (10), a belief based on social evolutionist theories. Modernist theories, much like the Spencerian philosophies of cultural evolution so widely accepted by the turn of the century, assumed a hierarchy of values, with the primitive being the lowest and the sophisticate being the highest. Indian writers like Eastman, Bonnin, and Standing Bear were able to think of themselves as the best the Sioux nation, indeed even all of American Indians, could offer to modern America. They seemed to enact the literary Modernist theory that one moves from primitivism to sophistication as one breaks away from the confines of their historical and cultural pasts.

In the process, as Kenneth Lincoln points out, Indians and nonIndians alike began a campaign to preserve what they saw as a vanishing culture--traditional American Indian lifestyles, values, and literature. Lincoln argues that, in the midst of preserving Indian poetry, chants, songs, and other works, traditional American Indian cultures influenced the flowering of literary Modernism:

Sorely, to be sure, the West needed a revised myth to supersede New World *carte blanche*....So in a curious turnabout, the mythographers reached into the presence of the past and reinvented the Indian at the heart of this continent's humanity. The resurrected noble savage, reduced by a factor of sixteen since 1492, would rise above the ruins of anarchic Manifest Destiny on literary wings.

(xvii)

Native American cultures, according to Lincoln, still widely influence the general American culture today, especially literarily (xxv), just as EuroAmerican literary traditions have influenced most, if not all, of the individual tribal literary traditions.

While Linda Wagner-Martin argues that most definitions of Modernism are too exclusionary (1), she believes that "perhaps more significantly than its themes, modernism's craft came to be its focal point....Modern writing meant structural and linguistic experimentation" (3). All four Sioux writers experimented within their texts. Eastman's autobiography, *Indian Boyhood*, is subtly nonlinear, not unlike Faulkner's blatantly nonlinear *Absalom, Absalom*, and several of Eastman's works appear objectively anthropological, with authorial intrusion used as parody. Bonnin combined autobiography, fiction, and legend into one text, not unlike Eliot's epic poem *The Waste Land*. Standing Bear combined points of view-- "objective" anthropological with subjective autobiographical--just as *Black Elk Speaks* utilizes many voices, not unlike Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and combines forms and mythical structures, not unlike Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Such blending, juxtaposing, and intersecting of textual forms and reader expectations are readers' clues to the combining of the two literary traditions--Sioux and EuroAmerican--these writers use to create literary montages, one textual characteristic highlighted during the literary Modernist movement (Ellman and Feidelson viii).

Admittedly, not all of the writings by these four Sioux merit the literary distinctions of Western sophistication that the other mentioned Modernist works do, simply because their writers did not have, or did not value, those literary distinctions, or--more probably--because they knew that such "sophisticated" works had limited audiences who could appreciate them. Their primary goals for contributing to "the blind worship of...books, of the written word," a worship which has allowed "the written word [to become] established as a criterion of the superior man--a symbol of emotional fineness" (LSE 249) were to correct misinformed ideas about Indians, to influence nonIndian sympathies in order that they would "look upon the Indian world as a human world" (LSE 251), and to be

the "spark [that] lights a fagot of thought with which to bring back to life the fires of Indian faith" (LSE 246).

While they often just wrote about themselves as Indians, these four Sioux writers wrote nineteen books among them, all of them, including Bonnin's co-authored report, *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery*, utilize combinations of traditional Sioux and EuroAmerican literary elements. No other transitional Indian nation produced writers who wrote so extensively for the general American reading audience, let alone wrote so many works which use both native and Western literary techniques. Was this not then a Sioux Literary Renaissance?

Together with their contemporaries, these four writers not only helped redefine what being Indian meant at the turn of this century, but also helped begin and strengthen the still evolving concept of what being an Indian writer means. Simultaneously they preserved images of both traditional and modern Indianism for future generations and created new ones for themselves, for other Indians, for all nonIndians—for the world. They were, as Vizenor states, "the first generation to hear stories of the past, bear the horrors of the moment, and write to the future" (51).

Some Historical & Cultural Background

Kenneth Lincoln, Paula Gunn Allen, and other American Indian literary scholars, asserts that, to best understand texts written by Indians, readers should learn as much about each particular Indian tribal culture writers draw on as possible (*NAR* 9 and *Sacred Hoop* 75). To better illuminate the Sioux cultural

contexts from which Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, and Black Elk emerged as writers, I will provide a brief Oyate history.

The Sioux--or the Seven Fire Circles, the *Oceti Sakowin*, or simply the People, the *Oyate*--did not always live on the plains. The Oyate, especially the Lakota and the Nakota, were forced to immigrate onto the plains from the Great Lakes region in the 1700s when their enemies, the Crees and Chippewas, began obtaining guns from the British and French (M. Powers 25), when diseases carried by traders began ravaging their neighbors (Anderson, *Kinsmen* 22), and when animal resources declined in the woodlands because of disease and over hunting by trappers (Anderson, *Kinsmen* 27). The Sioux adapted well and quickly to plains life, perhaps more easily and quickly than nonIndian settlers--who tried to tame the land, not cooperate with it--did a century later. The Lakota and Nakota transformed from living as a semi-sedentary, horticultural people to nomadic hunter-gatherer one, highly dependent on the horse, which thrived and multiplied on the plains for more than a century (M. Powers 25, W. Powers 18-19), while the Dakota remained near the Great Lakes region. Eventually, the Oceti Sakowin, as a whole, were subdued by an even larger group of enemies who wanted their lands--the "American" people. Ironically, settlers often included great numbers of international immigrants who became American simply through the act of homesteading. Indians would not officially become Americans until 1924.

The fact that the Sioux thrived in a new environment⁶ is a testament to their versatility and adaptability, hence their survive-ability. The Sioux, like most

⁶ Most of the Indian nations migrated over the centuries a good deal. The Navajos and Apaches came from Western Canada 500 years before contact. The Cheyenne and Crow were pushed ahead of the Sioux in their movement toward the west. Most of the tribes have explanations, usually in myth or enacted in traditional ceremonies, for why they lived where they were last found. A few remember back to a time before they came to live in certain places. The Cheyenne

American Indians, seem to have always tried to cope with living as themselves among "Others." It was natural, in vying for hunting grounds, to attack and counterattack enemy camps and to raid for goods such as horses. To support their military endeavors, to strengthen their spirituality, and to ensure their safety (as well as to prevent inbreeding), the Lakota and Nakota also held periodic celebrations, known as the annual Dakota Rendezvous, where dispersed communities, including those of their allies, came together for several days of trading and ceremonies (Swagerty 361). The three largest dialectical segments of the Sioux Nation, the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota, because of infrequent contact with one another, developed several distinct ceremonies and social mores, while retaining a sense of belonging to the Nation of the Seven Fire Circles.

Historically, the Sioux have had a tremendous impact on the American imagination. Early on dime novels, and later movies and cartoons, as well as notorious Sioux victories over the United States military, helped make the image of the plains warrior the quintessential Indian image in America and abroad. While other native tribes also experienced successes against many of their nonIndian enemies, the facts that the Sioux controlled a large territory in cooperation with their various allies, were the largest, last Indian nation to be conquered, and were the most common kind of Indian represented in wild west shows (Moses xiii) helped to emblazon images of their culture--the tipi, the eagle feather war bonnet, and Ghost Dance shirts, to name a few--into American mindsets for what we think of when we hear the word "Indian."

Undoubtedly, images offered in books, even those by our four writers, also had a great influence. Three of Charles Eastman's early books, *Indian Boyhood*

and the Sioux, for instance, still remember in some of their tales and rituals, when they were sedentary and grew corn (Cox & Jacobs 109-110, 131).

(1902), *Red Hunters and the Animal People* (1904), and *Old Indian Days* (1907) projected images of Indians which were so attractive that EuroAmericans sought to instill in their children similar values and knowledge of nature lore. Such images and values enticed EuroAmericans out-of-doors to enjoy the burgeoning national parks and summer camps "for relaxation and inspiration....turn[ing] to the Heritage of the American Indian to learn moral and practical lessons" (Miller 66). While Eastman's first three books precede the establishment of the Boy Scouts in England in 1908, in fact, Eastman's book *Indian Scout Talks* (1914) speaks directly to boy scouts and campfire girls--groups Eastman helped found in the United States (Miller 66).

Creating a strong influential set of values for children to follow is so important to the Oyeti Sakowin that Eastman, Bonnin, and Luther Standing Bear make a pointed effort to address EuroAmerican children in many of their writings. All four writers--Black Elk, Bonnin, Eastman and Standing Bear--attempt to depict their own childhoods--the only time they lived in the traditional Sioux manner--as a time for developing spiritually, intellectually, skillfully, morally, and socially. Eastman, through autobiography and short stories, and Standing Bear, through autobiography and anthropological reporting, go into the practical details of everyday Oyate life. In the process, they make Indian ways of living attractive and noble.

While the three men seem to be primarily concerned with passing on their knowledge, Gertrude Bonnin wrote from a different purpose, a purpose taken up by Eastman and Standing Bear in their later writings, and from a different perspective. While she, too, wanted to promote EuroAmerican understanding of Indian ways of living, she desired to be allowed to continue to be Indian in all aspects of her life, especially her spirituality, so that many of her writings were responses to misconceived beliefs by nonIndians about Indians. Bonnin, known

under her self-created Lakota penname of Zitkala-Sa, was one of the first, if not the first Indian, to argue for being allowed to live as both Indian and EuroAmerican. She was probably one of the first people to argue for an understanding and appreciation for "other" cultures, not unlike her contemporary John Collier and his cultural pluralism movement (Welch 194). All four writers addressed Indian concerns, including spirituality, but Bonnin was the first to push directly for Indian rights--especially the right to remain culturally Indian--with Standing Bear following suit some years later in calling his people "back to the blanket."

Most of the autobiographical stories these four writers relate occurred before 1900. Eastman, the oldest, recalls the Great Sioux Uprising in Minnesota in 1863, when he was five and when his father was arrested as one of the many warriors responsible for the massacre. The men all recall the Battle of Little Big Horn, which occurred the same year Bonnin was born on the Yankton Reservation--1876.

All three men discuss the Ghost Dance religion, with decidedly different points of view about the "craze" and the subsequent Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890. Eastman served as the official government physician for Pine Ridge Reservation and aided in treating the survivors and burying the dead. Standing Bear was a teacher on the neighboring Rosebud Reservation. Like Eastman, the incident shook Standing Bear's faith in the white man's ways and in his newly adopted Christian religious convictions, but, unlike Eastman, Standing Bear describes himself (and two of his Carlisle graduate friends) as ready to fight for his people⁷ (MPS 225), while also attempting to talk the dancers out of Ghost

⁷ It should be noted that the Lakota of South Dakota were not Eastman's "people," since he grew up Dakota in Minnesota.

Dancing (MPS 219-20). In contrast, Eastman had tried convincing the Pine Ridge Indian agent not to mass military forces against the Ghost Dancers because he thought it was a passing fad--the last ditch effort to return to traditional ways for a despondent people (FDW 97-8). Black Elk was a Ghost Dance participant and later one of its leaders, claiming to have envisioned the Ghost Shirts himself,⁸ and believing the message of Ghost Dancing to be part of his great vision (BES 237-47), and joining those massacre survivors who holed up in the *O-ona-gazhee* stronghold in the Badlands (BES 267-9).

As is typical of memories, thus of the nature of autobiography, all three men remember a different individual as being responsible for convincing the post-massacre "hostiles" to turn themselves in: Eastman remembers a "black robe" (DWC 114); Standing Bear believes it was his father and nine other chiefs who were later given medals by the government (MPS 228-30); and Black Elk remembers a lone Indian, Afraid-of-His-Horses, convincing Red Cloud to surrender (BES 269).

Black Elk, the only full-blooded Sioux of the four writers, was the only one of the four writers who maintained close ties with his original band of Oglala Sioux, although the other three writers did return periodically to their ancestral bands. Perhaps in part because of their mixed blood, thus influenced by their EuroAmerican sides, Eastman, Bonnin, and Standing Bear sought educations away from their respective reservations, learning English fluently. Even after relating information to two amanuenses, Neihardt and Brown, for the two books that bear his name, Black Elk clung to his native Lakota language throughout his life, even as he served in various capacities for the Catholic church.

⁸ Several people claimed to have been given visions directing them to make Ghost Shirts, a phenomenon which will be discussed further in Black Elk's chapter.

Only Black Elk had nothing to do with Captain Richard H. Pratt's Carlisle Indian School. Standing Bear prides himself, in *My People the Sioux* (1928), on having been the first Sioux boy to enter the school grounds when the old military barracks that served as its campus were first opened for use as a school (133). Bonnin taught there from 1898 to 1899, after becoming known as an outstanding orator, and directed the same school band Standing Bear had played in more than a decade earlier. It was through traveling with the band, as well as her own assertiveness in contacting literary societies (Welch 17) that she sometimes met influential people who aided her publishing and speaking careers. Because of her strong stance in valuing Indian culture and choosing to remain a "pagan," Bonnin was the only one of our writers to fall out of favor with Captain Pratt. Eastman served as an Outing Agent⁹ for the school in 1899-1900, nearly twenty years after Standing Bear attended. Eastman and Standing Bear's support of Pratt's endeavors at Carlisle is surprising, given Pratt's notorious motto, "Kill the Indian, save the man" (Warrior 6), unless seen in the contexts of their lives and Modern American culture.

The first half of the twentieth century was a difficult one for most Indians, for both those who willingly (if begrudgingly) acculturated and those who resisted the acculturation being forced on them. Most Americans, including Indians, looked nostalgically upon the "old" ways of Indian life, firmly entrenched in the belief that such ways of living were either already gone or soon would be. One pan-Indian group, the Society of American Indians, of which Eastman was a founding member and Bonnin a later member, sought to modernize Indians as quickly as possible (Welch 85).

⁹ An Outing Agent found farms or businesses which would "host" Indian students during the summer months by providing them with work, guidance, room, and board.

For most Americans, even many of those who sympathized with Indian causes, Indians, like people and things from most ancient cultures at this time, were a curiosity, as was exemplified in Ishi, the last Yahi Yana Indian. In 1911, when starvation drove him out of hiding in the hills, he walked into Oroville, California, seeking help. His remarkable survival led him to become a living exhibit at the University of California's Museum of Anthropology in San Francisco until his death in 1916 (*Indians of California* 145-48). He was, sadly, not the first Indian used as a live attraction. Earlier, in 1897, Robert Perry enticed six Eskimos to New York City with him as polar "fauna" specimens. Five died from pneumonia within months, leaving seven-year-old Minik alone. He died of influenza in 1918 in New Hampshire, where he was working as a lumberjack (*People of the Ice and Snow* 143).

Wild west shows also exhibited Indians and fragments of their lifestyles well into the twentieth century. While Sitting Bull was the most well-known Sioux, contemporaneously, to perform with a wild west show, both Black Elk and Standing Bear were also paid performers who traveled around the U.S. and Europe with the shows. As L.G. Moses points out, Indians

gave the Wild West show its most distinctive features. Although Indians played supportive roles in the victory tableau of pioneer virtue triumphing over savagery, they themselves had nevertheless survived the contest. They may have been defeated; but they were never destroyed. Instead, they were portrayed as worthy adversaries, for how else could the showmen-entrepreneurs like Cody validate their prowess in battle? (8)

Yet these images of cunning and savage fighters fed into the stereotypes about Indians that already existed, which were easily found in newspaper, magazine, and dime novel accounts of "the Indian Wars." While "Indian actors, playing

themselves, would provide an aura of immediacy otherwise missing from proscenium or printed page" (Moses 20), the general public continued to limit their beliefs about Indians to stereotypical images of "bucks" and "squaws." Indian Reformers protested the images, lamenting the fact that appearances of Indians as sideshow entertainment overshadowed the "achievements of American Indian education" (Moses 145).

Like the reformers, such limiting, rather two-dimensional, images propagated by Show Indians, however, are not the primary images that our four Sioux writers wanted readers to remember about Indian cultures and their importance in their quickly changing world. Their complex intercultural texts contain stories about themselves and about their tribal and nontribal experiences, revealing four very complex, intercultural human beings who try very hard, and not always very successfully, to do what is right for their families, their tribes, the Sioux nation, and even their country, but primarily themselves.

How does one stay true to oneself when straddling two different cultures? While this is not an unusual question, one asked by many different ethnic groups trying to "fit in" to American life, it is an important one because most critics tend to focus on the tensions created within these writers as they deal with being both Indian and American. Most critics tend to overdramatize the conflicts these writers faced as something all Indians (or people of any "other" culture) face, instead of analyzing the individual writers' responses to these dilemmas to see them as people, not just types. It is difficult for late twentieth century scholars to understand Eastman's rather calm assessment of the Wounded Knee massacre in *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, for instance. Not only was Eastman a physician, trained to assist the wounded, not to get involved in the conflict, but also he was a Santee Dakota Sioux, not an Oglala Lakota Sioux like most of the wounded and killed. He was not as emotionally tied to the wounded as Standing

Bear was. He had also predicted conflict if soldiers tried to stop the Ghost Dance, so he was not surprised.

While many critics of autobiographical writing, such as Foucault and Olney, argue over what the "self" is, what "truth" is, and how individuals create stories about themselves, few place such discussions in historical, cultural or individual contexts, let alone within operative literary traditions. Like David Murray, Arnold Krupat, Gretchen Bataille and Kathleen Sands, many scholars of American Indian literature fall into a pattern of pan-Indianism, viewing literature as though all Indians are receptive to all forms of Indian writing, while all nonIndian readers are a nuisance Indian writers must accommodate. Or scholars overemphasize the role of amanuenses (Brumble AIA 16), neglecting to acknowledge the fact that no text makes it into print without the aid and supervision of an editor unless it is "vanity publishing." Why have scholars, other than textual editors, not fretted over how much influence particular editors and "collectors," as H. David Brumble III calls people who compile texts, have had over EuroAmerican texts? Why is it such a remarkable thing that Indians and other ethnic groups have learned to write, and write well, in English and, often, in their own native languages?

Oversimplification plagues American Indian studies in that it does not allow scholars to connect the weblike structures and cultural supports of most texts. In studying the transitional Sioux writers, we would be neglecting a part of the influences on their texts if we did not examine the context from which they were created as thoroughly as possible. This contextualization means moving *beyond* merely examining the relationships and differences of the two cultures, Sioux and EuroAmerican, merely to note how one culture changes the "authenticity" of the other, *to* acknowledging that both cultures influenced all four writers--from within their own experiences, as well as from without via editors and collaborators. By

examining how those two cultures work together to create the particular works, we can examine concepts such as the Sioux literary tradition, historical moments, the writers' personal struggles, and their contributions to the Sioux Literary Renaissance, if we can be so bold as to call it a rebirth.

Undoubtedly, these four Sioux writers lived and wrote in a rapidly changing world. Changes would even touch Black Elk, who stopped living in a tipi and started living in a cabin, on the Pine Ridge reservation. Neihardt's car transported Black Elk to Harney Peak in the Black Hills from his home in Manderson, South Dakota, in a day, a trip that normally would have taken several days by horseback.

The beginning of the twentieth century, for instance, saw a growing concern for equality--for all people, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity. The push was strengthening (it had, after all, been going on for some time) to eliminate, in America, the white male dominated hierarchy. Even though Jim Crow laws continued to reign in the South, all African-Americans gained the full right to vote by 1929. Women, likewise, gained suffrage in 1920; and Indians (those who had not yet gained citizenship through homesteading or serving in the military during World War I) gained their rights as citizens in 1924, although as Standing Bear emphatically points out, little changed for Indians (LSE 229 & 245). He and Bonnin continued pushing for full rights and due compensation for Indians for years to follow.

Eastman and Bonnin, then, wrote first in times still largely dominated by legal hierarchies and open prejudices. Little had really changed by the time Standing Bear and Black Elk wrote, but American law at least seemed to be bending in favor of the oppressed. The emphasis, in literature, law, and society, was focused on the individual. Justifications, even by Eastman, Standing Bear, and Bonnin, for the Dawes Act--the elimination of reservations for allotments of land

to individual Indians--abounded. Most thought it was as individuals that Indians could best assimilate into mainstream American cultures. Indian rights supporters argued that for Indians to remain in "small, subject groups, isolated in remote areas under the arbitrary rule of a bureaucracy, could only lead to weakness and ultimate degradation" (E. Eastman STS 22). Many politicians merely saw the opportunity to take yet more land from the Indians because whatever land remained after each Indian received her/his allotment was given to the government.

By being forced repeatedly to give up large sections of land, the Great Sioux Nation Reservation was reduced significantly. In this way, the Sioux lost the Black Hills. The oldest mountain range on the continent, the Hills had been "adopted" in 1776 from other tribes by the Sioux themselves (M. Powers 50). To the Lakota, the Black Hills were and are the center of the world, with their legends and myths about the tribe's creation adapting after their migration into the area to reflect their new homeland.

For the Sioux and most other Indian nations, the world's center shifted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries decidedly in favor of the power of the United States government over that of the tribe. The government even went so far as to mandate Sioux religion--forbidding not only ceremonies like the Ghost Dance, the Sun Dance, and Rabbit Dancing, but also rituals such as give-aways, and the centuries old tradition performed for the especially beloved deceased as a means of devotion, Ghost Keeping. Thus "transitional" change for the Sioux was rapid and forceful, cutting to the very core of their culture. Most people, including several prominent Indians, like Eastman and Bonnin, thought such changes would only benefit Indians and make them more American.

But the country, and the developing world at large, was in the midst of a tornado of change--technologically, socially, and personally. Automobiles and radios, altering personal standards and increasing the range and effectiveness of

propaganda, connected the Individual with the outside world at ever spreading distances. The automobile, hawked by automakes, tire manufacturers, and oil corporations as the modern vehicle for exploration, opened up land travel to the general public and renewed the old promises of frontier excitement. As Phil Patton asserts, the "vision of the car offered a hopeful and reassuring response to Turner's notion that the frontier, the dominant force in American life, was now closed" (41). From the creation of national parks and parkways, Americans were enticed to "See America First," with the cars' names reflecting the renewed fervor of exploration--"De Soto, Cadillac, Hudson" (Patton 233). With this fervor, the desire to encroach still further on Indian lands increased.

Electricity illuminated most major cities making nightlife even more inviting. Sewer and running water connections appeared in most urban homes by 1900, improving hygiene and sanitation, thus the general public's health. By 1901, the life expectancy for white males in the United States lengthened to 48 years, for white females, 51, as the U.S. population passed 76 million. Better diets for the majority of Americans in the preceding century pushed the age of menarche from 17 to 14 (Trager 642), increasing the potential for a population boom--a boom which does not come until post-World War II film propaganda begins convincing women to leave the workforce and return to focusing on motherhood. What slowed the population boom at the turn of the century was increasing use of contraceptives as coalitions of women campaigned for the right to know about and to use birth control, allowing women to take more control over their lives. Another large factor in staying the population explosion was that women were needed to fill jobs men had vacated to fight both world wars.

In contrast to the growing health and prosperity of the general American public, Indian populations continued to suffer from poverty and minimal health care. Counting only Indians in the lower 48 states, the 1899 Indian population

"was estimated at 267,905....Reported deaths during 1899 exceeded births by 1,016" (Berthrong 263). Life expectancy "of reservation-based men was just over forty-four years, with reservation-based women enjoying, on average, a life-expectancy of just under forty-seven years," even in the early 1990s (Krupat, *Turn* 30-1). Specifically, Sioux populations had declined "from 38,000 at white contact to 25, 000 in 1805" (Anderson, *Kinsmen* 22 & 27). While Krupat reminds us that not all Indians live in poverty (*Turn* 31), the contrast of the conditions of the general Indian population with the general nonIndian population is staggering.

The people of the first half of the century, ever in need of leaders, were looking for legends to admire. Elizabeth Bacon Custer tried, for the rest of her life, to make "General" George Armstrong Custer, her husband, into a national hero/martyr. Yet, at the same time, people in major Eastern cities flock to see Sitting Bull, heralded as Custer's killer, in person, lining up for the opportunity to shake his hand (MPS 185-7). Both Custer's and Sitting Bull's promoters gain attention and money on the coattails of their "heroes."¹⁰

These larger-than-life heroes were part and parcel of the quest by Modern Americans (and Europeans) for identifiable touchstones on which to stabilize their increasingly chaotic lives. The threat of World War I; the devastating and seemingly wholesale slaughter in trench-warfare of Britain's most wealthy and promising youths--the original "Lost Generation" (French 2); the diminishing stature of Great Britain, whose colonial empire kept shrinking; the rapid economic growth of the United States, who seemed to be the promising offspring taking the place of parent England, despite two world-wide economic depressions in both the

¹⁰ In fact, Elizabeth Bacon Custer is not unlike Elaine Goodale Eastman, Charles Eastman's wife, who helps her husband promote himself almost as much as Elizabeth Custer promotes hers. See also Julia B. McGillicuddy's biography of her husband, *Blood on the Moon: Valentine McGillicuddy and the Sioux*, in which she, too, attempts to mythologize her spouse.

late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries; the threat of yet another world wide economic depression--all served to complicate personal and social lives, in addition to the seemingly rapid changes in living conditions brought on by technology. Most, if not all, of these changes would eventually touch even the Indians secluded on reservations--reservations which served simultaneously as prisoner-of-war camps and, sometimes, despite government intrusions, as havens for cultural stabilization.

One sort of touchstone sought by the general American public was historically based, an attempt to retain contact with the past, especially through the procuring of antiquities. "Tut Mania," which quickly followed the 1923 discovery of Tutankamen's elaborately gilded tomb in Egypt, swept Europe and America, with jewelry makers and clothing designers quickly incorporating, rather haphazardly, Egyptian symbols into their wares. Similarly, pre-Columbian artifacts were sought, mainly by Europeans, but also by Americans, with mixed desires. Some collectors did have an appreciation of the beauty of the pieces they paid for, but the antiquity, thus the monetary value, of the artifacts was often the primary motivation for purchase.

On a much less noticeable level, a general "Indian Mania" also existed, primarily in European countries, such as Germany and Spain. Many such artifacts--from Anasazi pottery to Ghost Shirts--ended up in European museums which could afford to pay more for them rather than in American museums, which were often restricted by congressional funding. Early on (in the 1870s), Smithsonian archeologists such as William Henry Holmes "sought precious archaeological booty" as though sifting through ruins in the Southwest was a "treasure hunt." In Holmes' own words, he and his fellow "vandals" invaded ancient Indian "homes and sacked their cities" (Hinsley 101-2). Later, after funding cutbacks, the Smithsonian restricted its excavations and, instead, paid numerous ethnologists to

study and record Indian languages and customs before they could be lost forever (Hinsley 276), while the Field Museum in Chicago "set out in 1894 to obtain the best collections that money could buy" (Hinsley 270).

Even Indians collected Indian relics. According to Deborah Sue Welch, Marie L.B. Baldwin, "one of only two Indian women lawyers in the nation" in 1916 (121), "was a noted collector of Chippewa relics....not as pieces of an ongoing Indian tradition, but as artifacts of a rapidly vanishing culture" (126). Eastman, too, helped museums, using his knowledge of "old-time Indian etiquette, as well as...all the wit and humor at [his] command" to obtain tribal histories, traditions, stories and artifacts on commission (DWC 171-2). Unabashedly, he admits to obtaining, through the traditional Indian etiquette of gift exchanging, "some object of historic or ceremonial interest, which etiquette would not permit to be 'sold,' and which a white man would probably not have been allowed to see at all" (DWC 166-7).

Such casual acquiring of ancient symbols was not restricted to the Egyptians or Indians. Many writers and scholars also became intensely interested in European roots. William Butler Yeats, for instance, had tried to educate Westerners about Celtic traditions and myths in much of his work, both dramatic and poetic. Critics like Jesse L. Weston, who wrote the influential *From Ritual to Romance*, analyzed myths and legends in an effort to illuminate contemporary religious belief (or lack of it) and other social indicators, like literature. Many writers, some of whom would come to be known as the "High Modernists," took such interests in ancient myths and legends further, applying new psychoanalytical theories about the subconscious to Western interests in our predecessors' cultures, believing, for instance, that there is in us all a Spiritus Mundi¹¹ or a universal

¹¹ The Spiritus Mundi is referred to by W.B. Yeats in his poem, "Easter 1916"

unconscious memory, as Jung put it, that links us, usually regardless of individual race or ethnic background. But in some extreme cases, belief in such a unifying element will allow and even justify prejudices against, subjection of, and extermination of "others." Many modern thinkers clung to the belief that our past is always in our present, defining who we are and will be--something the Sioux also believed.

To make American Indians a part of the onflowing cultural nebula, some, like the Mormons, theorized Indians were the lost Israelite tribe mentioned in the Bible. Most people still fervently believe Indians came from elsewhere, such as over an Ice Age landbridge from eastern Asia. Many modern Americans refused to believe that contemporary Indians were the progeny of "more sophisticated" pre-Columbian civilizations like the Mound Builders or the Anasazi.¹² Many nonIndians refused to believe Indians were people, pointing to "savages" like Geronimo, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse--whose military exploits were made famous by sensation-seeking journalists--for justification.

And what was modern life like for the Sioux, the Oceti Sakowin? The Eastern Sioux, the Dakotas, were already on reservations while the Western Teton Sioux, the Lakotas, still roamed the plains. While the Dakotas tried to become more like EuroAmerican farmers,¹³ war for the Lakotas, until Custer found gold

and is akin to Jung's idea of the Collective Unconscious.

¹² According to David Reed Miller, in a speech Eastman made in January 1907, Eastman denied that Indians ever made arrowheads of flint and that "Mound Builders had ever existed, maintaining that mounds were really battlefields, formed by the accumulation of dirt and sand over time" (64). Miller attributes Eastman's assertions to his increasing anti-intellectualism.

¹³ The Dakota were already a horticultural people, but social roles changed after reservation life began. In Euro-American farming, the men do most of the farming labor, while women tend the houses and small gardens. This gender-based practice was a switch for the Dakotas, whose women were traditionally the horticulturists--plants having been their agricultural mainstay--while the men hunted for the meat.

in the Black Hills, was primarily composed of short skirmishes with few casualties¹⁴ performed to retaliate, to warn encroaching enemies, or to steal horses. Social customs dictated silence and aversions as forms of respect for elders and people of the opposite sex. Storytelling and play, for children as well as adults, were the primary forms of education and entertainment. Feasting and giveaways marked significant occasions, such as births, naming ceremonies, first menses, first kill in the hunt or battle, so that any kind of fortune was shared within the tribal band. The annual Sun Dance marked the peak of the year for large gatherings of bands, wherein participants sometimes gave flesh offerings to Wakan Tanka, the Great Mystery, who was worshipped daily in such mundane acts as giving thanks for a successful kill by acknowledging the animal's spirit and everyone's ties to the web of life with offerings and songs. By the time reservation living was quickly on its way to becoming the enforced norm, the Sioux were looking for avenues, such as the Ghost Dance, to halt the insurgence of EuroAmerican culture into their daily lives.

As the increasing numbers of European immigrants and Eastern EuroAmericans pressed them closer together, creating more frequent contact, many of the plagues that disseminated other tribes began devastating the Oceti Sakowin bands in great numbers, with the earliest recording of such disease in 1818 on the Teton ideographic calendar (Lazarus 12). While there were minor victories over the American military and settler encroachment, such as Red Cloud's successful, if only temporary, closing of the Bozeman Trail, after the discovery of the Black Hill's gold the tide of prosperity for the Sioux shifted. While the Sioux were initially successful cattle ranchers, the General Allotment Act of 1887 (a.k.a.

¹⁴ According to Lazarus, "the Sioux had always considered eight or ten casualties a calamitous loss, and their entire history had never witnessed, or even contemplated, the loss of a whole camp" (23).

the Dawes Act), which ended up giving much of the best Sioux lands to EuroAmerican homesteaders, actually threw the Lakota into a tailspin toward poverty (Welch 82). In such an increasingly constricted, restricted and impoverished way of life, the Ghost Dance, with its promises of a return to traditional times and the elimination of all whites from their land, had its greatest appeal.

The subsequent Massacre at Wounded Knee was the culmination of the violent confrontations between a still ethnocentric and paranoid EuroAmerican culture and a clearly overwhelmed and equally frightened Lakota culture. It was because, as Standing Bear says, "they did not try to understand us and did not consider the fact that though we were different from them, still we were living our destiny according to the plan of the Supreme Dictator of mankind. Being narrow in both mind and spirit, they could see no possible good in us" (LSE 227). Indeed, "who gave the white man the right to *guide* and *supervise* the Indian?" (LSE 246).

But even Indians often were susceptible to ideas of superiority. Black Elk gave up his healing practices because a priest's powers, thus his God, were apparently stronger than Black Elk's own when the priest was able to oust him and his sacred tools from a healing ceremony (DeMallie 14). The founders of the Society of American Indians (SAI), mostly, if not all, mixed bloods, believed "they were the best examples of the heights possible for Indian peoples" (Welch 86), so hoped to convince other Indians, according to their organizational goals, "that any condition of living, habit of thought or racial characteristic that unfits the Indian for modern environment is detrimental and conducive only of individual and racial incompetence" (Welch 85).

The increase in interracial marriages thinned the Sioux strength as well as its blood counts, and promoted factionalism within the tribe, although, as Marla Powers indicates, "the terms 'full blood' and 'mixed blood' are cultural rather than

biological designations" usually, and "are based not on blood quantum but rather on the group a person identifies with socially and culturally" (144). Often, though, Sioux with some EuroAmerican blood were more attracted to American culture at large, and were more often accepting of the belief that traditional ways were of the past, not future, of the Sioux nation. Even full-blooded Lakota found themselves besieged by Christian ideals on their own reservations. By removing children from their parents' influences, usually well-meaning EuroAmericans accomplished what a century of warfare had not--partial, if not complete, acculturation of Sioux children to EuroAmerican lifestyles and beliefs.

It is into this rapidly changing world that our four Sioux writers were born. Each handled being born into the influences of two distinct cultures in decidedly individual ways--reflected primarily through their writings.

Some Literary Concerns

Charles A. Eastman, Gertrude Bonnin, Luther Standing Bear, and Nicholas Black Elk combined Sioux and EuroAmerican literary traditions out of necessity in order to reach the audiences they sought to affect. Each writer did so with varying degrees of success--success measured not only by literary standards, but also by social effectiveness and a lasting effect on both cultures. Ironically, it is *Black Elk Speaks*, a highly collaborative text between a EuroAmerican and a full-blooded Sioux, that is most memorable, and which, arguably, has maintained the longest and broadest impact on the general American psyche. In fact, of all the books written by these four writers, *Black Elk Speaks* has far outsold all the others, selling nearly 130,000 copies since its first publication, compared to Bonnin's *Old Indian Legends*, at nearly 39,000, Standing Bear's *My People the Sioux* at nearly 32,000, and Eastman's *The Soul of the Indian* at nearly 28,000, according to

information provided to me by the University of Nebraska Press in November 1996. *Black Elk Speaks* has decidedly colored our perspectives not only of Sioux Indians in particular, but also of American Indians in general. Yet, as we become increasingly aware of and appreciative of American Indian cultures and their writings, we search back further for earlier influences and try to come to terms with the perspectives about Indians, especially as writers, that many of us, including Indians, hold.

Must a person have inside knowledge pertaining to writers' backgrounds in order to study their written works with any sort of comprehension? A highly debated issue, this idea prevails throughout most American scholarly attempts at examining works written by "Others," with the dominant "Us" perspective still being that of EuroAmericans, since the vast majority of scholars, still, are white. Difference (with a capital D), as Arnold Krupat calls it in his review, "Identity and Difference in the Criticism of Native American Literature," derives from a scholar's "commitment to a definition of [literature] deriving from his own culture, his own historical moment." He cautions, drawing on work by Fredric Jameson, that when we choose to differentiate "the whole density of our own culture" from what we designate as Other or Difference, we ironically eliminate our access to an understanding of the Other and their possible relation to ourselves (3).

For instance, it is a Western assumption that autobiography relates, exclusively, the life of one individual. Most Western readers, according to Brumble in his book, *American Indian Autobiography*, expect autobiographies "to explain just how it was that [the writers] came to be as they are, just who they are, and how they stand in relation to the forces that shaped them" (5). Through this expected exposure, autobiographers should reveal their feelings, thoughts, and actions as completely and honestly as possible. Such baring of the soul is thought

to produce an accurate picture of the individual, something readers can rely on to be true in the sense that it fits comfortably into their realm of believability.

Most literary critics have come upon a dilemma in trying to fit the above concept of autobiography to American Indian autobiographies. The seeming interference of interpreters, stenographers, ghost writers, and editors forces the question of authenticity.¹⁵ Are these Black Elk's words, for instance, or John Neihardt's?¹⁶ If they are Neihardt's words, does that mean the ideas, the sentiments, the symbols and figurative language are his, too? Since Black Elk adopted Neihardt as his nephew, does that mean the book was written by two Sioux?

A much larger question, however, comes about because of perceived cultural differences, often regarded by many scholars as actual, viable barriers between EuroAmerican and Native American worlds. Many believe these barriers must be overcome before an Indian can produce a written text, as though Indians could not understand the concept of writing or had never even used other non-oral forms of communication before EuroAmericans brought the concept of writing to them.¹⁷ In order to even produce a written text means, for many scholars, that the Indian writer has already *assimilated* some Western culture, since writing in script

¹⁵See David Murray's "From Speech to Text: The Making of American Indian Autobiographies." He argues that "appeals to objectivity and authenticity, then, function as an expression of cultural bad conscience before the inescapable authority of the white text" (30).

¹⁶ DeMallie argues quite effectively for the authenticity of *Black Elk Speaks* as Neihardt's faithful translation of Black Elk's message, asserting that "Black Elk recognized in Neihardt a kindred mystic, and he decided to transfer to him the sacred knowledge of the other world that he had learned in the visions of his youth" (xx).

¹⁷Arnold Krupat asserts in his Introduction to *Native American Autobiographies: An Anthology* that the "'graph' part" of autobiography stands, for him, for alphabetic writing, even though he admits "personal exploits might be presented *pictographically*" (emphasis mine) (3).

form--as opposed to pictograph--was not used by most Indians until whites came to America (Brumble AIA16-17 and Murray "Autobiography" 67). If these writers have been at least partially assimilated, are they producing "authentic" Indian texts or hybrid Western ones? And, if indeed they have become part of the dominant culture, how has this affected their perceptions of themselves and how will their subsequent writings affect Western readers' perceptions, since, presumably, an Indian must be at least bicultural (or have access to ways of crossing cultural barriers) in order to communicate with nonIndians?

By the early twentieth century, most readers saw many Native American autobiographers as success stories--individual Indians who overcame their so-called savage and primitive backgrounds to rise to a level, if not equal to, at least a little closer to their own, more highly evolved, EuroAmerican status. The idea of evolutionary status, also known as Social Evolutionism, was a notion popularized at the turn of the century by Herbert Spencer. It affected African-Americans, who were moving en masse to urban areas from the beleaguered South in search of jobs and prosperity. Because so many people held the view that EuroAmericans, or so-called Whites, were more evolved, thus more culturally superior to all other races, they encouraged "others" to want to attain this imaginary status. Many African-American writers would go on to write stories about blacks attempting to "pass" as white, so that ideas of cultural supremacy aided racist views tremendously. And in America one is still supposed to be wholly EuroAmerican to be considered White; any fraction of Other Race in a person, especially that of an eighth or larger, usually makes that individual a member of the Other Race.

Such racism had people of color turning on their own kind. So much so that many Indian writers, such as Charles Eastman--who looked very Indian, but was only partially so by blood--even considered themselves as superior to other Indians in their ability to meet the challenges of Western culture. As H. David

Brumble III put it, Eastman "could compete because he was a member of perhaps the best family of the best tribe of the 'highest type of pagan and uncivilized man'" (AIA158). In other words, Eastman seems to have seen himself, especially at the time he wrote *Indian Boyhood*, as the closest thing to a EuroAmerican his tribe had produced. In fact, the "Biographical Note" which introduces his book, *The Indian To-Day: The Past and Future of the First American*, states that at the time of publication Eastman "is generally recognized as the foremost man of his race to-day" (Eastman ix).

Other scholars focus the discussion on the differences between Indian ways of telling stories (often assumed to have had only *oral traditions*, despite pictographs ranging from sand and tipi paintings to elaborately carved rock art and totem poles)¹⁸ and Western ways of telling stories which presumes, with some exceptions, of course, that writing has risen above and beyond mere oral storytelling to attain that elite status of *literature*.¹⁹ Traditional EuroAmerican views of autobiography, however, see the autobiographical act as an individual writing out his or her own individual story. This philosophy stems from the EuroAmerican, or possibly just the general Western, view that the individual is supreme, valuing independence above cooperation or other social values.

A few scholars, such as Paula Gunn Allen and Mary Stout, have come to realize that, contrary to what many assert, *autobiography* is as common in Indian narrative traditions as any other form of tale-telling. Brumble, in fact, breaks

¹⁸ Colonel Garrick Mallery, a Bureau of American Ethnology scientist, "collected vast amounts of data on sign language, pictographs, and other forms of early Indian writing that would otherwise have disappeared unrecorded" (Hinsley 169).

¹⁹ Even though English literary scholars still study Old English poetry and its oral tradition as a significant part of the English literary tradition, Native American literature rarely receives the same consideration. In fact, many literary scholars fail to acknowledge Native American influences on the American literary tradition.

Indian narratives, including those that could be classified as autobiographical, into six types, asserting that each type is uniquely part of Indian culture. Brumble identifies these Indian narratives as:

1. the coup tales,
2. the less formal and usually more detailed tales of warfare and hunting,
3. the self-examination,
4. the self-vindications,
5. the educational narratives, and
6. the tales of the acquisition of powers. (AIA 22-3)

While Brumble acknowledges Educational Narratives as only those which give examples to listeners on how to behave or not behave, all six types could easily fit into this same category since all six provide examples to the community about the consequences of both action and inaction by the speaker him/herself, and vicariously by her/his listeners.

Hertha Dawn Wong broadens the range of narratives, particularly autobiographies, to include pictographs, which were commonly created and generally read by Plains Indians, who used them "to convey everyday messages--announcements, rosters, personal letters, business and trade transactions, and geographical directions and charts--as well as tribal histories (known as winter counts) and autobiographical narratives" (57). Her chapter discussing pictographs as narratives demonstrates one aspect of a pan-Indian literary tradition.

Similarly, Arnold Krupat claims there are two major Indian autobiographical forms, "the *coup* story on the Plains foremost; [and] accounts of dreams or mystic experiences" ("Synecdochic" 216), although he argues that both forms, especially as oral tales, are essentially revelations of the synecdochic self, purposely revealing the teller's part in the whole community. Because Indian oral

tales were told in public and often performed before or with members of the tribe, Krupat sees the tales as having a "collective effect" (216-7), so that the individual's experiences became part of the whole tribe's experience and lore.

While Paula Gunn Allen stipulates that American Indian literature has only two categories, the ceremonial and the popular (*Sacred Hoop* 72), she argues that the purpose of traditional American Indian literature is never simply pure self-expression....tribes do not celebrate the individual's ability to feel emotion, for they assume that all people are able to do so....the tribes seek--through song, ceremony, legend, sacred stories (myths), and tales--to embody, articulate and share reality, to bring the isolated, private self into harmony and balance with this reality, to verbalize the sense of the majesty and reverent mystery of all things, and to actualize, in language, those truths that give to humanity its greatest significance and dignity. (*Sacred Hoop* 55)

In fact, argues Allen, ceremonial literature redirects and reintegrates the energy of private emotion into "a cosmic framework" (*Sacred Hoop* 55).

By trying so hard to categorize Indian tales, their purpose, and their manner of delivery, most scholars overlook an important correlation between the act of autobiography, whether seen from a Western point of view or from an Indian one, and between traditional Indian storytelling (which is not unlike other traditions of storytelling in many other cultures). Indians shared their stories with others, not just for entertainment purposes, but also for educational and informational purposes. Most scholars and lay storytellers agree that the primary purpose of an oral tradition is to pass on collective knowledge. But most scholars fail to see this quality in autobiography, instead choosing to focus on the concept of self-writing as the revelation of the individual, not the sharing of individual experiences with a larger community for a possible greater good or deeper

understanding of life in general, even though most other literary forms have been traditionally discussed in the terms of how the particular work illustrates universal, or at least common amongst humanity, concepts.

Arguably, some autobiographers reveal their own personal lives for exhibitionist purposes, such as to flaunt who they know and to highlight aggrandized feats. But such exhibitionism is as much of an attempt to produce verification of the individual's self-worth (or lack of it) as does any Indian's coup tale, war tale, or what Brumble calls self-examination or self-vindication tales (AIA 42).

Many scholars point to the fact that Indian autobiographers, especially those in collaboration with a white amanuensis (or interrogator, depending on your view), often reveal information about subjects considered *taboo* by many Indians, such as talking about or speaking the names of the dead (Murray "Autobiography" 70 and Brumble AIA 10). But one of the most titillating elements about Western autobiography has been the revelation of the unspeakable or unpardonable acts, the writings of which have always been seen as daring or, as in the case of Christian conversion stories and Indian self-examination tales, seen as proof of sin or wrongdoing to make redemption even more important in the author's life, or to make clear why particular tribal medicine failed to work to prevent tragedy (Brumble, AIA 42).

Some scholars point toward autobiographies which purport--usually unbelievably, once the text has been read--that the individual writing the story is unique, thus his story is worth hearing.²⁰ This Western ideal, aggrandizing the individual's importance, parallels the importance of the hero, like a messiah or a

²⁰ See Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Confessions* (1770), considered to be the first nonreligious autobiography, in which the author modestly states, "I am made unlike any one I have ever met."

fairy godmother, whose very strength of individual character provides an example to the world, thus possibly saving it from its own weaknesses.

Yet, Krupat's native mystic experience tales also reveal strikingly individual experiences which verify for the teller his/her abilities to perform medicine. As Brumble puts it, the "*telling* about [a] quest for powers is a culturally sanctioned means of setting forth [one's] credentials." Establishing that the individual conducting the ceremony is deserving of such recognition and responsibility is important to many traditional Indian cultures because the fate of the people involved relies on the individual's ability to perform the ritual correctly. For Brumble, shaman stories are the only Indian tales that closely resemble Western autobiographies (AIA 45), even though "such narratives were designed to call forth [feelings of awe and empathy] in those societies where courage, endurance, and self-sacrifice were essential attributes in warriors and leaders" (AIA 44).

So, while many scholars try to understand Indian autobiography by Difference, they tend to overlook their similarities, sanctioning everything that is part of the Indian experience, which they ironically assume is uniform, as totally alien to that of the EuroAmerican experience.²¹ Some scholars waver back and forth in their convictions about the extent of Difference (to the point of seeing Indians as alien) in Indian and nonIndian cultures. Arnold Krupat in "Identity and Difference in the Criticism of Native American Literature" argues vehemently against seeing the two cultures as radically different, yet argues in "Monologue and Dialogue in Native American Autobiography" that Indians must suppress their "native" community-oriented storytelling techniques to write a "text as given by

²¹There are exceptions, however, such as Albert E. Stone's essay, "Collaboration in Contemporary American Autobiography," discusses how autobiographical collaboration, especially between two people of different cultures, can create "the most trustworthy--and often the most moving and culturally revealing--accounts" (154).

the dominant Euramerican culture" (134). He goes further to assume in "Native American Autobiography and the Synecdochic Self" that oral storytelling "always assumes a present listener, as opposed to writing, where the audience is absent to the author, the author absent to the audience" (217)--ignoring the fact that one writes for an imagined audience and that what many readers enjoy about reading works, from the popular story to the critical essay, is forming a mental picture of the author. Hence, he assumes the mere physical presence of an audience (as in traditional Indian storytelling) creates more community oriented tales, whereas the absence of a physical audience in writing eliminates the idea of sharing with a community (thus the stories supposedly become more Westernly self-centered in nature).

While autobiographies are, perhaps, even more popular today than they were at the beginning of the century, some scholars, such as A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, assert that the popularity of Indian personal narratives, and other writings, of this time period "was the result of the great interest in the lives of the 'vanishing Americans'" (AIL 53). David Murray agrees, pointing out that "the marketability of Indians--their fascination--lay both in the sensationalism of accounts of inscrutable savagery *and* in the idea of nobility (albeit simple) doomed to destruction" ("From Speech to Text" 32). Brumble, tying the idea of the seemingly imminent disappearance of Indians to Spencerian ideas of Social Evolution's effects on Americans, asserts that most Americans felt "the tribes must vanish as social institutions, for it was the tribe that kept individual Indians from achieving all...[they could] as individuals, away from their tribes" (AIA 153). These kinds of negative attitudes toward their native lifestyles prompted Indian writers, such as Charles Eastman, Gertrude Bonnin, Luther Standing Bear, and Black Elk, to communicate the stories of their lives to the larger EuroAmerican public. How else could they hope to stop such racism or at least to create what

many saw as a final monument to the culture from which they came and which seemed to be undoubtedly vanishing? Or, as Standing Bear pointed out, "America can be revived, rejuvenated, by recognizing a native school of thought. The Indian can save America" (LSE 255).

The Sioux as Examples to the World

In analyzing four specific writers' works from the same Indian nation, I will examine how racial elitism and white Americans' insistence that American Indians fully assimilate into Western ways of thinking and living affected the writers' perceptions of their own lives, such as Zitkala-Sa's rebellion against acculturation, Standing Bear and Eastman's initial acceptance and later rejection of it, and Black Elk's sense of guilt for not having shared his vision with EuroAmericans earlier. I will also examine how cultural pressures from both sides ultimately affected the writers and their choices of textual forms and contents, going beyond the typical studies of Indian literature of the Transitional period, which tend to focus solely on autobiography, to examine literary qualities, both Sioux and EuroAmerican, of the autobiographical, anthropological, and fictional works. All four Transitional Indians lived at a time when more EuroAmericans began to see Indians as human beings, potential citizens, as Elaine Goodale Eastman and others like her saw them, and more Indians began seeing value in adopting aspects of EuroAmerican culture. One of the obvious values these four Sioux adopted was a belief in the potential power of the written word.

The chapter on Charles Alexander Eastman examines his influences on other Indian writers, and his choices in combining Sioux and EuroAmerican literary traditions in his books. If there is a theme to Eastman's life, it is that his

approach to living is modeled on being the Dakota brave he trained to be, with his warpath, on which his father sent him, being one of accommodation and survival in another culture. Instead of being submissive in his acceptance of EuroAmerican culture, he adopts useful aspects of it with a vengeance, embracing his "Christ ideal" as an operant form of Christianity which is complementary to his Dakota ideals. By combining comparative elements, such as Christian imagery and legendary Sioux figures, Eastman becomes one of the first Indian writers to successfully create a literary Modernist text. Several of his stories are examined in light of Modernist contexts, revealing his sophisticated use of collage and parody.

The chapter over Gertrude Bonnin as writer Zitkala-Sa examines her writings in a Modernist context, as well. Parallel to Eastman's quest to live modern life as a Sioux warrior should, Bonnin fulfills her feminine Dakota role by seeking to pass on her Dakota heritage. Despite the brevity of her writing career, Bonnin exhibits sophisticated use of Sioux symbolism and mythology, combined with Western mythology, to create passionate stories reflecting her political and social concerns for Indians.

Luther Standing Bear's chapter discusses his need to establish his authority as a Lakota chief. Because his writings are less sophisticated in their literary qualities, they reflect more clearly operant Sioux literary traditions, although they still combine Sioux and EuroAmerican literary elements. Like Eastman, Standing Bear feels compelled to live up to his Sioux role, in his case, that of chief. Through indirection and asserted credibility, two Sioux literary devices, Standing Bear uses his four books to live out his chiefly role in his attempts to lead the Lakota and nonIndians to an understanding of the value of traditional Lakota culture and to preserve that culture for future generations.

Because *Black Elk Speaks* is one of the most popular and most discussed books written by a Transitional Sioux, the chapter over Nicholas Black Elk focuses

mainly on the controversies surrounding the text, while attempting to validate the book as a *literary* text that Black Elk chose to compose. In choosing John G. Neihardt as his collaborator on the book, Black Elk made a conscious decision to allow EuroAmerican literary traditions to be reflected in the text. Yet the Sioux literary traditions, which Black Elk exercised in reciting his story to Neihardt, are so strong that not even Neihardt's intense EuroAmerican literary training can greatly alter them. In creating the text with both Sioux and EuroAmerican literary techniques, Black Elk accentuates the collage effect begun by Eastman, creating a vivid, and highly important, Modernist literary text. In the process, Black Elk's work demonstrates that a writer does not have to speak English to have an impact on American literature.

Perhaps other scholars doubt that a Sioux Literary Renaissance happened at all, a concern the last chapter deals with in some depth, as well as discussing possible future explorations of this particular literary renaissance. Instead of using the concepts of having to move from a time of "Dark Ages" wherein little or nothing creatively hopeful happens into a period of "Renaissance" wherein a seemingly sudden intellectual spark ignites a wave of creativity as the definition for Renaissance, I adhere to the word's literal translation as a Rebirth. The Sioux Literary Renaissance is a rebirth in two senses. First, most Moderns believed traditional Sioux life was dying, would vanish from the earth forever, so that many of the Transitional Sioux writers began writing in order to preserve that life, in essence, giving it a new form of life. Second, the new birth comes from the hybridization of two literary traditions. The coupling of Sioux and EuroAmerican literary traditions created a new literary tradition which eventually gave birth to Kenneth Lincoln's now famous treatise on the pan-Indian *Native American Renaissance*. I do not believe there was ever a dearth of literary events, whether storytelling, singing, or chanting, within the Sioux nation, although there were few

recorded events in traditional life before 1890, except in memories, which both Eastman and Standing Bear refer to as the Sioux form of libraries.

As Sioux, the native culture often seen as the last stronghold against EuroAmerican insurgence, they were profoundly affected physically by shrinking hunting grounds and buffalo numbers, by subsequent laws prohibiting intertribal skirmishes, by being forced to rely on often irregular government subsistence, as well as spiritually by confinement to reservations, the devastating massacre at Wounded Knee, and the suppression of various Indian religious ceremonies--around which their culture focused--and even socially and economically by the enactment of the Dawes Act, by increasing pressures for Indians to be educated in EuroAmerican ways, and by experiments in changing Indian names to ones more palatable to the EuroAmerican legal system. All of these changes created factionalism among the various members of the Sioux nation, especially between what has since been called the Progressives, who see assimilation or adaptation as the way to survive, and the Traditionals, who want to maintain traditional cultural values and lifestyles. I will also examine how each individual writer faced and dealt with her/his own experiences in this profoundly important transitional period, wherein they came to see themselves not only as individuals, but also as modern American Indian citizens and modern American Indian writers.

Because Indians' perceptions of themselves underwent forceful pressure from the dominating EuroAmerican culture, I will also examine how the writings--including retold legends, fiction, and autobiographical works--by these four Sioux not only anticipated contemporary audience views, which dictated how the works anticipated nonIndian audiences, and helped to project impressions of Indians still prominently accepted today, but also successfully utilized both Sioux and EuroAmerican literary traditions in ways not unlike the currently recognized literary Modernists. In fact, I will argue, it is important to recognize and value the

work these four writers, and other of their Sioux contemporaries, accomplished, noting the probability of a phenomenon we can call the Sioux Literary Renaissance.

This dissertation is just the beginning.

CHAPTER TWO

"This life was mine": Charles Eastman as *Ohiyesa*, the Winner

For decades now, scholars have seen Charles Alexander Eastman as one of the foremost examples of Native American writers in this century. Interestingly, many scholars ignore or are ignorant of particular facts. Many in their attempts to justify their views overlook his complex heritage, and the contributions preceding and contemporary Indian and nonIndian writers made to his work. Eastman's autobiography, *Indian Boyhood*, is often held up as *the* influential autobiography which set other Indian writers to work putting down their own life stories. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff asserts, for instance, that "Eastman's autobiographies inspired other Sioux writers, such as Luther Standing Bear and Zitkala-Sa, to write their personal narratives" (AIL 57). While Ruoff could be correct in specifying that Eastman influenced later Sioux writers,¹ she overlooks other pre-Eastman Indian personal narratives, many of which are not unlike Eastman's autobiographies. For instance, Arnold Krupat, arguably one of the more thorough and more vehemently outspoken American Indian autobiography scholars, points out in his recent work, *Native American Autobiography*, that "the earliest Native American autobiography...is...by the Reverend Samson Occom, A Mohegan, who

¹ It is debatable that Eastman influenced Gertrude Bonnin (*Zitkala-Sa*), eighteen years his junior, since she was already a noted orator and writer when Eastman began writing. While both began publishing their essays at roughly the same time (see the dateline in Appendix A), it is possible Bonnin read Eastman's essays in *St. Nicholas* and *Popular Science Monthly* before penning her own.

produced a short narrative of his life in 1768," although it was not published until 1982.² However, "the first extended autobiography by an Indian to attract a relatively wide readership" was by a Pequot, Methodist minister, Reverend William Apess, in 1829. The book examines "the christianized Indian's relation to Euramerican (sic) religion that thematically dominates the early period of autobiographies by Indians" (Krupat 5).

In essence, Apess--and his literary progeny³--set the standard for Eastman to follow. Perhaps, though, Spencer's Social Evolutionism, which was a well known and strongly believed notion at the beginning of Eastman's popularity,⁴ simply would not allow Eastman to be known as anything less than the best of his kind, who were, in his own words, "the highest type of pagan and uncivilized man" (IB preface). He has become, then, to many scholars, the quintessential turn-of-the-century Indian, conveying for scholars and general readers alike a particularly safe and identifiable version of the assimilated Indian.

Eastman is certainly one of the most important Sioux writers of the Transitional Era, and is arguably the writer who began the tremendous surge of publishing which marks the Sioux Literary Renaissance. Setting out as a writer to imprint a legacy for his children by conveying his lifestory to them, Eastman ends up being one of the most Modernist Indian writers. He is forced, through the educational systems he encounters, to move away from his traditional Dakota past,

² Eastman mentions "that great Indian, Samson Occum" in *From the Deep Woods* (65). Krupat also points out that "the first-person life history [was] only recently, in 1808, named autobiography by the British poet Robert Southey" (NAA 5).

³ See H. David Brumble III's *Annotated Bibliography of American Indian and Eskimo Autobiographies* for a fairly complete listing of Indian autobiographies ever published in the United States, up to the bibliography's publication date, 1981.

⁴ See Curtis Hinsley's book on how Social Evolutionism not only affected anthropological and ethnographical studies at the Smithsonian, but also Americans in general.

altering or abandoning many of its beliefs and customs to fit his new life, and spends the remainder of his life trying to maintain a balance between that past and his modern life based primarily on EuroAmerican values and customs. This balance appears in his writing cloaked in both traditional Sioux symbols, legends, and traditional Dakota literary techniques, as well as EuroAmerican literary conventions and Christian beliefs. To create such a balance, he must experiment with the traditional autobiographical forms (both Dakota and EuroAmerican), parody anthropological forms, and introduce Sioux literary traditions to his mainly EuroAmerican audience, proving once and for all that EuroAmericans are not the only people who can eloquently use narration and writing, showing, in effect, there is no such thing as "white writing" (Murray 80). To be one of the first Indians to accomplish these literary goals required uncommon circumstances for the turn of the century.

**The Brave Thing to Do: Following the Warpath
of Assimilation and Acculturation
to Create a New Literary Form**

To many people, to do something one fears most is a sign of bravery. Leaving the comfort of family and tribe as they went off to boarding school became a test of bravery for many American Indian children of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ohiyesa, young Charles Eastman, felt that leaving his family and tribe was a test of his courage. His faith in his father, in other people, and in his spirituality were all tested when he allowed, first, his father, then the people he studied under at various schools to change his appearance, his lifestyle, his language, and his religion. When he set off for boarding school, he did so as a Dakota brave, prepared to face death on this warpath, if he had to (DWC 32).

Eastman left the Santee Dakota people, whom he had known since his birth in 1858, several years before the Ghost Dance religion (1888-1891) swept through numerous western and northern plains tribes. In fact, he left for boarding school when

Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were still at large, harassing soldiers and emigrants alike, and General Custer had just been placed in military command of the Dakota Territory. (DWC 30)

His father, originally Many Lightnings, who became Jacob Eastman after converting to Christianity, taking his dead wife's surname as his own (Wilson 16), first persuaded Ohiyesa to try acculturation by speaking to him in terms a young warrior would understand and embrace: only the brave would succeed in the white man's world; those who did not try would be as doomed as the traditional Indians' ways of living surely were (Wilson 20-2).

Something not frequently examined is Eastman's father's conversion and subsequent steps toward acculturation, without which Eastman himself might never have changed. It is probable that Many Lightnings, during his isolation from his family and tribe as he served a prison sentence for his participation in the Minnesota Uprising of 1862, was more easily converted to Christianity because of the separation from his cultural support group. Such cultural separation and isolation would be practiced by Indian educators for decades, who often forcibly removing children from their families and tribes in order to more readily have them accept EuroAmerican standards for living. Eastman notes that "it was because of [Jacob's] meditations during those four years in a military prison that he had severed himself from his tribe and taken up a homestead.... [declaring] he would never join in another Indian outbreak, but would work with his hands for the rest of his life" (DWC 15).

While such a separation did not affect every Indian ever imprisoned, it probably affected many. His own separation from his tribe, coupled with the Sioux belief in stoic bravery while facing an enemy and their deep respect for the wisdom of elders--especially parents--probably quickened Charles' own acculturation. Eastman would have also seen this type of separation when he encouraged Indians to educate their children at boarding schools and when he embraced the principles behind the Dawes Act, which hoped to encourage individualism--that ever pervasive and often socially destructive American ideal--by forcing nuclear families, a clearly EuroAmerican concept of the family unit, to separate from the nearby support of their kin, thus severing tribalism. Eastman, by this time immersed in what he saw as American ideals, failed to see an age-old war tactic--divide and conquer.

Early on, Ohiyesa had been encouraged to think of himself as a member of the best family of the best tribe of the best Indians. Even before Spencerian social applications of evolution became familiar to Indians, such a belief was not extraordinary for many Sioux. The stories by Eastman, Gertrude Bonnin, Luther Standing Bear, and Nicholas Black Elk, as well as those by Ella Deloria and Marie McLaughlin, corroborate the fact that, to the Oceti Sakowin, being the best possible person at a given task was all the honor one should seek. For instance, an Oyate warrior with an excellent fighting reputation honored the enemies who confronted him, as well as honored the people he protected. Eastman, naturally then, set his goals on becoming the best Dakota brave he could by becoming the best acculturated and assimilated Indian within the dominating white culture--the brave path, as he saw it, he chose to travel.

While rarely ever critical of the process of his EuroAmerican education or of the method by which he adopted aspects of Euro-American lifestyle, Eastman himself admitted that "perhaps my earlier training had been too Puritanical" (DWC

73), referring to the fact that his conversion to Christianity was by accepting a very conservative form of Protestantism, which affected his perspective ever after (Stensland 199). Born three-quarters Sioux, one-quarter EuroAmerican,⁵ Eastman's first 15 years, as chronicled in his first booklength autobiography, *Indian Boyhood*, were spent under the tutelage of his paternal grandmother, *Uncheedah*, "the woman who taught [him] to pray" (DWC 32). Uncheedah fully intended to raise little *Hakadah*--Eastman's birth name--as a Sioux warrior fit to revenge what everyone in the tribe thought was his father's death for his participation in the Sioux Uprising of 1862 (IB 18 & Wilson 15).

Miraculously, his father returned, as from the dead, desiring to have his son accept the EuroAmerican way of life, especially in converting to Christianity and in seeking education in white schools. Because of his father's surprising "resurrection," Eastman was probably awed by the power of the Christian god, now worshipped by his father, which seemingly possessed the *wakan* power of returning the dead to life. As David Murray points out, Eastman uses his father "to represent a rupture rather than a continuity but a rupture which is the creation of his new self, a scene repeated as the end of one book and the beginning of the next" (80). Just as Christ is the separation figure between the Old and New Testaments, between the unfortunate sinfulness of humanity and salvation, Many Lightnings ruptures the pattern of Eastman's life, sending him down a new path. Resurrected with his father are Eastman's Dakota sense of kinship and progenical

⁵ Eastman's father, Many Lightnings (*Ite Wakanhdi Ota*), fooled Mary Nancy Eastman (*Wakantankamwin* or Goddess) into eloping with him. Mary Nancy died from complications, shortly after giving birth to Eastman (b. *Hakadah* or the Pitiful Last) in February 1858. Mary Nancy was the daughter of Captain Seth Eastman, a topographical engineer at Fort Snelling, and Stands Sacred (*Wakan inajin win*), daughter of Chief Cloud Man (*Mahpiya Wichasta*, who established Eatonville, Minnesota, and was one of the earliest supporters of assimilation, believing in the superiority of white civilization until he died) (Wilson, *Ohivesa*, 11-13).

obligation, yet instead of slaying his father's murderers, he will be learning the ways of his father's "saviors."

Significantly, however, Eastman knew himself as a child without biological parents--a "motherless child," as he called himself--for over ten years of his formative life. While his uncle and grandmother were his closest "parental" roles in the traditional Dakota ways of childrearing, the idea of being an orphan would have probably been completely foreign to him, although the idea that he was motherless was impressed on him at a very young age, since his birth name, Hakadah, means Pitiful Last. Yet, later, as an acculturated and Christianized Sioux he would have come to know the EuroAmerican concepts of family, including what it means to be "orphaned." His early experiences, he would have come to learn, were as an orphan whose savior father returned and sent him down a new path, commissioning him to be a kind of savior for his people, a theme reflected repeatedly in his writings. As Anna Lee Stensland points out, "the poor, unpromising orphan boy who becomes the savior of his tribe or the recipient of the stories of the tribe is a common characteristic in the Indian myths of many tribes" (203). At least two Oceti Sakowin mythical characters are such orphans--Little Boy Man and Stone Boy, both of whom withstand natural and supernatural elements to save people they love (Stensland 203). Together, Eastman's two most autobiographical works, *Indian Boyhood* and *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, reflect the essences of these mythical boys and their sacred quests in Eastman's patterning of his own life story.

Eastman's father was influential in Ohiyesa's life, not only as the sagacious, almost *wakan*, elder, but also in his appreciation for things EuroAmerican. Jacob seems to have instilled in Eastman respect for the awe-inspiring ability of "the white man...to preserve on paper the things he does not want to forget" (DWC 28). This idea of preservation returned to Ohiyesa when he began to pen his

recollections of his childhood for his children. He realized as an adult what the fifteen year old, who had asked, "Why do we need a sign language, when we can both hear and talk?" (DWC 17), could not foresee--to *preserve* a culture, one must preserve its defining parts, such as its traditions, its beliefs, and its lore. Eastman set out to save his people, his primary culture, at least on paper. He felt that "if his White readers could only understand the beauty and truth of the Indian way of life and learn to emulate the quality of truth found in it, a higher, more sensitive morality would eventually prevail in the larger American society" (Miller 64).

Perhaps this same sense of the need to preserve the valuable aspects of traditional Indian life and to educate EuroAmericans about that value is what also motivated him to accept a commission later in 1910 "to search out and purchase rare curios and ethnological specimens for one of the most important collections in the country" (DWC 166), one job to which not even his biographer, Raymond Wilson, refers. According to David Reed Miller, Eastman was paid by "the University of Pennsylvania Museum to conduct several months of fieldwork collecting folklore texts and museum artifacts" (63). Not the first time he would be shortsighted--a human failing, after all--in what was best for Native Americans, Eastman details out how he procured many sacred items from various tribes by means of "indirection" (DWC 166). Utilizing his knowledge of other native cultures, which he picked up as a child, to his advantage, he was even able to obtain an Ojibway Sugar Point band sacred war club--a club so important to the Sugar Point band that they attributed to it all their success in war and to their safety from the encroachment of white civilization (DWC 171). It is possible that, as David Murray points out, "Eastman seems here to play the exploitative white with no awareness of the irony of his position" ("Autobiography" 78). Perhaps, as the anti-white youth he had once been, he would have noted the significance of

removing sacred artifacts from their owners, but as his mostly Puritanized adult self he only lauds his own cunning, a kind of cunning he might have used on enemies on the war path.

For some, this casual acquisition might be an indication of the degree to which Eastman acculturated and assimilated Euro-American culture and values. But, since the Ojibway were traditional enemies of the Santee Sioux, since Eastman's religious views had shifted to embrace the "Christ ideal," and since Eastman believed there was no stopping the invasion of white people and values into Indian life, he probably had no second thoughts about acquiring artifacts--even sacred ones--for private museum ownership. The artifacts and legends he collected were for a higher purpose--preservation; they are relics, tokens of the free past that was. And, just possibly, spoils of war for a worthy warrior.

Before Jacob sent young Charles on his journey to the Santee Training School in Nebraska, he told Charles it was as though he was sending the young man on his "first war-path" (DWC 32), a path so important for a young Sioux, based on how well he performed, that it could determine the outcome of the rest of his life. On this first trip to Santee, Eastman was tempted several times to either return to his new home with his father or to his old home with his uncle in Canada. While he longed to return to his devoted grandmother's care, he remembers his father's parting sentiments "that if [Eastman] did not return, [Jacob] would shed proud tears"--tears for a warrior who died meeting the foe head on (DWC 34).

The image of himself as a civilized warrior, one who accepted, as he called it, the "Christ ideal," yet maintained the pursuit of preserving his Indian identity amidst the savagery of civilization, was how Eastman would primarily see himself for the rest of his life. Like many modern, EuroAmerican educated Indians, he desired to be known as an example for other Indians to follow, as well as for nonIndians to make note of. For most scholars, the fact that Eastman seemed

either never able to wholly choose between the two cultures, Indian or Euro-American, or, at least, never wanted to choose one completely over the other has made him appear to be a man in constant conflict with himself. Many scholars, in fact, focus a great deal on this seeming inability to decide once and for all *what* he was;⁶ some critics go so far as to overlook Eastman's EuroAmerican blood and subsequent heritage altogether, as is often done with people of mixed blood in America.

More importantly, Eastman himself often negates the idea that he was a genetic product, as well as a cultural one, of both cultures. He never fully acknowledges, for instance, that his mother was a halfbreed, instead calling her "the handsomest woman of all the Spirit Lake and Leaf Dweller Sioux" (IB 4) whose features, he had been told, "had every feature of a Caucasian descent with the exception of her luxuriant black hair and deep black eyes" (IB 5). He hints to his readers that she is of "Caucasian descent," but leaves the possibility also open that, while she was Indian, she *looked* white, possibly raising her value to his Euro-American readers.

Eastman seemed to accept this hierarchical view of himself. The Foreword to his first memoir *Indian Boyhood* calls North American Indians "the highest type

⁶ Wilson, for instance, indicates that Eastman "struggled for his own identity" while he became "an acculturated Sioux rather than an assimilated one" (36). Later, however, Wilson acknowledges Eastman's quest for a hybridization of cultures:

There is little doubt that Eastman believed Indians should adopt white ways; however, he did not favor total rejection of past customs and traditions. He supported many of the old customs but realized that Indians were doomed if they clung to the past and did not alter their ways. As a subjugated people, Indians had to acquire the more advanced aspects of white civilization to survive and then to compete in white society. (145)

What Wilson does not make clear is what exactly the "more advanced aspects" are that Indians should acquire.

of pagan and uncivilized man," and says they "possessed not only a superb physique but a remarkable mind" as well. By implication, since this book contains the stories of one of those Indians who lived a "thrilling wild life," Eastman is also telling us that he is a sample of those human beings with superb physiques and remarkable minds.

Eastman extends the social evolutionary hierarchy to an analysis of Indian spirituality, clearly showing himself as having become elevated in the process of his conversion to Christianity. In *Indian Boyhood*, his spiritual yearning to please the Great Mystery is seen through critical eyes as a pagan mythology, especially since Eastman himself repeatedly calls it superstition,⁷ such as in his descriptions of the Bear Dance (IB 169-177). He even refers to Uncheeda as a "superstitious old woman" (DWC 24). Yet many scholars overlook Eastman's underlying desire to believe in the workings of the Great Mystery, such as is illustrated in his comparison of native worship of *Wakan Tanka* to Christianity and in his condemnation of many Christians' superficial attitudes in *The Soul of the Indian*. His need to understand and appease his people's religion is repeated several times in *Indian Boyhood*, with Eastman going so far as to point out times when Sioux prophecies have come true (IB 177 & 253). Although Anna Lee Stensland expresses concern that Eastman's conversion to Christianity and his acculturation of many EuroAmerican values colors Eastman's telling of his stories, especially the traditional Dakota myths (207), Erik Peterson cautions us not to assume that just because Eastman left his tribe and adopted Christianity that he somehow became less Indian (174).

⁷ It is difficult to determine Eastman's exact definition of "superstition" since it was often used, according to the publishers of Ella Cara Deloria's *Waterlily*, to mean "common belief" even up to the time Deloria wrote her novel, approximately 1944 (xi).

Martha Lynn Viehmann attempts to balance such viewpoints when she argues that "while acknowledging the pain of the loss of the old freedom and independence and while honoring many of the values embedded in that way of life, Charles Eastman...also embraces the possibility of change, of transformation of life 'from the deep woods to civilization' without total loss" (79), even though she later asserts that the occasion when Eastman appeared dressed in his native clothing he is merely responding "to intense pressure to appear as an Indian. By putting on the 'garb of honor' of his tribe, Charles Eastman also puts on a mask" (103). But was putting on Indian attire any more of a masking of who Eastman was than his donning EuroAmerican clothing? Why should Eastman's acceptance of some aspects of Christianity be any more superficial, or any less real, than his belief in *Wakan Tanka*?

Eastman, in fact, equates the Sioux beliefs with Christian ideals in a positive way repeatedly in *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, even though he points out near the end that

From the time I first accepted the Christ ideal it has grown upon me steadily, but I also see more and more plainly our modern divergence from that ideal. I confess I have wondered much that Christianity is not practised by the very people who vouch for that wonderful conception of exemplary living. It appears that they are anxious to pass on their religion to all races of men, but keep very little of it themselves. (193)

His conflicting point of view--attracted to the ideal, but repulsed by those who fail to practice what they preach--complements those voiced by writers of the High Modernist movement, such as T.S. Eliot, whose epic poem *The Waste Land* has come to symbolize the failure of modern morality. While this skeptical view alone

does not necessarily make Eastman a Modernist, many of his texts point up the conflict between religious practice and belief repeatedly.

Eastman argues that working EuroAmerican concepts of Christianity rely on seeking large numbers of converts rather than enhancing individual religious experiences, so that its followers are weaker practitioners of spiritual ideals, ideals which are similar to those with which he was raised (DWC 141). He devotes a whole chapter, "Civilization as Preached and Practiced" in *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* to comparing Indian concepts of spirituality and religious reverence with EuroAmerican ones, lauding the parallel concepts, while admonishing Christian hypocrites: "My effort was to make the Indian feel that Christianity is not at fault for the white man's sins, but rather the lack of it" (DWC 149). Had EuroAmericans practiced what they preached, they would have taken the time to understand Indian cultures instead of degrading them simply to justify attempts to annihilate or subjugate Indians in order to justify acquisition of their lands. Christianity, as Manifest Destiny, was a misused and twisted conception of the spirituality of the "Christ ideal," as Eastman saw it.

In the "Civilization as Preached and Practiced" chapter, the story that seems to best symbolize Eastman's views on Indian spirituality and Christianity as a cultural practice is one he relates about his visit to a small Sac and Fox tribe in Iowa. After being eloquently admonished by an old chief for trying to convert his people, Eastman notes that he

was even more impressed a few minutes later, when one of his people handed [him his] pocket book containing [his] railway tickets and a considerable sum of money. [He] had not even missed it! [He] said to the state missionary who was at [his] side, 'Better let these Indians alone! If I had lost my money in

the streets of your Christian city, I should probably have never seen it again!' (DWC 149)

In many ways, his indictment of white Christians who fail to practice Christ's ideals clarifies not only Eastman's view of American society, but also his view of himself within both Indian and Euro-American cultures, especially when contrasted with a quotation he relates from an older man who participated in a Bible study group:

'I have come to the conclusion that this Jesus was an Indian. He was opposed to material acquirement and to great possessions. He was inclined to peace. He was as unpractical as any Indian and set no price upon his labor of love. These are not the principles upon which the white man has founded his civilization. It is strange that he could not rise to these simple principles which were commonly observed among our people.' (DWC 143)

Clearly, Indian values, when compared to similar Christian ones, are superior because Indians, in Eastman's view, practice, even without knowing them, Christ's ideals. If Christ, the primary focus of modern Western culture through Christianity, can be an Indian in practice, then Indians can be the better Christians. Since similar values are found in both religions, Eastman seems to stress, why not take the best from both?

Originally, Eastman hoped to use his Euro-American education to help Indians, what he and others often, and usually without question, called his people.⁸ One reason he chose to become a physician was because it seemed one of the best

⁸ It is another racial bias to insist on categorizing people by race when they are of more than one race. Eastman, himself, varies in his references to both Indians and EuroAmericans, sometimes calling them "they" and sometimes including himself in either race's numbers by referencing them as "us" or "our." Critics, confused and/or frustrated by his inconsistency, simplify the dilemma by exaggerating Eastman's inability to be wholly Euro-American or wholly Indian.

capacities in which he could serve his people. At first, there seemed no limit to his wish to use his medical training to aid Indians, but halfway through *From the Deep Woods* a limit appears. He tells us, "I had laid my plans carefully, and purposed to serve my race *for a few years* in my profession, after which I would go to some city to practice" (emphasis mine) (86). Thus native generosity temporarily takes the foreground, only to be followed by the EuroAmerican desire for *private* medical practice. Yet native virtues such as generosity never leave Eastman, even if they seem tainted by EuroAmerican desires, such as Eastman's quest for more and more money to support his growing family.

In *From the Deep Woods*, Eastman asked himself what the differences were between Euro-Americans and Indians. Along with other founding members of the Society for American Indians, he believed EuroAmerican keeps "the old things and continually adds to them new improvements," while Indians are "too well contented with the old" (FDW 64). What started as a war path for Eastman becomes a religious pilgrimage. He becomes a composite, the flesh equivalent of Beloit College, which "cover[s] the site of an ancient village of mound-builders, ...show[ing] to great advantage...the neat campus, where the green grass was evenly cut with lawn mowers" (DWC 52). He seems to build his understanding of civilization from a base of native sensibility, which he sees as inherent in the "Christ ideal," upon which he couples his strategies from both Indian and Euro-American frameworks. It is important to realize that neither culture would ever fully satisfy the adult Eastman.

While some scholars are quick to label writers of different races as Different in their approaches to self-writing,⁹ few examine similarities to the extent

⁹ Krupat nicely slices the racial pie thus: "Whereas the modern West has tended to define personal identity as involving the successful mediation of an opposition between the individual and society, Native Americans have instead tended to

that fully explains why a writer like Eastman can bridge two cultures to *his own* satisfaction. Some, in fact, refuse to believe that Eastman was capable of writing his autobiographies in the manner they were written, crediting his wife, Elaine Goodale Eastman with getting his works printed.¹⁰ Hertha Dawn Wong, in fact, nearly equates Elaine with Neihardt, Black Elk's collaborator, although she steps back from such a bold assertion after she hints at it. Like Wong, many assume Elaine was "the force guiding [Eastman's] work into print" (*Sending My Heart* 141), or at least "his principal editor" (Wilson 131), since Eastman did not publish any of his writings after their separation (Ruoff, "Introduction" xii). Such scholars overlook other possibilities for Eastman's lack of publication after his separation from Elaine. Eastman, significantly, lost someone readily available to type up his work. The cessation of Eastman's publishing could be attributed to the mere fact that many of his publishing contacts, people who possibly chose to remain loyal to Elaine in sympathy to the trauma she experienced from their separation, were hers to begin with. As David Reed Miller points out in a footnote, among Elaine's papers housed at Smith College, "ironically Charles's name is conspicuously absent" (70 n3). Why would she take such pains to remove his name, especially if they did, indeed, collaborate on all his works? If Elaine had been such a close collaborator with Charles, why are most of the works she publishes after his death completely unrelated, or only indirectly related, to the Sioux?

define themselves as persons by successfully integrating themselves into the relevant social groupings--kin, clan, band, etc.--of their respective societies.... These conceptions of the self may be viewed as 'synecdochic,' i.e., based on part-to-whole relations, rather than 'metonymic,' i.e., as in the part-to-part relations that most frequently dominate Euramerican autobiography" (NAA 4).

¹⁰ I cannot use the word "published" here because recent scholarship on writing and publishing argues that even giving a speech or telling a story publicly is a form of publication. It is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain if Elaine ever helped Eastman write his speeches.

Regardless of the lack of hard evidence, Wong, like others, also sees Elaine's influence in the educational messages of Ohiyesa's works (141), and in the fact that many of his descriptions of Indian life read as though written by an observer, not a participant (143). Ruoff goes even further to see Elaine's "purple prose," a reflection of her "poetic inclinations," in Eastman's fiction in *Old Indian Days* (xviii). What is most interesting about these scholarly perspectives is that Elaine seems to be the principal source of information for the view that she had an extensive hand in developing Eastman's writings, a belief perpetuated by each critic quoting each other. Both Wong and Ruoff, for instance, get much of their information from Wilson's biography of Eastman, wherein Wilson quotes a personal letter from Elaine to Harold G. Rugg dated April 19, 1939, three months after Eastman's death, in which Elaine claims:

'Dr. Eastman's books left his hand...as a rough draft in pencil, on scratch paper.' From these, she would then type copies, 'revising, omitting, and re-writing as necessary,' the same procedure undoubtedly employed in getting his articles ready for publication.

(131)

In the last clause, Wilson himself extends his speculations about Elaine's sphere of influence. Yet, and only later, Wilson reveals the fact that Eastman "despised" Elaine's insistent meddlings into his writings (191). Never is Eastman's irritation with Elaine's attempts at editorial manipulation mentioned by anyone as a possible reason for their divorce.

Perhaps the source which started most of the speculation about how much influence Elaine had over Charles' writing came from Miller's essay in which he quotes one of the Eastmans' nieces, Grace Moore, who reported that while working on *Red Hunters and the Animal People*, Eastman

would walk the woods alone in the mornings....Carrying a small note pad, he would jot notes of ideas as inspirations came to him. Returning around noon, he would explain his ideas to his wife, who then, under Charles' supervision, developed the ideas into prose, typing a draft for additional corrections and polishing. *Elaine was indispensable to her husband's writing: after his separation from her in 1921, he published nothing new.* (66)

The last line of speculation, which I have emphasized, is Miller's own--the rumor that has since been passed from scholar to scholar. Since he does not quote directly from Moore, we cannot be certain his paraphrasing is accurate either. Later, in his own essay, he discusses how Eastman's inability to type, which delayed his ability to turn in his reports as a U.S. Indian Inspector, was one of the primary reasons he was forced to resign that post (69). Elaine, obviously, typed Charles' manuscripts for him, but Miller's phrasing leaves clarity behind. Did Elaine develop the ideas into prose? Or did Charles do it as he dictated changes to his notes? Who did the additional corrections and polishing? Miller makes it clear that Eastman's notes from his investigations and inspections were typed by a stenographer, when he could find one, into a final report. Why should we suppose, just because she typed up his notes for his manuscripts, that Elaine played a significantly larger role in his writing than as a stenographer and creative consultant?

In fact, it is doubtful Elaine had as much of a hand in her husband's writings as she claimed, although she undoubtedly had some. His earliest writings were probably relatively untouched by Elaine because it was only *after* he had written them that she learned of them, read them, and encouraged him to publish them in the magazine which had published her work, *St. Nicholas* (Wilson 131), although she paints herself as the self-sacrificing wife, when, in her own memoir, she writes,

"I had always something of a one-track mind, and for many a year every early dream and ambition [of mine] was wholly subordinated to the business of helping my talented husband express himself and interpret his people" (STS 173).

Interestingly, in writing for publication, she makes herself the supporting actor, suggesting she pushed Eastman with a "dint of much persuasion" to write *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (DWC "Foreword"), and going so far as to pointedly list her own publications--*Little Brother o' Dreams* (1910), *Yellow Star* (1911), *Indian Legends Retold* (1928), and *The Luck of Oldacres* (1928)--in *Sister to the Sioux* (174). But in her personal correspondence, she was collaborator. Elaine is credited with collaboration with Charles on compiling *Wigwam Evenings* in 1909, and he dedicates *The Soul of the Indian* to his "wife Elaine Goodale Eastman in grateful recognition of her ever-inspiring companionship in thought and work and in love of her most Indian-like virtues." If he can do that much to admit her assistance, what would have prevented him from acknowledging she had a larger hand in all his writings?

For clarity's sake, we should also acknowledge that it is Elaine who claims to have "urged [Eastman] to write down his recollections of the wild life, which [she] carefully edited and placed with *St. Nicholas*. From this small beginning grew *Indian Boyhood* and eight other books of Indian lore, upon all of which [she] collaborated *more or less*" (STS 173, emphasis mine). Eastman, himself, in a book supposedly edited by Elaine, if we believe her claim, says that "when my wife discovered what I had written, she insisted upon sending it to *St. Nicholas*. Much to my surprise, the sketches were immediately accepted and appeared during the following year. This was the beginning of my first book, 'Indian Boyhood,' which was not completed until several years later" (DWC 139). Historically, Elaine would not be the first wife who, with few substantial claims to personal fame other than through marriage, creates an image which makes her appear as important as,

or because of, her spouse--one of the few avenues of prestige open to women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹¹

Had Eastman been Euro-American, it is possible that scholars would have made other observations about reasons for his occasions of "purple prose," the educational qualities of his works, and his use of "objective" narration, instead of trying to find reasons to question the authenticity of his work. This preoccupation is undoubtedly due to the Amanuensis Factor that clutters much American Indian scholarship with its obsession on deciding how much is authentically Indian and how much is EuroAmerican intrusion. The question of how much a text shows Sioux influences versus how much it demonstrates EuroAmerican influence becomes moot when it comes to writers like Eastman because he has undoubtedly been influenced as a writer by both. To redirect the question, we should examine Eastman's writings as products of both cultures, melding literary traditions to create a new one, instigated I believe by Eastman's writings and prominent throughout the Sioux Literary Renaissance.

How, after all, can a scholar like Ruoff claim unquestionably that more poetic descriptions are probably Elaine's, such as, "Long shafts of light from the setting sun painted every hill; one side red as with blood, the other dark as the shadow of death" (OID 124), or "the warrior's ambition had disappeared before it like a morning mist before the sun" (OID 51), or, the one she actually pinpointed as Elaine's writing, "the robust beauty of the wild lily of the prairie, pure and strong in her deep colors of yellow and scarlet against the savage plain and horizon, basking in the open sun like a child, yet soft and woman-like, with drooping head when observed" (OID 182) (Ruoff, Introduction xviii). Admittedly,

¹¹ For a contemporary wife/myth-maker, see Shirley A. Leckie's *Elizabeth Bacon Custer and the Making of a Myth* and Julia McGillicuddy's biography of her husband, *Blood on the Moon*.

it is easy to pick out phrases written by *Doctor Eastman*, such as, "water to be fetched in bags made from the dried pericardium of an animal," even though such use of medical terms are few (OID 175). But, until Eastman's handwritten manuscripts and Elaine's typewritten ones are discovered, if they exist, scholars do more disservice to Eastman as a writer to assert that his writings were not wholly his own.

One possibility few consider for Eastman's writing is that he uses the third person references to Indians or EuroAmericans as rhetorical or literary devices to make his descriptions appear more scientific, more anthropological, thus perhaps more believable, or, to the more sophisticated reader, as a Modernist parody of the common anthropological style used in as-told-to narratives about Indians. It is also possible Eastman felt a need to distance himself for personal, emotional reasons or for his audience's sake. Having learned well from oral storytellers like Smoky Day in *Indian Boyhood*, and purposely writing, at least at first, for his and EuroAmerican children, Eastman would have been very conscious of his audience. But that would never have stopped him from making his works as literary as possible because, as Anna Lee Stensland puts it, "a good story is far more important to Eastman and to other tribal Indians than accurate history" (201).

Eastman as a Modern Writer

One major difference often noted between oral storytelling traditions and written ones is the fact that oral stories, because of their spontaneity, are often nonchronological/tangential and are usually seen as circular in nature because speakers must return to the original thread of the tale after each digression. Since one has time to straighten out such tangles through editing, written stories are

often more linear with most stories and autobiographies usually having straight chronological movements. Because *Indian Boyhood* has a somewhat more linear structure, organization of the book can be seen as an alternative to the typical (thus usually seen as Western) maturation story, a sort of *bildungsroman* where the young man, in order to discover his individuality, leaves home. Yet the book's movement is not strictly linear, and could possibly be loosely patterned after the Old Testament.

Neither *Indian Boyhood* or *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, which follows sequentially, adhere strictly to the traditional chronological format of EuroAmerican autobiography, being "more topical" as Stensland puts it (200). *Indian Boyhood* has twelve sections, some of which are broken into smaller, individually titled stories. The first section includes five largely personal stories about Eastman's childhood, wherein Eastman moves deftly from describing the second winter after the Minnesota Uprising back to events which had to happen prior to that fateful rebellion (Stensland 201). These are the Genesis chapters of Eastman's life. The second section is only one story, which is largely anthropological, accompanied by Eastman's uncle's lectures on little Hakadah's training. The third section includes three more personal stories, with the fourth section being the only personal story told in the anthropological third person point of view. Much of the remaining eight sections (an intermixing of Proverbs and Prophets?) include personal observations and experiences intermingled with legends told by Smokey Day, the band's storyteller, or stories told by some member of Eastman's family, with the very last section being Eastman's reflections, from his Dakota perspective, on civilization, with the last sentence anticipating *From the Deep Woods*: "Here my wild life came to an end, and my school days began" (IB 289). As the title of the second book implies, Eastman makes an "Exodus" from the deep woods. While *From the Deep Woods* adheres more

stringently to traditional autobiographical chronology, Eastman manages to interject commentary about the differences and similarities between Indians and EuroAmericans throughout, ending with a commentary about "The Soul of the White Man." If we follow the biblical parallel, the book moves from the appearance of one savior and the education of another, through the description of the work done by the latter to his "Revelations" about human relations.

Creating such categories of Difference (in religion) and Assimilation (in writing style) seems to give credence to what most scholars assume is Eastman's biculturality--with parts of his story seemingly distinct in their influences by both Indian and Euro-American cultures. As William F. Smith, Jr. asserts, the mere fact that Eastman wrote these books without the intervention of a EuroAmerican editor "is an initial sign of the extent to which [the books were] influenced by two cultures" (242).

But, as Brumble puts it most nostalgically, "in some sense most Indian autobiographers seek to return [to their homeland]--if only by the workings of the memory, if only by mounting a memorial in words" (165-6). The conflict imposed on Eastman to choose between what was seen (then and often now) as separate and unequal Indian and EuroAmerican worlds is painfully revealed in the opening chapter of *Indian Boyhood*:

What boy would not be an Indian for a while when he
thinks of the freest life in the world? This life was
mine.

The speaker presents his readers with an idealized vision and immediately sobers the tone: "This life *was* mine" (IB 3). The tone is made even more somber and nostalgic if the reader has taken the time to read the two paragraph preface where Eastman speaks of his "thrilling wild life" and the "remnant" Indians on the reservations who, for him, are only "a fictitious copy of the past" (IB "Preface").

Few autobiographers, of any culture, escape such nostalgia. Perhaps what evinces most strongly the sense that Eastman, while recounting a way of living unfamiliar to his readers, is more human being than a creature of a specific culture, is his tale "Hakadah's First Offering." But, to establish this understanding, to lead us to this particular story, Western ideals of autobiographical chronology get set aside so that the reader is forced to piece together aspects of Eastman's youth. The first 98 pages discuss Eastman's birth and childhood. In the first chapter of *Indian Boyhood*, we learn that Eastman was called Hakadah, which means "the pitiful last," because his mother died soon after he was born. The story just before "Hakadah's First Offering" is our first introduction to Hakadah and his dog, *Ohitika*, Dakota for The Brave, as hunters--successful, yet accidental hunters when they kill a fawn by frightening it to death. In chapter five (which is the last chapter of the first section of the book), we witness the ceremony and contest which wins him his name Ohiyesa, "the winner." Interestingly, the fourth section of the book, which only contains this one story, "Hakadah's First Offering," is written in third person--the only third person point of view story in the entire book, indeed, *the only autobiographical story in Eastman's entire oeuvre written exclusively in the more anthropological third person point of view*, and is one of the many stories which reveals the circularity, as opposed to linearity, of the tale-telling in the book's structure. This shift in narration, however, is important, especially given the nature of the story. Why would Eastman choose, first of all, to include in his memoir a story about himself told in third person? Why imitate the more common type of Indian narrative which filters its "indianness" through an anthropologist's point of view? Why would he, in fact, choose to write this story in third person at all?

A drawing of an Indian boy stroking his dog by E.L. Blumenschein precedes "Hakadah's First Offering." The full importance of this picture does not

become clear to the reader until midway through the story. The story itself involves how Uncheedah, Eastman's grandmother, takes it upon herself to see that eight-year-old Hakadah performs his first ritual sacrifice for the Great Mystery. This is a traditional tribal initiation ceremony for the Dakota, with variations from tribe to tribe within the larger Sioux or Oceti Sakowin nation. The ceremony involves several days' preparation, usually on the grandmother's part since she is usually responsible for the children's moral upbringing. The child is expected to choose his/her most valuable possession to sacrifice to the Great Mystery in demonstration of the child's awareness of the need to sacrifice oneself--even to giving one's life away--for the betterment of the whole community.

Eastman tells us how Uncheedah has been planning this ceremony for days before telling Hakadah that he is to sacrifice whatever is dearest to him. One possible reason for the third person point of view becomes obvious early in the story. It allows us to enter Uncheedah's mind: "She believed that her influence had helped regulate and develop the characters of her sons to the height of savage nobility and strength of manhood" (IB 102). Since her sons had gained honor as celebrated warriors and hunters, Uncheedah "had not hesitated to claim for herself a good share of the honors they had achieved, because she had brought them early to the notice of the 'Great Mystery'" (IB 102). She prepares to do the same for her parentless grandson.

After thinking about it, Hakadah volunteers to give up his best weapons, his set of paints, and his best necklace. But Uncheedah is not satisfied with his suggestions and prompts him to consider again, wanting him to realize what it really is he values most--his dog, Ohitika:

But Uncheedah knew where his affection was vested. His faithful dog, his pet and companion--Hakadah was almost inseparable from the loving beast. She was sure it would be difficult to obtain his

consent to sacrifice the animal, but she ventured upon a final appeal. 'You must remember,' she said, 'that in this offering you will call upon him who looks at you from every creation. In the wind you hear him whisper to you. He gives his war-whoop in the thunder....In short, it is the Mystery of Mysteries, who controls all things, to whom you will make your first offering. By this act, you will ask him to grant to you what he has granted to few men. I know you wish to be a great warrior and hunter. I am not prepared to see my Hakadah show any cowardice, for the love of possessions is a woman's trait and not a brave's.' (105-6)

Once it becomes clear to Hakadah that he must sacrifice his dog, Ohitika, Hakadah was simply unable to speak. To a civilized eye, he would have appeared at that moment like a little copper statue. His bright black eyes were fastidiously melting in floods of tears, when he caught his grandmother's eye and recollected her oft-repeated adage: 'Tears for woman and the war-whoop for man to drown sorrow!' (107)

The ritual is then described in cursory detail, with Hakadah bravely performing most of it, except the killing of the dog, which is a task that falls to an uncle. The story ends with Uncheedah offering a prayer to the Great Mystery to make the boy a great warrior and hunter.

There are several possible reasons why Eastman chose to write this story in third person besides the fact that it allows him omniscience as a narrator. Perhaps he originally intended the story for separate publication, or he desired to avoid alienating his nonIndian audience with a strange, possibly repugnant ritual. Perhaps he was compromising with his wife Elaine's editorial suggestions. Conscious of a literary audience, he could have been aware that through third person narration, the author (autobiographer, remember) is able not only to

"objectively" illustrate, without seeming phony in the moment's emotional power, how important such a gesture is to the boy, his family, and the tribal community, but also to distance himself from the painful memory of having to sacrifice his own dog. Perhaps, since this is the only story which shows Eastman himself performing a Dakota ritual, he tries to reduce the "weakening" of the power of the ritual, thus perhaps weakening his own personal ties with the Great Mystery, by telling it in third person.

Regarding the possibility that he was considering publishing the story separately, instead of in the book, it is important to note that "Hakadah's First Offering" was published in *Current Literature* in January 1903, a year after the book was published. But while the essay was probably written concurrently with the rest of the memoir, other articles published by Eastman freely use his personal experience as reference, so even if he was considering simultaneous publication it would not necessarily require the essay to be written in third person. Editing concerns--especially the ability to alter texts for particular audiences--were not as easily handled in 1902 as they are today, but nonetheless would not have been so overwhelming that Eastman could not have altered the story for publication with the book. Since *Current Literature* cites Eastman's book as the source of the story, and since the story appears identically in the magazine as it does in the book--even with Blumenschein's picture of the boy and dog--it is doubtful Eastman wrote the story separately from the rest of the memoir. So it is doubtful he was concerned about publishing the work elsewhere as his reason for writing it in third person.

The idea of sacrificing animals for religious reasons, while not unknown to the predominantly Christian nonIndian audience he wrote for, was still not a practice commonly accepted in 1902 and would probably have not been a subject approved for children. And Eastman's primary target audience for *Indian Boyhood*

was for Euro-American children for whom the book was to be one of his first guidance texts which preceded his helping to found Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls. As Robin Lakoff suggests, the use of third person self-reference is "a way for speakers [and writers] to distance themselves and their interests from the discourse, suggesting that whatever is being talked about is of no consequence to them" (245). So Eastman, in order to be more accepted by his audience, could have been attempting to tone down the fact that this ritual sacrifice was *his* personal experience.

Since it is his personal experience, however, it would have been impressed upon Eastman as a child that this was *his* sacrificial ceremony, *his* tie to the Great Mystery. Among the taboos held by the Oceti Sakowin is that one should never speak one's own name, which was usually bestowed by a *wakan* or holy person in recognition of a deed, for fear of losing one's own personal powers. Since the individual's name is so guarded, it is reasonable to speculate that an individual's personal ceremonies would also be considered sacred. The fact that it is Eastman's personal experience is significant, because Eastman shows no qualms about going into much more detail, describing even graphic mutilation in detail, in his descriptions of another sacred ceremony, the Sun Dance, in *The Soul of the Indian* (56-63). He also describes other religious rituals, such as the Mystery Feast, as well as the religious purposes behind various practices, such as the ceremonial use of the pipe and sweat lodge (78-84), so the fact that the ritual was sacred, in and of itself, is not enough to have deterred him from discussing it. If the power of his personal sacrifice to Wakan Tanka was indeed one of Eastman's concerns, it clearly demonstrates the fact that despite his conversion to Christianity, he never stopped believing in the validity of his earlier Dakota religious training.

The idea of selflessness would not have been unfamiliar or repugnant to his audience, since he often wrote about the Indian ideal of self-sacrifice for the good

of the community as part of the founding idea for the Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls. But he probably was very conscious of the fact that the act of killing an animal as a sacrifice to the Great Mystery would be considered *heathen*, and he probably did not want that prejudiced belief projected onto him as the writer.

Interestingly, Eastman does not describe the *complete* ritual to his audience. As Ethel Nurge first pointed out, Eastman completely leaves out the fact that, after the dog is killed and used in the ritual as though still alive, he is later made to eat the cooked flesh of the dog to complete the ritual (37, n 2). While eating cooked dog meat was often part of Dakota ceremonies since the dog is considered the most faithful creature to human beings and eating its flesh passes on that undying sense of loyalty and selfless love, it was already a pejorative to refer to the Sioux as the Dog Eaters in 1900, so that, too, was an image Eastman wanted to avoid.

Yet, Lakoff points out the power of third person self-reference to "retrospectively justify dubious past actions, and create dazzling personae for future use....A device that is ostensibly distancing is utilized to create exciting drama. The third person allows the creation of characters; the connection with the first person provides an aura of authority and verisimilitude. Together they weave a spell, first catching the audience's attention, then gaining its trust" (253).

The use of the imitated anthropological third person point of view does function to check the sentimentality readers' might perceive in Eastman's personal descriptions of sacrificing his dog. While Eastman arguably mixes the literary third person with the anthropological, the anthropological tone and diction stand out, clearly in parody:

Hakadah breathlessly gave a descriptive narrative....The concluding sentence fairly dilated the eyes of the young hunter, for he felt that

a great event was about to occur, in which he would be the principal actor. But Uncheedah resumed her speech. (IB 103-4)

Elsewhere, Eastman uses a more conversational, less stilted tone. But from his frequent references to more formal descriptions--such as "savage nobility," "to execute" (instead of sacrifice), and "a perpendicular white cliff"--we clearly feel that this narrative, while not unlike anthropological descriptions of Indian life, is several steps removed from the cold, science of an anthropologist's pen. Literary scholars also tend to consider the third person point of view as more "objective," a Modernist concern (Wagner-Martin 5), thus somehow more credible as well. While we primarily have only Elaine's insistence that she had a hand in all of Eastman's writings, both she and Eastman would have been conscious of wanting to appear as objective and believable as possible in the piece. Eastman, especially later in his life, did act as an amateur anthropologist; as he went about conducting government business among Indians he took the time to "collect" artifacts for museums, so perhaps here he is trying out that role. It would be nearly impossible to prove that Eastman was aware of the Modernist movement, which was *just* getting under way, and its concerns with objective narration.

His desire *might* have been to help his audience relive the experience as completely as possible, but he also has to weigh the effects his details might have on the reader. He does not want to alienate his readers. Perhaps, though, the grief Eastman felt in losing his best friend--even some thirty years later--was too great. It is after all *the only story in his entire oeuvre* which is autobiographical, yet written in third person.

Eastman builds identification in the same way, with layer upon layer. By the time we get to "Hakadah's First Offering," we know he is Hakadah, but he *removes* the adult personae from the story as much as possible. We still know he is the one in control of the story, but, by focusing on the small boy's experiences,

he redirects our sympathies; whereas we would question, as an adult in retrospect does, Eastman's point of view about the sacrifice if he were narrating it as the adult Charles Eastman, we accept what the child learns and does and do not require him to comment on the sacrifice's appropriateness or on the possible lack of development in a culture that stipulates such a ritual.

"Hakadah's First Offering" becomes a symbol for Charles Eastman's continued self-sacrifice. He sacrifices his active *presence* in the story by writing it in third person. He caters to his audience's desire to *know* more about his culture--its customs and religion--in an anthropological sense, rather than a personal sense. While he seems to be putting the concerns for his audience's sensibilities foremost in writing this story, he is also able to distance himself somewhat from feeling the full impact, again, of the actual sacrificial experience.

The picture of the boy and his dog, then, becomes an important representation not only of the personal impact of the boy's coming of age sacrifice to the Great Mystery, but also of the intimate bond with his readers Eastman is willing to forgo for the sake of his larger audience's needs and expectations. In fact, he compensates for their ignorance and prejudices by making it appear--especially if the story is only read in *Current Literature* and not in the context of *Indian Boyhood*--as though this experience was not his own.

Because this story is the only switch to third person narration without adopting a character-speaker to accompany it, it is evident that, even while writing this story, the memory of the event is probably still a powerful operative in Eastman's psyche--so much so that he has to completely remove himself from the tale in order to tell it. In fact, some critics speculate that Eastman's book, which includes several recounted tales from Indian storytellers, has been padded with these second hand stories "to supplement the [absent and probably unpleasant] reminiscences" of his life, especially encounters with whites and instances of Indian

customs he or his editors felt his white readers might not understand (Murray, "Autobiography" 77).

With all these possible reasons for not writing the story, why did Eastman choose to tell it at all? Was he merely demonstrating how ingrained is the notion of self-sacrifice to a Sioux child? Is he trying to prove that such self-sacrifice is an--if not *the*--important element in successful tribal/community living? Or is he merely justifying his view of the "Christ ideal" since little Hakadah must choose to give up his best friend, thus has to appreciate the fact that his dog has sacrificed himself for Hakadah's benefit, just as Christ did for Christians? Conceivably, "Hakadah's First Offering" works as the Dakota version of Christ's sacrifice for sinful humanity. What creature is more loyal and continues to love without question no matter what happens to it than a dog? Another possible reason Eastman chose to leave out the information about his eating the dog's cooked flesh is because, literarily, it would not work within the confines of the Christian symbolism--excepting, of course, in the symbolism of the Eucharist wherein Christians eat and drink the "body" and "blood" of Christ. Equating Christ directly with a dog would probably, in fact, serve only to undercut what he has so carefully constructed here, and would have altered his subtle connection of his "savior" father with Christ.

"Hakadah's First Offering" also serves as a marker in the "progression" of Eastman's life. As a child, he was ready and willing to set aside his rather carefree life in order to partake of a ceremony which conveys to his people that he had come of the age to formally pay respects to the spirits of the world, and would remember ever after, because of his obligations and ties to those spirits and his people, that he should consider them before he thinks of himself. By the end of *Indian Boyhood* and the beginning of *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, even

his EuroAmerican readers would be prepared to see Eastman forgo his own desires to follow in the direction his newly resurrected father chose for him.

As Eastman probably soon learned, such subtlety in paralleling his father and his faithful canine companion as figures of his "Christ Ideal," especially in such an unexpected place as a book by an Indian, would elude most nonIndian Americans. Eastman actually wrote some quite sophisticated prose, and I will argue that his was much more sophisticated, much more subtle than his wife's writing. While he refers to the Animal People in several of his stories, his collection of short fiction, *Red Hunters and the Animal People* (1904), possibly the first collection of short fiction by an Indian (Ruoff, Intro OI, ix), is quite sophisticated in the development of the stories and in the descriptions of the characters--both human and animal.

Just as James Welch will do later in his historical novel, *Fools Crow*, Eastman places his audience alternately into the mindset of the Indians and the Animal People, with often dramatic, yet sympathetic descriptions of what they experience. For instance, when Igmu, the female puma, is out hunting, she sees a man ride by, not on a pony, but on "a long-tailed elk" (RH 8), when she listens for danger signs, she knows that "at that time of the day no people talk except the winged people" (RH 10), and when she catches a grizzly eating her cached kill, he is "the old root-digger" (RH 16).

In the stories in *Red Hunters*, Eastman seizes opportunities to explain various Sioux myths or customs, intertwining stories with a fairly subtle didactic example probably once told to him as a child. "The River People" is an elaborate story from both the beavers' perspective and the Indians'. Eastman assures us that "the beaver people are considered the wisest of the smaller four-legged tribes, and they are a people of great common-sense" (RH 179). Chapawee, the female beaver who resides as prime lodge builder and lore teacher, tells her gathered

children the stories of how their band came to be and why they reside at the Great Pipestone Quarry, what was formerly Yankton Nakota territory. The buffalo people, a possible metaphoric parallel to EuroAmericans, destroyed the beavers' original lodges in their clumsiness because "they do not respect the laws and customs of any other nation" (RH 182). So Chapawee's family--her mother, father, and two brothers--move on, only to be separated by a great spring flood. Persevering alone, she eventually meets Kamdoka, who becomes her lifelong mate. They chose to live and raise their successive generations in the Pipestone Quarry because the Indians only come for pipestone in the summer, when they are not interested in beaver pelts (RH 190).

After providing this beaver clan's lore, the story then switches perspectives to the Red Hunters who work for the American Fur Company (RH 193). The hunters observe the beavers' homes and actions for several days, taking the time to weigh "the full dignity and importance they had given to their intended massacre of a harmless and wise people" (RH 195). In a dual movement, Eastman manages, first, to dignify the Indian hunters' objectives for killing the beavers by noting that they are careful to leave four young beavers to carry on the next generation and to care for the two elderly beavers so "their spirits [do not] follow us" (RH 199), and, second, to create a parallel between the beavers and American Indians who are massacred or conquered, whose strength leaves them, leaving the narrator to wonder, "who would care in such a case to survive the ruins of his house?" (RH 199).

Similarly, the other stories in the collection also draw possibilities of such parallels, with the primary theme being how the Oyate, the People, related to and actually copied manners and customs from "the best animal people" (RH 210). In the process, he explains legends, beliefs, and customs, such as how Wounded Knee Creek came to be called by that name (RH 119), why the elk represents virile

young manhood (RH 211), and how the practice of regaling one another with stories not only teaches the young (RH 236) but also persuades opponents (RH 244).

Eastman even utilizes authorial intrusion to mimic the typical as-told-to anthropological narrative and to inject humor, such as when he tells us of "A Founder of Ten Towns," Pezpeza, whose "biographer and interpreter tells thus of his wonderful frontier life and adventures" (RH 125). Such parody, like that in "Hakadah's First Offering," is at once Modernist in nature (Wagner-Martin 5), as well as reminiscent of Victorian authorial intrusions. The two books, *Red Hunters* and *Indian Boyhood*, were published only two years apart, but, as "A Founder of Ten Towns" demonstrates, Eastman has refined and strengthened his sense of literary parody. Whereas the mimicked anthropological tone is only periodic in "Hakadah's First Offering," the imitation scientific point of view carries "A Founder of Ten Towns," with even the minutest of events explained in analytic detail, with the animals serving as "native" substitutes:

Every day some prairie-dog left the town in quest of a new home. The chief reason for this is over-population--hence, scarcity of food; for the ground does not yield a sufficient quantity for so many; (RH 128)

and the Indians as scientific observers:

Pezpeza's town was now quite populous. But he was not the mayor; he did not get any credit for the founding of the town; at least as far as the Red people could observe. Their life and government seemed to be highly democratic. Usually the concentration of population produced a certain weed which provided abundance of food for them. But under some conditions it will not grow; and in that case, as soon as the native buffalo-grass

is eaten up the town is threatened with a famine, and the inhabitants are compelled to seek food at a distance from their houses. This is quite opposed to the habit and safety of the helpless little people. Finally the only alternative will be the desertion of the town. (RH 133-4)

Eastman subverts the anthropological language and the general condoning, parental attitude often found in anthropological reports of the time by applying them to prairie dogs, at the same time playing off the Siouan belief that animals *are* simply other forms of people and deserve the same respect shown to humans.

In fact, Eastman's Animal People are very similar to the animals in Western fairy tales, fables (such as Aesop's) and folk tales (such as Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus stories), and even the personified animals in Greek and African myths. But unlike many of the nonIndian tales, these near-traditional American Indian stories raise animals to an equal spiritual and physical plane as the Indians, indeed all human beings, themselves. Eastman was the first Indian writer to openly describe and explain such ties to his primarily Euro-American audience, putting the Sioux beliefs into a form nonIndians could understand and accept.

In "A Founder of Ten Towns," for instance, the prairie dogs are directly linked to the ancient Mound Builders as a possible explanation as to where those ancient people went when they disappeared (RH 124). The parallel Eastman draws here demonstrates the Sioux belief in the powers of transformation and the duration of the soul, as well as giving one specific reason why many traditional Indians saw animals as People.

Most of these stories successfully elicit feelings of respect for the animals from the reader. When the old chieftainess, the white buffalo cow, dies and is "reborn" in the baby white buffalo, readers are assured of the duration of the soul and the power of the white buffalo woman--who brought the seven major Oceti

Sakowin rituals and the Peace Pipe--to the Sioux. More difficult to accept is the ritual capture and killing of the newly born white buffalo calf, which for the Sioux is "the token of plenty and good-fortune" through her preserved hide (RH 105). For the buffalo, she had represented a new powerful leader. Here, then, the needs of the Sioux prevail over the needs of the buffalo because "it is the will of the Great Mystery" (RH 105), just as the needs of Christians prevail over Christ's existence, with the white buffalo hide becoming a clear parallel to Jesus' cross.

The needs of the Indians for survival are not the justifications of the Red Hunters when two men spend hours hunting a big sheep ram in "The Gray Chieftain." Instead, they note admirably his fine qualities of bravery and cunning in evading them, making him a worthy opponent who will bring them great honor. Instead of sparing his life, they rejoice at having had the ability to kill him: "He is dead. My friend, the noblest of chiefs is dead!" exclaimed Grayfoot...in great admiration and respect for the gray chieftain" (RH 158). Because the Indian calls the mountain goat "my friend," Viehmann asserts that "this moment of affinity between man and beast, reinforced by the similarity of the names Grayfoot and gray chieftain, symbolizes the interconnection of human and animal life" (77). The interconnection serves as a demonstration, through animals for humans, that one should sympathize with one's opponents and nobly accept death when it comes, including the sacrifice of one's life for another, as the ram does for the Indian (Viehmann 78). Such demonstrations reemphasize Eastman's self-sacrificial, yet honorable, approach to life--it is far more honorable to fight a worthy foe or to accept a worthy challenge than it is to merely accept the easiest thing available.

Eastman claimed that "the main incident in all of [the stories], even those which are unusual and might appear incredible to the white man, are actually current among the Sioux and deemed by them worthy of belief," acknowledging that only "here and there the fables, songs, and superstitious fancies of the Indian

are brought in to suggest his habit of mind and manner of regarding the four-footed tribes" (RH vii). While *Red Hunters* is a very important book in Eastman's oeuvre, and while the book is clearly a predecessor to more contemporary literature as well as a book worthy of consideration by Modernist scholars, it is, unfortunately, the only book of Eastman's no longer in print. Like his other works, *Red Hunters* ends prophetically for itself on the note of sadness Eastman felt in the imminently predicted disappearance of the Indian because of the intrusion and annihilation by EuroAmericans (RH 245).

While Eastman acknowledges his biases against whites as a child, especially toward the end of *Indian Boyhood*, they are carefully tempered with equal praise and awe-filled impressions of the wonders of Euro-American civilization, probably so as not to make his white readers too uncomfortable, as well as to assert for himself that he has made the right decision in following his father's wishes to acculturate. While seemingly less worried about offending Euro-American readers in *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, he reminds them on several occasions of his former ignorance of white ways, such as when he retreats into the woods for solace from the Great Mystery because he "knew nothing of the white man's religion[, so had to follow] the teachings of [his] ancestors" (DWC 26). But, through the extent of his writings, it is clear Eastman was far from ignorant about either culture, and chose, when the need suited him, to claim allegiances to both.

So much attention has been paid, instead, to Eastman's supposed conflict as a man caught between the two cultures, with one critic calling Eastman "bifurcated" and afraid that his "inner betrayal is too great for him to endure" (Nerburn 62), that critics have tended to focus on the trivia of Eastman's writings, instead of its strengths. Some argue directly that Eastman has appropriated English, but was unable to use it well. David Murray, for instance, asserts that Eastman "vacillates from one spurious 'identity' to another, rather than think with

the terms available...with the result that he can only simplify a complex process into a series of crude oppositions" ("Autobiography" 78-9). In fact, Kent Nerburn's criticism and concern for Eastman's possible struggle with his possible feelings of liminality convinced him to alter Eastman's texts, eliminating both third and first person references when he saw fit, which was more often than not to make Eastman solely Indian in his references.¹² The dilemma, it seems to me, lies in the fact that scholars and critics have the need to categorize Eastman as solely the prototype of the kind of Indian he tried to convince us he was not, completely ignoring his EuroAmerican heritage, preferring to excise any EuroAmericanness as though it pollutes Eastman's writings.

Nerburn's liberties with Eastman's texts bring us to another dilemma, unanswerable here, in regards to the ownership of Eastman's texts. Since no living heirs have renewed Eastman's copyright, his works are now common property. In fact, four of his books are now part of Project Gutenberg on the Internet, which makes common ownership texts available to anyone with access. In many ways, such free and common access to his texts is good. Now more people can benefit from Eastman's insights. But such freedom also allows people like Nerburn to rearrange Eastman's texts as they see fit, completely altering the pattern of stories that Eastman had originally chosen, thus changing their reception and their message. Perhaps such alteration does no harm, but it is a concern worth investigating.

Was Eastman a conquered Indian--a man overwhelmed so much by EuroAmerican values that he could not overcome them to remain an "authentic" Sioux? Or was he a man of two cultures, two cultures so distinct from one other

¹² See Nerburn's edition of *The Soul of an Indian* (not to be confused with Eastman's *The Soul of the Indian*, although there are excerpts from the latter text in the former).

to most people that they assume he had to make a choice and accept one or the other? Or was he bicultural, a hybrid, if you will--a product of more than one culture, a man who could blend the two and their literary traditions to create a new literary form?

Being Bicultural Versus Being Assimilated

Eastman would probably opt for being called bicultural. Eastman was no longer the traditional Dakota, nor was he merely an "apple"--red on the outside, white on the inside. Eastman was a man who could have survived in either world, and did, going on to merge the cultures in the best way he could for himself, and, in the process, doing what he could for his primary Sioux culture. He accepted many EuroAmerican values, but he never fully assimilated into the mainstream culture, having "found a new sense of identity and spiritual renewal as an 'Indian'" when he conducted his anthropological fieldwork for the University of Pennsylvania Museum (Miller 63). He seems to have realized, at least by the time he was older, that he liked being an Indian as much as he enjoyed being "American." Repeatedly, in *From the Deep Woods into Civilization* and other works, he parallels similar beliefs and values held by the two cultures. Peterson argues that Eastman and George Sword, another Sioux writer, forged a "different narrative pattern" that is "initially Sioux" but which "draw[s] on both Christian and Lakota beliefs in order to demonstrate the syncretisms of the two" belief systems (181), and, as I extend Peterson's argument, to create a Modernist collage-like form of literary tradition from the Sioux and the EuroAmerican traditions. Eastman, after all, was not that much unlike contemporary European immigrants, who acculturated by choice, often losing languages, religious practices, and

fashions in favor of what they saw as "American." Often unknowingly, however, natives and immigrants alike influenced changes in general American perceptions and values, even in literature.

Eastman desired such influence through his writings and speeches not only on Euro-American perceptions of Indians, but also on Indian perceptions of Christianity and civilization. But first he had to convince himself of his own desired images of these things. Thus he must acknowledge the multiplicity of both cultures, so that both Indians and whites have savage capacities, as well as are capable of being noble spiritualists and teachers, utilizing, of course, the stereotypes of his day. It is in *From the Deep Woods* that he achieves this complexity most effectively, although *The Soul of the Indian* is Eastman's only book that rivals the religious/spiritual popularity of *Black Elk Speaks*.

September, 1876, when Eastman reached Beloit College, was "less than three months after Custer's gallant command was annihilated by the hostile Sioux." Notably, the 7th Cavalry are gallant and the Sioux hostile, even though two of Eastman's uncles were participants in the fight. Yet, while at Beloit, because the townspeople mistakenly believe Eastman is Sitting Bull's nephew, he is followed in "the streets by gangs of little white savages, giving imitation war whoops" (53).

It seems ironic, later, that Eastman would argue that he needs to switch colleges because Beloit has accepted other Sioux as students and he feels "that [he] might progress faster where [he] was not surrounded by [his] tribesmen" (DWC 58). He never completely justifies this reasoning, although it seems quite probable that Eastman needed to be *the* Indian on campus to feel secure in his importance, mentioning later that he was able to have protracted discussions about "the Indian standpoint in sociology and political economy" because he was then *the* expert on the subject (DWC 68). Despite possible resentments or fear of contemporary Indian scholars--which he does not seem to exhibit in other of his

writings, such as those in *The American Indian Magazine*, which was edited by Bonnin--he credits his uncle as being "a positive genius" in his observations about natural history (DWC 68).

While spiritually he thought it best to seek enlightenment "in silence, in the deep forest or on the height of the mountain," as is the Sioux way (DWC 26), he also felt merely thinking and speaking in English made him act like a white man (DWC 58). Even though he admitted to "some disadvantages connected with this mighty civilization" (DWC 62), such as letting the poor and elderly lose "their self-respect and dignity" (DWC 147), he also, like Bonnin, admires its literature (Eastman "First Impressions" 592). While he balks at the self-respect and dignity taken, for instance, from a "pretty Dakota maiden" forced to attend Riggs' school in Nebraska against her will--a scene which made Eastman's "blood boil" (DWC 45)--he is awed by the realization that "nations, tongues, and civilizations, as well as individuals, have lived and died" and are brought to life again through books ("First Impressions" 592). Eastman accepts acculturation as his particular path in life, but, naturally, detests seeing someone else forced against her will to accept the same life.

As a civilized warrior, Eastman's first encounter as "an object of curiosity...was not a pleasant feeling" (DWC 21). Yet, later, he deliberately switches colleges so he can remain a unique phenomenon and be an object of curiosity. Even in 1890, when he becomes "a 'white doctor' who was also an Indian[, he is still] something of a novelty" (DWC 76). Eastman saw himself as *the* representative of the Dakota people, throwing himself fully into the role as the warrior in full battle regalia, which he often wore to speaking occasions. Even though Eastman probably began to enjoy such attention, accepting the title of the best of the best, he became aware of the responsibilities involved in being *the* best

example of an acculturated Indian. One responsibility was giving his audience what it wanted.

Hertha Wong claims that Eastman's use of metaphors of nature, as comparison of how he felt in the stages of his acculturation, "emphasize[s] his Sioux identity" (146). While such an emphasis does come across, Wong fails to realize that these metaphors are more than a natural comparison for the man who was once a "wild" Indian who lived outdoors. She also fails to acknowledge that the use of natural metaphors are not uncommon in other cultures. They are, though, devices most contemporary readers would have stereotypically expected from an Indian writer (and sometimes still do). Eastman, a man who believed the culture he was raised in was vanishing from the face of the earth, would also have been compelled to preserve for his children, his original audience, the aura, if not the essence, of what it felt like to be an Indian, one who had "missed the demoralizing influences of reservation life" (DWC 59).

He does cave in occasionally to the stereotypical expectations brought about by dime novels about the West. Some of his Indians say, "Ugh," and "How."¹³ And he often refers to them as savages with savage minds. But the word "savage" may have meant several things to Eastman. He often touched on what he called "the racial mind," contact with which was refreshing for him compared to the tunnel vision he often found in nonIndians (DWC 150). In fact, Eastman found and admired this same type of racial mind in the "Yankees of the uneducated class" because they were "very Indian-like in their views and habits; a

¹³ See for example the stories in *Red Hunters and the Animal People*. Not only do many of Eastman's Indians speak in racial stereotypes, but the author also equates rattlesnakes with "the negro in the South--he was permitted to dwell in the same town, but he must not associate with the other two [races] upon equal terms" (126). Later, the rattlesnake family is described as always loafing about (129). Clearly, African-Americans were not equal to Indians in Eastman's view.

people of strong character, plain-spoken, and opinionated" (DWC 66). Gerald Vizenor argues that Eastman was teasing "the antiselves of evolutionism" when he describes Indians as savage and uncivilized (49), which can also be seen as further proof of Eastman's deliberate parody of anthropological writing.

He also wanted to capture for his children, who must live in this new era for the Indian, the sense that they belonged, as mixed in culture as they must have felt, to this world. Eastman reflects at Dartmouth: "thinking of the time when red men lived here in plenty and freedom, it seemed as if I had been destined to come view their graves and bones. No, I said to myself, I have come to continue that which in their last struggle they proposed to take up, in order to save themselves from extinction" (DWC 65). Eastman realizes, profoundly in the vein of doom in which most of his contemporaries viewed Indian culture, that history exists and civilizations rise and fall, so that, as he studies literature and history, "civilization began to loom up before [him] colossal in its greatness" (DWC 69), even as he assumes "the day of the Indian had passed forever" (DWC 62).

Eastman would not completely give up the Indian culture that had nurtured him, and he worked to preserve it for his children, all the while convincing his contemporaries and future generations that Indians were not that unlike Euro-Americans, thus not a threat, but actually an asset, to American society. His stories and essays bring the Dakota way of life, in particular, directly home to his readers, so that they might experience a bit of Indian life to develop an appreciative taste for it. His articles, such as "My People: the Indian's Contribution to the Art of America" and "What Can the Out-of-Doors Do for Our Children?", and his nonfiction books, such as *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains* and *The Indian To-Day*, describe Indians and their cultures in more authentic detail than nonIndians probably would have read, thus helping to signify the importance of an authentic view of Indian life. And his two works of fiction, *Old Indian Days*

and *Red Hunters and the Animal People*, while racially stereotypical in some ways, bring out the traditional Indian views of life and make vital the native connection with the natural world and among one another, preparing paths of acceptance for more complex views of Indian life from later Indian writers.

Eastman set out on the warrior's path, intent on learning the white man's ways. Learning to use EuroAmerican words and publishing media, including EuroAmerican/Dakota forms of public speaking, to spread an appreciation of the culture of his childhood, to ease Indian transitions into EuroAmerican culture, and to provide a demonstration that there are similarities in values between the two cultures seems to have justified his Dakota name, Ohiyesa, The Winner. Ray Wilson, Eastman's biographer, views Eastman's life more pessimistically. After the failure of his marriage and other ventures, "Eastman withdrew--a very Indian thing to do. He could no longer live the expectations of others in the white world; he could no longer return to the deep woods. He lived instead alone and on an island, his most symbolic act" (193).

But interest in Eastman has been rekindled. A very influential Modern Indian writer--dare I say the Father of the Sioux Literary Renaissance?--Eastman was an appealing and sought after orator in his day, and an appealing writer today. Eastman is also important as a human being, a Dakota fighting the seemingly endless battle for the preservation of his first culture by combining its literary traditions with EuroAmerican ones. He was the firestarter of the Sioux Literary Renaissance, even as he followed in the footsteps--sometimes taking two or three strides where predecessors took one--of earlier Indian autobiographers and writers. In the light of that fire, Eastman's writings, his legacy to us, for us, can now be better appreciated.

CHAPTER THREE

Weaving a Magic Design: Gertrude Bonnin Creates a New Literary Tradition as *Zitkala-Sa*

If Charles Eastman can be seen as carrying out one of the dominant male Sioux roles by directing his life as though he were on the warpath, Gertrude Bonnin works to carry out her "feminine Dakota heritage" (Susag 8) by passing on, thus continuing, Oceti Sakowin cultural values (Susag 21). While scholars tend to focus on "the turmoil, hurt, anger, and frustration felt by a sensitive, talented American Indian woman" (Picotte OIL "Foreword" xv), Zitkala-Sa's writings actually demonstrate the power and passion Indian women felt and exhibited in their lives and artwork. Bonnin drew on the powerful kinship influences with which her mother defined her early life and her inherited understanding of Indian symbolism and mythology, as well as her acquired knowledge of Western myths, to create a literary artform that helped her balance the passions and concerns she felt for both Indian and Western cultures. While her writings reflect fewer EuroAmerican values than Eastman's, Zitkala-Sa demonstrates through her stories how the Sioux had already assimilated into their daily lives EuroAmerican goods and tools, such as writing, which complemented their own culture.

Despite the brevity of Bonnin's literary career, especially when compared to Eastman's, she managed to combine Sioux literary traditions with EuroAmerican

ones as effectively as, if not more thoroughly than, he did. Like Eastman, Bonnin initially wrote both autobiographical essays and short stories, later merging her literary talents with political rhetoric to write more blatantly political open essays and appeals, seeking equity and suffrage for Indians. Her earlier essays and fiction, however, as Dorothea Susag argues, "contradict the myths of powerless victimization, language inadequacy, and feminine impotence" believed of Indians in general and Indian women in particular (21), and incorporate Sioux cultural values and literary traditions in order to alter "Judeo-Christian discourse and ideology," upon which Western cultural values and literary traditions are based (22), creating a Modernist type of collage. Much as literary scholars had to become familiar with such myths as the Fisher King to understand the less obvious meanings in T.S. Eliot's epic poem *The Waste Land*, scholars must learn about aspects of Sioux culture--such as its myths and legends, the importance of Indian women's symbolic art, the strength of kinship bonds, and the early material impact EuroAmerican culture had on Sioux living--to truly appreciate Bonnin's works.

Academic studies of Bonnin's life and works, like Eastman's, insist on seeing Bonnin's life in turmoil, as is reflected in her early writings. Mary Ann Stout claims that "Zitkala-Sa's life and writings are filled with confusion and contradiction" because she tried to remain wholly Dakota,¹ espousing values

¹ As Dorothea Susag notes in her essay "Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin): A Power(full) Literary Voice," Bonnin descends from the Nakota dialect speaking branch of the Sioux, but always called herself a Dakota, as do contemporary residents of the Yankton reservation (note 2, 22). It is possible that Bonnin, like many Sioux, saw the entire nation as a collective, despite dialectical differences, since her chosen pen name, Zitkala-Sa, is Lakota for Red Bird. Margaret Lukens unsuccessfully attempts to argue that Bonnin's choosing a name from the Lakota dialect instead of the the Nakota dialect, which is the least dominant of the three dialects, "indicates a more profound dislocation from her origins" (168). To simplify concerns of proper labelling of Bonnin's heritage, I will alternately call her a Sioux, a Dakota, or a Yankton Sioux.

inherent in things Indian, especially Siouan, but advocating some assimilationist policies ("Early Native" 16-17). Stout, like other scholars, is unable to accept the idea that one can be Indian culturally--taking a political stance for recognition of the values Indian cultures have to offer--and still be wholly American. After all, what American fits the description of or *is* completely satisfied with everything "American"?

In a similar dichotomous stance, Deborah Welch assumes Bonnin "was increasingly being brought to a point where she would have to make a choice--the Indian world or the White," even though Zitkala-Sa sought compromise (13), a compromise that began for the Sioux as a nation when they first traded with EuroAmericans and adopted EuroAmerican tools into their lifestyles. For Dexter Fisher, "language became the tool for articulating the tension [Bonnin] experienced throughout her life between her heritage with its imperative of tradition and the inevitable pressure of acculturation" ("Transformation" 204). According to Fisher's dissertation, Bonnin was

controversial to the end...an enigma--a curious blend of civilized romanticism and aggressive individualism. To many traditional Indians, she was somewhat suspect because she took bits and pieces from various tribes where it suited her, as exemplified in the eclectic dress she wore for public speeches which combined Sioux beadwork with Navajo silver. To whites, she was irritating because she was efficient and unpredictable....She often ridiculed the blind adherence of Indians to outmoded traditions of a past era; yet, at other times, she would vociferously defend their right to retain and preserve their culture. (25)

Perhaps taking cues from Hazel Hertzberg's seminal work, *The Search for an American Indian Identity*, Welch and Fisher seem to be reacting more to Bonnin's

assertive personality, which inevitably caused conflicts with people unaccustomed to dealing with a strongminded and strongwilled woman--especially not such an Indian woman--than they are to her writings. Fisher calls Bonnin "headstrong and independent" (AIS :Foreword" xi); Welch believes Bonnin had "personality handicaps" (164); and Hertzberg characterized Bonnin as needing to be a "one-woman show" (208). All three may be highlighting the vital urgency in tone found in many of Zitkala-Sa's writings and speeches, but they appear to be paying more attention to biographical concerns, such as other people's reactions to Gertrude Bonnin, one of the primary political voices for Transitional Era Indians (Hertzberg 138). Fisher, for instance, oversimplifies the conflicts this way:

To her mother and the traditional Sioux on the reservation where she had grown up, she was highly suspect because, in their minds, she had abandoned, even betrayed, the Indian way of life by getting an education in the white man's world. To those at the Carlisle Indian School...she was an anathema because she insisted on remaining 'Indian.' (AIS "Foreword" viii)

Fisher's dualistic description of the prejudices Bonnin faced as both a traditionally educated and a school-educated Indian overlooks several important points about Bonnin's life. First, Bonnin returned to the Yankton reservation several times where the primary conflict she faced was between herself and her full-blooded, older half-brother, Peter St. Pierre, who inherited Gertrude's land allotment from her mother. While the inheritance slight was primarily a familial falling out, Bonnin believed it was racially based, since she was possibly fathered by the EuroAmerican whose surname, Simmons, her mother took, although Fisher asserts Bonnin was fathered by a man named Felker (AIS "Foreword" ix). St. Pierre was

apparently successful in developing her mother's prejudices against EuroAmericans into a bias against Gertrude and her other half-brother David² (Welch 61). The schism with and final rejection by her mother, Ellen Bonnin, *Tate I Yohin Win*, only served to highlight other rejections she had experienced in her life--from former fiance Carlos Montezuma who told her her writings would make no difference (Welch 38), from influential Carlisle founder Captain Pratt who called her writings "'trash' and their author 'worse than pagan'" (Welch 27), and from Bureau of Indian Affairs officials who refused to provide Bonnin with a teaching position on the Ute reservation while her husband was stationed there (Welch 73). These were the *personal* conflicts which affected Bonnin most profoundly.

It is unfortunate that scholars would choose to label Bonnin as "schizophrenic" (Stout "Literature" 71) and "ambivalent" (Fisher "Transformation" 204). Fisher even goes to extremes to blame Bonnin herself for her inability to remain living on the reservation after her taste of schooling:

Gertrude Simmons *tried to convince herself* and her mother that the bit of education she had received made it impossible for her to fit

² In the Foreword to *American Indian Stories*, Fisher quotes a letter from Bonnin to Montezuma in which she calls David her half-brother, although Deborah Sue Welch indicates they probably had the same father, Simmons (4). Bonnin recalls an incident, probably told to her by her mother, with her father, whom Fisher earlier said was Felker, a man who had deserted the family before Gertrude was born (ix):

Once my father scolded my brother, and my mother took such offense from it--that eventually it resulted in a parting--so as I grew I was called by my brother's name Simmons. I bore it a long time till my brother's wife--angry with me because I insisted upon getting an education--said I had deserted home and I might give up my brother's name 'Simmons' too.... Then I chose to make a name for myself--and I guess I have made 'Zitkala-Sa' known--for even Italy writes it in her language (x).

comfortably back into the traditional customs of her tribe. (AIS
"Foreword" xi, emphasis mine)

In making this claim, Fisher ignores the plethora of agonizing, personal stories told by Indian children who had been removed at young ages from their families and taken for two to three years to boarding schools where many died. Luther Standing Bear remembers,

I soon began to see the sad sight...of returned students who could not speak their native tongue, or, worse yet, some who pretended they could no longer converse in the mother tongue. They had become ashamed....The boys came home wearing stiff paper collars, tight patent-leather boots, and derby hats on heads that were meant to be clothed in the long hair of the Lakota brave. The girls came home wearing muslin dresses and long ribbon sashes in bright hues which were very pretty. But they were trying to squeeze their feet into heeled shoes of factory make and their waists into binding apparatuses that were not garment, but bordered on some mechanical device. (LSE 235)

Such cultural reprogramming, in isolation and far from home, like Eastman's father's, was difficult to overcome upon returning home. The children became aliens to the parents, and the parents became undeveloped and backward people to the children. Furthermore, the drastic changes in environment were so stressful to the children that Standing Bear estimates "nearly one half of the children from the Plains were dead and through with all earthly schools" in the three years he was at Carlisle (LSE 234). Fisher does Bonnin an injustice when she blames her solely for her inability to return to traditional Yankton life.

Gertrude, or Gertie as she was known on the Yankton reservation, was not unwelcome there (Picotte OIL "Foreword" xv). On the reservation, she met her

husband, Raymond Bonnin, who, according to Welch, was "a man eight years her junior, her inferior in education, a man who stood in admiration of her accomplishments. In short, it was a marriage in which she could have some assurance of being the dominant partner, and of maintaining charge of her own life" (66). While such a practice of finding an "inferior" mate has been a standard one for men, Welch chooses to imply such a preference was purely manipulative in Zitkala-Sa, one example of how well-meaning scholars bring inbred, probably unconscious, prejudices against independent, self-directed women.

The major social conflict on the Yankton reservation, with which the Bonnins got themselves embroiled, arose between two groups--one with fraudulent claims to land rights, the other with legitimate ones--seeking control of the reservation in order to control the sale of lands (Welch 172). Zitkala-Sa would witness more fraudulent scams against Indians in her Oklahoma investigations as a representative of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, eventually publishing a report entitled, *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes Legalized Robbery* (Welch 184). She would learn from both of these experiences that the government had the power not only to dictate policy, but also to cover up wrongdoings. Later, she and Ray join forces with their opposition, who surreptitiously gained power, on the Yankton reservation in order to fight policies of the Indian Bureau (Welch 218-23).

But Zitkala-Sa did not limit her ambitions to work on reservations. After working for the Society of American Indians, which eventually disintegrated but was the first pan-Indian organization in the United States, as well as creating influential writings for its publication, *The American Indian Magazine*, she worked with other political groups, such as in the investigation of the graft and land fraud in Oklahoma for the Indian Welfare Committee of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, later founding her own pan-Indian group, the National Council of

American Indians, of which she remained president until her death (Welch 201).

As Fisher admits, Bonnin

became known to Indians and government officials alike as a persuasive public speaker and an effective, if relentless, mediator. She had, at last, found the way to use her education and skills of expression to aid her people, not to be an object of suspicion to them, and in doing so, she became the champion of the underdog Indian and a scourge to irresponsible Indian agents. (AIS "Foreword" xvi)

To give credit to all these critics who are so quick to focus on schisms instead of bridges, it is difficult to fully separate the political Mrs. Bonnin, who helped secure Indian voting rights, from the originally idealistic writer Zitkala-Sa, who wrote to influence public opinion about Indians and Indian culture, including finding value in native literary traditions.

Zitkala-Sa's stories are meant to influence and *change* EuroAmerican opinions about Indians, opening their eyes to abuses, such as land fraud. Two stories, "The Widespread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman" and "The Badger and the Bear," are designed especially to teach EuroAmericans about how easy it was to manipulate Indians out of their lands. One of Bonnin's few works of fiction, "Blue-Star Woman" with its larger, more difficult words "Widespread Enigma Concerning" in its title immediately calls our attention to the fact that this is not an ordinary children's story. "The Badger and the Bear," on the other hand, is structured in fable-like form, specifically for indirect educational purposes³ and is based on a traditional Oyate tale.

³ The tales contained in *Old Indian Legends* are often compared with the ones Ella Cara Deloria collected in Dakota texts, with Deloria's tales being called the more "scientific" (Stout "Zitkala-Sa" 41 & Picotte xviii), despite the fact that

"Blue-Star Woman" begins with "fields of golden sunflowers facing eastward, greeted the rising sun" (AIS 159), symbolizing the promise of sustenance and endurance. An old Indian woman contemplates her lack of kinship ties while she cooks frybread and coffee--foods given to her by a generous neighbor, in a giveaway not unlike what the "Pilgrim Fathers" received (AIS 162). Zitkala-Sa reverses the Thanksgiving giveaway, however, because the foods are distinctly EuroAmerican in origin, since the Sioux had neither flour nor coffee before contact with EuroAmericans; most Sioux, in fact, never saw them before reservation rations began being distributed (MPS 22 & 71-20). Because she was orphaned at a young age, Blue-Star Woman is uncertain whether or not she is Sioux. Her enigma, then, is that she cannot prove to authorities that she deserves a land allotment on this reservation.

The old woman also faces a dual dilemma due to cultural ignorance: she must openly speak her name, as well as the names of her dead parents, to government authorities. Ironically, she is actually proud to *write* her name because it is "her individual name," one she would not lose in marriage as most EuroAmerican women do (AIS 163), a Sioux idea to which Zitkala-Sa was clearly attracted. The Sioux taboo against speaking personal names aloud, which "was probably a means of protection in the days of black magic" (AIS 160), means nothing to nonIndians who want to legally assign her a portion of the reservation lands. Not only does she not know her parents' names, since no one spoke the names of the dead, but also because she has always lived alone on the edges of the

Deloria combined tales creating a synthesized, idealized, and generalized collection of folk tales (DeMallie "Afterword" *Waterlily* 237). Zitkala-Sa's tales, undoubtedly, were "embellished," as Stout calls it, which was her writer's prerogative. But I would argue that she maintained the original purpose of such stories--to educate by example--just as Aesop's fables and countless other tales for children have been meant as educational tools.

tribe, "her *reincarnation* had passed unrecorded in books" (AIS 161). In other words, when Indians were reassigned EuroAmerican names in place of their Sioux names, hers was never recorded on the rolls. Because of the practices of the two cultures, she has become a *persona incognita*.

Two "nephews," strangers she associates with *Iktomi*, the Sioux trickster, come to her morning meal and leave after devouring all her food, like *Iya*, the devourer of Oyate legend.⁴ They are able to convince Blue Star Woman to allow them to help her gain a land allotment in return for half of the land, arguing that "half a crust of bread" is better than none at all. To clinch her agreement, they point out that their trickery for getting her allotment is like using back-fire to fight a raging prairie fire: "In just the same way, we fight crooks with crooks. We have clever white lawyers working with us. They are the back-fire" (AIS 169).

The story then switches point of view. Chief High Flier is informed of Blue-Star Woman's allotment. He knows that since she is Indian she is entitled to allotment somewhere, but he is convinced her land should not come from his reservation. In angry determination, he has his granddaughter write a letter to "a prominent American woman," asking for her assistance in stopping this illegal

⁴ Iktomi, the spider trickster, was once the Spirit of wisdom, Ksa (Dooling 35) who, through believing the words of others began to find enjoyment in fooling others, pointing up the difficulty in knowing whether one is following folly or wisdom (Dooling 34). Because he repeatedly tried to fool the Spirits, Iktomi was banished from their realm.

Iya is the son of Unk, the Spirit of passion and jealousy, who seduced Inyan, the rock, from which all the other spirits originally came. Iya is a foolish and evil giant, given to rages, in which "he is known as Ibom, the Cyclone, who is the Spirit of disaster" (Dooling 8). Iya was condemned by Skan, the Spirit of the sky, after he spoiled the Spirits first feast, so that "he shall be forever hungry with a hunger that cannot be satisfied, so he shall eat filth and his breath shall stink" (Dooling 11). Later, Unk mates with her own son, Iya, and gives birth to Gnaski, the Demon, who delights in manipulating people with superficial flattery to make them look foolish (Dooling 9).

claim (AIS 173). As he rides his horse to the nearest post office to mail the letter, he thinks over the situation, becoming convinced that his well-meaning friend will only turn his letter over to Washington bureaucrats where it will get no response. A disembodied voice tells him his conclusions are right, so he stops his horse in sight of the government buildings to which he was riding to burn the letter with a fire of "dry grasses and the dead stalks of last year's sunflowers," believing the woman in Washington would get the message "on the wings of fire" (AIS 176). As he is riding home, however, Indian police overtake and arrest him for attempting to set fire to the government buildings. The superintendent, who is given supreme authority on the reservation by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, convicts the old man and sends him to prison. In his desolate prison cell, he has a vision wherein his EuroAmerican woman friend becomes "a vast multitude of women, with uplifted hands" (AIS 179), gazing upon the Statue of Liberty, whose light "penetrate[s] Indian reservations" (AIS 180). The power of the vision of EuroAmerican women sustains him until his release. Immediately after returning to the reservation, where the hills are empty of any sign of sunflowers (AIS 180), he is confronted by the two "nephews" who ask for his thumbprint signature. When Chief High Flier asks his son why they want his authorization, his son simply replies, "I pledged to pay them half of your land if they got you out of jail" (AIS 182).

Clearly, the sunflowers which are mentioned several times in the story are dying away and disappearing possibly forever, just as the Sioux and their life-sustaining traditional way of life seemed on the brink of extinction, for Zitkala-Sa. Symbolically, the sunflower and the sun it represents on earth have multiple meanings, from the fertility provided by *Wi*, the Sun spirit, to the promise of continuity as the sun returns each morning. The onset of drought, mirrored by the one in Eliot's *The Waste Land* which was published the following year, brings

desolation to the Sioux. The promise of a restoring rain is as distant in the story as it was during the drought actually experienced in South Dakota in the late 1800s.

Surprising to most readers might be the image of the EuroAmerican legion of women who are to come to the Indian's rescue. According to Mary Stout, the old chief's dream, acknowledges a hope that Zitkala-Sa always had. Her intensive work with the General Federation of Women's Clubs proves that she thought she had found a group who would listen to the story of the Native Americans; a group which even had enough political clout to right the wrongs she saw. (48)

Knowing something of Bonnin's political career and her close ties to the GFWC, as well as knowing something of Sioux culture (the name taboos) and mythology (Iktomi and Iya) aids in reading "The Widespread Enigma Concerning Blue-Star Woman." Also important is how EuroAmerican culture affected Indians--from forcing them to change their names to Anglicized ones, eliminating women's uniqueness by forcing them to take their husband's new surnames, to making the Sioux conscious of the need to wrangle legally to possess the land that had sustained them for centuries, even if only by obtaining small bits of it.

Personally for Bonnin, her research and legal battles on behalf of many tribes, including her own, her dealings with and her bitterness toward the Bureau of Indian Affairs which only chose to acknowledge her when it needed her in desperation, her experiences with the unending tangle of politics in Washington, and her own personal struggle with land graft all contributed to her distrust and suspicions, even of Indians who would use the system to their own advantage. Even without particular knowledge about Bonnin and Sioux culture and its EuroAmerican imposed changes, the message about wanton land fraud is clear.

"The Badger and the Bear," because it is written specifically for children, is more subtle in its address of EuroAmerican and Indian relations than "Blue-Star

Woman." The badgers can be seen as simply symbolizing American Indians and the black bears are the encroaching EuroAmericans. The badger family lives in a well-kept underground dwelling, where father badger brings his bountiful hunting kills, keeping "mother badger very busy, and the baby badgers very chubby" (OIL 61). One day a large, but gaunt, black bear comes to visit, and "though he was a stranger and his strong paws and jaws frightened the small badgers, the father said, 'How, how, friend! Your lips and nose look feverish and hungry. Will you eat with us?'" as is the Dakota custom (OIL 63). The bear returns daily, so that the family anticipates accommodating him. But then, one day, his behavior changes and he remains standing instead of sitting on his usual fur rug in the Dakota place of honor near the door. When the father badger asks him what is wrong, the bear states that he, the bear, is very strong. Father badger quickly reminds him he got strong on their shared food, but the bear ignores the reference to his expected appreciation. When the bear demands the cave dwelling for his own home, father badger says, "I fed you. I called you friend, though you came here a stranger and a beggar. For the sake of my little ones leave us in peace" (OIL 66). But the bear tosses them each out without any provisions whatsoever. Desperate because he cannot hunt without his weapons and his children are starving, father badger returns to the dwelling to beg for food. Again, the bear tosses him out, with "the little ruffian bears" hooting and shouting "to see the beggar fall upon his face" (OIL 69). Zitkala-Sa effectively creates sympathy for the Badgers who, like the Sioux, have been denied their traditional ways of living and must resort to receiving commodities from the government to survive, with thoughtless EuroAmericans calling them beggars. One little bear takes pity on the badger family, though, but only through trickery--a reverse Iktomi move wherein trickery becomes necessary--is able to obtain meat from his father, the now robust black bear, for the badgers.

The next day father badger again returns to beg. When he is thrown out this time, he sees a small bloodclot in the grass, which he picks up and carries home. He prepares a sweat lodge for the bloodclot and prays to the Great Spirit who sends him a Dakota brave out of the small amount of blood as an Avenger. The black bear, seeing the badger and the brave, feigns friendliness and offers, as is custom, something to eat. But the Avenger warns the bear that he must return everything to the badger or suffer. In fear, the bear family flees.

Read through the eyes of transitional Sioux life, the story is part wishful thinking wherein all Sioux lands, such as the Black Hills, would be returned to them, with all nonIndians, who only want to profit from what the Indians have by displacing them from their homelands, leaving them alone forever. But it is also largely truth, pointing out that Indians initially welcomed Europeans to this land, even helping to feed and clothe them, only to be turned out of their own homes once the whites outnumbered and overpowered them.

This story has interesting variants, however. Eastman's version, also called "The Badger and the Bear," appears in the only volume of his work, *Wigwam Evenings*, directly cited as collaborative with his wife, Elaine. The plot of the Eastmans' story mirrors much of Zitkala-Sa's except that it leaves out the Badger's magic which brings the Avenger, as the Eastmans also call the miraculously appearing Sioux warrior, thus eliminating more of the Siouan literary elements than Bonnin's version. The Eastmans' version mimicks the traditional European fable when it ends with a moral, "There is no meanness like ingratitude" (WE 69).

Zitkala-Sa's version is followed immediately by "The Tree-Bound," which is actually a continuation of the same story. She separates the two stories in a EuroAmerican literary style because the point of view in the second story shifts to that of the Avenger, completely leaving behind the Badgers. As Ella Deloria recorded the story, titled "Blood-Clot Boy," in both Lakota and English, there is

no separation despite the point of view shift. Comparatively, Deloria's retelling of Blood-Clot Boy's story is more distinctly Siouan. The animals in Deloria's story, however, are a rabbit, who is immediately driven out of his home by the bear so he has no chance to show the bear proper Siouan hospitality (DT 113). As in Zitkala-Sa's version, the rabbit/badger character surreptitiously obtains the bloodclot, from which the Avenger, Blood-Clot Boy, is magically created using the sweatlodge (DT 114). Also like Bonnin's version, Blood-Clot Boy/Avenger can perform magic; however, Blood-Clot Boy kills the father and mother bear outright, ending up sparing only the baby bear who showed Rabbit pity by feeding him and his family (DT 116).

Possible reasons for the differences in the story are many, and it must be recognized that each individual storyteller always adapts a story to her/his own liking. But both Bonnin and Eastman probably sanitized their stories for their EuroAmerican audiences, since both books were originally targeted at younger audiences. Bloodclots, to most EuroAmericans, were probably very disgusting things, so Blood-Clot Boy becomes the Dakota Avenger in Bonnin's and the Eastmans' versions.

Why, though, do the Eastmans eliminate the potency of the magic? In their version, the Avenger simply "sprang from a drop of innocent blood," which mirrors Christian ideals of purity and innocence and the power of blood, as in the Eucharist, to right wrongs (WE 68), making his appearance more miracle than magic. Why, too, are the protagonists Badgers in the Bonnin and Eastman versions and a rabbit in Deloria's? Again, different storytellers might prefer different animals. Badgers have reputations of ferocity and cunning, whereas rabbits are better known for their speed (and quick thinking?). But other stories Modern children might have been familiar with, in particular Joel Chandler Harris' *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, were only twenty years old when

Zitkala-Sa published *Old Indian Legends*, nearly thirty years old when the Eastmans published *Wigwam Evenings*. Two of the most popular figures from the Uncle Remus tales were Brer Rabbit and Brer Bear, also adversaries who attempted to trick one another. In Harris' stories, as in all the Sioux versions of "Blood-Clot Boy," the Rabbit (or alternatively the Badger) is always more cunning. Perhaps Bonnin and the Eastmans chose to use a Badger in lieu of a Rabbit to keep children from confusing their tales with the Uncle Remus ones.

Published in 1901, most of the the stories in *Old Indian Legends* involve the spider trickster Iktomi, and the cyclone eater/devourer Iya, who eats up whole villages and anything else he desires, and other would-be profiteers, all of whom can easily be seen as symbolizing infiltrating, deceitful EuroAmericans intent on obtaining Indian lands and absorbing Indian children into mainstream society. Yet, if this particular symbolism is the case, Zitkala-Sa lets us know that not all EuroAmericans are bad. The little bear in "The Badger and the Bear," who sympathizes with the badgers, is undoubtedly someone like James Mooney, Senator Henry M. Teller, or Thomas A. Bland who argued repeatedly that, although assimilation must take place, it should be "at a slower pace, in a manner to be determined by Indian peoples themselves within the bounds of tribal culture" (Welch 81). This ability to see the positive and negative attributes of both cultures often leads critics to label Bonnin as ambivalent. What Bonnin recognizes, however, is that both cultures do affect one another, and that individuals from either culture can be unscrupulous. This balanced view of both cultures, also characteristic of Charles Eastman's views, is often misunderstood by critics who prefer to see transitional Indians' attempt to wholly acculturate as EuroAmericans or to remain wholly Indian culturally.

The illustrations by Angel De Cora which accompany the original text of *Old Indian Legends* depict Indians in all the roles, even though the texts describe

animals as the characters. In "The Badger and the Bear," a grumpy, older and larger man sits to the far right in the drawing, obviously representing the Bear. In the middle sits a younger man who has a pleasant look on his face, which is turned to the right toward his guest. He is the Badger. Badger's wife, a woman tending to the broiling of the venison in the foreground of the drawing, is dressed in fringed buckskins, like her husband. Their children scamper about behind the father. In the pictures which accompany his stories, even Iktomi, the trickster spider, is depicted as a lone Indian whose nose and chin are a bit too long and pointed, with a crafty smile on his face.

Why did De Cora depict Indians instead of animals for the tales? As William K. Powers emphasizes in his discussion of Oglala ritual language, when speaking of sacred matters, especially in ceremonies, which are often accompanied by stories, animals are referred to as *wahutopa* or Four-Leggeds, and humans are called *wahumunpa* or Two-Leggeds. Powers asserts that "common language was often rendered sacred by means of its context"; the context could be renditions of songs learned during vision quests wherein "nonhuman species are regarded as human (*Wanbli oyate* 'Eagle nation,' *Tatanka oyate* 'Buffalo nation,' *Hehaka oyate* 'Elk nation,' etc.)" (65). Such "ritual language was the means of expressing cosmological concepts" and is found "extensively in Oglala mythology" (W. Powers 66). To convey the Dakota concept that animals and humans are relatives, equal in spiritual and physical concerns, De Cora depicts humans to visually play the roles Zitkala-Sa depicts in language, in lieu of the presence of a performing storyteller. Children, or anyone else, who read the book, even if not familiar with such a concept--after all, the Christian concept is a hierarchy with humans as stewards over animals--they would still be able to make the connection that the characteristics, good and bad, depicted in the stories can be, and probably should be, applied to humans as well as animals, which is the context through which a

child raised as a traditional Sioux would have seen them. EuroAmerican children familiar with other kinds of folk tales, such as Harris' Uncle Remus tales or Aesop's fables, would have easily been able to understand the Sioux context, as well.

Zitkala-Sa's legends, crafted carefully to bridge Sioux and EuroAmerican cultural and literary contexts, prepared Modern readers for her second collection, *American Indian Stories*, published in 1921. Perhaps the story which best demonstrates Bonnin's continued connection with her Dakota sensibilities, even though tinged, like the other stories in the collection, with keen political awareness, is "The Great Spirit," previously published as "Why I Am a Pagan." Briefly, in her first person trek up to her cabin, she mentions the legend of Stone-Boy, the personification of *Inyan*, the great rock spirit that created the world: "our great-great-grandfather, older than the hill he rested on, older than the race of men who love to tell of [Stone Boy's] wonderful career" (AIS 102). Here, too, are the sunflowers Bonnin loved so well, "living symbols of omnipotent thought" (AIS 102)--the thought of Wi, the sun Spirit who was given the role "chief of the Sacred Beings" by Skan.⁵ After being exuberantly greeted by her dog, Chan, who can speak in an almost human voice, Bonnin sits at her desk to begin working. Refreshed from her walk, she feels "in keen sympathy with my fellow-creatures, for I seem to see clearly again that all are akin. The racial lines, which once were bitterly real, now serve nothing more than marking out a living mosaic of human

⁵ One version of the Oyate creation story says that Inyan, the rock, was lonely so created companions: Maka, the earth, made from the material of Inyan's being whose blue blood are the waters of the earth; the power from the blue water separated from it to become the sky Spirit, Skan, who gives power to all else (Dooling 3) and is the final judge on all matters (Dooling 4); Skan then took parts of himself and Maka to create Wi, the sun Spirit, to give Maka warmth and to decorate her with life (Dooling 4).

beings" (AIS 104). Without lecture, without haranguing against wrongs wrought in the name of Christian progress, Bonnin depicts the Dakota sense of connectedness to both animate and inanimate things in the universe. She does so in a romantic, sensual tone, to make her primary culture and its beliefs as attractive to her EuroAmerican readers as possible: "I prefer...my excursions into 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" (AIS 107).

While Eastman claimed to be preserving his early life experiences as something from a vanishing culture, Zitkala-Sa's autobiographical essays do "not showcas[e] her life as yet another artifact to be preserved" (Fisher "Transformation" 206). Because she is more outspoken about her own and her mother's feelings toward whites in her three major personal narratives, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," and "An Indian Teacher Among Indians," many scholars, such as Deborah Sue Welch, Mary Stout, and Dexter Fisher, overlook the actual stories themselves and concentrate more on her frequent "unreasonable attitude toward other people" (Welch 73) and her "tone of militancy" (Stout 73) and a perceived "pattern of ambivalence...as she alternates between a controlled rage over the mistreatment of Indians and a desire to convince Americans of the Indian's humanity" (Fisher "Transformation" 204-5).

It is unclear why Fisher believes Zitkala-Sa's anger over the treatment Indians received at the hands of what she calls, "hard-working, well-meaning, ignorant [people] who...inculcat[ed] in our hearts [their] superstitious ideas," (AIS, 67) is somehow unconnected to her insistence that Indians are humans, too. Indians were mistreated, after all, because EuroAmericans could comfortably place them in a category of "otherness" and often justified abuse because they believed Indians to be somehow less than human. By pointing out abuses toward Indians,

both subtly and directly in her stories, Bonnin is highlighting the fact that Indians are deserving of the same rights other people take for granted simply because of the "race" and culture into which they were born. While her outspoken comments were unusual for an Indian writer in the era in which she wrote, Zitkala-Sa's writing is more than militant commentary; it is literature. Of the three Sioux writers in this study who wrote their works unaided by another highly skilled and trained writer, Gertrude Bonnin exhibits, perhaps, the most creative, the most facile, literary talent--demonstrated best by her integration of elements, both cultural and literary, considered by many to be diametrically opposed, as will be examined in more depth later.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that in focusing only on the inevitable conflicts which come from one culture asserting its values over those of another, instead of recognizing that Bonnin's writings highlight the ongoing transitions--the give and the take--between the two cultures, scholars fail to notice that Zitkala-Sa becomes the epitome of a person who can and does *balance* the two cultures in her own personal life and attempts to demonstrate in her writings the need and possibility for a balance in America as a whole. Even Dexter Fisher admits that Bonnin tried "to become the literary counterpart of the oral storytellers of her tribe," and "felt compelled to live up to the critical expectations of her white audience" (AIS "Foreword" vii).

Dorothea Susag attempts to downplay the schism many scholars assume plagued transitional Indian writers. Searching for an initial theme, however, she incorporates Edward Said's descriptions of exiles who assert difference and cling to memories of their past, where "the literary voice...*becomes the site of contestation* between two languages, two systems, two cultures" (emphasis mine 5), even though she ends up arguing that Zitkala-Sa successfully modified the two cultures (22), not only for herself, but also for future generations.

Few scholars seem able to connect the appeal literature, and other parts of EuroAmerican life, had to Bonnin's ingrained sense of the Sioux literary tradition-- a tradition so tightly and actively interwoven into everyday Yankton life, unlike Western literature, that "being eloquent" (Stout "Early Native" 11) was a prerequisite for effective tribal communication (Susag 13-14). Being eloquent meant gaining the attention, and respect, of listeners, because cooperation was vital to tribal life in order to make equitable, and often lifesaving, decisions. The best speakers, then, were more often the most influential people. Speaking metaphorically of her work--reading and writing--at college, Zitkala-Sa says, "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" (AIS 76). Eloquently, Bonnin translates one activity, writing (also predominantly a EuroAmerican male activity at the turn of the century), into another, weaving (a traditional Indian female activity)--symbolically paralleling cultural values, as well--weaving and writing as arts of expression, and traditional concepts of men's work as women's art. In effect, Bonnin crosses over three imposed boundaries--the ones between EuroAmerican and Indian cultures, between men and women's roles, and between the arts and crafts--thus, however modestly, invades three territories: those of EuroAmericans, men, and art, especially the literary arts.

In Western mythology, such a comparison of artistic, often gendered, expressions, in particular storytelling and weaving, comes as early as the Greek myth of Philomela. After being raped, having her tongue cut out, and then imprisoned, Philomela cannot tell her sister what happened to her, except through weaving an intricate tapestry (Hamilton 394-6). Perhaps, then, Bonnin weaves through the silence imposed on Indians, and most women, with her writings as Zitkala-Sa. Whatever the case, Bonnin recognized that being eloquent, no matter what the language or method of conveyance, garners respect and admiration. As

the writer, Zitkala-Sa, Bonnin crafts works that combine Sioux and EuroAmerican literary traditions, reflecting values from both cultures and demonstrating one culture's effects on the other, in order to gain respect and admiration, as well as to influence opinions and decisions, from both cultures.

Despite the fact that being facile with language in order to explore its limits and possibilities is not limited to EuroAmerican writers, many literary scholars still seem unwilling to recognize literary capabilities, let alone traditions, in writers in transition between oral and written cultures. While Dorothea Susag admits that "Zitkala-Sa has constructed a literary *voice* both from the rhetoric and value systems of the colonizers, and from a remembered Yankton/Dakota landscape, language, and story" (7), she hesitates to assert there was and is a viable Sioux literary tradition, hinting instead at a "tribal literary tradition" which she refuses to isolate from other generally recognized Indian oral traditions (9), and pointing out that Bonnin allows us to "see how Lakota *story* tradition, translated into English, has been woven into the Judeo-Christian tradition and rhetoric" (emphasis mine 17). While such an observation is leading Bonnin scholarship in the right direction, it still oversimplifies what she does in her writing, leaving the intricacies largely unexplored.

Even though Eastman, Standing Bear, and Black Elk also demonstrate combinations of Sioux literary traditions with Western ones, Bonnin's writings are different from theirs in several ways: she never assumes an anthropological point of view toward her Indian subjects; she does not shy away from pointing out weaknesses in EuroAmerican thought and actions; she never attempts to separate EuroAmerican influences--such as the adoption of materials goods like beads, cloth, and metals--from contemporary Dakota life although she is critical of many practices imposed overtly on Indians like Christianity and boarding schools, and

she was one of the first, if not the first Indian writer, to argue for being allowed to live as both Indian and American.

To assume that literary finesse--by which I mean the ability to tell stories well in multiple, sometimes experimental, forms--comes only with studying Western ideals of literature is arrogant and racist, to say the least. Imagination is a human trait, shaped by culture and experience. A literary or creative tradition becomes established when one speaker or writer influences others, but the products as each successive creator shapes them are never identical; yet when they carry on or transfer specific aesthetics, themes, or forms, they are part of an ongoing, thus traditional, literary or creative experience. Analyses of several writers from one particular tribe, such as in Julian Rice's *Lakota Storytelling*, assist in establishing the fact that various Indian nations conceived and transmitted stories within culturally established forms, just as EuroAmericans have done.

Perhaps Bonnin's awareness of Western values of literary finesse can be credited to the fact that she began studying EuroAmerican concepts of literary quality at an earlier age than any of the men in this study. Perhaps such awareness of language's capabilities for eloquence not only comes from tribal necessity and her EuroAmerican-based literary training, but also comes from her finer sense of appreciation for abstract, metaphorical concepts like symbols, an appreciation which would have come directly from tribal elders and her mother, who "instructed her child in the Dakota way, expecting her to transmit to her children the same Dakota tradition" (Susag 4). Because of her initial grounding in the traditions which accompany a primarily oral culture, Bonnin possessed a charismatic finesse in oration that the men, too, seemed to have. Both Eastman and Standing Bear were popular speakers; and Black Elk mesmerized audiences with his demonstrations of Lakota rituals, songs, and dances at pageants for years.

Bonnin comes to writing, then, well fortified--possessing a deep appreciation for language's subtleties from her childhood training in Dakota literary traditions, from her experiences as a college orator, and from her education in EuroAmerican literary traditions. Compared to the male Sioux writers, only Eastman had a training close to, yet not quite comparable to, what Bonnin received. While Eastman did have his grandmother and other elders to teach him the cultural values of storytelling, Bonnin had her mother, who, judging by Zitkala-Sa's descriptions of her, was one of the most influential people in Bonnin's life.

Similarly, women are often noted as being the primary givers of power in many traditional Lakota stories, such as in the common legend of "The Stone Boy." Not only do Stone Boy's powers come from his mother, who lived among the Winds, but when he rescues his four Wind uncles from the buffalo people, he is only able to do so because of the spiritual/magical powers given to him by the women he meets along the way (Walker 51). Almost all contemporary Oceti Sakowin writers, such as Luther Standing Bear, who discuss traditions of tribal art credit women with the most creativity because, unlike the men whose artwork was primarily restricted to painting tipi covers and adorning their weapons, women's art work was also considered to be the more symbolic art, often using geometric designs, as well as the totem images the men used (LSE 91).

It is important to note Paula Gunn Allen's description of symbols here. According to Allen, to Indians, symbols are not just concrete representations of abstract concepts. Instead of merely metaphorically representing an imagined reality (an idea), or an emotive reality (a feeling), symbols stand for "that reality where thought and feeling are one, where objective and subjective are one, where speaker and listener are one, where sound and sense are one" (Hoop 71). So that, when Zitkala-Sa refers to sunflowers, replete throughout her writings, as in "Blue Star Woman," she at once refers not only to the idea of the flowers, which are

scattered wildly across the plains, but also to the tribal emotionality and spirituality connected with the sunflower. In one of the primary dances of the Sun Dance, wherein young men begin dancing when the sun rises and continue dancing for three to four days without food or water, the dancers, who are adorned with leather sunflower symbols, perform much the same sort of symbolic representation as Bonnin's sunflowers do in her stories. The sunflower is "the only flower that follows the sun as it moves on its orbit, always facing it" (MPS 120). It also looks something like the sun, known to the Sioux as a physical manifestation of the spirit *Wi*, so that as a symbol, both in the Sun Dance and in Bonnin's stories, the sunflower is a tribal way of all at once bringing the sun to earth in a physical form and connecting spiritually with the lifegiving--and seemingly never ending--power of the sun, of *Wi*. The sunflower is, for the Sioux, then, a symbol of physical and spiritual strength, which, at a deeper level, is necessary for tribal continuity. When we read Zitkala-Sa's stories then, we must realize that the sunflower, and other natural symbols, are being used at multiple levels. When the sunflowers wither and disappear from the plains in "Blue Star Woman," not only has the life-giving ways of traditional Sioux life been extinguished, in Zitkala-Sa's view, but the Sioux are on the verge of disappearing, spiritually, culturally, and physically.

That most of Zitkala-Sa's symbols are natural in origin is not surprising, given the fact that early on, like most Indians of and before her era, she had ample contact with and appreciation for the natural world. Margaret Lukens demonstrates how Gertrude's lessons from nature helped develop her problem-solving skills and her "scientific skills of experimentation [which are] necessary for life on the land":

Knowledge of light and shadow was the way Gertrude would learn to tell time, to understand where to position a dwelling or plant vegetables, and to navigate on the trackless prairie. Zitkala-Sa

narrates the young Gertrude's attempts to catch her own shadow, noting, 'Before this peculiar experience I have no distinct memory of having recognized any vital bond between myself and my own shadow', illustrating the introduction of an important scientific concept into the mind of the youngster through playful interaction with the natural world. (170)

Her mother, herself trained to know life-giving and life-threatening plants and animals apart, as well as how to utilize their forms and parts in artwork, would have provided Gertrude's segue into understanding the symbolic aspects of nature, as well as the mythology that accompanied them.

When *Skan*, the Sky spirit, created *Wi*, the Sun spirit, he cast shadows on the Earth, *Maka*, and decries, "The shadow of each thing shall be its spirit and shall be with it always" (Jahner "James R. Walker" 195). In Zitkala-Sa's story about chasing her shadow, her spirit or *nagi* (spirit double or guardian)⁶ in traditional Sioux belief, Gertrude pursues the shadow, which is always just ahead of her, until she is exhausted. To catch her breath, she sits on a rock, the physical manifestation of *Inyan*, or the primal power that gave of himself to create the first Spirits (Jahner "Walker" 194 and Dooling 3), and the shadow teasingly sits next to her (AIS 23). Gertrude's friends "planted their moccasined feet firmly upon [her] shadow to stay it" (AIS 24), but her shadow/spirit cannot be held down, and slips away, always just ahead of her. Dorothea M. Susag equates this spirit chasing

⁶ Traditional Sioux believe there are four "spirits" per person. In creating the first people, Skan "gave a spirit like that of the Sacred Beings but a little lower" to the creatures. From himself, he gave them "a *nagi*, a sirit that guides the conduct...to be their ghost or double. Then he gave to each the *nagila*, a particle of his own divine energy. He commanded Tate [the Wind Spirit] to breathe into each image a *niya*, the breath of life, and Wakinyan [the Thunder Spirit] to give each a *sicum*, the spirit which gives power to produce offspring, and to give health and growth" (Dooling 11).

with Bonnin's pursuit of her Dakota heritage, which always seems to be part of her but separate from her (16). As *nagi*, it is what guides and protects her, like a guardian angel. Whatever Bonnin's reasons for incorporating traditional Sioux mythology into her autobiographical stories, she clearly demonstrates a command of abstract symbolism's power and potential, as is fitting for the traditional, artistic Dakota woman.

Sioux women's creative outlets seemed to begin shrinking with reservation life. Standing Bear comments in *Land of the Spotted Eagle* on the increasing loss of traditional women's artistry for several reasons: the loss of natural flora to the region (being replaced by farmed vegetation), which were used for dyes and paints; the damage to the earth, as well as restrictions placed on native access to particular geographical areas, the soils of which were used for both clays and paints; and the ease of using beads instead of dyed porcupine quills in needlework on clothing (LSE 91). Standing Bear is the only one of the four Sioux writers in this study who directly comments on this phenomenon--the replacement of Sioux tools and commodities for EuroAmerican ones. The use of beads in Indian crafts seems "traditional" now, but the switch has been important to Sioux culture, demonstrating how easily EuroAmerican "things" have been synthesized into even "traditional" elements of Siouan life.

Marla Powers reports, for instance, that from the time "when the reservation was first established and up through the 1940s, traditional costuming flourished. It is often said that the Lakota people, once they no longer had to hunt for game and retired to the annuity system..., began beading in great quantity simply because they had the time and the materials to do it" (137). She assumes, as do so many others, that "beading" is as traditional as "quilling" was, even though Standing Bear credits his mother with obtaining "the first beads ever seen by the Sioux Nation" (MPS 7). So why is it so easy for us to assume beading is

traditional, but literary craft--facility with narrative forms and symbolic abstractions--is not?

Writers, such as Standing Bear, Marla Powers, and Edward Lazarus, point to the effect Euro-American culture has had on Sioux culture. In fact, as Lazarus argues,

the Sioux...had abundant reason to want tranquil relations with the whites. In the generation since Lewis and Clark's visit, the Teton had tripled in size to 10,000 members, testimony to the prosperous life they were enjoying. The Indians could credit their contact with the white for much of this prosperity. The introduction of firearms, cooking utensils, and a host of other items had drastically reduced the workload of their hunting culture and brought relative leisure to their nomadic existence. To an ever-increasing degree, the tools of western civilization were becoming everyday necessities of Sioux life. (11)

Since the Teton were much further west than the Yanktons, Lazarus is speaking of an influence in the far west that had already had a profound effect on more eastern tribes like the Bonnin's Yankton Sioux. That dependence on trade with whites for things like cooking pots--which not only made cooking easier, but could also be broken down and shaped into metal arrow heads--would be only a temporary boon for the Sioux, and for the traders themselves. As G.E.E. Lindquist points out, early trading with EuroAmericans brought a kind of economic prosperity for Indians:

that the fur trade increased the larder of the Indian as well as that of the trader, few will question. Oliver Faribault, a noted fur trader, used to say that he counted it a loss of five hundred dollars for every Indian who learned to read and write. (67)

The goods they trade for and the EuroAmerican tools the Sioux come to appreciate, including literary tools, are assimilated into their daily lives.

But the increasing desire for products from EuroAmericans began to change not only the way the Oceti Sakowin lived, but also how they produced their own goods. Women's artwork changed from a nature based art form to a manufacture based one using artificial paints and beads, and woven cloth instead of leather. Ghost shirts--those sacred, bullet-proof shirts of hope for the Lakota--for instance, were made out of white cloth, probably muslin (Mooney 790). Ironically, "the singular piece of craftwork that is the symbol of being Lakota in the modern world" is the Star of Bethlehem quilt design, brought back around the turn of the century to the reservations from, most likely, Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania as a skill the girls learned in school (M Powers 138).

A possible reason the star quilt appealed and still appeals⁷ to the Sioux is because stars, especially the morning star, are sacred symbols representing the promise of dawn and the continuous rebirth of lifegiving daylight, thus the continuous sustenance of the tribe. Stars are also, as Bleck Elk mentions in *The Sacred Pipe*, a contrast to the darkness, ignorance, of night, and act as transmitters of "the Light of Wakan-Tanka into this darkness.... The sacred Morning Star... stands between the darkness and the light, and... represents knowledge" (71). Stars often appeared as one of the many symbols painted on the Lakota Ghost Shirts (Mooney 790).

In Zitkala-Sa's short story, "The Trial Path," stars become symbolic of the power of love, even from beyond the grave, as well as the points of transition

⁷ To attest to the continuing popularity of the Star of Bethlehem design, most of the stores carrying locally made crafts on both the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations sold Star quilts of brilliant colors in August 1995.

between life on earth and an eternal life of happiness beyond the Milky Way.⁸ The story is an *ohunkankan* story, or a tale "regarded as having some fictional elements" in it (Picotte xi), which was told "in the evening as everyone in the family went to bed, during the time between lying down and sleep" (Picotte xiv), which is also the time period in which the story takes place. As two women talk at night, "a large bright star" peeps in through the top of the tipi at the granddaughter who listens avidly to a tale her grandmother tells. The granddaughter, reassured that the largest and brightest stars are wise old warriors and the smaller dimmer one young braves, decides the star she sees "is my dear old grandfather" (AIS 127). As the girl states this, watching the star, a sort of time warp occurs wherein her voice traverses past the fall night air, "over many winter snows, till at last it cleaves the warm light atmosphere of her grandfather's youth. From *there* her grandmother made answer" (emphasis mine AIS 128).

The story her grandmother then tells about the girl's two grandfathers, one of whom kills the other and must face a trial test to determine his own fate, is told by the grandmother as though that time were present time: "It is the day of your grandfather's death...How fast, how loud my heart beats as I listen to the messenger's horrible tale!" (AIS 128-9). This kind of memory, according to medicine man Lame Deer, is called *waki-ksuya*, which means "to recall, to travel back into the past, to hold communion with the spirits, to receive a message from them, to bring to one's mind the dead friends, to hear their voices once again, even to the point of having a vision" (198). The stars, after all, shined upon that past time, as they still do the present, so become the vehicle for the story, for the two

⁸ For some Oceti Sakowin, the Milky Way, the *Wanagi Tacanku* or Ghost Road (W. Powers 93), is an pathway filled with the campfires of the dead on their way "to a place which is reflective of their life with *ni*" or breath (W. Powers 53). Other Oyate believe one travels to this ideal land south on the backs of spotted eagles, which is why "to 'go south' is a metaphor for dying" (W. Powers 93).

women's memories, and for the spiritual reoccurrence of the highly emotional event that took one husband from the elder woman and gave her another.

The story subtly explains connections, web-like and circular, between past and present, between kin--blood relatives and adopted, between humans and animals, and between storytelling and ceremony. The grandmother carries on the mental and emotional memories of her two husbands, both of whom are considered the granddaughter's grandfathers. The second husband, who passed his trial test by successfully riding an unbroken pony, forever ties the value of his own life with that of the horse, who was named *Ohiyesa*, the Winner,⁹ so that when the man dies some time later, the horse is killed at the gravesite so that "together master and beast will enter the next camp-ground" (AIS 135). The very act of storytelling becomes a ceremonial act attempts to tie the grandmother--and her memories--to the granddaughter, strengthening and redefining their kinship ties, as well as their cultural ones, providing the grandmother with continuance--in thought, in emotion, as well as through heredity, through the granddaughter. yet the transmission in this story seems to fail. "I did wish the girl would plant in her heart this sacred tale," the grandmother says when she discovers the girl is asleep (AIS 135).

"The Trial Path" is imbued with Dakota values and beliefs--kinship ties which are so strong and vital that they last beyond death, the importance of the past in the present, the importance of carrying on information--especially familial

⁹ Interestingly, both Bonnin and Eastman named their sons *Ohiyesa*. Eastman named his son after himself, of course, but why did Bonnin choose that name for her son? It is clear from this story that she liked the name, but could there be another reason? Bonnin was already nearly two months pregnant when she married Ray Bonnin (Welch 45), but there is no evidence that he is not their son's father. Could the "The Trial Path" with the idea of two husbands for the grandmother be in any way autobiographical?

tales--through storytelling, the power of storytelling to shape the beliefs of the young thus of the continuing culture, and the importance of animal connections to human life. Many of these values and beliefs appear repeatedly throughout Zitkala-Sa's writings.

By the time Gertrude left Yankton for "the red apples" in the east, she would have witnessed her mother's own creative efforts at home. In Bonnin's youth, her favorite pastime was to sit near her mother after dinner listening to the legends told by the elders who had been treated to her mother's hospitality (AIS 13). She adapted these oral stories "for the white man's papers," and an early chance to make her own voice heard (AIS 97). Like the women artisans whose creations change with the encroachment of another culture's influences, Bonnin combines the oral stories, and their various traditional forms which she grew up hearing, with EuroAmerican literary traditions formed from centuries of manipulating words on paper into a new form. Her firm grounding in oral traditions also helps her become an eloquent speaker, "a prized art among college students in the nineteenth century" (Welch 10).

Her early training in metaphoric symbolism provides a solid base for her sophisticated, Modernist prose. The sacred sunflower which follows the sun's path dotingly across the sky is a symbol for the reverent and steadfast Sioux. The persistent wind is a more intricate symbol. Her mother's name, after all is Reaches for the Wind, so that Zitkala-Sa uses the wind as both a symbol for her mother's influences and the persistence of Sioux culture (Susag 11). Bonnin also places herself in the mythic role of *Wohpe*, *Skani's* (the Sky's) daughter who comes to earth as a falling star and becomes *Tate's* (the Wind's) adopted daughter, taking the shape of a wind, who is "a mediator, moving among oppositions to create harmony" (Jahner "Walker" 58 & 195). As Zitkala-Sa says so eloquently of herself, "my Indian nature is the moaning wind" (AIS 67). The hand hurting reeds

and thistles with which she weaves as symbols of pens and papers are the tools with which she tries to successfully and harmoniously merge two cultures, Sioux and EuroAmerican. From watching her mother do beadwork to listening to, and probably practicing or repeating, the elders' stories, Bonnin sharpens her literary finesse and success in addressing EuroAmericans with their own literary expectations, and working within Sioux literary traditions, becoming, indeed, a mediator between supposed opposites.

Having it considered effective, quality, *Modern* literature, I believe, was one goal Bonnin had for her writings. Zitkala-Sa's major search in her works is for "those ears that are bent with compassion to hear" her words which come "out as the low voice of a curiously colored seashell" (AIS 68), inviting the curious to pick up her works and listen closely to what she has to say. To reach a wider audience than those most Modernist writers wrote for, or just those interested in the anthropological aspects of Indian life, Bonnin crafts her stories, both autobiographical and fictional, carefully, trying to attract more educated non-Indians to her works to educate them more effectively about the plight of Native Americans, as well as to demonstrate that, even as an Indian, she, too, was capable of writing sophisticated, Modern prose, which has the power to sway feelings and opinions.

Repeatedly, she demonstrates the all too human need to have someone understand her pain and sympathize with her needs--as a human being. The fact that she is an Indian girl, manipulated into voluntarily leaving a life she knew and loved to try a strange way of living that had seemed to promise untold wonders for her innate curiosity, is almost incidental. In "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," she becomes *any* child who is taken away from familiar surroundings and has a new regimen of living imposed on her--because the damage is similar for any child who becomes *acculturated* to one way of living and then must remove herself,

without the love and support of family and friends, from that way to adopt another.

To give credit to the scholars who are overpowered by Zitkala-Sa's powerful imagery of a child torn from home, it is true that Bonnin does emphasize her regrets at having left the surroundings of her first culture and her lack of finding little possibility of a satisfying way of living in the second. She finds herself "homeless and heavy-hearted" as she goes away to college and later begins teaching at the Carlisle Indian School where she "pine[s] for sympathy," as she seems to throughout the rest of the autobiographical essays (AIS, 76). But I would argue that it is not self-pity Zitkala-Sa is really stressing here; something even contemporary reviewers did not recognize, instead accusing Bonnin of having an "over sensitive nature" which has made her "melancholy" to the extent of standing in "rebellion and bitter opposition" to EuroAmericans and their culture, complaints often lodged against other outspoken women writers of that time (Susag 21). Instead, she is using her personal experiences to draw attention to the highly damaging impact forced acculturation via forced deculturation has on children and their sense of self.

While Bonnin did feel and experience some extreme instances of estrangement, compounded by feelings of guilt for having gone against her mother's wishes not to leave the reservation, during her years away from Yankton, she *chooses* as a writer to emphasize these feelings--feelings she could have easily glossed over as did Eastman. As Deborah Welch points out, "with her pen, Zitkala-Sa determined to reach a broad spectrum of Anglo society, showing them that Indian peoples were human beings, with fears, hopes, and dreams for their children, much like themselves" (18).

The three autobiographical essays were originally published separately, yet in the same final order as they are found in the book, in successive issues of

Atlantic Monthly. They show obvious signs of having been well thought-out in their order beforehand. The first chapter of "Impressions of an Indian Childhood" foreshadows all that will happen in the rest of the stories as she begins with the scene of herself as a child running carelessly across the prairie while her mother cries over the "sham," the "paleface," who threatens to take away everything they have ever had. On the Yankton reservation Ellen Bonnin, *Tate I Yohin Win* (Reaches for the Wind), is the Wind, *Tate*, in Gertrude's hair, allowing her to grow up free and confident (Susag 11). But the wind symbolically demonstrates her own passionate need to create harmony, like *Wohpe*, in this case between her mother and EuroAmericans, of which Gertrude is part--genetically and, later, culturally. While her mother repeatedly cautions Gertie about trusting the whites, the first essay ends with the eight-year-old girl begging to be allowed to go East to the land of the red apples, a reversal of the Garden of Eden myth. The mother acquiesces, reluctantly, saying, "She will need an education when she is grown, for then there will be fewer real Dakotas, and many more palefaces" (AIS, 44). Whereas her mother is pessimistic, Zitkala-Sa is tempted away from this paradise in South Dakota, mixing Sioux myth with EuroAmerican ones.

Unlike Eastman's father, who essentially forces his son to adopt white ways, Zitkala-Sa's mother has implanted resistance in her daughter. It should be noted, however, as Raymond Wilson does in his biography of Eastman, *Ohiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux*, that Eastman's grandmother was largely responsible for his Indian education, thus encouraged resistance to the influence of EuroAmerican culture (13). Wilson also demonstrates how important Eastman's father was to his acceptance of EuroAmerican culture and quotes him as saying, "Our own life, I will admit, is the best in a world of our own, such as we have enjoyed for ages....[but] the sooner we accept their mode of life and follow their teaching, the better it will be for us all" (20). Even Standing Bear's father

encourages him to learn EuroAmerican ways well because "they keep coming like flies" and Indians have "to be able to live with them" (MPS 151). The Sioux women demonstrate more resistance to acculturation than do the men.

While Bonnin laments the loss of her mother's respect, Luther Standing Bear says that one of the major faults of EuroAmerican culture and how it has modified Sioux culture is the loss of traditional Mother Authority:

Today mother-power is weak, scattered to many places--taken over by the teacher, preacher, nurse, lawyer, and others who superimpose their will. This loss applies also to the white mother, for she, too, is blinded and confused by the intricacies of the society in which she lives. And the incongruity of it all is that the child has not become individualized, but has become stamped with the ideas of others. Few today are the youthful individual thinkers and doers who dare step out of the ranks, for the ranks close about them and try to force them to conform. This process was not possible in Lakota society in tribal times. The Indian mother pointed the way, but she followed in her son's and daughter's path. She did not take from, but rather, added to, their strength by urging it to express itself. (LSE 109)

Standing Bear probably oversimplifies and overemphasizes the role of the biological mother, however. Ella Deloria and Mari Sandoz emphasize that children were considered community responsibilities among the Sioux, with a second set of parents often being designated to avoid overprotecting the children and preventing the mother from showing favoritism to her children over her husband (Sandoz 27). Often, the grandparents were particularly useful in aiding the parents in teaching the children social values (Deloria *Waterlily* 32-33). But Zitkala-Sa emphasizes that it was "close beside my mother" sitting on a rug where she began her

"practical observation lessons in the art of beadwork" (AIS 19), later having observed and absorbed enough to be able to impersonate her mother in play with her friends, imitating things they heard their mothers say and mimicking "their various manners, even to the inflection of their voices" (AIS 22).

It is perhaps an imitation of her mother's voice, as well as those elders which visited regularly to tell tales of Iktomi after the evening meal, that she affects in her stories. At least she openly reveals the important role her mother played in her life. Even if she occasionally became ill with guilt and anxiety, readers can also sense her adamant "refusal to remain the victim" (Susag 7). One of Bonnin's major regrets was, undoubtedly, losing her mother's respect (AIS 80 & 97). Yet she strives, in her writings and political activities, to carry out the mission she saw necessary to remove her mother's sadness and fears--to halt the victimization of Indians by EuroAmericans--and to carry forth her Dakota woman's role--to perpetuate the culture she learned at her mother's side on the Yankton reservation, while still becoming an American citizen.

As Welch asserts, "fiercely proud of her Sioux ancestry, Zitkala-Sa sought acceptance in the Anglo world on her own terms, refusing to bend to the prevailing ethnocentrism of her time" (v). But it is only when Zitkala-Sa realizes for herself how damaging her separation from her mother and their traditional Sioux life at such an early age has been on her current life does she begin to truly rebel against the "Christian palefaces" who marvel "at seeing the children of savage warriors so docile and industrious" (AIS 98). This realization actually comes at the end of the first essay when she tells us that, as "the lonely figure of my mother vanish[ed] in the distance" (AIS 44), Bonnin "no longer felt free to be [her]self, or to voice [her] own feelings" (AIS 45). Here began her quest to find, and use, her voice, even if in childlike imitation of her mother's more powerful one, in order to free herself.

And her mother's voice and influence was a powerful one. An example of how much power Ellen Simmons had over her family is seen in her control of Gertrude's brother, David Simmons, who "returned after three years [at school] to take up life as a farmer, drawing an allotment in 1892, never to leave the reservation again" (Welch 6). The fact that Gertrude was the one who convinced her mother to let her attend boarding school later filled Bonnin with intense feelings of guilt and unhappiness because she became terribly homesick and lonely at school. Yet she had to live with the fact that she was the one responsible for the sense of alienation she experienced because her mother had warned her about trusting the palefaces (Welch 7-8). Perhaps, too, Gertrude felt some anger toward her mother for having been right. Naturally, she laments having given up what she had known, where she felt she had belonged:

I had arrived in the wonderful land of rosy skies, but I was not happy, as I had thought I should be. My long travel and the bewildering sights had exhausted me. I fell asleep, heaving deep, tired sobs. My tears were left to dry themselves in streaks, because neither my aunt nor my mother was near to wipe them away. (AIS 51)

Even though it is not just her mother she misses,¹⁰ it is her mother's "powerful force," as embodied in her Nakota name, *Tate I Yohin Win*, Reaches for the Wind, which carries Zitkala-Sa through her autobiographical essays. *Tate* is the main Dakota Wind spirit, which Dorothea Susag mistakenly conceives of as being female, who "moves in connection with the masculine Sky, *Skan*" (Susag 11).

¹⁰ According to Lame Deer, "Indian kids call their aunt 'Mother,' not just as a polite figure of speech but because that aunt acts like a mother," more evidence of the importance of the strength of kinship and communal ties, so that "Indian children are never alone" (184).

Susag argues, "in Zitkala-Sa's recollection and recording of [wind images], she acknowledges her mother's personification of this most powerful force, and she affirms the continuity between the Wind, her mother, and herself" (11). While I would agree with Susag's insistence that the references to wind in Zitkala-Sa's autobiographical essays do in many respects symbolize Ellen's forceful nature upon Gertrude, her insistence that Tate is female is erroneous.¹¹ A possible implication in Ellen's Dakota name, Reaches for the Wind, is that she reaches for the ephemeral, the uncatchable, the untameable. So that when Zitkala-Sa says, "I was as free as the wind that blew my hair, and no less spirited than a bounding deer. These were my mother's pride,--my wild freedom and overflowing spirits" (AIS 8), it is at once a yearning for the kind of freedom Gertie feels as a child that Ellen reaches for, as well as a yearning to keep hold of Gertie herself.

So the connection with the freedom of the Wind is ironic for both Zitkala-Sa and her mother, one of whom is caught up in dealing with acculturation forces, the other of whom is confined to a reservation. But the wind symbolically, primarily, stands for her mother's and her primary culture's felt influences on Bonnin. As Zitkala-Sa steps down from the train upon her return from Carlisle where she has been teaching, again against her mother's wishes, "she's struck by a 'strong hot wind...determined to blow [her] hat off, and return [her] to the olden days'" (Susag 11). For Zitkala-Sa, the Mother Influence attacks her physically on the Yankton reservation. But Bonnin did not ever openly disagree with her mother's assessment of EuroAmericans and their culture, possibly because she

¹¹ See James Walker's *Lakota Myth*, page 46, for instance; or Lame Deer's discussion of *Tate's* marriage to "*Ite*--the face--the most beautiful woman in the universe" who becomes Double-Face or Two-Faced Woman after having an affair with *Wi*, the sun (180-1).

would have had to admit her mother had been correct in her judgment when Gertrude was eight and wanted to go to the land of the red apples.

As a child, secure in her personal identity, she had already analyzed and rejected many EuroAmerican customs, such as when through her educators' ignorance or outright rejection of Indian customs she is humiliated by having her hair cut. As Zitkala-sa says in "School Days," "Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!" (54). Clearly, as a child, she must have wondered, since she could not yet speak English and no one explained to her in her own language why cutting her hair was necessary, whether she was supposed to mourn or had indeed been marked as a coward. The real tragedy for children like Zitkala-Sa is that the Euro-Americans who assigned themselves the task of acculturating these children never seem to have asked or cared about what short hair meant to Indians. As Standing Bear laments, they never took the time to learn about the people they set out to change (LSE 241).

Effectively, Zitkala-Sa uses stereotypes in her autobiographical essays often reserved for Indians on nonIndian ideas, such as calling Christianity a superstition (AIS, 62), and pointing out double standards, such as allowing an opium addict and an alcoholic to maintain positions they had no business holding to insure their survival while the same whites ridicule Indian children with demeaning labels reminding them of their dependence on government financing for their educations (AIS 95).

The very last chapter of "An Indian Teacher," in fact, most scathingly of the autobiographical essays exposes white injustices and prejudices against Indians, focusing most strongly on the phenomenon of visitors who come to the school as though to a zoo. With this trapped image in the foreground, Zitkala-Sa's autobiographical stories end with the statement she wants those sympathetic ears (and eyes) to remember most: "Few there are who have paused to question

whether real life or long-lasting death lies beneath this semblance of civilization" (AIS 99). She, like Eastman and the nonIndians of their time, seems to pessimistically assume an end to Indian culture. Zitkala-Sa takes the insinuation further, however, pointedly questioning whether EuroAmerican "civilization" is real life or a long-lasting death.

Most graphically, Zitkala-Sa's fractured, though never entirely broken, relationship with her mother symbolically illustrates the break with her past, her Dakota heritage, she was often forced to try to make by assimilated Indians like Montezuma and EuroAmericans like Captain Pratt. Somehow, even as a child she realized she did not have to give up her first culture. Her desire to maintain her Indian identity--largely defined by her Sioux culture--lead her to create a composite literary tradition based on a strong Sioux literary tradition, her traditional feminine Dakota role of cultural propagator, acknowledgement that EuroAmerican goods and tools could be assimilated into Sioux culture, and a Modernist American literary tradition. She is truly a Modern writer in her use of collage, such as with the drawings of humans in a book of animal fables and with her mixture of Dakota myth and symbolism within the framework of EuroAmerican romanticism. Through her balancing of the two cultures, Zitkala-Sa not only demonstrates how the past is always in our present, but how America's past through American Indian traditions can provide us with a strong sense of our present by highlighting our continuity and our connections to the natural world.

CHAPTER FOUR

"As long as you think I can't, I will show that I can": Luther Standing Bear's Quest for Honor

It is highly probable that Luther Standing Bear had either read or heard about the writings done by Charles Eastman. There are several reasons for making such an assumption. Standing Bear's memoir, *My Indian Boyhood* (1931), imitates Eastman's *Indian Boyhood* (1902), while clearly differing from it; whereas Eastman's is a generic title which could imply anyone's indian boyhood experiences, Standing Bear's is clearly his own. Standing Bear counters Eastman's descriptions of games, feasts, and ceremonies with more specificity. His *Stories of the Sioux* concern more "firsts," like those in Eastman's autobiographies, reflecting one of the most common Lakota themes which stems from the honor carried by counting first coup on an enemy. Standing Bear's writings demonstrate his deep concern for upholding his Lakota honor, attempting to clearly prove that he deserves the title of chief. While Eastman was more creative in his writings, Standing Bear's anthropological details, assisted in part by Prof. Melvin Gilmore and Warcaziwin in *Land of the Spotted Eagle* and by E.A. Brininstool in *My People the Sioux*, are more thorough, although not always more accurate, than anything Eastman provided.

Standing Bear takes the time to separate his works from Eastman's because it was important to him that he not only be believed, but also be known as the best authority on Sioux culture. To procure that sense of authority, he emphasizes the

Sioux storyteller's need for corroboration, and highlights the Sioux concerns for honor and prestige, asserting in a traditional Lakota manner that he, like Eastman, is from a family of good reputation and importance among the Sioux, even though he claims his writings were not done "with any idea of self-glory" (MPS "Preface"). While he freely gives information about typical Lakota practices, he practices the Sioux art of indirection when speaking about his own family, especially about his wives and his parents' separation.

Even though his works are the least literary in Western terms of the four Sioux writers in this study, Luther Standing Bear's books are important primarily for what they show us about the Sioux literary tradition and about traditional Lakota values, which inform that literary tradition. Because he had less EuroAmerican-style education than his contemporaries Charles Eastman or Gertrude Bonnin, Standing Bear's approach to writing his books exhibits fewer EuroAmerican influences, therefore allowing his Lakota values and his knowledge of Lakota literary traditions to come to the foreground. Most important to Standing Bear in his writings are that he comes across as a worthy authority on his subject matter (carefully tallying Story Sticks in his favor) that he weds his audience to the belief of his authority through indirection and imitation of anthropological objectivity, that he emphasizes what is important through repetition, and that he prove himself worthy of the title of Chief.

In his introduction to Standing Bear's *My People the Sioux*, Richard N. Ellis brings up several questionable points about Standing Bear's various claims, such as the facts that Luther repeatedly calls his father a chief, that he credits his father with talking the "hostiles" who retreated into the Badlands after the Wounded Knee Massacre into surrendering,¹ and that he also gives his father

¹ According to James Mooney in *The Ghost Dance Religion and Wounded Knee*,

credit for preventing the "hostile" chiefs, Spotted Tail and Red Cloud, from killing Crazy Horse. None of these claims, Ellis admits, are verifiable. The real controversy about them comes from the fact that there is no historical evidence to substantiate the claims (xv-xvi). Nor are there any but first-hand personal accounts, much like his own, to discredit them.

Similarly, we have only Standing Bear's word that he was made a chief after his father's death. Why is it important for Standing Bear that his reading public believe he is a chief, as well as believe he is the son of a very important Sioux chief? How does he go about convincing us he is truthful, at least as truthful as his memory allows?

which was first published in 1896, the elder Standing Bear had been part of a party, along with American Horse and Little Wound, which had persuaded Striking Bear and Short Bull, who had fled to the Badlands with their people when frightened by the sudden insurgence of more than 3000 soldiers (850), to return peacefully to the Catholic mission near the Pine Ridge agency approximately one week prior to the Wounded Knee Massacre (868). As Eastman points out in *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, information corroborated by Mooney, the overly nervous Pine Ridge agent, D. F. Royer, newly installed in October 1890 at his post had unnecessarily called in the troops, which Eastman believed "would be construed by the ghost dancers as a threat or a challenge, and would put them on the defensive" (98). Royer was described by Herbert Welsh, then president of the Indian Rights Association, in *Scribner's Magazine*, according to Mooney, as "a person... 'destitute of any of those qualities by which he could justly lay claim to the position--experience, force of character, courage, and sound judgment'" (848). Both Eastman and Welsh were correct in their assumptions, and Royer's paranoia caused the panic of most of the Sioux, ghost dancers and others, and led to the resulting hostilities. Luther could still be right about his father's participation in persuading the post-massacre refugees to turn themselves in, since most sources tend to only list a few chief names and gloss the rest with "and others." However, since he wrote *My People the Sioux* when he was at least sixty years old--nearly forty years after the massacre--he could be confusing his father's participation in persuading the initial "hostiles" held out in the Badlands with the post-massacre ones.

First of all, it is highly probable that Luther's father was really a chief--at least a band chief,² meaning he was responsible for the welfare of a small group of families, probably no more than twenty to thirty family groups, although Standing Bear's own estimation of band size ranges "from thirty or forty families to one hundred or more families, [with] a band of one hundred tipis or so being considered a large band" (LSE 120), perhaps exaggerating to further claim honor for his father. The elder Standing Bear, a Brule Sioux half-breed (MPS xiv-xv), was a member of the Wears Salt band (so called because a blind grandmother accidentally used salt instead of flour to make paints for the faces of a group of children (LSE 122-3). The struggle over whether or not he was indeed a chief primarily comes from nonIndian prejudicial beliefs--older than contact itself³--that there can be only one leader, one chief, to a tribe, when in fact there were several chiefs, each with separate (although sometimes overlapping) responsibilities. These responsibilities became more evident as the bands broke up into smaller units to increase foraging ranges, such as in winter when game was scarce. Paula Gunn Allen asserts that there were, at a minimum, always two "chiefs" or leaders per band, the red or war chief and the white or inside chief, who, at least for the Indians of the Southwest, was usually a woman with the primary responsibility of moving and setting up camp efficiently and seeing to domestic situations should they arise (*Sacred Hoop* 18-19). Leaders, emphasizes Marla Powers, accrued personal power and tribal respect because they exhibited the qualities, "generosity, fortitude, bravery, and hunting ability," which visibly demonstrated their connection to and respect for the spirits (26). While there were leaders, most

² Richard N. Ellis, in his brief biography of Luther Standing Bear, asserts that "his father was undoubtedly a band leader" ("Luther" 142).

³ Marla Powers reminds us that "the term 'chief' was not indigenous to the Oglalas; rather, it was a Euramerican term. Among the Sioux no leader existed who was supreme in all aspects of life" (29).

tribal decisions were made in council, where everyone who demonstrated such personal power and honor could freely speak after appropriate ceremonial pipe smoking, which often served to calm nerves and clear heads (127).

It is important to Standing Bear that his readers understand early on in *My People the Sioux* the important role his father played in the band. Standing Bear is meticulous in his descriptions of tipis and their varying sizes, pointing out that a poorer family, with fewer horses, could only transport a smaller tipi which required "only about two horses...on the move." A large tipi required at least six horses to move, so that "if a man wanted a large tipi, he must first be sure he had horses enough to move it." Standing Bear puts the equation before us: having many horses is considered being wealthy since having more horses means the privilege of having a larger tipi, which in turn can accommodate more family members, such as multiple wives. Standing Bear the First's "tipi was the largest in our tribe." In fact it was so large that "when we made camp, all the rest of the tribe would camp at a distance, as they were afraid the wind might get too strong in the night and knock our tipi over them" (MPS 13). All of this physical evidence is supposed to corroborate Luther's claim that his father was an important Lakota chief--one worth dealing with and hearing about.

If all of this "factual" information is not enough, Standing Bear also includes a heroic story about his father in *Stories of the Sioux*, entitled "Standing Bear's Horse." The story is a simple one, but difficult to believe. His father, Standing Bear the First, as he calls him, encourages ten other warriors to accompany him on the warpath to "punish the enemy and to make them return to their own land" because they have been harassing the Sioux (SOS 32). The part that is difficult to believe is that Standing Bear the First is the only one who chooses to ride a horse on this mission. The eleven warriors have a difficult time finding the enemy because "they wanted no open fights with the Sioux, who they

knew were the bravest of brave fighters" (SOS 32). As a result, the war party has to travel all the way to the edges of Sioux territory to engage and repel the enemy. On the way back, they discover the plains have been stripped of all life because of a prairie fire. Exhausted and starving, unable to go further, the other warriors ask Standing Bear the First to kill his horse so they can eat it. After praying, Standing Bear the First climbs a hill with his horse only to discover a lone buffalo in the valley below. He quickly kills the buffalo and the warriors feast. The story ends with, "In later years Standing Bear the First showed Standing Bear the Second the exact spot where the Great Mystery had placed the buffalo," which enables Luther to bring himself into the story, as well as adds a sense of "truth" to this story mixed in among Sioux legends. Truly, his father was a legendary figure to Luther.

While touting one's heroic achievements was expected of Sioux warriors, hunters, and sacred men, allowing one man to rule their lives was an alien concept. The EuroAmerican insisted upon dealing with one overall chief or with a few major chiefs, such as for treaty agreements, oversimplifying the more complex tribal system under which the Sioux lived. It is important to note that the Sioux, like most other tribes, were forced to appoint a representative or group of representatives to act as Head Chief(s) in a capacity of mediator--the negotiator for his people with the United States government. While such leadership was an alien concept to most tribes (M. Powers 29), it eventually became the norm. The gradual weakening and elimination of these chiefs lead to the lessening and near negation of the Sioux political voice, which Richard N. Ellis calls one of the most important "method[s] of reducing cultural integrity" (MPS 144). As a result, it was important for Standing Bear to reassert the power and the voice of the Sioux Nation through his inherited standing as a chief. To do so, to become the spokesperson for his people, Standing Bear has to prove his worth for such a role,

and his books, especially *My Indian Boyhood*, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, and *My People the Sioux*, are his testimony.

Standing Bear is carefully laying out for us devices similar to what the Lakota called Story Sticks. Traditionally, when Lakota men gathered in the council hall, or *Tipi Iyokihe*, for some leisure, men who were known to have had exceptional adventures were asked to tell their stories. As each man finished his story, "a tally-stick taken from a bundle kept in the *Tipi Iyokihe* for that purpose, was stuck in the ground upright, the narrator being entitled to a stick for every adventure which he could truthfully relate" (LSE 127). The man with the most stories to tell, was most revered because "in this way the listeners lived over the thrills of the adventurous ones and indelible records were printed in the minds of the youths" (LSE 127). This type of story telling, *woyakapi* or true stories (Wong 125), involves a narrator conveying important information to an audience which needs the information to live productively after hearing (or, in this case, reading) the content which illustrates the significance of a particular person, event, or place (Allen *Studies* 46). Standing Bear's *woyakapi* expands to discuss not only himself, but also his father, their people and their homeland.

So there are several possible reasons why Standing Bear might have wanted to make his father appear more important to the Sioux Nation than he might have been in actuality. Standing Bear was following, after all, in Eastman's literary footsteps--and Eastman had billed himself as the Best Indian from the Best Family of the Best Tribe. So, not unlike many nonIndian cultures, part of a Lakota's reputation as a man of honor started with his father's reputation. In *My People the Sioux*, we are introduced to his father's important status very early on: "I was the first son of Chief Standing Bear the First" (3). This theme of being the first runs heavily throughout Standing Bear's books, from Luther's being the first Sioux boy to enter the Carlisle school grounds, to being the first Sioux to work in

a position on the reservation "where he could compete with the white people" (243), who were the only people legally allowed to work for the government as Indian agents. He argues that his father "was the greatest chief who ever lived the lives of both the Indian and the white man" and "was the first man to see the need of day schools on the reservations" (MIB 4).

Of course, his father's reputation also depended on that of his father, "One Horse, who was a great chief and [Luther's] grandfather" (MIB 3). One Horse had captured so many spotted horses by the time of his son's birth, he named him Spotted Horse (MPS 3). Young Spotted Horse became the first Standing Bear after he gained the first coup on a Pawnee, and was also wounded by him, who was so brave and fierce that no one, at first, dared get close to him. It was after this brazen display of valor that the newly named Standing Bear, in honor of his bravery, was also made a chief (MPS 4-6).

Like Eastman, Standing Bear works very hard to establish the fact that he came from a very noteworthy family. Not only were his father and grandfather chiefs, but his mother was Pretty Face, who "was considered the most beautiful young woman among the Sioux at the time she married my father" (MPS 3). He elevates her to quite a status, since she is not merely the most beautiful of their band or of Spotted Tail's tribe, but of the whole Sioux nation.

While such aggrandizing posturing, albeit via the indirect route of connection with important individuals, might seem artificial and might seem to provide a reason to look askance at Standing Bear's grounding in reality, it is a traditional warrior touch--a way to get one's listeners to believe one is an authority because one is worthy of such respect. Traditionally, however, such a storyteller would have handy witnesses to corroborate the stories told and to uphold the speaker's authority (Brumble AIA 26-27 & Wong 122). It was important to the Lakota warrior that his deeds be publicized (Brumble AIA 27), but it was vain for

him to do so without being asked or without having verifiable witnesses, which was a sign of arrogance (LSE 129). As a writer, Standing Bear has no such authorizing support. He must resort to traditional autobiographical nuances to create his rapport of believability with his readers.

One such autobiographical validating touch is to prove someone else is in error concerning either the writer him/herself or about a concept close to the writer's expertise. Standing Bear denounces the EuroAmerican free and easy use of the word "chief" to describe any and every male Indian:

Whenever an Indian leaves his reservation and comes among the white people to-day, either to go on the stage or in the moving pictures or with a Wild West show, he is always greeted with 'Hello, Chief.' This is most decidedly wrong. Suppose when you visited an Indian reservation, the Indians would say to you, 'Hello, President,' or 'Hello, King.' You would think it not only silly, but it would be most embarrassing. Then sometimes the white people call a woman of mixed blood 'princess.' How can that be right and proper when Indians have no kings or queens, and therefore can be no 'princesses'? The highest title an Indian woman can receive is wife or mother. And where is there greater honor than that?" (MPS 276-7).

By emphasizing how inappropriate it is to call all Indian males chief, Standing Bear wants us to believe he would never use the term lightly (he signed all the prefaces to his books as Chief Standing Bear), going so far as to emphasize the fact that, while there is great honor in receiving the title of chief, such an honor requires much self-sacrifice on the part of the man who receives it (277).

While Ellis, and other critics, do not consider Standing Bear's works "superb examples of literary art" (MPS xix), this passage concerning his opinions

about nonIndians' casual ways of using titles for Indians is very complex. Luther worked in movies and with Wild West shows, so probably encountered being called "chief" often. How must this have made him feel?

When Standing Bear worked for Bill Cody's Wild West show, his father had already passed away (in 1898), leaving a "chief" gap for their band. As the first son of Standing Bear the first, Luther should have been in line for the position. Yet he was not made a chief until after he returned in 1905. Why the delay? Perhaps he had to earn the title and since there were no more battles to be fought (other than legal ones), Luther had to prove himself worthy some other way. He points out an instance, in *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, wherein one man, who was designated as a chief by whites in Washington, did not *earn* the title from the Sioux because he lacked "the traditional qualifications for a chief" (178).

In the passage regarding the misuse by nonIndians of the term "chief," Standing Bear also elevates the status of chief, perpetuating the erroneous belief that there was one chief over each tribe, possibly to put the concept in terms his nonIndian readers would understand--President and King. But, in doing so, he also elevates his own status, thus his own authority and, hopefully, his own believability. To Standing Bear, though, there seems to be little difference between being a president and being a chief, comparing Crazy Horse to the United States' first president by pointing out that "George Washington gave England a lot of trouble, too" (LSE 178).⁴

⁴ This comparison of a chief's status to that of the president's is not terribly inaccurate, given the fact that the U.S. government recognized Indian tribes as sovereign nations in 1830 when "Chief Justice John Marshall [wrote] in the...Supreme Court case *Worcester v. Georgia* that Indian tribes were 'distinct, independent, political communities' who retained at least limited rights of self-government" (Lazarus 17). Indian chiefs are, in effect, heads of state, now that the government limits each tribe to one overall leader.

Then, in the discussion on the misuse of the chief title, Standing Bear reduces the status he just created by reminding his readers that the Sioux have no kings, or queens, and thus no princesses. Both Eastman and Bonnin refer to young Indian women as princesses in several of their writings, so that here Standing Bear is also counteracting a stereotype they helped affirm. Since there is no such thing as an Indian princess (except in the contemporary honorary sense at powwows and other tribal events), even though the men vie for positions and titles of honor, the women in traditional Sioux society had to settle for being wife or mother, according to Standing Bear. In seeming anticipation of any New Woman's objections, he then none too subtly challenges them to name a higher honor, failing of course to note that being husband and father should also be enough honor for men.

Certainly, part of Standing Bear's impulse to denounce the idea of princesses comes from his need to assert his point of view is more correct than previous perspectives on the subject. Zitkala-Sa used the term in "Shooting of the Red Eagle" to refer to a chief's daughter (OIL 99). But calling Indian women princesses is only one thing that he refutes. He also tries to dispel the belief that women did anything more than defend their homes and children. While Eastman does assert that certain things, such as walking on the hide of bear, wolf or wildcat, are taboo for women, the second half of *Old Indian Days* is devoted to telling women's stories, with the women's deeds ranging from superior selflessness and modesty (as are expected), to deeds of valor from warfare. To counter Eastman, Standing Bear acknowledges that women could ride horses well (LSE 103), that some women are so *wakan* that they are "allowed to make and decorate war shields for the warriors" (LSE 140), and that women are the founders of peace (LSE 202) and symbols of sacredness and purveyors of traditions, such as through the "Holy Woman," as Standing Bear calls White Buffalo Woman, who brought

the peace pipe and its ceremonies to the Sioux (LSE 221). Yet he argues that women never were warriors. At most, in Standing Bear's stories, women are accidentally heroic, such as in "The Woman Who Killed the Owl," in which a woman cooking an evening meal gets annoyed by a hooting owl, throws a bone at it and kills a Crow scout in doing so, and "Grandmother and the Bear," in which a woman protects herself and children who are picking turnips by pointing an iron rod at a bear which thinks the rod is a gun. It seems to have been very important to Standing Bear that people believe his version of the "truth" rather than Eastman's or Bonnin's.

While Standing Bear may have lost his appeal to some women readers by limiting women's roles in Sioux life, he has spent considerable time anticipating their, and his other readers', concerns about his sincerity. Above all, he wants his readers to see how he always speaks with honor and proper decorum, as is expected of a Lakota. So he attempts, somewhat clumsily, to develop a sense of sympathy or at least an understanding within his readers to instill a belief that he is worthy of the title of chief.

For instance, the image of his first wife, Nellie DeCory, and newborn daughter, Alexandra Birmingham Cody Standing Bear, as a display for the Wild West Show in England creates reader sympathy for them: "the work was very light for my wife, and as for the baby, before she was twenty-four hours old she was making more money than my wife and I together"⁵ (MPS 266). Here is a mother and child, less than a day out of childbirth, working as a sideshow. Perhaps Standing Bear, and Buffalo Bill Cody, believed the English would be impressed by the Indian woman and child's stamina?

⁵ Such live "anthropological" exhibits were very popular in Victorian England and America. Revisit the discussion of these in the Introduction.

Within four pages, however, little Alexandra dies--the first really sympathetic heart tug for readers--but Standing Bear does not dwell on her death, managing to cover her illness, her death, and her funeral in one paragraph (MPS 270). Then Standing Bear is in a train wreck and seriously wounded, which prevents him from joining the Wild West Show for a second year (MPS 271-2). Upon his return home, his first son, little Luther Standing Bear the Third, dies (MPS 272) and Standing Bear must take his son's honored position as council drum-keeper, collecting sacrifices offered at dances. As when discussing the deaths of any of his male relatives, Standing Bear makes an effort to point out his son's generosity to validate "the great mourning throughout the tribe" at his son's passing (MPS 272). In a time-honored tradition, Standing Bear praises males/warriors for their sacrifices and nobility.

After these three tragedies, Luther is made chief. It is doubtful that many readers, despite his stereotypical oversight in regards to the importance of women, would have begrudged him his title of chief after witnessing his stoic grief. Through his selfless and untiring work as official interpreter and as an Indian manager for Bill Cody's Wild West Show, in his quest to provide for his family despite the physical harm he endured, in his stoic, but appreciative sense of loss over his children, and in his generosity toward his people by having given away over a thousand dollars of goods on the day he was made chief (MPS 276), he proved himself a man worthy of being a Lakota chief.

As both Eastman and Standing Bear emphasize, trying one's best to obtain such honor and respect was the primary emphasis in a Sioux boy's life skills training and social education. According to Marla N. Powers, the four virtues that were most important to the Lakota were generosity (*wacantognaka*), bravery (*cante t'inza*), patience (*wacintanka*), and wisdom (*ksabyahan opiic'iya*) (60). Demonstration of these four things would guarantee an individual the honor and

respect Sioux children, both male and female, sought, so Standing Bear attempts to exhibit all four. He has to prove himself better than Eastman, for instance, because Eastman had, after all, been lauded by EuroAmericans as the best his culture had to offer modern America decades before Standing Bear rose to popularity. If he can prove himself more worthy of honor than Eastman, he will have proven that, even though less formally educated than Eastman, he is the better Sioux.

Unlike Eastman and Bonnin, Standing Bear's autobiographical accounts revolve around him primarily with very little description or development of the people with whom he associated, other than his father, accompanied by largely anthropological information about Lakota culture. He only occasionally brings in his first wife and children for emotional effects, and never mentions his second wife at all. His attention is primarily focused on the male aspects of being a Lakota, although in *Land of the Spotted Eagle*,⁶ he spends considerable time describing kinship and gender-based roles.

Perhaps in his eagerness to "correct" information Eastman had given, such as Eastman's assertion that women's roles were more diverse than were stereotypically depicted in western novels and movies by giving several accounts about women's roles as warriors and chiefs, Standing Bear ends up contradicting himself on occasion. For instance, when discussing proper courting conduct, Standing Bear asserts that "good courting manners in Lakota youth forbade his calling at a young woman's tipi...and no presents were given until an engagement took place" (LSP 98). Yet, while describing how a young man might catch an

⁶ The title of the book, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, refers both to the plains area where the Sioux traditionally lived, and to the land where the dead dwell in happiness. Many traditional Lakota believe the spotted eagle is the animal which carries the *wanagi*, or spirits of the dead, to this land of happiness which is always located to the South (LSE 122).

opportunity to speak to the young woman, he describes how young men often followed girls home from ceremonies, with the mother passing "food to all the young men who stood or sat outside the tipi door waiting to speak to the girl" (LSP 105-6). Further, he notes that even while courting, young hunters "would go hunting and bring a buffalo to her father and brother"--a token present which proved the hunters were capable of providing for a woman and her family (LSE 104). Eastman, in a much more brazen account, depicts a man inside a young woman's tent, "bending over her and gently pulling her robe, as a suitor is permitted to do to awaken his beloved" (OID 46). Perhaps the difference marks the distinctions in customs between the Dakota and the Lakota, with the Dakota allowed inside the woman's tipi and the Lakota remaining respectfully outside.

What is further ironic about Standing Bear's negligence in providing details about specific women's lives, especially concerning his wives or even his mother's influence on him, is his lament for the loss of "mother authority" among the Sioux because of EuroAmerican social influences. Traditional Lakota mothers were the only authorities who could sanction marriages, says Standing Bear, "being the nearest interested person. Had an utter stranger...been asked to receive the vows of the young people and sanction their marriage, it would have been an act without meaning to them" (LSE 109), clearly indicating a distrust of the EuroAmerican practice of being married by a priest or judge and giving credence to the stereotypical assumption that seems to occur in many cultures that mothers' ties to their children are stronger than the fathers'. Mother authority for the Lakota, according to Standing Bear, reflected social authority. Emphatically, Standing Bear argues that women should remain the sole educators of children, claiming,

Today mother-power is weak, scattered to many places--taken over by the teacher, preacher, nurse, lawyer, and others who superimpose their will. This loss applies also to the white mother,

for she, too, is blinded and confused by the intricacies of the society in which she lives. And the incongruity of it all is that the child has not become individualized, but has become stamped with the ideas of others. Few today are the youthful individual thinkers and doers who dare step out of the ranks, for the ranks close about them and try to force them to conform. (LSE 109)

Standing Bear's claims that Lakota children are much more individually oriented than EuroAmerican children would probably have been highly contested in his day. As he admits, Lakota "boys were to be future warriors and the girls were to be future mothers" (LSE 117), which would seem to be a very rigid and narrow range of social expectations for both genders. But what Standing Bear means by his references to individuality is clarified later:

Though each person became individualized--could be as truthful, as honest, as generous, as industrious, or as brave as he wished--could even go to battle upon his own initiative, he could not consider himself as separate from the band or nation. Tribal consciousness was the sole guide and dictator, there being no human agency to compel the individual to accept guidance or obey dictates, yet for one to cut himself off from the whole meant to lose identity or to die. (LSE 124)

A nonconforming individual within the group, especially in such a small group as a band of fifteen or fewer families within possibly hostile territory, could upset the social balance, endangering everyone.

Mari Sandoz's observations on how the Sioux raised their children corroborate Standing Bear's assertions about individuality. Sioux children, according to Sandoz, learned to be independent by being adopted by a second set of parents, who helped see the children's proper training and kept them from being

too emotionally attached or dependent on their biological parents. They were thus provided with the extended support of the second family, as well as all the "siblings" that came along with it. Such a broad range of personal experiences allowed the Sioux child to learn to make personal decisions at an early age because, as Sandoz asserts, "no Sioux could tell anyone what to do" (36).

As for why roles were designated so clearly based on gender, Standing Bear simply says, "the division of labor [depended on] the best experience of the people," so that women tended to home matters--food, shelter and clothing preparations--and men tended to more dangerous pursuits--hunting, scouting, and warfare (LSE 127). Most Sioux writers corroborate Standing Bear's assertions regarding the proper training of the genders for their specific roles within the community. Indirectly, Standing Bear's assertions about proper gender roles point towards his own training as the son of a chief, who killed his first buffalo, but never made it to the war path.

To assert that traditional Lakota training is an education, and to counter the argument that those who are not educated in schools are ignorant, Standing Bear points out the irony in the differences between Indian and nonIndian educational systems several times in his books:

An [Indian] education could not be confined to a certain length of time nor could one be "finished" in a certain term of years. The training was largely of character, beginning with birth and continued throughout life. True Indian education was based on the development of individual qualities and recognition of rights. There was no 'system,' no 'rule or rote,' as the white people say, in the way of Lakota learning. Not being under a system, children never had to 'learn this today,' or 'finish this book this year' or 'take up' some study just because 'little Willie did.' Native education was not a

class education but one that strengthened and encouraged the individual to grow. When children are growing up to be individuals there is no need to keep them in a class or in line with one another.

(LSE 15)

While nonIndians learned in organized groups citizenship duties which required them to act as a group and to be conscious of commonalities, Lakotas learned customs, mores, survival skills, and spirituality as individuals, usually as a child at a parent or grandparent's knee (Deloria, *Waterlily* 24). While the individuals within each culture tested their strengths, especially in games, with other individuals, for EuroAmericans the competition was typically geared toward obtaining power and influence over others; for many Indians the competition was typically geared toward winning honor and respect, not necessarily power, from others.

The primary difference between the two educational philosophies, both of which called for several forms of self-sacrifice, was that the individual-based education for the Sioux youth was to ensure the survival of his people, and the group-oriented education of the EuroAmerican youth was to ensure his individual survival and, often, his monetary success. Whereas the EuroAmerican might sacrifice sleep and self-respect to climb the corporate ladder, the Indian sacrificed his worldly goods, which sometimes meant his family's food, to see that all in his band survived and lived as comfortably as possible. These beliefs are inherent in the two culture's religious ideals, as well. In Christianity, one must seek salvation, have an individual relationship with Christ as the foremost thing in her/his life, as an individual, to reap the rewards of heaven. In traditional Lakota religion, "beliefs concerning a hereafter...range from a belief in an unspecified place in which the spirits of human and animals live in a world reflective of the 'real' world, to the idea that there is no hereafter, but that all spirits reside visibly and invisibly near the place of their kinsmen" (W. Powers 51).

This oversimplification of the cultures glosses over much, however, since a larger difference that should be noted and conceded is the fact that traditional Lakota life revolved around the transience of a hunter/gatherer tribal society wherein the accumulation of goods was impractical, and which allowed the whole tribe to move to where food or goods could be obtained when supplies ran low; meanwhile EuroAmerican life revolved around establishing a permanent residence which allowed and possibly encouraged the accumulation of material goods, partly from fear of less productive times when food or goods would be harder to obtain. As Standing Bear and others attest repeatedly, Indian wealth was measured not only in how much they could afford to give away to others, but also in how much they were able to keep. Horses, tools, clothes, tipis, wives, and numbers of living children all contributed to the tribe's image of an individual male. A great number of tipis surrounded by a great number of horses attested to the wealth in game and foraging of the surrounding environment, as well as the hunters' abilities to provide food for the large number of people. Such a large gathering could not be sustained long before game shied away and the grass became eaten or trampled. But while such a group was together, few enemies dared invade.

However, "the fame of a band rested upon its braves and honored men rather than upon the number of tipis, horses, or other goods it might possess" (LSE 132). Men who were honored for their deeds and good judgment were allowed to influence or to sway the band's decisions, although that influence could be removed if the advice given proved dangerous or costly in some way. The primary sense of Honor is thus primarily gained through what a Lakota does for others.

For both Sioux and EuroAmerican cultures, obtaining these goals-- influence through power or respect through honors--meant achieving that culture's status as a responsible adult. As Standing Bear admits,

I thrived upon the thought of achievement and approval and I do not think that I was an unusual Indian boy. Dangers and responsibilities were bound to come, and I wanted to meet them like a man. I looked forward to the days of the warpath, not as a calling nor for the purpose of slaying my fellowman, but solely *to prove my worth to myself and my people*. (emphasis mine, LSE 14)

This goal--proving his worth to himself and his people through bravery, *cante t'inza*--compelled him to take up a role which seemed lost--being a chief to his nation. While Standing Bear initially left the reservation to live elsewhere and do other work, such as act in movies, he returned, later in life, to the reservation to witness the deplorable conditions into which his people had fallen.⁷ This visit to Pine Ridge convinced him to do what he could under the circumstances to guide his people--both the Sioux with whom he was born and the EuroAmericans with whom he lived and worked--into a better understanding and, he hoped, a better life. To do so, he had to draw on his Lakota training.

Clearly differentiating between the two culture's educational systems is important for Standing Bear who, like Eastman, experienced both culture's educational practices. As Ella Deloria describes in *Waterlily*, and as Standing Bear emphasizes in *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, Lakota teaching methods were aimed at teaching by pointing out "the rules of behavior toward one another" and supplying examples, not through a process of humiliation (Deloria *Waterlily* 34). Indirectly demonstrating appropriate behavior, instead of exacting punishment to create a

⁷ Richard Ellis, in the Foreword to *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, says, "Standing Bear was shocked by the physical and mental status of the reservation Sioux. If his visit did not serve as a catalyst for the writing of [this book], it undoubtedly confirmed and strengthened previously formed opinions...and convinced him of the need to educate the American people about the strengths of traditional Sioux culture" (i).

sense of humility, starts even before children can speak, with the parent or grandparent redirecting an older child's behavior as an example for the toddler (Deloria *Waterlily* 36).

It was not until Standing Bear attended Carlisle that he experienced the sensation of humiliation. The Carlisle teacher demanded the student, when reading passages written in English, read the passages until it was read correctly. Instead of praising their efforts, the teacher questioned each student's reading, asking the student if s/he thought the passage had been read correctly. Still uncertain of their command of the language,

One after another the pupils read as called upon and each one in turn sat down bewildered and discouraged. My time came and I made no errors. However, upon the teacher's question, 'Are you sure that you have made no error?' I, of course, tried again, reading just as I had the first time. But again she said, 'Are you sure?' So the third and fourth times I read, receiving no comment from her. For the fifth time I stood and read. Even for the sixth and seventh times I read. I began to tremble and I could not see my words plainly. I was terribly hurt and mystified. But for the eighth and ninth times I read. It was growing more terrible. Still the teacher gave no sign of approval, so I read for the tenth time! I started on the paragraph for the eleventh time, but before I was through, everything before me went black and I sat down thoroughly cowed and humiliated *for the first time in my life* and in front of the whole class! (LSE 16-7)

Standing Bear effectively makes his readers bear the humiliation as well, forcing us to follow his efforts numerically through each reading. In such a laborious way, he helps us achieve at least a small sense of what he went through during that class

session, exhibiting not only his bravery, *cante t'inza*, but also his patience, *wacintanka*.

Later, when he attended the weekly Saturday school meetings, Luther still feared reprimand. He thought Captain Pratt would announce his failure before the entire student body. Standing Bear was surprised when Pratt proclaimed that Luther had read his teacher's reading test eleven times in succession and correctly every time. Luther was elated at the praise because he "truly liked General Pratt⁸ and words of praise from him meant a good deal....But in spite of the praise that I received that day and the satisfaction I have had in all these years in knowing that I was a good student, I still have the memory of those hours of silent misery I endured in childish misgivings" (LSE 18).

Yet the students were not the only ones humiliated by the EuroAmerican educational system designed for the Indians. Before any of the children learned English, a woman tried to teach them how to play reeded "horns." While she attempted to communicate by gesture, when she demonstrated wetting the reed, the boys misunderstood and began spitting into their instruments. The teacher got so frustrated and discouraged that she ended up crying, while the boys sat and "waited for her to get through" (MPS 148).

To Standing Bear, such misery endured by people at the mercy of a social construction not geared toward empowering individuals is questionable policy, and not a demonstration of wisdom, *ksabyahan opic'iya*. Yet he does not directly say so, only implying his viewpoint through the indirect use of examples. Only later, in the latter part of *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, does Standing Bear fully confront the wrongs he feels EuroAmerican culture has imposed on American Indians.

⁸ Standing Bear refers to Captain Pratt as General Pratt, perhaps because of a lapse in memory, but also possibly because the higher rank makes words of praise from Pratt more important.

The primary good Standing Bear seems to have acknowledged in having attended Carlisle was two-fold: actually experiencing nonIndian ways of living to compare them with Indian living in order to arm himself for the future, and being able to meet children who he would have, at an earlier time, considered enemies, such as the Pawnee boy who Luther befriended after he was captured, and who he met again later at Carlisle. This two-fold experience benefited Indians who were going to have to deal with attempts at forced assimilation because it equipped them with knowledge of how nonIndians think and live, and it forced them to join with other Indians, leading to the Pan-Indian movement of the early twentieth century.

The further one reads in *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, the more one notices Standing Bear's tone becoming increasingly condemning of things EuroAmerican. In one of his most biting indictments of EuroAmerican culture and its assumption that Indians are better off assimilating to it, Standing Bear asks, "Has the white man's social order been so harmonious and ideal as to merit the respect of the Indian, and for that matter the thinking class of the white race?" (LSE 251). This was a legitimate question, which had not been asked before, at least so openly. Such a direct attack or challenge is also very Sioux-like. Warriors often used tales to taunt or challenge their peers to draw out confessions or to goad others into action to prove the challenge wrong (Brumble AIA 29). Here, then, Standing Bear challenges EuroAmericans to right their wrong way of thinking and acting toward Indians.

More directly than any of the other Sioux writers examined herein, Standing Bear argues for a return to tribal ideals, including customs, religion, and dress, all of which, he points out, have survived the attempted extraction or elimination of them by the dominating race: "had the Indian been as completely subdued in spirit as he was in body he would have perished within the century of

his subjection. But it is the unquenchable spirit that has saved him--his clinging to Indian ways, Indian thought, and tradition, that has kept him and is keeping him today" (LSE 190).

In many ways, Standing Bear's imitations of anthropological accounts are corrections of the more objective, thus not personally connected or socially accountable, anthropological narratives popular among ethnologists at the turn of the century. As Brumble points out, many Indians believed anthropological narratives made Indians merely "artifacts...of the dominant culture" (AIA 22). To keep anthropology from stealing humanity from Indians, Standing Bear works hard in his books to not only justify how the Lakota think and live, but also to demonstrate the worthiness of such thought and actions.

One way of demonstrating and clarifying Lakota values is when Standing Bear repeatedly confronts language as it is used by EuroAmericans in a Sioux-like indirect way, such as his discussion of the words chief and princess. When defending "'going back to the blanket'" as a viable approach to living in modern America, Standing Bear says,

the Indian blanket or buffalo robe, a true American garment, [is] worn with the significance of language[;] covered beneath it, in the prototype of the American Indian, [is] one of the bravest attempts ever made by man on this continent to rise to heights of true humanity. (LSE 191)

The significance of language, for Standing Bear, is not just what is written in books because "countless leaves in countless books have robbed a people of both history and memory" (LSE 27). Language, as the basis for communication, reflects culture and status; in the case of the blanket, something that had to be traded for either from Southwestern Indians or EuroAmericans, the more elaborately woven and more brilliant the colors, the more the blanket spoke of the

significance of the wearer because he would have had to pay dearly, such as with a horse, for it. Even though Standing Bear uses writing to communicate with Indians and nonIndians alike, recognizing the ability of the written word to transmit information at a distance, he still feels the most important stories are those recorded in memory "of interest or importance, some happening that affected the lives of the people" which "taught the virtues" and conveyed ideas "of pure fancy" because "a people enrich their minds who keep their history on the leaves of memory" (LSE 27). Standing Bear recognized that, as Indians became more increasingly educated in EuroAmerican schools, their sense of value for their native cultures would be diminished by the assertion of EuroAmerican values for written literature over the merits of oral tales. Because of Standing Bear's admiration for oral literature, much of the tone of his books, even when he is being anthropological, is informal and conversational, with several attempts at directly addressing his audiences, both Indian and nonIndian.

Even though many scholars dismiss Standing Bear's works as being of no literary importance, more so than the other writers of his time, Standing Bear uses the traditional Lakota indirect approach to assert his authority, to validate his claims, and to create interest, and hopefully belief, in his subject. Parts of all of his books are anthropological. Because of this anthropologic stance, which sometimes seems to overwhelm his autobiographical attempts, he reveals in fact very little about his individual, personal life, especially of his experiences post-Carlisle. Unlike Eastman, however, Standing Bear's use of the "objective" anthropological third person point of view is not an attempt to parody anthropologic writings, but to validate his own point of view, demonstrating he can view Lakota culture objectively, to correct misinformation, and, more subtly, to eliminate the need to discuss personal matters he feels should remain private.

Nowhere in any of his books does he discuss the fact that he married more than once, for instance. Even early on in *My People the Sioux*, he downplays significance of his mother's choosing to leave his father after Chief Standing Bear the First takes two more wives--an event we learn about indirectly:

One day my mother went to see her mother, who lived some little distance from us....When night came and she did not return for supper, I did not cry. Some other women came to our tipi, and they were very good to me....Some days afterward, one of my uncles...took me to see my mother....She never mentioned to me about going back to my father, and, in fact, never thought of returning. One day, when I was playing outside, my father called for me. I went home with him, and he gave me a horse and all the things necessary to make a man of me. When I went inside the tipi, the two women were still there, and they both called me 'son.'

(MPS 28)

In a very traditional way, no one makes an issue out of Pretty Face's decision, although the families seemed to continue to manipulate Luther between the two camps with both sides offering him gifts and pampering. It is also in this indirect way that the reader learns about family structures because Standing Bear points out that all his stepbrothers and stepsisters, as well as his cousins, are called brother and sister (MPS 29).

Standing Bear's discussions of his first wife, Nellie DeCory, are brief and rather cryptic,⁹ possibly because of Lakota standards of decorum in which one never reveals or shares private information, such as what animal is one's spirit

⁹ Richard N. Ellis also points out "important gaps in [*My People the Sioux*], particularly relating to his marriages and to his activities in Los Angeles" (151).

guide, any private song created for private occasions (such as love or medicine songs), and even one's name. It is possible that he did not dwell on their life together because he was writing about her while married to his second wife, May Splicer (Ellis "Luther" 149). For whatever reason, he encapsulates the courtship with Nellie:

There was a half-breed girl in the camp of whom I began to be very fond. We took many long walks together. She was very gentle and quiet. (MPS 198-9)

He takes more time to illuminate her parentage and her father's wealth, which would make her more appealing, I assume, to his white readers:

Her mother was a full-blood Indian woman, who could neither read nor write. Her father was a full-blood white man[, De Cory, who] was one of the men who gathered up all the things the Indians threw away, not realizing their value. But De Cory did, and he sold them, and in that way made considerable money....one of the wealthiest men on the reservation. (MPS 199)

Standing Bear later emphasizes his father-in-law's generosity:

He came to the house one day with his wagon loaded with all kinds of food and greases, such as we used in making Indian fried bread. One whole hog was killed and dressed for us, and we were very busy getting it in shape so it would not spoil....[he] gave us five head of cows to start with. Then he picked out a very fine team of matched horses and two mares. (MPS 202)

He also emphasizes that Nellie's Indian mother raised all of her children "as 'white' as she knew how" (MPS 199), perhaps to show his readers that his wife was almost as acculturated into a EuroAmerican lifestyle as he was.

But most of Luther's attention is focused not on his new bride but on the controversy entailed in his choice of bride, since the two widows of Chief Spotted Tail try to force him into also marrying "their daughter Grace" since they are concerned that Nellie would not know how to take care of him properly since she was not brought up in the traditional Brule way (MPS 200). Standing Bear passes over his connections with Grace in *My People the Sioux*, except to relate this incident. When he refuses, and has to have the women evicted from his house by the reservation police, Grace's brother becomes infuriated at the insult (MPS 201). To soothe Grace's brother, the elder Standing Bear gives him a few horses to save Luther any further trouble with the young man (MPS 202).

Significantly, this struggle with Grace and her mothers helps to create the sense that Luther was in demand as a potential husband--one of the "best" catches, so to speak. In *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, Standing Bear describes his courtship with Grace. One evening he walked home from church with Grace and her mother, who discreetly disappears inside while Grace and Luther talk under the cover of his blanket (the most discreet way for Lakotas to court). Customarily, when another suitor wants to spend time with the young woman and the previous suitor is taking too long, the one waiting indicates impatience by brushing the back of the courting blanket. When Luther gets this signal,

Grace doubtless wanted to have some fun with me, so she wrapped her hand tightly in my watch-chain, as I was wearing civilian clothes under my blanket. Thus I was detained longer. But in a few moments I was forcibly reminded of Lakota courtesy by a decided kick on the back...that caused me to sway slightly forward. Here was a case where only the young lady could keep the others from piling on me, which she did. (LSE 101)

Exactly what Grace did to keep the other suitors at bay is a mystery, however, since Standing Bear discreetly returns to his general discussion of courtship. The fact that she was highly sought after speaks to the importance of Luther's success in commanding her attention, however.

It is through *indirection* that Standing Bear achieves the creation of his status, and its believability, with his reading audience. He cannot directly assert his authority or importance because, to the Lakota, "bragging was a social sin" (LSE 104). Standing Bear uses a traditional Lakota belief that showing one's "industry and worth" is far more believable than talking about it (LSE 104) to convince his readers of his credibility. He layers information about this customary for his readers in a gradual way.

Most importantly, Standing Bear takes his time in building up his collection of personal Story Sticks, the traditional Lakota way of validating his authority. He proves to his readers he has lived this life. He also emphasizes his own worth, as a husband, as a father, as a manager for the Wild West Show, and, especially, as a Lakota Chief.

Standing Bear attempts, through his four books, to wield his chiefly powers by reminding his people what traditional Sioux life was like and why it has enough value inherent in it to be worth maintaining. Since chief power has been eliminated by the government on the reservations, and since Standing Bear sees nothing but depression and despair at Pine Ridge and Rosebud upon his return there, he feels the need to live up to the title bestowed on him by his band and his tribe. Through his books, because of their reflection of his values, because of his intimate knowledge of Sioux life, as well as his belief in it, because of his demonstrated worth as a chief, and because of the apparent need for leadership to guide the Sioux back to self-sufficiency and self-worth, Standing Bear assumes that

responsibility, attempting to use his chiefly authority to resurrect the Oyeti Sakowin culture.

CHAPTER FIVE

Black Elk Passes on the Power of the Earth: Melding Religions, Purposes, and Literary Traditions in *Black Elk Speaks*

Dramatic monologue, self-examination, corroborative speakers--cued as though characters in a play, corroborative drawings in both color and black and white, inserted chants and textual notes, repetition, indirection, sacred symbolism, and textual experimentation all make *Black Elk Speaks* a Modernist collage of Sioux and EuroAmerican literary traditions. More so than many of the other works discussed in this study, even those altered by editors, *Black Elk Speaks* is a collage, or a marble cake as Ella Deloria might call it (Rice *Deer Women* 16), not only of a polyphony of Indian voices telling their stories with a sometimes indirect, sometimes overt EuroAmerican voice chiming in, but also of two individual souls carrying the markings of two different perceptions of the world that are often remarkably similar.

Of all the texts by Transitional Sioux writers, *Black Elk Speaks* was and remains the most widely read, the most influential. Significantly, Black Elk, *Hehaka Sapa*, was the only one of the four writers in this study who never learned to read or speak English. Yet he was influenced enough by EuroAmerican values not only to become an influential Catholic catechist, credited with converting over 400 Indians to Christianity (DeMallie *Sixth* 26), but also to continue demonstrating tribal ceremonies, which he discovered Europeans and Americans in general enjoyed watching while working as a young man for a wild west show, as an

Indian pageant performer in Rapid City, South Dakota. In addition, he accepted EuroAmerican culture enough to collaborate on several books, *Black Elk Speaks*, *When the Tree Flowered*, and *The Sacred Pipe*. Just as other Indians had to deal with the pressures of assimilationist forces, Black Elk significantly exercised more *choice* in doing so than did the other writers, excepting perhaps Gertrude Bonnin who chose to remain largely culturally Indian even in mainstream society. By and large, Eastman and Standing Bear were pushed or enticed by outside forces to adopt EuroAmerican ways of living. To a much larger degree, Black Elk resisted acculturation and assimilation.

At 23, Black Elk chose to explore Europe and America with a wild west show in his attempt to understand the white man's culture. Discouraged by ever more rigid controls being clamped down on his tribe's lifestyle, Black Elk thought, "Maybe if I could see the great world of the Wasichu, I could understand how to bring the sacred hoop together....I even thought that if the Wasichus had a better way, then maybe my people should live that way. I know now that this was foolish"¹ (BES 219).

¹ Although this quote and the one following about Grandmother England are not verbatim from the Neihardt transcripts, Neihardt condenses information while adhering to Black Elk's overall intentions, although he altered some of Black Elk's attitudes. For instance, instead of desiring to see the Wasichu world in order to better "understand how to bring the sacred hoop together," Black Elk actually said,

So far I looked back on the past and recalled the people's ways. They had a way of living, but it was not the way we had been living. I got disgusted with the wrong road my people were doing now and I was trying to get them to go back on the good road; but it seemed as though I couldn't induce them. (DeMallie *Sixth* 245).

And later Black Elk adds,

I felt that my people were just altogether lost, because I was a long ways from home. I wondered about their future and about the vision and I thought I had just lost my people. Everything that I was doing here on earth I left alone and was among other men just

Black Elk stayed with the show for three years, even traveling to England where he met Queen Victoria, whom he called "Grandmother England," quoting her as saying that "maybe if she had been our Grandmother, it would have been better for our people" (BES 227). Becoming more and more disenchanted with being on exhibit, Black Elk fell ill and during a bout of fever had another vision--one of returning home to his mother's teepee. When he returned home to the reservation and his healing practices, he was pleased to discover everything had happened just as his dream had predicted, further affirmation for him of the power of his sacred vision and what it could do for his people. Only later in 1904 did he accept Catholicism, a religion which provided him with a partially assimilated way of continuing his spiritual leadership to his people, after a priest threw him and his shaman tools out of a dying boy's tent. Sensing that the priest's powers were stronger than his own, Black Elk allowed the priest to give him religious instruction, to baptize him, and to give him a Christian name, Nicholas (DeMallie *Sixth* 14).

In contrast to Black Elk's cultural balances as he lived on the Pine Ridge Reservation, Eastman, Bonnin, and Standing Bear felt pressured by nonIndians to

as a common man. (DeMallie *Sixth* 246)

Despite his reluctance to travel across the ocean, Black Elk's friends persuaded him to go. The above quote gives us the clear indication that Black Elk had changed his mind about what EuroAmerican culture had to offer, which Neihardt simplifies into, "I know now that this was foolish." Similarly, Neihardt tones down Queen Victoria's rather racist speech to the Indians. Black Elk remembers her saying:

If I owned you Indians, you good-looking people, I would never take you around in a show like this. You have a Grandfather over there who takes care of you over there, but he shouldn't allow this, for he owns you, for the white people to take you around as beasts to show to the people....I wish that I had owned you people, for I would not carry you around as beasts to show to the people.

(DeMallie *Sixth* 249-50)

Neihardt prudently changed "owned" to "belonged to me."

live all-or-nothing lives--either wholly Indian or wholly EuroAmerican. All three writers succeeded in incorporating elements of both cultures into their lives and writings--which made their works seem to reflect liminality and discord to some critics, even though the three tried to show themselves as successfully assimilated Indians in Transitional America. Standing Bear originally set out to demonstrate his successful integration into the nonIndian parts of America, while he, in the later years of his life and in his later writings, and Bonnin, throughout most of her life, specifically tried to persuade Indians to retain their cultures as the largest and most significant part of their lives. Of the four writers, Black Elk retained, by choice, his Indian culture most consistently during his life and most strongly overall.

Scholars often focus on two different aspects of *Black Elk Speaks*. First, there is the fact that John G. Neihardt acted as a medium between Black Elk's life story and the book's readers--which opens up questions concerning the purpose of the book. Was Neihardt solely serving his own purposes, or does he "authentically" project Black Elk's vision as well? Second are questions actually tied to the first about the book's spirituality. Debates rage over questions of accuracy regarding Neihardt's depictions of Lakota spirituality and Black Elk's sincerity in accepting Christianity, a conversion which is never mentioned in the book. Is the sense of the sacred in *Black Elk Speaks* from Neihardt's need to explore the Messiah movement, which was his original reason for interviewing Black Elk, and his deeply acculturated sense of Christianity, or does it stem primarily from the power of Black Elk's visions?

Raymond DeMallie, in his seminal work *The Sixth Grandfather*, largely accepts Neihardt's depiction of Black Elk, sympathetically picturing the situation between the two

as if something long bound up inside the old man had broken free at last....Since becoming a Catholic Black Elk had strictly put away

the old ceremonies and his healing rituals. He had accepted the white man's religion and the white man's ways, and this would not change. But the vision, and his failure to live up to it, must have been a heavy burden...[which] he could at long last transfer to another man--someone who could record the old Lakota ways as testament and memorial to a way of life now gone forever. (Sixth 28)

The romantic nostalgia created by the book carries over into DeMallie's assessment of the circumstances. Yet DeMallie readily admits "Neihardt was already 'writing' Black Elk's story by rephrasing his words in English" during the interview sessions (*Sixth* 32). He also points out, significantly, that Black Elk countertranslates Neihardt's words for his own understanding of the situation. When Neihardt tells Black Elk he became an epic poet because he sought a "higher purpose," "this the old man translated as *hanbloglaka*, 'vision telling,' the traditional mystical speech of Lakota holy men" when they tell their sacred visions, each tale imbued with the particular symbols of the individual man's vision (*Sixth* 37). Thus Black Elk found a direct connection between himself and Neihardt--they both have traditional ways of telling stories since both their lives are directed by the power of visions. In simplifying how the men regarded each other, DeMallie argues that "Neihardt perceived Black Elk's religion in terms of art; Black Elk perceived Neihardt's art in terms of religion" (*Sixth* 37). But religion and art are not that easily separable in the Lakota cosmos. Through his EuroAmerican sense of the artistic forms of narration, Neihardt conveys not only Black Elk's sense of the sacred mission he has been assigned, but also Black Elk's sense of artistic, Lakota narration, his understanding of the intricate workings of the Sioux Literary Tradition.

To Neihardt's credit, DeMallie points out that Neihardt "resisted the publisher's attempt to relegate the vision to an appendix," but also admits that

"cultural details were not so important to Neihardt as were the mood and message" (*Sixth* 53). DeMallie defends Neihardt's artistic choices: Diction is kept simple to "reflect our expectation of Indian speech patterns" (*Sixth* 52); the Vision's emphasis on war and destruction are minimized to focus on its messages of healing (*Sixth* 53); the Thunder-Beings' powers, which were transmitted to Black Elk, are de-emphasized because they presented Black Elk as a possible threat armed with destructive, magical powers and because such details, foreign to most EuroAmericans, would have been taxing to read (*Sixth* 54); and the sense of despair and of the inevitable "destruction of the Lakotas' way of life" are heightened to mirror and emphasize Black Elk's own sense of failure in having not transmitted his Vision as he was told to do by the Six Grandfathers, the primary powers of the Lakota world² (*Sixth* 55). DeMallie admits that Neihardt's image of Black Elk as a "pitiful old man...sorrowing over the destruction of his people is a powerful literary" device (*Sixth* 57), and that the book was "intended as a work of art, transcending the ordinary to make a larger statement about humanity" (*Sixth* 57). To DeMallie, "The book is Black Elk's story as he gave it to Neihardt, but the literary quality and the tone of the work are Neihardt's" (*Sixth* 51).

² DeMallie produces an interesting comparison of Black Elk's interpretation of his vision and White Bull's, whose biography was written by Stanley Vestal. DeMallie asserts that "in most respects, Black Elk's religious experiences were entirely representative of late nineteenth-century Lakota culture" (*Sixth* 84) because it adheres to the pattern set after Lakota contact with and persistent war with EuroAmericans. White Bull's vision is very similar to Black Elk's, yet he did not interpret it as a mandate to become a holy man. In part this reflected the times. White Bull was born in 1849; when the vision came to him in 1858 the Lakotas were still living in the old way. Buffalo were plentiful, and the northern Lakotas (White Bull was Minneconjou) had not yet become involved in war with the whites. The road to success for a young man was still through fighting the enemy tribes and gaining war honors, and it was for this kind of endeavor that White Bull found power in his vision. (DeMallie *Sixth* 85)

Nearly ten years later, DeMallie, in the Introduction to Neihardt's novel, *When the Tree Flowered*, reemphasizes both Neihardt's and Black Elk's perspectives. Neihardt believed he wrote *Black Elk Speaks* as "a faithful telling of one man's life, and an attempt to interpret Black Elk's philosophy and personality as Neihardt understood them," in effect "minimiz[ing] his own presence as author, [by] relegating himself to a preface and a postscript, refraining throughout the text from introducing superfluous description and explanation" ("Introduction" x). DeMallie believes that the book's "unembroidered directness" in allowing Black Elk to speak for himself "led readers of the 1930s to reject the book as too far removed from their own experience to be credible, but led readers from the 1960s on to embrace it as representing the unmediated expression of a native voice" ("Introduction" xi). DeMallie notes that Neihardt "was aggravated when reviewers, instead of taking the book at face value as representative of the Sioux world-view, suggested that [he] had used Black Elk as a vehicle to express his own philosophy" ("Introduction" x). DeMallie emphasizes that, although Neihardt worked to bring the traditional Sioux view forward authentically, "he had not intended by [doing so] to obscure his creative role as author" ("Introduction" xi).

Julian Rice, likewise, argues that Neihardt was more than amanuensis, claiming that "none of the imagery is Black Elk's" and accuses Neihardt of altering Black Elk's descriptions of "Lakota unity to a prophecy of universal peace as if to indicate a moral progression brought about by God" (*Black Elk's Story* 63), even though he admits *Black Elk Speaks* is one of Black Elk's major works (*Black Elk's Story* 8). He believes "the Lakota integrity of *Black Elk Speaks* [exists] only to the extent that Neihardt felt he could not betray Black Elk" (*Black Elk's Story* 61). He contradicts DeMallie's universal peace theme argument by insisting that when Black Elk refers to unifying people, he means the Lakota people only (*Black Elk's Story* 62). DeMallie later clarifies and corroborates the fact that it was "Neihardt

[who] transforms the sacred hoop of the people into the sacred hoop of all peoples, extending Black Elk's vision symbol of the unity of the Sioux into a symbol of the unity of all humankind" ("Introduction" xiv).

Repeatedly, Rice argues that Black Elk would not have inserted Christian imagery because traditional Lakota would not have thought along those terms (48-64), ignoring the fact that Black Elk had been a practicing Catholic catechist for more years, and more recently, than he had been a practicing medicine man. The religions not only would have become fused to one another in his memory in many ways--as they did for Eastman--but also would have become lenses one for the other, so that Black Elk would have been able to see traditional Sioux religious practices through the lens of Catholicism, and Catholicism through the lens of Lakota beliefs.

Clyde Holler corroborates this view, arguing that, especially in *The Sacred Pipe*, "Black Elk's innovation...is clearly conscious, and it takes place on a more self-consciously theological level....Black Elk is clearly...most engaged with Catholicism and with the intellectual problem of its relationship to traditional religion" (*Black Elk's Religion* 185). While *Black Elk Speaks* focuses on traditional Lakota religion, there should be no doubt that, since Black Elk is recounting his memories through years of practicing Catholicism, the EuroAmerican religion will affect, to some degree, how he came to perceive traditional Lakota religion. Critics as early as Carol T. Holly and as recent as Clyde Holler acknowledge this wedding of religious perceptions as the probable working reality for Black Elk. In 1979, Holly asserted that "*Black Elk Speaks* represents a genuine marriage between native American consciousness and western literary form" (121). In 1995, Holler recants Julian Rice's dichotomous contrasts between Lakota and Christian religions, "particularly because many Lakotas profess allegiance to both traditions" (*Black Elk's Religion* 28).

Strangely enough, Rice praises *The Sacred Pipe* because even though "it has many Christian elements," it "remains one of the best written descriptions of Lakota ceremonies" (*Black Elk's Story* 4). Rice agrees with Clyde Holler's earlier assessment³ of the equality of Christianity and the Lakota religion, declaring that the choice to parallel Christian rites and myths with Lakota ones in *The Sacred Pipe* was "a conscious strategy on Black Elk's part" (*Black Elk's Story* 6). The fact that Black Elk chose to emphasize the traditional Lakota religion in *Black Elk Speaks* disturbed his daughter Lucy Looks Twice, prompting her to collaborate with Michael F. Steltenkamp, as we will see.

Rice concludes, however, that scholars, like the 1930 readers DeMallie referred to, take Black Elk's words, his vision, too literally, failing to recognize his uses of metaphor. Drawing from another critic's discussion of symbolism, Rice points out that just as the Eucharist metaphorically represents the body and blood of Christ to Christians, the spiritual elements of Black Elk's visions, too, are metaphoric, working, like the Eucharist, to bring his followers closer to Wakan Tanka (*Black Elk's Story* 150). Rice insinuates that Black Elk fictionalizes parts of his vision for two possible reasons: because he needed to protect the power of the vision so as to keep its power, for him, from lessening and to keep its power from being wrongly used, as well as because "outside spirits transmit strength through a symbolic medium, naturally or humanly shaped," so that "power is circulated, sent by the spirits as inspiration, returned to them as expression, and passed as easily through fiction as through 'truth'" (*Black Elk's Story* 152).

Holler counters both Rice and Steltenkamp's implications that Black Elk was insincere in transmitting his vision and in his conversion to Catholicism because

³ See Holler's "Black Elk's Relationship to Christianity."

the assumption that there was this much deception in Black Elk's character is just as unlikely as the assumption that he made a complete transition to twentieth-century Catholic consciousness....the evidence seems to indicate that Black Elk readily accepted Christianity as a valid extension of the insights expressed in his power vision, and as a practical bridge to the white world and a better life for his people. (27)

Hilda Neihardt, John Neihardt's daughter, also counters claims against Black Elk's honesty when she insists that "communicating 'the truth' was important to Black Elk," so both he and her father took precautions to solidify the truth as closely as possible. Black Elk had his corroborator, Standing Bear (no relation to Luther), "present during all the interviews, because the presence of his longtime friend would make it clear to Neihardt that he was telling the truth" (H Neihardt 36). Neihardt rephrased and queried for more particular details, all of which was translated back and forth by Ben, to make certain he understood Black Elk's meaning (H. Neihardt 39).

Because of the emphasis on the authenticity of Black Elk's vision and the focus of *Black Elk Speaks* on traditional Lakota religion, Michael F. Steltenkamp, after encountering Lucy Looks Twice, Black Elk's daughter, felt the need to set "the record straight" about the full extent of Black Elk's life. After a chance encounter, not unlike Neihardt's with Black Elk nearly sixty years earlier, Steltenkamp interviewed Lucy and determined that she had "a dream [she] had carried with her ever since her father's death....to have her father's life fully recorded" (xix-xx). In what seems to be imitation of Neihardt's introduction to Black Elk, Steltenkamp notes that because she was "in her declining years, Lucy knew that not much time remained for her to fulfill the *vision* of relating her father's life story" (emphasis mine, xx). Perhaps this imitation is unconscious on

Steltenkamp's part, but it is more likely that he is demonstrating a Lakota storytelling convention, or a Christian one, something like, "when I was lost and needing direction, I chanced upon a wise old sage who said...." Yet he wants us to take his efforts more seriously than Neihardt's because he took years to translate, transcribe, compile, edit, interpret, and polish Black Elk's life story, as given to him by Lucy, methodically, so that "she was quite satisfied with our collaborative effort" after she read it (xx).⁴ Steltenkamp wrote Black Elk's "complete" biography as "an example of reflexive adjustment to new cultural landscapes that previously had not been explored" (xxi).

Steltenkamp's most convincing arguments come in his evaluations of the controversies surrounding Black Elk, wherein "much of the discussion spawned by Black Elk has focused on an either-or proposition: he was, at heart, either an old-time medicine man or one who forsook the tradition in favor of something entirely new" (157). Yet, he notes, Lakota ideology allows Black Elk to have a "resilient willingness to let go of what was and to experiment with what might be the disclosures of Wakan Tanka for his life" (160). As a traditional shaman, Black Elk would have possessed "a well-conditioned, culturally based disposition toward seeking the power of Wakan Tanka on whatever new horizon it might appear" (161). As a respected Lakota religious practitioner, his role was primarily to "foster a religious consciousness that had so long enabled the people to confront whatever challenged them," so that when religious leaders like Black Elk converted to Christianity, their Lakota followers would be more likely to convert as well. As Lucy admitted to Steltenkamp, the missionaries worked to convert the religious leaders in order to reach the rest of the people because of the belief that,

⁴ Not until many years later did Lucy read *Black Elk Speaks*, which, she said, changed her life--she became a believer and a pipe carrier (H. Neihardt 119).

if Wakan Tanka was leading the shaman to Christianity, they, too, should follow (162). The religion and its particular practices, or what we can see as the means with which human beings connect to spiritual powers, were not as important to Black Elk, according to Steltenkamp, as the quest to connect with those powers, so that "whereas [Black Elk's] destiny was that of a Catholic catechist, others might pursue alternate paths" with many returning to traditional Lakota religious practices (164-5).

Most recently, Clyde Holler stridently argues that there can be no coinciding of purpose between Black Elk's wish to convey his Vision and Neihardt's needs for literary material, insisting that "defenders of Neihardt who insist on his faithfulness to Black Elk's message simply reveal the shortcomings of their understanding of literature" (*Black Elk's Religion* 7). Performing his own logical skewing, he adds up the facts that Neihardt added the pessimistic ending in an artistic turn, deleted much of the Vision's war imagery to create a more positive bend to the Vision, and inserted his own positive, universal message to mean that "Black Elk did not believe that the dream had died" (*Black Elk's Religion* 7), never clarifying how the fact that Neihardt did these things reveals so conclusively what Black Elk thought. He does agree with Steltenkamp that scholars cannot take an either/or stance in trying to understand Black Elk the man (*Black Elk's Religion* 22), reiterating that Black Elk's adaptability stems primarily from his understanding of the sacred (*Black Elk's Religion* 23). Holler spends an entire chapter using the idea of *sincerity* to explain how "dual religious participation" cannot work in Black Elk's and other Lakotas' lives. He seems to believe that if Black Elk is only using "traditional religion [to] meet religious needs, [and] Christianity [to] meet social and economic needs" (*Black Elk's Religion* 206), he is being insincere in his religious beliefs (*Black Elk's Religion* 209). Although he earlier argued a dichotomous view of Black Elk was an incomplete one, Holler refuses to see Black

Elk as an accomodationist (*Black Elk's Religion* 211), believing "he would have more likely chosen *either* the path of outright resistance *or* the path of the nominal Christian" (*Black Elk's Religion* emphasis mine 212). Holler ends up arguing that Black Elk actually believed in three religions: traditional Lakota beliefs, the Ghost Dance religion, and Christianity (*Black Elk's Religion* 217). Yet Holler never makes the connection that the Ghost Dance religion *was* a melding of traditional Lakota beliefs and Christianity (Mooney 790). Ironically, Holler spends a good deal of time arguing for the conclusion that DeMallie made ten years earlier: "Black Elk's own life was fitting testimonial to this union of Christian and native traditions" (*Sixth* 25).

What few scholars examine is how Black Elk *chose* to convey his sense of Lakota culture, especially his personal vision, to a larger audience, or what considerations went into making that choice. While Julian Rice claims Black Elk chose to translate his vision "and the whole of his accumulated wisdom into every genre of the oral tradition," he names only four Lakota genres--offered up to restore Lakota confidence and desire to live in the face of the severity of economic and cultural depression:

hanbloglaka (dream or vision-talks) renewed the people's confidence in their traditional methods of obtaining spiritual protection; *waktogloka* (kill talks) reminded them that as Black Elk had been able to defend himself, so they too might do from those who had stolen most of their land and threatened to take their culture too; *wicowoyake* (true stories) provided evidence of strategies their ancestors had received or developed to ensure survival, and *ohunkakan* (mythical stories) gave them a perspective on contemporary struggles so that they might think of them as the

same ordeals that are always the precondition of wisdom and fulfilled consciousness. (Rice "Storyteller" 25-6)

While establishing the fact that the Sioux acknowledged and practiced different types of storytelling is important in illustrating their long standing literary traditions, it is important to recognize, as with any literary study, that not all stories fit neatly into established categories. In the sections of *Black Elk Speaks* that I will examine here, Black Elk uses all four story genres mentioned above in an intermingling manner not unlike Neihardt's intermingling of EuroAmerican literary traditions, Christian ideals, and Black Elk's narrative.

To better understand Black Elk's (and Neihardt's) literary choices, we need to first place him in context with his peers. Black Elk, born in 1863, was five years younger than Eastman and thirteen years older than Zitkala-Sa. Despite being a contemporaneous Sioux, although all four were of different bands,⁵ and despite beginning to publish after the other three writers, Black Elk and his works have not be examined for influences by the other three writers, or by any of Black Elk's other contemporary Indian storytellers. Was Black Elk familiar with, let alone influenced by, his earlier peers?

One reason for overlooking the possible fact that Black Elk was familiar with the writings of Standing Bear, Bonnin, and Eastman is the dilemma of language. Despite having been in contact with whites from a fairly early age, Black Elk retained the most traditional Sioux lifestyle--so much so, he had to have his son translate his words for Neihardt. But would the fact that Black Elk--a man raised in a culture that relies heavily on oral means of communication--did not speak or read English preclude him from knowing about the other writers or their

⁵ Black Elk was an Oglala Lakota Sioux, Zitkala-Sa Yankton Nakota Sioux, and Eastman Santee Dakota Sioux. Luther Standing Bear was probably a Brule Lakota Sioux.

works? And, if he did know about them, did such knowledge directly affect his decision to tell Neihardt, and later Brown, his own life story and knowledge of Lakota religion, freely explaining rituals and other sacred information?

It is also possible that influences by preceding writers have been unexplored because critics tend to focus on Black Elk's decision to transmit his story through Neihardt, instead of writing his story himself. It is well documented that many Indians resented being manipulated into speaking of taboo subjects, such as naming the dead or sharing tribal rituals and sacred songs, by anthropologists who were "objectively" seeking documentation of cultures often alien to them. So both Neihardt and Brown emphasize how Black Elk in essence *chose* them to tell his stories to (BES "Preface" of 1979 edition xvii and Brown xiii). Neihardt reported, and his daughter Hilda corroborates, that his interpreter mentioned how Black Elk refused to tell his stories to a woman anthropologist shortly before Neihardt turned up at Pine Ridge (BES vii, H. Neihardt 12-3). Raymond DeMallie notes that, since Black Elk was a "Roman Catholic catechist, [a] pillar of the church" it was doubtful that Black Elk would willingly talk about nonChristian matters to a stranger (DeMallie *Sixth* 27).

Neihardt, his daughter Hilda, Brown, Black Elk, and DeMallie all seem to corroborate the belief that Black Elk chose Neihardt as his amanuensis because of a spiritual kinship. Neihardt noted that, upon approaching Black Elk's house, it seemed as though Black Elk was expecting him (DeMallie *Sixth* 27). This possible spiritual connection has been important in many arguments because it helps align Neihardt's intentions in *Black Elk Speaks* directly with Black Elk's, so that there should be no doubt about the work's authenticity. Some scholars see such statements by Neihardt as false, mere attempts to connive his readers, especially given the fact that Brown later uses a similar statement: "when the ritual smoking was completed, the old man turned to me and asked why I had taken so long in

getting there, for he had been expecting my coming" (xii). Is such a statement a Lakota convention, an indirect way of assuring the visitor he's welcome? Rice quotes, and agrees with, Holler's declaration that Black Elk did not really know beforehand that either Neihardt or Brown was coming to visit him. Both critics agree that Black Elk was speaking conventionally "rather than referring to ESP." Such a greeting, to Rice, is a way to welcome "a visitor into a relationship that will be good, sanctioned by the spirits" (Rice *Black Elk's Story* 149).

But perhaps Black Elk was more shrewd in his selection of amanuensis than he has been given credit for. Perhaps Black Elk did not want his story to end up like so many other Indian stories as an essay in some anthropological journal or as a book with little literary value other than the fact it contains the life history of an Indian holy man. Perhaps Black Elk had heard of the success Sioux writers like Eastman and Bonnin were experiencing in transmitting traditional Oceti Sakowin stories and ideas to the wider world. Was Black Elk merely looking for a larger audience, recognizing the power of the written word because of his knowledge of the Bible's power given Christianity's scope around the world? Or is it too outrageous to speculate that Black Elk understood the potential, and lasting, impact of a story with literary value as opposed to one collected by an anthropologist?

He was, after all, a Catholic cleric who read and who preached from a Lakota bible in Lakota to other Lakotas. He could have written his story in Lakota. But he was probably also aware of the widespread impact of written stories in English. He was also well-traveled and had conversed with other men and women trained in spiritual, practical, and literary interpretations of the Bible. While he had remained on the reservation, he also knew the reservation's structures--including the influences day schools and boarding schools had on younger generations. As an observant, intelligent man, he would have been able to

discern--even through the filter of reservation living--what was important to EuroAmericans.

He knew stories not only had to appear to be truthful, for EuroAmericans to appreciate them, but they had to be well told. As Rice points out, Black Elk "must have known of the white man's need to have an absolute predetermined truth from his 30 years as a Catholic catechist. Stories of the oral traditions express the 'subjective' truth of the teller's inspiration which can be wrapped in many bundles of which those preserving the people's life are true, and those inflating the teller or flattering the listener are false" ("Storyteller" 47). Again, the *literary* value inherent in looking for a believable, well-told story is not unique to EuroAmericans, and it is presumptuous to assume it is. Eastman's reverent descriptions of famed storyteller Smokey Day,⁶ and Ella Deloria's vivid descriptions of the effect a mesmerizing storyteller, Woyaka, has on his audience (*Waterlily* 50-7), as well as Waterlily's ability to captivate her children with tales (*Waterlily* 82-3), demonstrate the Sioux appreciation of a story well told.

It is highly plausible that Black Elk would reject one potential amanuensis for a better one--one who was not only a recognized poet, but also a man who was familiar with native ways of living and thinking (H. Neihardt 38). The facts that Neihardt could tell a good story and was familiar with Lakota culture would have become clear to Black Elk within the first hour or so of their meeting. A spiritual connection, if there really was one, would have been a bonus and would have helped reassure Black Elk that his decision to reveal his life story, and his sacred vision, to this particular person was the right choice.

While many critics acknowledge Black Elk's communal efforts in telling his stories to Neihardt, most dismiss Neihardt's initial pursuit and final gathering of

⁶ See *Indian Boyhood*, pp. 115-53, and all of *Wigwam Evenings*.

Black Elk's stories as only those of a Westerner trying to pin down, for his own purposes, an individual's life story. But Neihardt did not set out to preserve Black Elk's story, but to gather information on the Messiah movement for his epic poem *Cycles of the West*. There is evidence, however, that he, too, knew a good story when he heard one and knew the potential for a good book when he found one (H Neihardt 18).

Perhaps one reason why Black Elk felt a kinship with Neihardt was because Neihardt spoke a kind of ritual language, stemming from a trained aesthetic appreciation for language, that Black Elk recognized, something like the *hanblaglaka* (the term Black Elk used to describe Neihardt's mission to be an epic poet) used by those interpreting visions in which Black Elk was trained. Both men, then, were trained with particular, perhaps similar, aesthetic concerns for language. Like the Sioux ritual language, EuroAmerican literary terms are not standardized, "but...contain some lexical items which [are] mutually intelligible between" those trained to use it (W. Powers 65). William Powers tells us that Lakota "sacred persons were distinguishable from the common people not only by their ability to interpret sacred knowledge," just as literary scholars interpret texts, as well as "by their ability to communicate...in a special language unintelligible to the uninitiated....although [there is] no evidence that there was a conscious attempt by sacred persons to exclude common people from sacred discourse" (64), which can also be said, for the most part, about literary scholarship. Perhaps it was Neihardt's EuroAmerican *literary* training which prepared him for his being able to speak, as though one *wakan* man to another, in something like Sioux *wakan* language.

Regardless of his intentions, many critics see Neihardt's motivations as purely Western and Black Elk's as purely Indian. Albert Stone, for instance, sees Black Elk's culture as clearly Indian, meaning communal, and Neihardt's as

Western, meaning individually driven (Stone 158)--believing Neihardt "surrendered himself to his Indian subject" (Stone 157-8). Brumble sees *Black Elk Speaks* as a product of two personalities and two cultures (AIA 12) and only allows that an Indian is capable of conceiving of more than one self--one tribal, one individual--after the influences of EuroAmerican autobiography become familiar to them (Brumble AIA 146). Krupat believes, simultaneously, that Indian writers must suppress their communal natures to write, (Krupat "Monologue" 134), but that they find it impossible to suppress those other (communal) voices completely (Krupat "Monologue" 145). Murray asserts that *Black Elk Speaks*

blends the historical and the spiritual to present a moving account of a world-view in which all aspects of existence are integrated into a whole but which seems ultimately powerless to present the remorseless disintegrating forces of white civilization. This gives Black Elk's account an epic sweep and grandeur untypical of autobiographies, in that the individual becomes almost incidental, even though fully realized and human. ("Autobiography and Authorship" 71)

For most of these scholars, cultural differences simply get in the way of examining Indian as-told-to narratives, so that they turn out to be something exotic and foreign, instead of the examples to the world that every autobiography can be. All writers, Western or not, speak to audiences. They pass on their lives--which have been touched by so many others that they actually reveal multiple voices and, often, points of view, in repassing through their life stories--on to a larger community.

A productive way of examining *Black Elk Speaks*, in particular, is to examine how much it is like and unlike his Sioux predecessors' works. Like the other writers' autobiographical works, *Black Elk Speaks* is largely chronological.

And like the other life stories, it contains chosen glimpses of Black Elk's life. These choices, in a more complex manner than the other writers probably encountered,⁷ involved at least four levels. First, Black Elk chose Neihardt, "with the same sense of mission and awareness of the permanency of the white man's records," as his traditional spiritual successor, just as "he would have passed his spiritual knowledge by word of mouth to a younger man of the tribe" (Holly 121), in effect controlling "the use of sacred knowledge by restricting its use to responsible parties bound by the ties of kinship, discipleship, and religious obligation" (Rice *Lakota Storytelling* 27). Second, Black Elk decided what to reveal, even when answering direct questions from Neihardt, using his "intuitive selection of significant memories...not [as] a factually accurate 'history' but storytelling in the same sense that a fiction writer purifies, sweats away irrelevance to tell a story that is good as well as true" (Rice *Lakota Storytelling* 33). Third, Neihardt clarified wording and meaning through repetition of the ideas which were then verified by Black Elk after his son countertranslated the English back into Lakota. And fourth, Neihardt chose what parts of the stories to include in the book and how to arrange them with, according to DeMallie, a serious attempt at retaining the already musical (a literary quality) and authoritative elements of Black Elk's words (*Sixth* 51-2). There was probably also some additional editing on the part of the publishers. It is important to emphasize that Black Elk, despite Neihardt's intervention in selecting, organizing and emphasizing, was responsible for the choice of most of the book's content. In fact, Neihardt did an excellent job of melding Western lyricism with Sioux literary traditions, striking a balance

⁷ Here I admit I am discounting arguments that Elaine Goodale Eastman had more than an editing role in Charles' books as far as the choice of language and materials go. I am also overlooking the help E. A. Brininstool, Clyde Champion, and Prof. Melvin Gilmore, Curator of Ethnology for the University of Michigan, gave Standing Bear in editing his books for publication.

between EuroAmerican and Sioux literary traditions which parallels Black Elk's balance between Catholicism and traditional Lakota religion.

While Neihardt does trim material and consolidate phrases for clarity, he seems to give in to the temptation to make Black Elk an important figure, as Charles Eastman and Luther Standing Bear both try to do for themselves, by making him appear more influential than he probably really was. As a result, he sometimes takes Black Elk's words literally. For instance, when Black Elk relates his first vision from Ghost Dancing, he describes two men he meets in a land of plenty. In *Black Elk Speaks*, the *hanbloglaka* passage reads:

"We will give you something that you should carry back to your people, and with it they shall come to see their loved ones."

I knew it was the way their holy shirts were made that they wanted me to take back....what I brought back was the memory of the holy shirts the two men wore....So the next day I made ghost shirts all day long and painted them in the sacred manner of my vision. (247)

The transcripts from the interviews indicate that the day before this dance, Black Elk prepared himself to join the Ghost Dancing, of which he had been skeptical to this point, by dressing "in the sacred clothes" (DeMallie *Sixth* 259). During his vision, the transcripts read,

I could see two men coming toward me. They were dressed with ghost shirts *like I was dressed*....what I brought back was the memory of what they had shown me and I was to make an exact copy of it. *This* ghost shirt was to be used always in the ghost dances. So I started the ghost shirt....I made the first two shirts according to what I saw in the vision....I worked all day making

shirts....I wanted all the people to know the facts of this vision.

(emphasis mine, DeMallie *Sixth* 261-2)

Did Black Elk begin the *idea* of wearing the ghost shirts, or did he start this one particular design of the ghost shirt?

DeMallie cites James Mooney's reference to the first recorded EuroAmerican sighting of the ghost shirts, wherein a schoolteacher claims a woman, Return from Scout's wife, created them--shirts for the men, dresses for the women--after she saw them in a vision (Mooney 916). To explain the different accounts, DeMallie merely speculates that "it seems likely that several of the ghost dancers had had visions relating to sacred regalia for the ceremony" (*Sixth* 262, n9). It is possible that both visions, Black Elk's and Return from Scout's wife's, were embellishments on the sacred clothing, which Black Elk mentions having put on to prepare for his first participation in the dance, already being worn by the ghost dancers. In any event, Black Elk's recollection of his initial participation in the dancing, soon after which he designed his particular ghost shirts, happened in the Spring of 1890, and the schoolteacher reported that Return from Scout's wife had had her vision of them in October 1890. Black Elk *could have been* the original instigator of the ghost shirt phase of the Ghost Dance Religion.

Mooney has a more plausible explanation, however. He notes that "the protective idea in connection with the ghost shirt does not seem to be aboriginal. The Indian warrior habitually went into battle naked above the waist" so that "the warrior should be as free and unencumbered in movement as possible. The so-called 'war shirt' was worn chiefly in ceremonial dress parades and only rarely on the warpath." Mooney believes that the ghost shirt originated in the same area of the country that the Ghost Dance Religion did, so that the garment "may have been suggested by the 'endowment robe' of the Mormons, a seamless garment of white muslin adorned with symbolic figures, which is worn by their initiates as the most

sacred badge of their faith, and by many of the believers is supposed to render the wearer invulnerable" (790). He points out as well that only the Sioux attached war connotations to the shirts, calling them bulletproof, whereas other tribes either wore them as peace symbols or forsook wearing them because of the connotations of war that developed with the ghost shirts after the Sioux began using them (791).

Neihardt made the choice to emphasize the idea that Black Elk was the originator of the idea of the ghost shirts. But Neihardt makes another textual choice, which had to be more difficult, about the ghost shirts. Later, when Black Elk speaks of the Wounded Knee Massacre, the transcripts show graphically how the shaman believed in the bulletproof nature of his shirt, and his sacred bow, which is never pointed out as a bulletproofing device in *Black Elk Speaks*. Neihardt had to ask himself if a EuroAmerican audience would believe Black Elk's statement that, as Black Elk tells it in the transcripts:

I could feel the bullets hitting me but I was bullet proof. I had to hang on to my horse to keep the bullets from knocking me off. I had the sacred bow with me....I had to hold my bow in front of me in the air to be bullet-proof but just as I had gotten over the hill after completing my charge, I let my bow down and I could feel some bullets passing through the ghost dance shirt near my hip.

(DeMallie 273-4)

While Neihardt mentions the bow, he eliminates Black Elk's connection with its ability to make him bulletproof, eliminating altogether Black Elk's stated belief that the sacred things he did made him invulnerable to bullets, making the event sound more like luck than sacred power: "I just held the sacred bow out in front of me with my right hand. The bullets did not hit us at all" (BES 262).

Neihardt does the opposite with Black Elk's wounding. He makes it more dramatic and supplies information earlier in the description of the event than Black

Elk does in the transcripts. Neihardt's version, clearer than Black Elk's, yet still relating to the sacred, says,

All this time the bullets were buzzing around me and I was not touched. I was not even afraid. It was like being in a dream about shooting. But just as I reached the very top of the hill, suddenly it was like waking up, and I was afraid. I dropped my arms and quit making the goose cry. Just as I did this, I felt something strike my belt as though some one had hit me there with the back of an ax. I nearly fell out of my saddle, but I managed to hold on, and rode over the hill. (BES 272)

The more repetitive, clearly more oral version in the transcripts reads,

as I fled toward the hill I could hear the bullets hitting my clothes. Then something hit me on the belt on the right side. I reeled on my horse and rode on over the hill...I should have kept on coming like that with my hands up. I was in fear and had forgotten my power. I had forgotten to make the goose sound there and to keep my hands up. I doubted my power right there and I should have gone on imitating the goose with my power and I would have been bullet-proof. My doubt and my fear for the moment killed my power and during that moment I was shot. (DeMallie *Sixth* 277-78)

Notably, Neihardt maintains the accuracy of Black Elk's actions, but restructures the telling, eliminating repetition and clarifying the consequences of the actions more immediately for a more readable, dramatic effect. He has not changed the action in Black Elk's story, but he has, significantly, downplayed the sacred powers Black Elk believed in. This was probably a very conscious choice on Neihardt's part, since his EuroAmerican audience probably would have labeled the sacred powers supernatural and unbelievable, or at least suspect.

While Neihardt does not necessarily change facts, he changes emphasis often. For instance, Black Elk has second thoughts after he has mounted his horse and is on his way to investigate the shooting going on at Wounded Knee.

Neihardt's version reads, "I took only my sacred bow, which was not made to shoot with; because I was a little in doubt about the Wanekia religion at the time, and I did not really want to kill anybody because of it" (BES 270).

The transcript of Black Elk's words reads, "I just thought it over and I thought I should not fight. I doubted about this Messiah business and therefore it seemed that I should not fight for it, but anyway I was going because I had already decided to. If I had turned back the people would think it funny, so I just decided to go anyway" (DeMallie *Sixth* 272).

Neihardt's version reduces the strength of Black Elk's doubt because he probably felt a EuroAmerican audience would not believe any of the sacred things Black Elk mentions if he so easily doubts the Ghost Dance Religion--which, after all, is more Christian than the Lakota traditional religion, thus might be more understandable and believable to the predominantly Christian readers (and which might be one of many reasons why so many nonIndians feared the Ghost Dance Religion, which professed a Messiah). Neihardt might also think his readers would also "think it funny" if the book's "hero" was to be depicted as wishy-washy. Black Elk's decision not to fight, since he comes from a warrior society, would have cast aspersions on his manhood to many nonIndians. Neihardt's version, though not quite the truth, keeps Black Elk from looking foolish in EuroAmerican eyes for deciding not to fight and for only carrying a ceremonial bow into a battle where Army bullets are massacring his people.

Neihardt adheres strictly to other Lakota literary concerns, however. As Rice points out, "by having four narrators at the beginning, even though Black Elk assumes the place of principal narrator later on, the appropriately respectful

invocation for spiritual assistance has been made" ("Storyteller" 43). Such a ritual is important to legitimize the strength and power asked for from *Wakan Tanka*, but also to demonstrate that Black Elk has "not forgotten any spirit or power or charm. Any slight omission might bring down on his luckless head the wrath of the incensed deity" (Daugherty 152).

The speakers strengthen Black Elk's powers as a storyteller, as well as corroborate the events of which he tells. In the same manner, Standing Bear's illustrations, many of which are in color, in the original edition act as corroborative information and serve to illustrate events in the visions that might not be easy for nonIndians to imagine. They also supply the visual drama, albeit poorly, which would have been present in Black Elk's telling of and performance of the vision. The first color drawing, for instance, depicts the tipi made of a flaming rainbow, his adopted name for Neihardt, in which he met the six sitting Grandfathers, the powers of the world, all waiting to offer Black Elk some aspect of themselves to aid his and his people's spiritual needs. Above the tipi, thunderclouds seethe with lightning and a spotted eagle and crow fly unharmed. Outside the tipi, the two spirit warriors, complete with eagle wings, stand guard, ready to take Black Elk, depicted as a small boy with a bow and arrow, onto the next phase of his vision (BES 33).

The more difficult concept of the center of the earth, at Harney Peak in the Black Hills of South Dakota, is depicted in color as well. Harney Peak, a mingling of black, greys, and reds, supports Black Elk on his sorrel pony. Above them flies the spotted eagle. Behind them, the *waga chun*, or the cottonwood⁸ tree is

⁸ Black Elk tells why the cottonwood is a sacred tree to the Oyate in *The Sacred Pipe*:

Long ago it was the cottonwood who taught us how to make our tipis, for the leaf of the tree is an exact pattern of the tipi, and this we learned when some of our old men were watching little children

budding out, symbolizing the rebirth of the Oceti Sakowin's powers. To the left, the Grandfather of the West sits astride a black horse with an arrow ready to strike like lightning, as Standing Bear's representation of the Thunder Beings. Directly below is the Grandfather of the South riding a buckskin and carrying the flowering stick, which he promised Black Elk would flower as the Lakota tree of life, once order has been restored. To the far right, the Grandfather of the North rides a Bay pony and carries a rod representing the Daybreak-Star herb of healing the grandfathers give Black Elk for his healing practices. Below, the Grandfather of the East rides a sorrel pony and carries the peace pipe which has a red spot on the end, possibly Standing Bear's reference to the eagle which is supposed to be clasping it (BES 41).

Besides clarifying difficult images for nonIndian readers, Standing Bear also demonstrates traditional Lakota methods of recording stories, even showing the book's readers how to write the name Black Elk in pictograph, with a black elk's head above a man's head with a line descending from the elk to the man's mouth (BES 199).

Standing Bear's illustrations, as well as Black Elk's and his corroborating friends' dramatic monologues, not only adhere to Sioux literary traditions--from

making play houses from these leaves. This too is a good example of how much grown men may learn from very little children, for the hearts of children are pure, and, therefore the Great Spirit may show to them many things which older people miss. Another reason why we choose the cottonwood tree to be at the center of our lodge is that the Great Spirit has shown to us that, if you cut an upper limb of this tree crosswise, there you will see in the grain a perfect five pointed star, which, to us, represents the presence of the Great Spirit. Also perhaps you have noticed that even in the very slightest breeze you can hear the voice of the cottonwood tree; this we understand is its prayer to the Great Spirit, for not only men, but all things and all beings pray to Him continually in differing ways" (74-5).

traditional types of stories to traditional techniques such as repetition, indirection, and the use of personal sacred symbols--but also contribute to the Modernist textual experiment that is *Black Elk Speaks*. The book unfolds almost like a play, with the drawings acting like stage directions, becoming substitutes for the dramatic elements of the vision's presentation as tribal ceremony. Neihardt's insertion of explanatory notes, such as the one on page 89 defining "coup," also add further dimension to the book. Prose mingles with poetry, as Black Elk reveals his sacred songs and chants, creating, as Rice puts it, "a 'bundle' of Lakota words which in turn become a bundle of English words" ("Storyteller" 47), or a Modernist collage. Through the melding of Lakota and EuroAmerican literary traditions, through the giving and comparing of traditional Lakota and Christian philosophies, and through a joining of purposes--one literary, the other a form of cultural inheritance--Black Elk and John Neihardt strike an important, and culturally significant balance in the rendering of *Black Elk Speaks* for a largely EuroAmerican audience.

Louis Owens argues, in discussing American Indian novels, that the movement (which for him is an "irreversible metamorphosis") "from oral, communal literature to the written commodity of published work....represents a necessary 'desacralization' of traditional materials, a transformation that allows sacred materials--from ritual and myth--to move into a secular world of decontextualized 'art'" (11). To Owens, putting the sacred on paper is like the public viewing of traditional dances; it becomes hokey and less powerful, in essence stealing something from the communal culture.

Similarly, Kenneth Lincoln reports that

tribal peoples may be justifiably apprehensive of a written form of literature that fixes spiritual ideas. Peter Nabokov reminds us that the first Cherokee shamans to adapt Sequoyah's 1921 syllabary of

eighty-six characters, the earliest known 'talking leaves' north of the Rio Grande, hid their transcriptions in trees and attics, fearful of exploitation. There fears were not unfounded, given the many anthropological misunderstandings and abuses of sacred tribal materials. (25)

Black Elk was probably aware of these kinds of fears and attitudes toward revealing sacred information. There are many indications that Black Elk was rebuffed to some degree for having "conspired" with the outsider, Neihardt, in revealing information about what many assume to be purely Lakota or Oceti Sakowin ideas. But, as Holler points out, just as "each tribe had its own religion, its own origin myth, and its own stories[,] each holy man had his own vision, which directed both his storytelling and his ritualizing[, so that] Each holy man tells the old stories differently, in accord with his vision" (*Black Elk's Religion* 213). While many of the historical facts in *Black Elk Speaks* were events which happened to the Sioux as a group, the visions, the sacred part of the book, are all exclusively Black Elk's in the sense that he was the one who had them. Even in traditional Lakota belief, only Black Elk had the power to decide whether or not to pass his vision and its powers on. While he was supposed to use the power from the visions for the good of his people, he did not want to fulfill one particular command. In 1900 he was supposed to use "the soldier weed, a destructive power that would wipe out his enemies--men, women, and children" to create "such wholesale destruction, so he gave it all up and became a Catholic" (DeMallie, *Sixth* 14).

Just as it is more probable that Black Elk envisioned the design for a particular set of ghost dance shirts, ones which came from the symbols of his own visions, it is also probable that Black Elk understood that his visions were exactly that, his visions. He still was able to exercise his prerogative as a Lakota--choice.

He chose not to fulfill all of the mandates of his original vision. He recognized the dilemma of having followed the wrong vision during the Ghost Dancing because, as he said, "it is hard to follow one great vision in this world of darkness and of many changing shadows. Among those shadows men get lost" (BES 254). He chose, later, to reveal those visions to a man in whom he had the confidence necessary to entrust them, even though he knows he has given away his power by giving away his vision (BES 206). Unfortunately, we will never know for certain if Black Elk was satisfied with how the book itself turned out, or with the influence it has had. I doubt he would have been surprised that the power of his words have lived on because Black Elk understood the power and the limits of language: "Of course there was very much in the vision that even I can not tell when I try hard, because very much of it was not for words. But I have told what can be told" (BES 205).

Charles Eastman, Gertrude Bonnin, and Luther Standing Bear never returned to their native ways of living as completely or successfully as Black Elk did. Perhaps because he was a full-blood and was never educated in a white man's school, he never felt the drive to compete with others for fame and material things which kept him near Manderson, South Dakota, his whole life. Perhaps because Black Elk owned a piece of his people's sacred land, near what he continued to think of as the Center of the World, Harney Peak, he chose to stay there. Perhaps because Black Elk had more fully embraced both cultures' religions and found a productive way to use both the power of conversion and the power of his visions for his people, he remained closest to his home ground.

Eastman, Bonnin, and Standing Bear all acted in various ways and with different energies as advocates for Indian rights, but it was Black Elk who spoke most urgently of passing on his knowledge to future generations--not necessarily to preserve his knowledge, but to see that his medicine visions protected his

people, and perhaps, in the process, to make life better for all. Like his predecessors, his literary choices, combined with Neihardt's knowledge of EuroAmerican literary traditions, produced a truly Modern literary text, and helped to cap off a highly successful Sioux Literary Renaissance.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions and Continuances

**"The white man sees so little,
he must see with only one eye," Lame Deer**

Until now, few extensive studies have been conducted comparing several writers from an individual Indian nation, let alone from a specific era with historical and cultural concerns examined alongside literary ones. The closest such study I am aware of is Julian Rice's *Lakota Storytelling: Black Elk, Ella Deloria, and Frank Fools Crow*, also notably about transitional Sioux writers, further proof that a Sioux Literary Renaissance occurred between the Wounded Knee Massacre and post-World War II, the period also inclusive of the Modernist Literary Movement. While the Modernist Movement and the Sioux Renaissance could have both happened without the other, the two feed one another in ways that parallel the cultural and literary exchanges experienced by Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, and even Black Elk. Just as the Modernists used the "primitive" to elucidate ideas about the human subconscious, transitional Indian writings, submerged beneath the mainstream consciousness of America, bubbled up like dreams, coloring modern Americans' views of themselves, Indians and nonIndians alike. Just as in dreams, where the imagined and the unimaginable intermingle, writers like Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, and Black Elk intermixed EuroAmerican and Sioux cultural beliefs and practices, creating a new literary tradition, a tradition which, though heavily influenced by EuroAmerican literary

standards, is still decidedly focused through their particularly Siouan lenses, hence their contributions to the Sioux Literary Renaissance.

I am very conscious of the fact that, in focusing on Sioux writers, I have neglected the plethora of other Indian writers from the period (see the attached Publishing Timeline). Even though the Sioux were the most prolific writers of the period, much could be gained from examining other transitional Indian writers and their particular tribal literary traditions. Much can be learned about the nature of writing, especially as a member of a "submerged" culture, by comparing tribal and transitional literary qualities.

The foci of American Indian literary scholarship since the Transitional Era have varied from analyzing an individual writer's complete oeuvre, to analyzing specific genders and specific genres, to debating the unsolvable issue of whether an "authentic" Indian voice exists, which presumes that all Indians understand all other Indians and there are things EuroAmericans just will never be able to imitate or understand about being Indian. In some Indians' views, sacred tribal practices should never be spoken of, seen by, let alone used by nonIndians. Understandably, many wish to guard the essences of their cultures from casual appropriation, extending what was often considered an individual's property--the shaman's healing rituals and songs--into tribal property. While the Sioux, and other tribes, believed it was possible to steal others' sacred powers, the individual whose spiritual powers were compromised was the one most affected, although inappropriate activities or poorly performed ceremonies could account for tribal failures at the hunt or in war. The idea that the tribe as a collective owned property, not just defended territories, probably started with the reservation system, since individuals were traditionally responsible for their own livestock (dogs and horses) and goods (tipis, clothing, parfleches, etc.), which they were free to give away or abandon, if worn out or even as a sacrifice to *Wakan Tanka* or any other influential Oceti

Sakowin spirit, as they saw fit. The conflict over who is legally an Indian, thus legally entitled to tribal affiliations and benefits, began with the Dawes Act, as is reflected in Bonnin and Standing Bear's writings and in Eastman's work for the government in changing traditional Sioux names into EuroAmerican ones. These two concerns--sacrosanct tribal property and authenticity in Indian identity--are intimately intertwined: whoever is recognized as Indian is entitled to the benefits of tribal affiliation, whatever they may be.

The milieu surrounding contemporary Indian writers has changed from Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, and Black Elk's day. No longer are scholars astounded that Indians are writing. Today, so many people claiming Indian ties are writing, both creatively and critically, that literary scholars still seem preoccupied with the idea of being able to distinctly separate EuroAmerican and Indian cultures--what is authentically Indian? who is an authentic Indian? Such debates rage almost uncontrollably, serving only to create an Us/Them dichotomy.

Yet the debates help define the spectrum of American Indian literary studies, with some wanting a narrower focus concentrating only on those writers on verifiable tribal rolls, to the extreme spectrum of some wanting to examine everything remotely Indian in nature. What remains as certain now as it did for Mary Austin in 1929, is that there is no "ground for assuming that stories may be profitably amputated from the cultures that produced them, or that considerations of form in aboriginal literature are wholly negligible" (3-4). We must also acknowledge that changes to native cultures have occurred from contact with nonIndians. George Sword, who wrote in both Lakota and English, "insisted that a great change had come over the Lakota language since it had been reduced to writing by white missionaries" because, as it had been spoken, "each syllable was a distinct unit of meaning," but in writing it down EuroAmericans had attempted to

cluster syllables together in a similar fashion to English words (DeMallie & Jahner 21).

Arnold Krupat, in his response to Dan Littlefield's MAASA Presidential Address, attempts to delineate the difference between secular and sacred property, between what can be claimed as tribal and common properties, by using Navajo jewelry-making and Hopi mask-making as examples. Any human being has the potential to learn to make both the jewelry and the masks, but while there might be technical aspects to both, what separates the activities is the passing on of sacred knowledge--an ultimately personal and cultural exchange. In comparing the crafts to literary studies, Krupat elaborates:

I would suggest that a very great deal of what is currently understood as constituting the category of Native American literature is more like Navajo jewelry-making than Hopi mask-making, and cannot, therefore, actually belong to any individual or group. This is most particularly the case with Native American written literature, which...by its written nature is an intercultural practice, and by its published nature is available to a general audience. Native American people may feel a special relation to Native American literature, and feel that relation as conferring a particular authority to speak of it, but contemporary Native American literature is a conjunctural practice, not a thing, and as a practice, like Navajo jewelry-making--also a conjunctural practice inasmuch as the Navajo learned many of their jewelry making techniques from Mexicans--cannot 'belong' to any single group. ("Scholarship" 94)

Krupat then extends his example to oral literature, since "once narrators permit 'outside' auditors to record, translate, and publish stories, then--again--while

'insiders' may be especially well-positioned to speak of these stories, there is no ground on which they can claim sole rights to possession" ("Scholarship" 94 & *Turn to the Native* 22).

Eastman was probably very conscious of the fact that "Hakadah's First Offering" demonstrated a traditional ceremony many Sioux would consider a tribal initiation ritual, so he eliminated especially sacred elements of the ritual, including the outward fact that it was *his* ritual, in his rendering of it for the general public. Black Elk, however, goes into depth about his visions, including his great vision, which he had interpreted as his mission to save his people, experiencing repercussions not only from the Jesuits who had trained him as a catechist, but also from traditional Sioux who felt betrayed (Holler 13). Yet there is a strong sense that Black Elk himself had accepted Neihardt as his official successor to carry through the mandates of the vision. To do so, Black Elk had to adopt Neihardt, who had known and worked with Omaha and Sioux for thirty years (H. Neihardt 38), as his nephew and rename him Flaming Rainbow, *Peta Wigamou Gke*, in an official ceremony (H. Neihardt 47). Does that make Neihardt an "authentic" Sioux?

Turning from exploring issues of who is an authentic Indian to determining what each tribe maintained as part of their literary traditions will open avenues of exploration. More productive than determining who or what is Indian would be the examination of how different cultures and their literary traditions are reflected within texts, or how those cultures *unite* to create a particular text. After all, writers like Alice Walker, who says she is as much a descendent of the African American slave who was raped as she is of the EuroAmerican rapist,¹ have learned

¹ Alice Walker said this during a television interview several years ago.

to embrace, or at least accept, the influences--genetic and otherwise--their various "racial" and cultural backgrounds have had on their lives and their writing.

Admittedly, several literary techniques which I have delineated as part of a Sioux literary tradition have been used by other Native American nations and other cultures, even by EuroAmericans, as well. But the fact that the Oceti Sakowin had an operative set of literary values and traditional techniques to call upon to meet various occasions and needs for storytelling or singing/chanting proves they were conscious of the merits of having established forms and appropriate methods of conveying stories which differ from, thus distinguish them from, everyday speech patterns.

While primarily oral cultures do not write everything down--the Sioux, remember, kept historical calendars in pictographs--they do adhere to a sense of *performance* when telling tales. By performance, I am referring to the impulse to capture and maintain an audience's attention through some form of active interest, such as excitement, fear, or suspense, which can be created by tone, diction, and movement. Even though scholars try to create a sense of difference between oral tales and written ones, especially by focusing on the degree of active performance required in one but not the other, both require a finesse with language in their approaches toward audiences. Both, too, evoke participation from their audiences, the only difference being that oral storytellers have the benefit of immediate response, which can, possibly, alter the emphasis or outcome of the story being told, whereas writers must imagine their audience's responses. Good writers are aware of possible audience reactions, which is how their finesse with language illustrates itself. Language is used, after all, by both speakers and writers to create effects.

If further justification is necessary for why I think the Sioux traditions operating within the texts discussed herein are literary, I can merely point back to

texts, based on oral forms, which are so readily identified as the beginnings of Western literary traditions--from works by Homer to *Beowulf*. As Arnold Krupat points out, in regards to English literature, the belief that "oral literature as something other than a contradiction in terms" was discovered by the Romantics. Once this belief "crossed the ocean, it became attractive [for some scholars]...to think of Indians as standing in for America's missing feudal past, to hear their chants as 'poetic' (rather than as satanic, or as gibberish), finally, as constituting a 'literature' it only remained to establish in writing" ("Identity" 2). Yet, the prejudice against seeing oral tales as literature has lingered because many choose to distinguish that which is *literature* by its adherence to the word's original meaning, as a body of *written* works. This bias, I believe, stems at least partially from a distrust of memory--a distrust so strong that Luther Standing Bear felt it necessary to address its concerns, and dismiss them, in offering his written versions of Sioux tales (SOS Preface). In such fear, however, lies the belief that tales must be transmitted verbatim in order to be faithful to their "origins," a belief which overlooks the fact that each new storyteller adds new dimensions to the story, whether orally or in writing. Thus, as I have attempted to illustrate here, tales are re-owned by each successive teller. The trick, then, is to determine what each storyteller contributes to the story.

Further exploration of the depth to which an individual storyteller affects a communal story should be done and can be done with Sioux texts, which should further help establish the existence of a Sioux Literary Tradition. There are six books in which Sioux tales, based on oral tales told to the writers, are recorded: Charles and Elaine Eastman's *Wigwam Evenings*, Zitkala-Sa's *Old Indian Legends*, Luther Standing Bear's *Stories of the Sioux*, Marie McLaughlin's *Myths and Legends of the Sioux*, Ella Deloria's *Dakota Texts*, and the WPA South Dakota Writing Project's *Legends of the Mighty Sioux*. Similar stories with strong

variations, such as tales of Iktomi/Unktomi the spider trickster and Eya/Iya the Devourer and tales of the first people and earthly powers, are contained in these books, along with several completely unique stories. Mostly stories of how things came to be as they are, they provide clues as to Sioux perspectives on history, such as in McLaughlin's stories about the importance of corn which few people associate with the Sioux since they were a migratory culture who nonetheless practiced modest agriculture, as well as on Sioux spirituality and cultural values, especially between the three main branches--Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota--such as in variations that can be found in very traditional tales like the trickster tales and the myths about Stone Boy/Boy Man. As Rice points out about Deloria, these writers "unassumingly retell the stor[ies] as [they] remember [them] and never assume that writing will corrupt" them (*Deer Women* 11). They were stories that the writers felt important enough to "preserve" by writing them down.

Perhaps, even, by studying one Indian nation's approaches toward telling tales, even as they join their traditions to another culture's, we can better appreciate not only how Indians in general make literary choices, but also how human beings worldwide use combinations of literary styles and forms to effectively reach their chosen audiences.

Indeed, as Mary Austin sweepingly points out, by the time Europeans met the people we have come to know as Indians, Indian literary artists had mastered the lyric, were creating the epic, and still linked poetry with drama and dance (Introduction xxix). It is very tempting, when discussing American Indian literature, to sweep the works of the more than five hundred nations into one pile because there are so many similarities. But, while we gain an understanding of what aboriginal life was/is like in general, we do an injustice to each culture and its literary sensibilities in disregarding each particular culture's literary emphases.

I began here by examining four of the most prolific Oceti Sakowin/Sioux writers of the Modern or Transitional era because the Sioux, as a nation, outdistanced other Indian nations in sheer numbers of publications, especially in books to be read by the general public, in that time period. Freshly defeated and corralled on the reservations, the Sioux were one of the most mentioned Indian nations in the country at the time. Perhaps the public was weighing its guilt, its sense of responsibility for the Wounded Knee Massacre. Perhaps they wanted to continue reading about these fierce and proud people who wiped out Custer and his men since the Lakota Sioux, in company with Cheyennes, were one of the only Indian nations to win a significant battle with the United States Army. Not only did the general public read about these particular plains Indians, but also saw the popular Western movies of the times often featuring Indians who were or were very much like the Sioux in appearance.

A scholarly avenue I am investigating is to determine if other Indians read works by Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, Black Elk, and even Ella Deloria, and Marie McLaughlin contemporaneously. Archivists have searched and are searching for publications written by Indians which discuss or respond to either the writers or their works. Next, I will search library records, comparing the check-out records on several of the books at various libraries across the nation, noting, for instance, the check-out rates at libraries in predominantly Indian communities, since it would be nearly impossible to determine the ethnicity of readers by any other methods. The written responses to the writers would allow me to speculate on the impact the books had on Indians, while the library records will help me analyze their appeal to Indians in particular.

In examining only these four writers, however, I neglect several other Transitional Sioux writers, the most significant of whom is Ella Deloria, who "wrote more pages in Lakota than anyone else before or since" (Rice, *Deer*

Women 2). Julian Rice has done a splendid job in his three volume scholarly analysis of Deloria's works, although he takes the stance that Deloria was the first to create "a unique form of fiction adapted from the oral tradition and set down...as a Lakota language literature, respecting but not deferring to its oral source" (*Deer Women 2*). Rice admires Deloria's *Dakota Texts* because it places stories told in Lakota next to their English translations. Clearly, he overlooks Eastman and Bonnin's fiction which preceded Deloria's by decades, and who produced works with which Deloria would certainly have been familiar as she created her own, because they wrote primarily in English, not Lakota. Rice's work on Deloria, while it stops just short of asserting that a Lakota literary tradition existed, helps to support my own belief that there was/is an operating Sioux literary tradition that "can be both preserved and creatively expanded through writing" (*Deer Women 9*), even in English.

Also neglected is Marie McLaughlin's *Myths and Legends of the Sioux*. McLaughlin presents an interesting case. She admits to being one-quarter Sioux and lived much of her life on one or another of the Sioux reservations where her husband worked for the federal government. Yet she writes about the Sioux as though she were not one, although she claims she had the Indians' confidence and knew the language thoroughly (9). Admittedly, McLaughlin does not have to claim her Sioux cultural side, but under racial classifications of the time (and now) she would still have been considered Indian. Her dislike of the label demonstrates the era's deep-seated prejudices against being Indian, which perhaps makes it more astonishing that Eastman, Bonnin, Standing Bear, and Black Elk all appear to be proud to be Sioux. It is clear from the tone of the stories McLaughlin preserved that she admired many Sioux values and qualities. Like Eastman's initial impulse for writing, McLaughlin wrote down the stories she collected because "these fairy tales would be lost to posterity by the passing of the primitive Indian" and because

"the 'timbre' of a people's stories tells of the qualities of that people's heart" (10). The stories she preserves, then, can be examined based on her own attitudes toward the tellers, as well as to speculate about how much these stories demonstrate the hybridization of the Sioux Literary Tradition with the Western one.

McLaughlin's stories can also be compared to her contemporaries. One story, "The Sioux Who Married the Crow Chief's Daughter," parallels Eastman's story, "The Love of Antelope," although it differs considerably in length and specificity. Both involve a widowed Sioux warrior who prepares with a group of warriors to make a raid on an enemy camp. In McLaughlin's version, the enemies are Crow. In Eastman's, the enemies are Cree. When the warrior acts as scout and enters the enemy camp, he takes time to peer into one tipi, where he discovers a young woman who looks identical to his late wife. After persuading the woman to come with him as his wife, the couple, in both stories, eventually settles in the Crow/Cree camp to be near the wife's people. Also in both stories, the Sioux warrior proves himself worthy of the Crow/Cree's respect by going to battle, even against his own people. Some of the major differences in the stories are that McLaughlin's extends well into the couple's time living with the Crow, so that the Sioux warrior one day returns to his people actually bearing gifts from the Crow, later returning to his wife bearing gifts for the Crow from the Sioux, and eventually becoming a Crow chief. Eastman's story, however, has a longer beginning which describes the warrior's relationship with his deceased wife and the dreams both he and his second wife have about each other before they ever meet. He also has the runaway couple living alone for two years, in which time they have a child, before they return to live with her people.

Another neglected work holds interesting prospects as well. *Legends of the Mighty Sioux* was a WPA project put together by South Dakota Indian

workers, presumably Sioux. The stories, while interesting in and of themselves for determining their place in literary traditions, are accompanied by illustrations by Oscar Howe, a Crow Creek Sioux, who was one of the first painters to restylize "traditional Indian painting" which was popular at the time "through creating a method of locating the aesthetic points of a painting....This search for the aesthetic points and lines brought about a marriage between the subject and the background" (LMS Appreciation Note). *Legends* is truly an experimental, communal work, with the only writer identified being the compiler, Montana Lisle Reese, who tells of having to trade tennis shoes for a story from an elder (LMS Appreciation Note). The book promises many potential points of interest. In comparing the "language" of Howe's paintings with those of the text, for instance, we could compare the simplicity of the vignette, "How the Rainbow Came to Be" which tell how the "Mighty Spirit" placed flowers in the sky to create the rainbow (64), with the facing page picture of a young Sioux woman raising a handful of flowers up toward a rainbow stretching across the sky. Is she the Mighty Spirit? The tales could also be compared, again, to similar ones, such as by pairing McLaughlin's "Legend of Standing Rock" and "Story of the Peace Pipe" with the WPA's "Story of Standing Rock" and "The Gift of the Peace Pipe." The Peace Pipe story is, in fact, one of the most retold Sioux stories on record. Also worth exploring is the sense of orality of the tales alongside their sense of anonymity because Louis Owens says oral tales have no authors (10).

George Bushotter, a Teton Sioux, was, according to DeMallie, "the first Lakota to write an account of his own people in their own language" (AII 91). Working for the Smithsonian's Bureau of Ethnology, he produced 258 stories about Lakota culture (DeMallie AII 98). None of these, as of yet, has been printed for the general public. DeMallie only hints at the contents of the works, but was most fascinated, in 1978, with Bushotter's depiction of the duality of the genders

"throughout the kinship system," with "gang rape as a symbol of Lakota men's pent-up hostility towards women" as a "recurring theme" (DeMallie AII 99). How do these stories compare to other Sioux tales? What do they say, in particular, about Bushotter?

It is perhaps too easy to differentiate between Indian and EuroAmerican literature by pointing out, essentially, that one is communally oriented and the other is individually oriented. But, as I have demonstrated in some small way here, such simplicity in division is deceiving. The fact that an individual Indian can own his own songs, and can tell his own vision tales based on his own individual vision symbols clearly indicates that individuality can be an asset to a community. As Standing Bear emphasizes, "the individual who excelled was praised and honored" (LSE 33). To excel, for traditional Lakotas, meant seeing responsibly to one's duties--"to parents, to lodge, to band, to tribe, and to self" (LSE 84). This concept is perhaps the biggest difference between general traditional Sioux life and EuroAmerican life. For the Sioux, duty to oneself came last because "a man living in his tribe without respect was a living nonentity" (LSE 40). For EuroAmericans, probably because of sheer numbers within which one finds oneself competing with more than helping others, duty to oneself comes first.

Because EuroAmericans dominate American culture and literary studies, English, America's "second tongue" as Zitkala-Sa referred to it (OIL vi), has become important to American literary scholars; it is our primary language, even if our ethnic origins are connected to other language cultures.² To reach the majority of Americans in writing, using English is necessary. To educate the majority of Americans on what it means to grow up and live the life of a Sioux

² I, for instance, have no English blood in me, but no one has ever thought it strange, since American English is my primary language, that I have chosen to and have been expected to study English *and* American literature.

requires conveying its stories, its creation myths, its legends, its trickster tales, etc., especially to children, in English. But that does not preclude the possibility that they will someday learn an Indian language.

Since Indians were often derogatorily referred to as though they were children, too simple and too naive to understand the adult ways of the world, as even Marie McLaughlin sees the Sioux (MLS Foreword 11), some scholars are concerned that writers like Eastman, Bonnin, and Standing Bear, all of whom wrote some of their works specifically for children--even though many of their texts are more complex than being written for children would seem to make them--were only adhering to the child-like Indian stereotypes. But, as all four writers demonstrate through their own stories of their childhoods, we learn our primary cultures, and our places in them, as children. Young minds are eager and easily trained to appreciate and mimic the rhythms of daily life, so that the familiar usually comes to be the comfortable. It is through stimulation of the imagination, such as by stories, that we learn to place ourselves in ever wider contexts, to explore ever deeper possibilities.

For primarily oral cultures, like the traditional Sioux, tales were the primary methods by which elders passed on "the history and lore of their tribe, the events of migration and travel, the discoveries of the dreamers, the tales and prophecies of wise men, battles and victories, and secrets the brotherhood of animals shared with the medicine-men" (LSE 133). In a similar fashion, Eastman, Bonnin, and Standing Bear begin their literary careers with autobiographical narratives about their childhoods to demonstrate to nonIndians what being a traditional Sioux Indian meant. They demonstrate *how* it was to be Lakota/Dakota. Not only to illustrate what those children reading the books were missing, but also to illuminate readers about what Indian children were going to be missing, simultaneously trying to educate and to create sympathy.

To affect cultural change, begin with the children. Sometimes it takes a few generations, but what Deborah Sue Welch called a naive desire in Bonnin and her contemporaries' attempts to create awareness and appreciation for Indian cultures is actually working. The stages toward appreciation are clear. As Kenneth Lincoln said, "something has been moving Westerners toward American Indians for a long time now" ("Foreword" xxiii). First, Eastman and Bonnin help introduce the concepts that Indians are human and intelligent beings and deserve the right to live as recognized Americans. Then Bonnin is joined by Standing Bear in advocating an appreciation of Sioux and other Indian cultures, hoping for recognition that, even if they *remain* culturally Indian, they are still valuable Americans. All three are, by this time, working steadily to educate nonIndians about being Indian, or at least being Sioux. Bonnin takes up political agendas directly; the men write more books.

By the time *Black Elk Speaks*, the Sioux literary momentum is waning. While Neihardt and Black Elk's collaboration is critically successful, it fails to sell well. Its production, however, begins phase three--the idea of being Sioux has progressed from acceptable values to be endorsed in children and refashioned by Modernist writers (Lincoln "Foreword" xxiii), to being considered as a legitimate dimension to being American, and, now, to being mystical and highly spiritual--enough so to be considered alien again. Other literary Modernists had moved on and had begun experimenting more with text malleability rather than on the power of the past from myths and ancient symbols, moving on to explore the effects of one's immediate past on one's present as James Joyce does in *Finnegans Wake*. Survival in a severe economic crisis, followed by yet another world war chaos, became more important to most Americans than what Indian spirituality had to offer the world.

But the quest for spirituality in another world of relative chaos, the Sixties --not unlike the Roaring Twenties when being aware of ethnic "others," such as Indians or African Americans (the Harlem Renaissance), was a popular and Modern thing--led many back to Black Elk's good red road. Since then, an interest in Indian mysticism has bloomed, to be balanced, in the last twenty or so years, by an interest in Indian concepts of ecology and literature. Slowly, a true appreciation for the subtleties inherent in combining two cultures' literary traditions, creating another, is developing.

There is still a drive toward recreating oral traditions as closely as possible in writing. Direct appeal to audiences is common, with many contemporary Sioux writers, such as Vine Deloria, Jr., Mary Crow Dog, and Wallace Black Elk, writing autobiography and conveying their views of cultures and the sacred through philosophy and criticisms.

**"I am not the new Indian,
I am the old Indian adjusted to new conditions":³**

Most of the questions, concerns, and outright problems facing contemporary Indians today are the same questions, concerns, and outright problems faced by Indians a century ago. All four writers moved with the momentum of their times, initially seeking to at least preserve their own Indian culture when it seemed on the brink of extinction, then growing into advocates for keeping that culture alive and vital, responsive to the times, yet clearly defined by the traditions of the past. Eastman, Bonnin, and Standing Bear proved Indians

³ Quoted from Hertzberg, 65, as spoken by Laura Cornelius during the Columbus Day Conference of Indian reformers on October 12, 1911.

could be educated and could compete on the same levels--although often against overwhelming prejudices--as any other American culture. Black Elk managed to achieve what Eastman sought to prove--that traditional Sioux religion and Christianity had much in common and could co-exist. He also proved that an Indian, or any person for that matter, does not have to speak English to be a productive member of American society.

It is appropriate that the chapter on Black Elk essentially ends this dissertation because, despite the fact he mostly told his stories after the other three writers had published, he proved where they failed that an Indian could come home again after experiencing other parts of the world, and after experimenting with assimilation and acculturation. While Eastman left the Deep Woods for Civilization, he eventually returned, at least to his bungalow, Matotee Lodge, on the shores of Lake Huron (Wilson 185). Bonnin and Standing Bear periodically revisited their home reservations as well. But Black Elk returned to the reservation, not to do government or political work, nor merely to observe conditions, but to live and to continue being the religious leader he always was, even if in a different way. Black Elk completes the cycle on which so many contemporary Indian writers rely--the initial movement away from tribal life, followed by a return to it because of a recognition of its defining abilities on the individual and the power and strength of the individual on and within a community.

But one of the major dilemmas for contemporary Indians is the ongoing debate on whether the reservations are a safe haven, where Indian cultures can thrive, or are prisons, concentration camps, ghettos. Standing Bear, upon his late return to the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations, was dismayed by the impoverished, politically divided conditions, which continued to worsen. Only Black Elk experienced these conditions on an daily basis. The other three had escape routes to Wisconsin, Washington, D.C., and California. Like their

ancestors, ironically, they had the run of the nation, choosing to go where they would, making a temporary living here and then one there. But Black Elk, often lauded as the most Indian of them all, chose to stay near his beloved Black Hills, the center of his world.

Despite often overwhelming odds, despite forced cultural changes, despite poverty and government manipulations, despite being a "defeated" people, the Sioux produced writers who spoke out for themselves, their tribes, and Indians in general in a strong, provocative, often quite literary voice--a voice composed of and emboldened by the combination of two culture's literary traditions. From the frozen wastes of Wounded Knee rose the Sioux Literary Renaissance.

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- . *Old Indian Legends*, reprint. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1985.
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Appendix A

Indian Publishing Dateline approx. 1890-1955

Various anthropological and ethnographical publications produced many of the printed narratives from this time period, with H. David Brumble listing nearly 400 such writings in his *Annotated Bibliography of American Indian and Eskimo Autobiographies*. Those writings, while important narratives about Indian life, are not listed here. Included are writings which would have had circulation among a more general population. Most of the tribal affiliations listed here appear as listed in Brumble's *Bibliography* and Paula Gunn Allen's *Studies in American Indian Literature*.

The Sioux

- 1893-1894 Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa) (Santee) "Recollections of the Wild Life" in *St. Nicholas: An Illustrated Magazine for Young Folks*
- 1894 Charles A. Eastman "Mythology of the Sioux" in *Popular Science Monthly*
- 1900 Gertrude Bonnin (as Zitkala-Sa) (Yankton) "An Indian Teacher Among Indians" in the *Atlantic Monthly*
- Charles A. Eastman "The Story of the Little Big Horn" in *The Chautauquan*
- 1901 Gertrude Bonnin "The Trial Path" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "The Soft-Hearted Sioux" in *Harper's Monthly*, and *Old Indian Legends*
- 1902 Gertrude Bonnin "Why I Am a Pagan" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and "A Warrior's Daughter" in *Everybody's Magazine*
- Charles A. Eastman *Indian Boyhood*

- 1903 Charles A. Eastman "Hakadah's First Offering" in *Current Literature*, and "The Great Cat's Nursery" in *Harper's Magazine*
- 1904 Charles A. Eastman "First Impressions of Civilization" in *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, "The Mustering of the Herds" in *Out West*, "The Gay Chieftain" in *Harper's Magazine*, and *Red Hunters and the Animal People*
- 1905 Charles A. Eastman "Indian Handicrafts" in *The Craftsman*
- 1906 Charles A. Eastman "Rain-in-the-face" in *The Outlook*, "The War Maiden" in the *Ladies Home Journal*, and "The Grave of the Dog" in *Metropolitan Magazine*
- 1907 Charles A. Eastman "The Singing Spirit" in *Sunset Magazine*, "The School Days of an Indian" in *The Outlook*, and *Old Indian Days*
- 1909 Charles A. Eastman (w/ Elaine Goodale Eastman) *Wigwam Evenings*
- 1911 Charles A. Eastman "The Indian and the Moral Code" in *The Outlook*, and "A Canoe Trip among the Northern Ojibways" in *The Red Man*, and *The Soul of the Indian*
- 1912 Charles A. Eastman "Education without Books" in *The Craftsman*, "The Song of the Birch Canoe" in *The Craftsman*
- 1913 Gertrude Bonnin-Simmons (with William Hanson) *Sun-Dance*, an Indian opera
- Chief Red Cloud (Oglala) (w/ Joseph Dixon) "Chief Red Cloud" in *The Vanishing Race: The Last Great Indian Council* (which contains several narratives from chiefs of other tribes, as well)
- Charles A. Eastman *Indian Child Life*
- White Horse (Yankton) (w/ Joseph Dixon) "White Horse" in *The Vanishing Race*
- 1914 Charles A. Eastman "How to Make Wigwams and Shelters" in *Boys' Life*, "Stories Back of Indian Names" in *Boys' Life*, and "My People: The Indian's Contribution to the Art of America" in *The Red Man* and in *The Craftsman*, and *Indian Scout Talks*

- 1915 Charles A. Eastman "The Indian as a Citizen" in *Lippincott's Magazine*, "The Indian's Gift to the Nation" in *Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, "The Indian's Health Problem" in *Popular Science Monthly*, and in *American Review of Reviews*, "Camping with Indians" in *The Teepee Book I*, and *The Indian To-Day: The Past and Future of the First American*
- 1916 Charles A. Eastman "The Indian's Health Problem" in *American Indian Magazine*, and "Rain-In-The-Face, the Story of a Sioux Warrior" in *The Teepee Book II*, and *From the Deeps Woods to Civilization*
- Gertrude Bonnin "The Indian's Awakening" in *American Indian Magazine*, and "A Year's Experience in Community Service Work Among the Ute Tribe of Indians" in *American Indian Magazine*
- 1917 Sword (Oglala) (w/ J.R. Walker) in *The Sun Dance and Other Ceremonies of the Oglala Division of the Teton Dakota*
- Charles A. Eastman "The Language of Footprints" in *St. Nicholas*
- Gertrude Bonnin "Chipeta, Widow of Chief Ouray: with a word about a deal in blankets," "The Red Man's America," and "A Sioux Woman's Love for her Grandchild" all in *American Indian Magazine*
- 1918 Charles A. Eastman *Indian Heroes & Great Chieftains*
- Gertrude Bonnin "Indian Gifts to Civilized Man" *American Indian Magazine*
- 1919 Charles A. Eastman "The American Eagle: An Indian Symbol," "The Indian's Plea for Freedom," and "Justice for the Sioux" all in *American Indian Magazine*
- Gertrude Bonnin "America, Home of the Red Man," "Coronation of Chief Powhatan Retold," and "Letter to the Chiefs and Headmen of the Tribes" all in *American Indian Magazine*
- 1920 Charles A. Eastman "Great Spirit" in *American Indian Teepee*
- 1920-21 Charles A. Eastman "What Can the Out-Doors do for our Children" in *Education*
- 1921 Gertrude Bonnin *American Indian Stories*

- 1924 Gertrude Bonnin (w/ Charles A. Fabens & Matthew K. Sniffen) *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery*
- 1925 Marie McLaughlin (Medawakanton) *Myths and Legends of the Sioux*
- 1926 Pte-San-Waste-Win (Hunkpapa) (w/ James McLaughlin) "Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull's View of the Custer Tragedy" in *My Friend the Indian*
- 1928 Luther Standing Bear (Brule) *My People the Sioux*
- 1931 Luther Standing Bear "The Tragedy of the Sioux" in *American Mercury*, and *My Indian Boyhood*
- 1932 Ella Deloria (Yankton) *Dakota Texts* (bilingual)
(Nicholas) Black Elk (Oglala) (w/ John Neihardt) *Black Elk Speaks*
- 1933 Luther Standing Bear *Land of the Spotted Eagle*
- 1934 Luther Standing Bear *Stories of the Sioux*
- 1941 Charles A. Eastman "Report on Sacajawea" in *Annals of Wyoming*
Legends of the Mighty Sioux compiled by Indian Workers on the WPA South Dakota Writers' Project
- 1944 Ella Deloria *Speaking of Indians and Waterlily* (not published until 1988)
- 1946 Oscar One Bull (Teton) (w/ H. Inez Hilger) "The Narrative of Oscar One Bull" in *Mid-America*
- 1947 Flying Hawk (Oglala) (w/ M.I. McCreight) *Firewater and Forked Tongues: A Sioux Chief Interprets U.S. History*
- 1950 Charles A. Eastman "A Half-Forgotten Lincoln Story" in *The Rotarian*
- 1953 Black Elk (w/ Joseph Epes Brown) *Black Elk's The Sacred Pipe*

Other Indians

- 1891 Sophia Alice Callahan (Creek) *Wynema: A Child of the Forest*
(this is the first novel written--in protest over the Wounded Knee
Massacre--by an Indian woman)
- 1899 Chief Simon Pokagon (Potawatomi) *O-Gi-Maw-Kwe Mit-I-Gwa-
Ki (Queen of the Woods), Also Brief Sketch of the Algaic
Language*
- 1900 Francis LaFlesche (Omaha) "An Indian Allotment" in *The
Independent* and *The Middle Five: Indian Boys at School*
- 1903 Daniel La France (Mohawk) "An Indian Boy's Story" in *The
Independent*
- 1904 John Johnson (Ojibwa) *En-me-gah-bowh's Story: An Account of
the Disturbances of the Chippewa Indians at Gull Lake in 1857
and
1862 and Their Removal in 1868*
- 1905 George Bent (Cheyenne) (w/ George Hyde) "Forty Years with the
Cheyennes" in *The Frontier* magazine
- 1906 Geronimo (Apache) (w/ S.M. Barrett) *Geronimo's Story of His Life*
- 1907 Hiparopai (Yuma) (w/ Natalie Curtis) "The Words of Hiparopai: A
Leaf from a Traveler's Diary, Showing the Indian's Outlook upon
the Transition Period" in *The Craftsman*
- 1910 James Hightower (Cherokee) *Happy Hunting Ground*

Left-Hand (Arapaho) (w/ F.L. King) *Chief Left-Hand: His Life
Story, As Told by Himself*
- 1913 Crashing Thunder (Winnebago) (w/ Paul Radin) "Personal
Reminiscences of a Winnebago Indian" in *Journal of American
Folklore*
- 1914 Goodbird (Hidatsu) (w/ Gilbert L. Wilson) *Goodbird the Indian:
His Story, Told by Himself to Gilbert L. Wilson*

Sanimuinak (Eskimo) (w/ G. Holm) "Sanimuinak's Account of How
He Became an Angakok" in *The Ammassalik Eskimo*

- 1915 Chief Tahan Joseph Griffin (Osage) *Tahan: Out of Savagery into Civilization*
- Rev. Henry Roe Cloud (Winnebago) "From Wigwam to Pulpit: A Red Man's Own Story of His Progress from Darkness to Light" in *Missionary Review*
- 1916 Apauk (Piegan) (w/ James Schultz) *Apauk, Caller of Buffalo*
- 1920 Same Blowsnake (Winnebago) (w/ Paul Radin) *The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*
- Annette Leevier (Ojibwa) *Psychic Experiences of an Indian Princess*
- 1921 Buffalo Bird Woman (*Maxidiwiac*) (Hidatsa) (w/ Gilbert Wilson) *Waheenee: An Indian Girl's Story, Told by Herself*
- 1925 John Milton Oskison (Cherokee) *Wild Harvest: A Novel of Transition Days in Oklahoma*
- 1926 John Milton Oskison *Black Jack Davy*
- 1927 Mourning Dove (aka Hum-Ishu-Ma) (Okanogan) *Cogewea, the Half-Blood: A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range*
- Lynn Riggs (Cherokee) *Big Lake*
- 1928 Sylvester Long (aka Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance) (Croatan, adopted Blackfeet) *Long Lance: The Autobiography of a Blackfoot Indian Chief*
- Chief Tahan Joseph Griffis (Osage) *Indian Circle Stories*
- 1929 Iron Teeth (Cheyenne) (w/ Thomas B. Marquis) "Red Pipe's Squaw" in *Century Magazine*
- John Milton Oskison *A Texas Titan: The Story of Sam Houston*
- Muriel Hazel Wright (Choctaw) (w/ Joseph B. Thoburn) *Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People*
- 1930 Isidora Filomena (Chuructos) (w/ Hubert Bancroft) "My Years with Chief Solano" in *Touring Topics*

- John Freeman Craig, aka Chief White Eagle (Winnebago)
Fifty Years on the Warpath
- Catherine McDonald (Nez Perce) (w/ Winona Adams) "An Indian Girl's Account of a Trading Expedition to the Southwest About 1841" in *The Frontier*
- Plenty-coups (Crow) (w/ Frank Linderman) *American: The Life Story of a Great Indian*
- 1931 Lynn Riggs *Green Grow the Lilacs*
- White Horse Eagle (Osage) (w/ Edgar Schmidt-Pauli) *We Indians: The Passing of a Great Race*
- Wooden Leg (Cheyenne) (w/ Thomas Marquis) *Wooden Leg: A Warrior Who Fought Custer*
- 1932 Peter Hudson (Choctaw) "Recollections of Peter Hudson" in *Chronicles of Oklahoma*
- James Paytiamo (Acoma Pueblo) *Flaming Arrow's People: By an Acoma Indian*
- Pretty-Shield (Crow) (w/ Frank Linderman) *Red Mother*
- John Joseph Mathews (Osage) *Wah 'Kon-Tah: The Osage and the White Man's Road*
- 1933 Kate Bighead (Cheyenne) (w/ Thomas Marquis) *She Watched Custer's Last Battle*
- Mourning Dove *Coyote Stories*
- Sylvester Long Redman *Echoes: Comprising the Writings of Chief Buffalo Long Lance and Biographical Sketches by His Friends*
- 1934 John Joseph Mathews *Sundown*
- 1935 John Milton Oskison *Brothers Three*
- 1936 Thomas Wildcat Alford (Shawnee, Techumseh's grandson) (w/ Florence Drake) *Civilization, as Told to Florence Drake*

- Maria Chona (Papago) (w/ Ruth Underhill) *The Autobiography of a Papago Woman*
- D'Arcy McNickle (Flathead) *The Surrounded*
- William Morgan (Navajo) *Human-Wolves Among the Navajo*
- Lynn Riggs *The Cherokee Night*
- 1938 Samuel E. Kenoi (Apache) (w/ Morris E. Opler) "A Chiricahua Apache's Account of the Geronimo Campaign of 1886" in *New Mexico Historical Review*
- Left Handed (Navajo) (w/ Walter Dyk) *Son of Old Man Hat: A Navaho Autobiography*
- John Milton Oskison *Tecumseh and His Times: The Story of a Great Indian*
- 1939 Louise Abeita (Hopi/Isleta) *I Am a Pueblo Indian Girl*
- Black Eagle (Nez Perce) (w/ William Whitman) "Xube, a Ponca Autobiography"
- 1940 Anauta (Eskimo) *Land of Good Shadows: The Life Story of Anauta, an Eskimo Woman*
- Julia Cooley (?) *Wolves Against the Moon*
- Yellow Wolf (Nez Perce) (w/ Lucullus McWhorter) *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story*
- Muriel Hazel Wright *Springplace: Moravian Mission and the Ward Family of the Cherokee Nation*
- 1941 Simeon Oliver (Eskimo) (w/ Alden Hatch) *Son of the Smokey Sea*
- Lucy Young (Wailaki) (w/ Edith Murphey) "Out of the Past: A True Indian Story" in *California Historical Society Quarterly*
- 1942 Don Talayesva (Hopi) (w/ Leo Simmons) *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*
- 1943 Tetlaneetsa (Thompson River) (w/ Marius Barbeau & Grace Melvin) in *The Indian Speaks*

- Ethel Brant Monture (Mohawk) *West to the Setting Sun*
- 1944 Ruth Muskrat Bronson (Cherokee) *Indians Are People, Too*
- 1945 John Joseph Mathews *Talking to the Moon*
- 1946 D'Arcy McNickle *They Came Here First: The Epic of the American Indian*

Appendix B

Personal Information on the Four Sioux Writers

Charles Alexander Eastman (1858-1939)

Born in Minnesota on a Santee Dakota reservation, Eastman was the son of Many Lightnings and Goddess, whose English name was Mary Nancy Eastman and who was the daughter of EuroAmerican artist Seth Eastman, who had married a Santee woman when he lived among them. After his father's conversion to Christianity, the whole family took Mary Nancy's family name as their own, and young *Ohiyesa* became Charles Alexander.

Nicholas Black Elk (1863-1950)

Born in December on the Little Powder River within present day Wyoming into an Oglala Lakota family tradition of healers, living and practicing their medicine west of the Black Hills, Black Elk experienced his first, and greatest, vision when he was nine years old, upon which he did not act until he was 16, when he joined the family line of shamans. Nicholas was a Christian name chosen for him after his conversion to Catholicism.

Luther Standing Bear (1863/8-1939)

Possibly born in December of either 1863 (as official rolls list him) or 1868 (as he claims), Standing Bear was born into the Brule Lakota tribe to Pretty Face and Standing Bear, a mixed-blood band chief. Plenty Kill, or *Ota K'te*, chose the name Luther (even though he could not read) from a list on the Carlisle blackboard.

Gertrude Bonnin (1876-1938)

Born on the Yankton Nakota Reservation in South Dakota, Gertrude lived the first eight years of her life there before leaving to study, against her mother's wishes, at White's Manual Institute in Wabash, Indiana. After a falling out with her sister-in-law over the surname Simmons, Gertrude christened herself with the Lakota name *Zitkala-Sa*, or Red Bird, later accepting her husband's family name, Bonnin.

2

VITA

Ruth J. Heflin

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: EXAMPLES FOR THE WORLD: FOUR TRANSITIONAL SIOUX
WRITERS AND THE SIOUX LITERARY RENAISSANCE

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Pratt, Kansas, on June 19, 1963, the daughter of
Mary Rosella and Charles Heflin.

Education: Graduated from Pratt High School, Pratt, Kansas, in May
1981; received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Kansas
State University, Manhattan, Kansas, in May, 1985; received a
Masters of Arts degree in English from Kansas State University,
Manhattan, Kansas, in July 1988. Completed the requirements for
the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in English at
Oklahoma State University in May 1997.

Experience: Taught as a Teaching Assistant at Kansas State University,
Manhattan, Kansas, from January 1986 to July 1988, then as an
adjunct instructor from August 1988 to September 1989; taught as
an adjunct instructor at the University of Kansas, Lawrence,
Kansas, from August 1989 to December 1989; taught as an adjunct
professor at William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri, from August
1990 to May 1991, at the University of Missouri-Kansas City from
August 1990 to July 1992, and at Kansas City Kansas Community
College from August 1990 to July 1992. Taught as a Teaching
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