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GUERRILLA ETHNOGRAPHY

by

Renae Moore Bredin

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
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ABSTRACT

Using contemporary paradigms from Native American, African American, feminist, and post-colonial critical theories, as well the debates around what constitutes anthropology, this dissertation examines the ways in which Native American written literary production and European American ethnography converge in the social production and construction of the "raced" categories of "red" and "white." The questions of how discourses of power and subjectivity operate are asked of texts by Paula Gunn Allen, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Elsie Clews Parsons, all of whom have lived and worked in and around Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico. The matrix in their texts of location (Laguna Pueblo), discourses (fiction and ethnography), "races" (Laguna and White), and gender (female), facilitates an examination of the scripting of "Indian-ness" an "White-ness" and how these categories sustain each other, and how each "contains" and "represents" the other, based in relative domination and subordination. What is posited here is a practice of **guerilla ethnography**, a practice which reflects "white" back upon itself, creating a picture of what it means to be culturally "white" by one who is "other than white." Texts are examined in terms of a racial and ethnic "whiteness" as a socially constructed category, upsetting the underlying assumption of whiteness as the given or natural center.

GUERRILLA ETHNOGRAPHY

Introduction

"The construction of identity depends on a relation to agency and the empowerment conferred by a sense of agency. Many histories have been written in which agency comes at the expense of the often unrecognized or sometimes even self-justified domination over others."

Fran Bartkowski

This dissertation examines the ways in which Native American literature and European American ethnography contribute to the social construction of the "raced" categories of "red" and "white." The questions of how discourses of power and subjectivity operate are often asked in terms of the racial and ethnic "Other" as a socially constructed category, with the underlying assumption of whiteness as the given or natural center, rather than as another socially constructed category. "Whiteness," both overvalued and also magically invisible, is a category sorely in need of investigation. In the overvaluation of "white" and its covert associations with right, good and positive value in a racist dominant cultural matrix, it becomes the space and subjectivity in which power and privilege are centered. As bell hooks urges, "central to this process of unlearning white supremacist attitudes and

values is the deconstruction of the category 'whiteness' "
(Black Looks 12).

The consistent use of a "savage other"--whether "black," "red," "brown," or yellow,"--to create and affirm "white-ness" as the dominant, powerful and superior Self has been explored historically, anthropologically and sociologically. While contemporary critics like bell hooks, Cornel West, Toni Morrison and others point to the lack of sustained investigation of "white-ness" as a socially constructed category, especially in relation to literary texts and contexts, the notion of constructing a Self on the back of a "red" or "indian" other has been, to some degree, explored. In The White Man's Indian, Robert F. Berkhofer investigates historically the construction of "the idea of the Indian" over time and across disciplines, stereotypes which bolstered and defined colonizing identity as "not red."

If Whites of the early period of contact invented the Indian as a conception and provided its fundamental meaning through imagery, why did later generations perpetuate that conception and imagery without basic alteration although Native Americans changed? The answer to this questions must be sought partially in the very contrast presumed between Red and White society that gave

rise to the idea of the Indian in the first place. Since Whites primarily understood the Indian as an antithesis to themselves, then civilization and Indianness as they defined them would forever be opposites. Only civilization had history and dynamics in this view, so therefore Indianness must be conceived of as ahistorical and static. If the Indian changed through the adoption of civilization as defined by Whites, then he was no longer truly Indian according to the image, because the Indian was judged by what Whites were not. Change toward what Whites were made him ipso facto less Indian. (29)

Berkhofer's analysis, along with Reginald Horseman in Race and Manifest Destiny, Richard Slotkin in Regeneration Through Violence, Michael Omi and Howard Winnant in Racial Formation in The United States, and Richard Drinnon in Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building begins to fill the lack of any sustained analysis of the ways in which racialist ideologies construct not just the Other, but the ideology itself, and those who will materially benefit from the antithesis. Peter Hulme in Colonial Encounters, takes a careful look at the rhetorical strategies employed by Western European expansionism at moments of contact, and identifies the ways in which the

textualized construction of a "savage" other permitted and affirmed the colonial enterprise. Hulme's enterprise has been to look at the historical and rhetorical constructions of racial categories and characteristics, and the ways in which those "savage" constructions have attempted to build superior subjectivity on the backs of inferior "others."

"Red," "white," "savage," "other" (Other), are terms related to the categories under investigation here. Grounded in the colonial gesture, all of these terms are loaded. "Red-ness" is a term comparable to other negative racial slurs, but also one which has been in the process of being rescued and re/claimed by those for whom it has been an epithet (see Vine DeLoria's God Is Red). It is a term I will use here, keeping in mind its history and the possible implications, but also working to set up a structure in which "white," "black," and "red" circulate as co-terminous.

As Jonathan Boyarin points out in a note in "Europe's Indian, America's Jew," "At this point the choice of which words to place in quotation marks becomes almost completely arbitrary, symptomatic of a rare degenerative condition in which the patient is ultimately unable to sustain any pretense at critical writing" (200). Identities, categories, language, have been so called into question as to dis-able confident assertion of truth, or to sustain stability. All to the better. In order to call into

question the term "red," which Berkhofer chooses to represent with a capital letter as a means of setting it off, and in equalized opposition to "white," also with a capital letter, I am using the terms "red" and "white" here to point to what has been ideologically set in opposition. I would argue that this opposition will prove to be untenable, as we will see in the final chapter. The hybridity and cross-fertilization of shared geography undermines any possibility of "pure" categories.

While naming strategies are powerful tools, they take place within a specific cultural and geographic location. "Savage" has similar but distinctly unique connotations in late 20th century U.S. cultural practices, compared to its import in late 19th century racialist monologues. The texts we will examine here set these two particular cultural usages into dialogue. The matrix of location (Laguna Pueblo), discourses (fiction and ethnography), "races" (Laguna and White), and gender (female writers inscribing themselves within patriarchal norms) facilitates an examination of the scripting of "Indian-ness" and "Whiteness" and how these categories sustain each other, and how each "contains" and "represents" the other, based in relative domination and subordination. Leslie Marmon Silko, Paula Gunn Allen, and Elsie Clews Parsons have all lived and worked in and around Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico. Silko is a

descendent of German shopkeepers and Laguna women, a contemporary author writing out of the hybrid spaces of blood and kin, culture and landscape. Allen, also from Laguna, also the descendent of German shopkeepers and Laguna women, writes from within what can be accounted as relatively akin to Silko's positions, using strategies that are both like and unlike Silko's. Parsons, a feminist anthropologist from New York, collected ethnographic material at Laguna in the 1920's, using informants related to Silko and Allen, and publishing a great deal of ethnographic material about the pueblo. Their texts, I would argue, are "portraits of the whiteman" (borrowing Keith Basso's title) as well as "portraits of the redman."

Voices like Silko's and Allen's, whose agency is more than contested, whose empowerment is not conferred, but who wrest agency on the written page, speak back to Parsons. In speaking back to the subject, these "objects of ethnographic investigation" mirror what constitutes the racial "whiteness" as it has been constructed by white folks like Parsons. Silko and Allen represent racial constructions of "red" and "white" in their mixed fictional/poetic/theoretical/anthropological/pedagogical writings, and in such representation produce a different re/version of "whiteness." Their uses of Euro-American genres and paradigms, their reworking of anthropological versions of

tribal stories, and their reproduction and representation of cultural practices, both "white" and "red," work to **reinscribe** the white monologue with itself about the savage Other which has discursively created "white" as the norm, "everything and nothing, therefore unexaminable" (Dyer "White" 45).

In Playing In the Dark, Toni Morrison looks at American literature and its "responses to a dark, abiding, signing Africanist presence" (5). She asserts that it is this Africanist presence, marked as absence and "deployed as rawness and savagery, that provided the staging ground and arena for the elaboration of the quintessential American identity" (44). Like hooks and Dyer, for Morrison whiteness is scripted as "unraced" and unexamined in meaningful ways. However, Morrison perpetuates the binary of race as it is currently operating in U.S. cultural theory and practice; a binary composed of the opposition of "black" and "white." The elision of the indigenous population "within a natural and mental landscape" of white American identity is not new, but Morrison's dismissal is surprising. She asks:

"Why is it [the landscape] seen as raw and savage? Because it is peopled by a nonwhite indigenous population? Perhaps. But certainly because there is ready to hand a bound and unfree, rebellious but serviceable, black population against

which...all white men are enabled to measure these privileging and privileged differences. (45)

By reversing Morrison's formulation, we see an assumption of an 'unbound and free' indigenous population, in opposition to the "bound and unfree...black population" she articulates, which buttresses both "white" and "black" notions of what constitutes "red." At the same time, by perpetuating the binary, Morrison's formulation maintains the opposition of dominant/privileged and subordinate/unfree.

"When the sign ceases the synchronous flow of the symbol, it also seizes the power to elaborate--through the time lag--new and hybrid agencies and articulations. This is the moment for revisions" (Bhabha "Post Colonial Criticism" 457). I am here inserting "red" into the time lag, the "passing moment in between the chain of signifiers" "white" and "black" in order to disrupt the binary which covers over the American U.S. postcolonial contingency. In fact, in interrupting the "synchronous flow" of the sign of "black-ness" with the sign of "red-ness," I am arguing that Silko and Allen articulate a new and hybrid agency, revising in the time lag, the passing moment between the chain of the signifier "black" and the signifier "white," the binary of race in postcolonial American U.S. third world social economies. Bhabha articulates a space "outside the

sentence" in the after experience, before concept occurs. It is this space that opens for the emergence of agency of the marginal, the subaltern--the "return of the subject as agent" ("Post Colonial Criticism 450). The attempt here is to insert "red-ness" in order to break the binary of black/white formulations of race, effecting a counter-hegemonic shift, de-stabilizing the current balance of power in the dialectics of oppositional resistance.

Poetic Resistance

Using as models Leslie Marmon Silko's Storyteller and Barbara Babcock's "Arrange Me into Disorder," and in the spirit of the guerilla tactics employed in the primary texts, the poetry of Leslie Marmon Silko and Paula Gunn Allen will provide intervention in what follows, as both commentary and critique--a poetic resistance to "the patterns of thought and rationality that hold us in bondage" (Babcock 103). Because Silko, Allen, and Parsons negotiate, resist, and traverse boundaries in their texts, it seems important to participate in that resistance, a kind of "reverse strip tease" (Vizenor "Socioacupuncture" 83) of dressing (white) academic form with its poetic antithesis, where everything stands in. "The logic of *bricolage* is that of the kaleidoscope in which structural patterns are realized by means of bits and pieces--patterns produced by

the conjunction of contingency *and* constraint" (Babcock 106). This is a chapter that has no chapter number, and no separate space.

Chapter 1 sets in motion the relationships between and among Parsons, Silko, and Allen, and explores the geography of their common ground at Laguna Pueblo. Somewhere at the beginning of this century, Elsie Clews Parsons is said to have declared Laguna and its inhabitants a 'lost cause,' a pueblo without a kiva. Somewhere near the end of the same century, Silko and Allen recuperate the stories Parsons collected from their grandmothers, telling these stories again to a predominantly white audience, as did Parsons. Parsons' relationship to this "disordered" place, and to two indigenous Laguna women, the first being one of her informants, Mrs. Walter G. Marmon, the second Marmon's descendant, Leslie Marmon Silko--is really a dialogue of power relationships. This dialogue is based in a network of the discourses among categories of racial and ethnic construction, notions of spatial and bodily location, and gendered subject/object relations. Location, race, and gender speak to the scripting of "indian-ness" and "white-ness" as complicitous categories in the ethnography and anthropology of Parsons' "scientific" texts, and the reclaiming of that dialogue for the object of scientific

inquiry via the "fictional" texts of Leslie Marmon Silko and Paula Gunn Allen.

It is in the agency or lack thereof that gendered, racial identity operates at Laguna. Parsons steps into Laguna in a position vis a vis established white institutions as female/"minor" (Deleuze's term), but vis a vis Laguna her position is dominant and privileged by virtue of her race and her class, as well as by the more equitable status accorded women within Laguna cultural practice. Her agency is contested, both within the "serious fiction" of Euro-American scientific, anthropological discourse, and the indigenous community upon which she will code her own rational and complex authority to speak. The "objective" voice of the ethnographer, which Parsons both replicates and repudiates in her work, erases the constructed nature of those authorizing themselves to speak--because they are white. The crossblood status of Silko and Allen situates them on several troubled margins in this matrix, and their liminality works to define and represent both "white-ness" and "indian-ness" as lived categories of subjectivity. Parsons, Marmon, and Silko are all speaking to and about each other, constituting a web of relational subjectivity.

Chapter 2 theorizes through the trope of 'mother' how each writer supports or opposes the ongoing transformation of "red" and "white" raced categories. One of the most striking features of many current analyses of the

constitution of "red-ness" is their minimal engagement with issues of gender and racial formation. Brief mention is made on occasion of the "Pocahontas" complex, but rarely fully examined. Some feminist theorists, like Gloria Anzaldúa, Marilyn Frye, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Nancy Caraway, and to a certain degree both bell hooks and Toni Morrison, are beginning to ask the questions of racial construction and how gender (masculine and feminine) supports, sustains, contains, and resists certain kinds of constructions, particularly that of "white-ness" and "black-ness." Paula Gunn Allen points to another absence, that of the "red" absent presence in the history of ideological formation and literature in the United States. In "Who Is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism" Allen takes the white myth of "self" as 'rational,' 'ordered,' and 'modern' at face value, then proceeds to show just how those very aspects of "self" are at the heart of white alienation and isolation, the seeds of "our" collective disintegration. What saves "us," for Allen, is what "we" have learned from indigenous peoples--our mothers.

Because the trope of mothers, mothering, and motherhood appears frequently in the works of Parsons, Silko, and Allen, and because of the gendered and (em)powered nature of the mother figure in "white" ideology and Laguna Keresan worldview, this chapter will look at 'mothers' as a screen

and mirror into the larger problem of the representation of "white-ness."

Chapter 3 looks at Paula Gunn Allen's raced self-identification and positioning in relation to what is currently a predominantly white feminist reading audience. Cherríe Moraga writes in "From a Long Line of Vendidas" that "the Radical Feminist must extend her own 'identity' politics to include her 'identity' as oppressor as well" (188). Critical debates are currently raging over the politics of identity, the constitution of cultural inclusion/exclusion, and the problem of the speaking subject, when the speaking subject is speaking outside of the dominant order. The question to be asked is that of the position of the "other" within the dominant framing of ideology. Is the "other" complicit and resistant in ways that affect the construction of a "white self?" In what ways can the subaltern alter the discourse of racial formation? No longer the question of "who may speak," but the question, "speaking or not speaking, does the constructed 'Other' operate as more than a blank page, thereby revising the text of the 'white self'?" Chela Sandoval, in "Feminist Theory under Post-modern Conditions" posits the possibility of using the outsider position, or the borderlands, as a position of "tactical subjectivity" out of which existing modes of oppression can be confronted

(14). I would extend this, arguing that this "tactical subjectivity" in the space of the much discussed 'borderlands' revises the dominant version of self, scripted here as white, male, heterosexual.

This chapter interrogates the work of Paula Gunn Allen, who positions herself as *essentially* Native American, lesbian and "feminine," identities chosen from among several possible identities which she has taken up and set aside within the body of her oeuvre. In Allen's novel The Woman Who Owned the Shadows, the central figure in the text, Ephanie, (re)constructs herself in much the same way that Allen does. This text provides a decentering confluence of the subject positions of reader, writer and texts, within which we can begin to examine the issues of positionality and essentialism. Because Allen claims the authority to speak vis á vis an essential identity as Indian, and also constructs an alternative identity within the blood and bones, her work stands in a unique relationship to the debates over raced identity as socially constructed or biologically determined.

Chapter 4 takes up the uses of story versions and verbal art as an ongoing American Indian aesthetic practice. It reads into the gaps and elisions between versions of a particular Keresan narrative a particular scripting of "red" and "white." Native American aesthetics and cultural values

are deeply embedded in the use of verbal art as a defining principle. What "white" folks have called myths or folktales are the oral literate tribal productions that seek to create and affirm tribal world view. Native American writers employ verbal art in ways which can undermine the European American forms in which they write. Writing down the story as a unified field with the finality that pen and paper, keyboard and printer imply operates against the grain of tribal storytelling. Silko and Allen resolve some of the difficulty of oscillating between written and oral aesthetic assumptions by telling several versions of the same stories, some of which Parsons also recorded. At times, it is in the differences between versions, as well as in the similarities--in the crack in the mirror--where that which is "red" and that which is "white" might be viewed.

At the same time, these stories are grounded in geographic and temporal locations. In several versions of the Keres story "Arrowboy and the Destroyers," Silko shows how in her cosmology, and by inference, what she is constructing as Keresan cosmology, landscape is not a consumable commodity, but something in which all participate, something to which all are 'essentially' connected. Both the use and abuse of landscape as commodity, as well as 'essential relation' set white and indigenous practices apart. How these cultural landscapes

are articulated in space and time in specific locations creates a palimpsest, a series of stories which render both "white" and "red" textual subjectivities. For both Silko and Allen, storytelling and versions operate not only as a re/writing of the script dictated by ethnographers like Boas, Gunn, Cushing, and Parsons, but also as resistance to the prescriptive nature of the re-told/re-corded versions by Anglo Europeans.

The final chapter defines and explores what constitutes 'guerilla ethnography' in the work of Silko and Allen. Both writers re-vision European American social constructions through a re/writing of "white" ethnographic and fictional textuality. In Silko's case, the portrait of "white-ness" in Almanac of the Dead is bleak at best. Greedy, "ruly" (Marilyn Frye's term), violent natures are assigned white status, even if blood belies this position. This ethnographic version of Euro-American cultural production and social construction, written as a Euro-American novel, relies on the aesthetic form and appearance of Western European genres. It operates to de-stabilize those historical and sociological versions of culture and society which buttress white supremacist internal colonialism in the Americas.

Paula Gunn Allen commits a similar practice in Grandmothers of the Light: A Medicine Woman's Sourcebook.

Using current Euro-American ethnographic practice, she revises previous images of indigenous peoples using "thousands of stories collected from hundreds of tribes [that] have been published in the United States" (Grandmothers 3). By making use of these accounts which were collected by white people for the most part, she takes up the ways in which white people have revised tribal narratives, and what that means about "white-ness." Allen, while serious about her intent to re-center what she terms "cosmogyny," also plays trickster or clown, putting on the markings of white folks, but in reverse. While Silko steps outside of ethnographic form to turn the mirror onto white folks, Allen employs ethnographic form, but in so doing reverses the mirror, "mimicking" the colonizer, producing what Homi Bhabba calls "its slippage, its excess, its difference," disrupting the authority of "white-ness" ("Of Mimicry" 126). Her text is "*almost the same but not white*" (Mimicry 130).

As what I presume to be a response to the ethnography of Parsons, Boas and others, who were in fact re-visioning Laguna cultural production and social construction for white consumption and redemption, Almanac of the Dead re-visions contemporary white culture. Cultural critics like Gerald Vizenor, Nora Noranjo-Morse, and Barbara Babcock offer ways of rethinking anthropological and ethnographic "monologues"

in light of what I'm calling guerilla ethnography. This chapter posits the conjunction of cultural critique and critical narrative in Almanac of the Dead and Grandmothers of Light.

The questions germinating here are about how "red" people see "white" people. What cultural, political, and aesthetic values make up the social construction of "whiteness" in the indigenous imagination? How do the writings of Silko, Allen, and Parsons de-naturalize, racialize, and defamiliarize that social construction? How is the "portrait of the whiteman" altered when it becomes a portrait of the whitewoman? What happens when the questions and the portraits are recast in terms not of color but of power and privilege? And what's more, what happens to the "white" reader when the relations of power are de-stabilized in this defamiliarization of subjectivity?

I want to ask these questions, not only as a method of getting to close readings of Silko, Allen, and Parsons, but as a way of getting to the knotty issues of race, gender, and power. It will be one of only a handful of critical investigations into what I'm calling 'the red woman's white girl,' in a reversal of Berkhofer's title, 'images of American white folks from those on the shore to those on the reservation.'

Chapter One
Three Women

"...I see no way to avoid insisting
that there has to be a simultaneous
other focus: not merely who am I? but
who is the other woman? How am I naming
her? How does she name me?"

from "French Feminism in an International
Frame"

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

"No anthropological undertaking can
ever open up the other. Never the
marrow. All he can do is wear himself
out circling the object and define his
other on the grounds of his being a man
studying another man."

from Woman, Native, Other
Trinh T. Minh-ha

Despite currents in anthropological, ethnographic and literary debates claiming the unknowability of the "Other," efforts to know the Other abound. Critical tourism of other cultures and identities continues, marked now by polyphony, dialogism, and reflexivity.¹ Pluralism notwithstanding, efforts by members of dominant groups to work in the cultural material of groups traditionally silenced speaks to a sometimes spoken, sometimes unspoken desire for otherness.

In this undertaking, I am working not to know the other, but to explore the relationships of two groups--Anglo- and Native-American, to each other; to ask what happens in those moments when identities are constructed in contact. How do those relationships, once they enter narrative on the page, operate to sustain or change political and social

conceptions of the categories which are in contact. Does the "emergent"² nature of the performance of the moment of contact become static when textualized?

The textual meeting of three women differentiated categorically but located geographically in the same space, and temporally across a century, provides fertile grounds for questioning these notions, and for exploring the terrain of self/other, "red"/"white," subject/object, and the seemingly opposed ideologies of social construction and biological essentialism.

When feminist anthropologist Elsie Clews Parsons wrote her ethnographic accounts of the Keres inhabitants of Laguna Pueblo, she created her version of what constitutes "indian-ness"--more specifically, Pueblo-ness. Contained within her "factual" account of Keres ritual, tradition, and habits of mind are particularly white, feminist, upper-class assumptions from the world she brings to the act of writing. Her ethnography overtly participates in constructing what becomes construed by other white readers as the racial category of Indian.

Forty years later, Leslie Marmon Silko and Paula Gunn Allen write fiction and non-fiction accounts of the ritual, tradition and habits of mind of the same Keresan group living at Laguna. Their accounts also participate in constructing what becomes construed as the racial category

of Indian, but from subject positions that are identified as **within** the category being constructed. Unlike Parsons, the assumptions which Silko and Allen as Laguna women might bring to their enterprise are **part of** the category "red" which is already in circulation. There is embedded in both enterprises a parallel underlying construction of what constitutes the unspoken racial category "white."

White Feminist

In 1917, Elsie Clews Parsons first visited Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico, in conjunction with an anthropological field trip to Acoma and Zuni. An early feminist sociologist and a pioneering ethnographer,³ she returned to Laguna at least four more times to research and record the culture. What she published (several hundred pages on Laguna alone) is an ethnographic account based in scientific discourses and "objective" reportage, but it is also a narrative discourse, what James Clifford calls a "serious fiction," (Predicament 10). Parsons' authorial voice claims to be recording a faithful picture of a culture, this despite those ruptures and disjunctions in time and space inherent in the project of publication, ruptures that cover over the distance between Laguna and New York, the 1917 collecting expedition, and the publication of the notes months later. A contemporary reading of these ethnographic narratives, the

ethnographic monologue, must take into account a narrative that is full of voices in the margins,⁴ messages in the cracks, dialogues between the lines. As Barbara Babcock asserts in her Introduction to the recent reprinting of Parsons' Tewa Tales,

"Parsons' style of writing, with page after page consisting largely of notes and countless references to other texts, including her own publications, reflects not only the thoroughness of her scholarship and her desire to leave as complete a record as possible for later scholars but also her belief that anthropology--especially Southwestern studies--should be a collaborative, comparative, and cooperative enterprise. (x)

In "Feminist Anthropology: The Legacy of Elsie Clews Parsons," Louise Lamphere identifies the "polyphonic Boasian mode" of ethnographic inquiry and textualizing to which she asserts Parsons was committed.

The twenties was the period in which the "Classic ethnography" was formulated, as exemplified by Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*. The new style of ethnographic writing transformed observations and dialogue gathered in particular places and at particular times into a

text containing a unified voice, that of the ethnographer representing beliefs, practices, and behaviors of a whole culture (Clifford 1983; Clifford and Marcus 1986). However, Parsons' fieldwork differed from that of Malinowski and Mead. In the 1920's Parsons stayed within the Boasian tradition, which represented a more polyphonic description, but she has framed that description in terms of culture elements, diffusion, and culture history. (Lamphere 522-3)

There are actually two methods Parsons used to report on and textualize her experience of Laguna. The first, in the 1920's, is as Lamphere describes, "polyphonic description" of specific cultural details. In "Laguna Ceremonialism," "Mothers and Children at Laguna" and other such reports to various anthropological journals, Parsons catalogues ritual observances, records sacred and everyday stories, and describes kinship systems in great detail. She offers little by way of generalization about or analysis of the details she reports. In "Mothers and Children at Laguna" there are descriptions of an altar and the rituals associated with presenting a new child, gift giving, pregnancy taboos, lullabies, and childhood training practices. The report is loosely held together under the rubric of mothering, and there are a number of informant

voices offering 'factual information.' This is the general pattern found in most of the other material Parsons publishes about Laguna Pueblo.

However, as Lamphere also notes, her later work contains and monologizes her earlier descriptions. Pueblo Indian Religion, published in 1939 after much of her fieldwork in the Pueblos had been completed, is precisely that "unified voice [of] the ethnographer representing beliefs, practices, and behaviors of a whole culture" (op cit). In the preface, Parsons asserts that "Pueblo society appears remarkably unified . . ." (vii), and later in the introduction, begins to codify what constitutes a Pueblo by categorizing Pueblo "Habits of Mind," "which are fostered in Pueblo life" (76). While she disavows what she is doing when she says, ". . . in what degree these traits characterize the individual Pueblo I do not know" (76), it is in the disavowal that the fetishistic nature of this text becomes apparent.⁵ Her suggestions of Pueblo "susceptibility to ridicule or criticism and to fear, the urge to separate one's self from whatever may seem offensive or dangerous, and that very widespread way of mistaking an attribute for an independent object," along with her larger claims to Pueblo compulsive behavior, clairvoyance, analogous thinking, arbitrary relationship of events, reliance on orientation and sequence, and other habits (76-

111), function to generalize what she has observed as the texture of daily life into what constitutes a psychological race profile. Is this not the founding gesture of imperializing discourse?

Native Informant

Running along side Parsons' narrative of what she reports from Laguna in the earlier 'polyphonic' fieldwork, embedded within her oscillation between the "objective" and the "personal" stances of her texts, there are the voices in the margins of her cultural interpreters or informants, as well as those who functioned as her linguistic interpreters. These are the individuals who offered up the details from which Parsons devises her psychological race profile. Many of these voices are women from Laguna who are related to each other by matrilineal blood kinship as well as clan affiliation: Mrs. Walter G. Marmon (Gawiretsa), "a native-born Laguna woman," Mrs. E.F. Eckerman '(possibly either Mrs. W.G. Marmon's mother or aunt), Wana (Margaret Marmon--possibly related to Mrs. W.G. Marmon), Getsitsa, and Dzaid yuwi'. Of these, the most provocative voice is that of Mrs. W.G. Marmon--Gawiretsa. Parsons speaks of her, in footnotes and in textual reference, with warmth and respect, calling her an "excellent" informant ("Notes on Acoma and Laguna" 180), "unsophisticated and uncontaminated by

American shoddiness . . . strong, gentle, and very lovable" ("Laguna Ceremonialism" 87). Her continual textual reappearance (use as an informant) locates her as one of the co-writers of the narrative(s). Because Parsons identifies Gawiretsa in such a way, as a kind of "noble primitive," my attention is provoked. The relationship between Parsons and Gawiretsa is personal and intimate rather than anonymous and formal, as is the case in much of ethnographic writing. Her voice, while marginal, is stronger and more consistent than those of the other women informants/(co)authors. How does the "noble primitive function as co-author? What then, constitutes **authorship**, **authority** and **authenticity**? It is in this marginal polyphony that questions of power and privilege are pointed to and enacted in ethnographic discourse.

James Clifford in The Predicament of Culture asks us to reconsider the authorial voice of ethnography. "Who is actually the author of the field notes?..indigenous control over knowledge gained in the field can be considerable, and even determining" (45). Ethnography is a discourse which simultaneously produces and problematizes textual relationships. As an ethnographer, Parsons steps into Laguna in a position *vís a vís* established institutions as female (minor), but *vís a vís* Laguna her position is dominant and privileged by virtue of her race and her class.

She comes to Laguna loaded with the baggage of the original white male settlers to whom Parsons' informants are connected, baggage which troubles her exchanges with and reportage of the "culture" from within which she remains "outside." She participates in the construction of a "serious fiction" which passes for scientific knowledge and comprehensive understanding of Pueblo and Keresan culture. Her construction is possible only by virtue of the object of scientific inquiry--the "native informant."

Parsons' relationship to Gawiretsa is one of subject/object, a relationship which is reproduced as textual in Parsons' writings. It is grounded in the lived connection of participant observer/informant. Mrs. W.G. Marmon, a full blood near the "center" of Laguna (her brother was a *cheani*), informs and interprets to an outsider for outsiders--she writes none of Parsons' material herself, but offers Parsons carefully selected pieces of the culture to be re-interpreted for a white audience. In a footnote to "Notes on Acoma and Laguna," Parsons alludes to Gawiretsa's position in relation to the material she tells to Parsons.

² The *kachale* appear to have encroached in other ways too upon the *cheani*. In the somewhat bitter criticism of the *kachale* by my elderly woman informant [Gawiretsa], the sister, I recall, of *osach cheani*, I had a glimpse, I thought, of one

of those institutional feuds apparently characteristic of Pueblo Indian society. (185) Gawiretsa participates in what Parsons characterizes as an "institutional feud," offers "bitter criticism" of the *kachale*. It is clear in the margins, at least, that this is not an anonymous, objective informant. Gawiretsa will, by implication, tell only what supports her own claims. This self-selecting strategy is precisely the strategy which affords the object of investigation to take up a subject position and 'write' the field notes, take control of the transaction, and becomes an **authority**.

This strategy of selective representation by the represented is described by Greg Sarris in Keeping Slug Woman Alive. Sarris describes how Pomo women informants in northern California carefully managed encounters with anthropologists. They called their storytelling sessions "money-storytelling-time" and "giving-them-a-piece work." Those who came to record the stories of Pomo Indians were only given carefully chosen, and sometimes never before heard, stories, bits and pieces, but "[t]hey never get the whole picture. . . [b]esides, they make up what they want anyway. They tell their own stories about whatever I tell them" (105). This Pomo woman is clear about just what is going on in these transactions. She is offering bits and pieces, for her own reasons, knowing that what happens to

her information is beyond her control once she gives it over. Because her version of what constitutes Pomo cultural practice moves outside of her control once the encounter is ended, she retains control in the telling. What the non-Indian recorder does in making up what s/he wants anyway is to make a textual Indian that speaks to the desire of the non-Indian **as** non-Indian.

Trinh T. Minh-ha describes the relationship between the anthropologically observed and observer:

A conversation of "us" with "us" about "them" is a conversation in which "them" is silenced. "Them" always stands on the other side of the hill, naked and speechless, barely present in its absence. Subjects of discussion, "them" is only admitted among "us," the discussing subjects, when accompanied or introduced by an "us," member, hence the dependency of "them" and its need to acquire good manners for the membership standing.

(Woman, Native, Other 67)

Before me lies a book filled
with pictures of silent tombs
and chipped statuary and
jungles -- live and dead ideas
trapped in a senseless
time-warp. No wonder tribal
people dislike
having their picture taken.
Here and there the faces of
Mexico and Central
American
peasants look out at me.

I seem to see a sense of knowing on their faces
 and,
 inevitably, resignation.
 (Allen "The Sun Worshippers")

Rather than Trinh's "naked and speechless them," indigenous control over what happens in the ethnographic exchange would seem to be more multivalent. But the subjectivity of the moment of exchange is quickly lost--made naked--to ethnographic textualization.

"This is the way Aunt Susie told the story."

If my calculations are correct, Gawiretsa is a paternal great-aunt to Leslie Marmon Silko, one of the three women moving through our triangle. Silko is one of the pre-eminent voices of the contemporary Native American literary renaissance, a movement which is bringing together traditional oral storytelling and Western textual practice.⁶ Both Gawiretsa and Silko function in important ways as cultural informants and interpreters of Laguna for non-Indian culture. Silko, a mixed-blood and somewhat marginalized figure vis a vis spatial relationships at Laguna (her family lived on the outskirts of town), offers "us" as readers her version of Laguna, coming from "a certain kind of background and place" which involves Laguna people and culture ("Stories and Their Tellers" 21).

Silko and Gawiretsa re-produce their kinship textually. Silko tells the stories told by her grandmother, her Aunt

Susie, and her community, as an insider. In Storyteller, Silko hands **authorship** over to Aunt Susie early on, making her the teacher and teller, in turn **authorizing** and **authenticating** Silko's telling. Arnold Krupat describes Silko's dialogism in this way:

Silko dedicates her book "to the storytellers as far back as memory goes and to the telling which continues and through which they all live and we with them." Having called herself a storyteller, she thus places herself in a tradition of tellings, suggesting what will be the case, that the stories to follow, Silko's "own" stories, cannot strictly be her own; nor will we find in them what one typically looks for in post-Rousseauian, Western autobiography--or, as Bakhtin would add, in poetry--a uniquely personal voice. There is no single, distinctive, or authoritative voice in Silko's book nor any striving for such a voice (or style); to the contrary, Silko will take pains to indicate how even her own individual speech is the product of many voices. *Storyteller* is presented as a strongly polyphonic text, in which the author defines herself--finds her voice, tells her life, illustrates the capacities of her vocation--in relation to the voices of other

"Ethnologists blame the Marmon brothers"

There is another relationship, also textual, which mirrors and reconfigures the Parsons/Gawiretsa and Silko/Gawiretsa dialogues. In a 1976 interview, Silko refers frequently to "anthropologists" without much affection. One anthropologist is singled out and named. "...there was a kind of continuum that was really there [Laguna] despite Elsie Clews Parsons. In 1930, you know, she wrote off Laguna as a lost cause. She said it had no kiva, that it was dead. I think she wrote that somewhere" (Evers Conversation 30). In Storyteller Silko continues her dialogue with Parsons. Near the end of the book, a Coyote story Silko's great-grandfather told to Parsons is retold. After the re/telling, Silko offers a response to one of Parsons' central concerns about the ethnographic and cultural identities at Laguna.

A good deal of controversy surrounded
and still surrounds my great-grandfather and his
brother
who both married Laguna women.
Ethnologists blame the Marmon brothers
for all kinds of factions and trouble at Laguna
and I am sure much of it is true--
their arrival was bound to complicate
the already complex politics at Laguna.

They came on the heels of a Baptist preacher named

Gorman

who also must have upset Laguna ceremonialism.

(256)

When Parsons arrived in Laguna, she arrived with her cultural baggage intact. Laguna itself was, according to her textual description, "hybrid." She identifies in several of her writings, the big controversy between the "conservatives" and the "progressives" at Laguna, a controversy brought on by the insertion of "white" cultural practices and familial ties.

It is these brothers, Walter G. and Robert G. Marmon, who figure in what Parsons reads as a central problem for the community on her first visit (of a few days) to Laguna: "At Laguna ceremonialism or sacerdotalism is disintegrated and the social organization is considerably Americanized," which Parsons attributes to the marriage of Gawiretsa to Walter G. Marmon (1917, 192). Gawiretsa is also the daughter of Kwime and the sister of Giwire, both of whom served as Shikani-kurena cheani, a position central to ceremonial life and sacerdotalism in Pueblo cosmology. Gawiretsa, functioning as Parsons' access to this disordered pantheon and ceremonial organization (1939, 244), is actually one who is at the center of the "disorder," as well as an active participant in the causes of the disorder in

subject/object relations can be re-scripted as subject/subject relations. But this figure is also, as pointed out by Alarcón and Greenblatt, 'one who asserts her own subjectivity in choosing certain lines of action--her alliance with incoming white men is one not necessarily always already a scene of rape/domination.

You stride the continents of your fool's pride
not knowing why it is I, Malinche, whose figure
looms large about the tales of your conquests.

. . .

Did you never wonder who it was
that led you in, let you in?
Did you never wonder why?

Allen Skins and Bones 5

At Laguna, this similar alliance between Gawiretsa and the incoming Marmon brothers is a crucial moment in Parsons' version of what happened. She does not imply that Gawiretsa was forced to marry a white man, rather she sees Gawiretsa is an agent, telling stories, acting in the midst and on behalf of Keres praxis as well as on her own behalf. At the same time, Parsons blames much of what happens to ritual practice and community cohesion on the arrival and subsequent marriages to local women like Gawiretsa by the Marmons.

Walter G. Marmon, appointed government teacher in 1871, married the daughter of Kwime', chief of the Kurena-Shikani medicine men and father of

Giwire, who was to take his father's position. This group led the Americanization faction and was opposed by most of the hierarchy, by the other clown society, the Kashare, by the Town chief and the War chief or head of the Scalp-takers, by the Flint, Fire, and Shahaiye societies or their chiefs.....the withdrawing ceremonialists first took their altars and sacrosanct properties up a mountain to secrete and protect them, and later brought them down to Mesita, three miles east of Laguna. Meanwhile the two kivas of Laguna were torn down by the progressives, while Robert G. Marmon was Governor, and there was a meeting at which the old women in charge of what was left of sacrosanct things brought them out and gave them up (Pueblo Indian Religion 889).

Miscegenation, then, is the agent of hybridization. As Homi Bhabha points out, the 'hybrid' moment of political change is critical as transformational, "the re-articulation, or translation, of elements that are *neither the One...nor the Other...but something else besides* which contests the terms and territories of both" ("Commitment" 120). Miscegenation at Laguna is a contestation of both Pueblo **and** white elements, the "terms and territories of both" undergo transformation. The Marmon brothers become not fully white,

Kwime' and Giwire become not quite indian. In the introduction to Pueblo Indian Religion, Parsons asserts the value of the 'hybrid' and points to what becomes an obsession for late twentieth century anthropology--acculturation.

When the town was first studied, twenty years ago, its ceremonial disintegration was so marked that it presented an obscure picture of Keresan culture. But, with recently acquired knowledge of that culture in mind, today Laguna and her nine colonies offer unrivaled opportunities to study American acculturation and the important role played by miscegenation. (890)

Parsons' interest is in the hybrid, and what constitutes both cultural survival and cultural disintegration (subjects which, like her informants, appear consistently in her footnotes). Her material from Laguna constantly refers to the arrival of the Marmons and the attendant cultural disintegration. While there has also been constant contact with Mexican and American influences, and in fact, the Shiwana Kurena Kwime' had been educated by priests in Mexico,⁸ it is the fact of "white"/"red" miscegenation that Parsons makes the moment of hybridity.

While Parsons takes care to report the split, and to identify (at times) her informants, Gawiretsa again, "stands

on the other side of the hill, naked and speechless," a "them" barely present, yet a woman who possibly participates in controlling and determining the ethnographic text. Parsons has ultimate editorial control, and in the written moment, she is able to silence the other participants in the dialogue, the fiction of polyphony turned to marginalia.

"They had been killing Indians
right and left.
It was war! It was white men coming to
find more silver, to steal more Indian land.
It was white men coming with their
pieces of paper! To make their big ranches.
Guzman and my people
had made an agreement.
Why do you think I was married to him?
For fun? For love? Hah!
To watch, to make sure he kept the agreement."
(Silko, Almanac 116).

Marginalia

According to Clifford, "...ethnographic texts are orchestrations of multifocal exchanges occurring in politically charged situations. The subjectivities produced in these often unequal exchanges--whether of 'native' or of visiting participant-observers--are constructed domains of truth, serious fictions" (Predicament 10). Herein lies one of the tasks at hand. If there is an honest acknowledgement about participation in both privilege and oppression, the position of privilege in the discourse of power relations is relatively clear. Parsons' positions either as privileged or subordinated in this discourse are more troubled (it

should be noted that she operated within a set of social rules different from our own with resistance), and Gawiretsa's position is nearly invisible. "For the first-world feminist critic, therefore, the challenge at this particular time is to develop a discourse that responds to the power relations of the world system, that is, to examine her location in the dynamic of centers and margins" (Kaplan 189). Where is the margin--where is the center?

Barbara Babcock, in "'A Tolerated Margin of Mess': The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered," explores the nature and possibilities inhering in the phenomenon of "marginality."

. . . as an operational definition and point of orientation in these shifting concepts of "marginality," let it be said that a situation of "marginality" exists whenever commonly held boundaries are violated, be they those of the social structure, of law and custom, of kinship, family structure and sexuality, of the human person, or of nature. (Babcock 155)

Babcock explores possible definitions, including the classic sociological definition, particularly Everett Stonequist's, who defined "marginal area" as "'the boundary of two cultural areas where the occupying group tends to combine the traits of both cultures,' and 'marginal man' as

'a personality type that arises at a time and a place where, out of the conflict of races and cultures, new societies, new peoples and cultures are coming into existence'" (155). Here again is a way of speaking about hybridity which is useful in examining the version of Laguna Parsons is offering us. Laguna Pueblo as a geographic site is situated on the geographical margins both temporally and spatially. Parsons comments on this temporalized marginal space in her opening remarks in "Notes on Laguna Ceremonialism" in this way:

Although Laguna was one of the first pueblos to be visited by Americans, of it there is little or no ethnographic account--presumably [sic] because the ethnographers of the Southwest have felt that because of the late origin of Laguna (settled, it is said, in 1699) and its continuous contact with Mexican and American it would present a hybrid and therefore uninteresting culture. Such a preconception overlooks the tenaciousness and ubiquity of Pueblo Indian habits of mind or culture. Moreover, the preconception is unscientific in its indifference to some of the most significant problems of ethnology, the problems of acculturation. It is a preconception

explicable only as a variant of the race snobbery which is ever seeking for pure races. (87)

It should also be emphasized that Laguna is geographically located on what was once the main road across New Mexico, a road which later became Route 66. Settled in 1699, it is physically located at a geographic crossroads/center, yet it remains marginal in several ways. First, as an indigenous community, it is outside of the boundaries of the social structure of the colonizing communities by which it is surrounded and controlled--White America. What is outside, therefore not inside, participates in defining the inner field of what constitutes "white America." Then, its "continuous contact with Mexican and American" further marginalizes its identity for the "scientific community" Parsons is here scolding for its "race snobbery." Finally, Parsons herself participates in its marginalization with her 20 year long commentary on the disintegration of ceremonialism and social organization. Johannes Fabian identifies this kind of textualized spatial **and** temporal distancing as necessary to the project of modern anthropology. Without this, there is no Other to know. Fabian charts the ways in which anthropological discourse has used not only spatial relations to construct a proper Other, but has also been tied to the politics of Time as a dimension of cultural contact.⁹ As a strategy of social

construction, Laguna is geographically, spatially, temporally, and textually distanced from the white ethnographer (Parsons) and her audience (white cultural tourists), and in the distancing, is strategically constructed as what is **not** there and then.

Falling Into the Wrong Hands

Parsons' assumptions about her audience are also part of this discourse of disintegration and hybridity. In "Laguna Genealogies," a longer article tracing kinship terms, clan moieties, and town gossip (her primary informant being Margaret Marmon, another of Silko's aunts), Parsons relates much gossip that could be considered dangerous.

In repeating gossip I have been frank in the same way that the native is frank; and prudent, I hope in the way he would wish. Incriminating evidence about "selling information" about ceremonial particulars I have withheld; and the one witchcraft case I have cited in particular is past history, the principal is dead. Moreover there is **hardly a possibility of these records ever falling into the hands of a Laguna townsman, or, if they did, of his ever reading them.** At Laguna, as elsewhere, gossip must follow certain lines to be

considered interesting, lines which I trust I can be charged with avoiding. (260; emphasis added)

Apparently, however, these records did fall into the hands of an unintended audience, for it is clear that Silko has read these documents, and possible that another Laguna writer, Paula Gunn Allen, has also taken a look.¹⁰ Clifford asserts that, "The multiplication of possible readings reflects the fact that 'ethnographic' consciousness can no longer be seen as the monopoly of certain Western cultures and social classes....indigenous readers will decode differently the textualized interpretations and lore" (52). While Parsons envisioned a unified white audience to whom she would represent a "monological authority" on Keresan culture, when Leslie Marmon Silko reads Elsie Clews Parsons, she "decodes differently." Parsons' presumption of illiteracy, disinterest, or lack of ability on the part of "Laguna townsmen" is shattered. Silko, this Laguna townswoman, re/reads, re/interprets, and re/constructs the Keresan object made by Parsons, and in this re/versal, reads, interprets and constructs Parsons--the "white" other--as white object.

Clifford tenders the deconstructive position when he asserts that "...one may also read against the grain of the text's dominant voice, seeking out other half-hidden authorities, reinterpreting the descriptions, texts, and

quotations gathered together by the writer" (53).
 Gawiretsa, Juana, and the other women whose discourse
 Parsons appropriates, albeit with more care than others of
 her time and profession, are the "half-hidden authorities"
 we might seek in the silences, the cracks and gaps, the
 interstices of Parsons' narrative ethnography located
 spatially in Laguna, and temporally in the marginal
 boundaries criss-crossed by acculturation and changing
 social and family structures. They are "ethno-graphed,"
 gathered on the other side of the hill, clothed in the
 strategic power, "warriors of survivance."¹¹

I didn't lead the whitemen, you know. I just
 went along for the ride. And along the way
 I learned what a chief should know,
 and because I did, my own Snake people survived.

. . .

And what I learned I used. Every bit
 of the whiteman's pride to make sure
 my Shoshoni people would survive
 in the great survival sweepstakes of the day.
 Maybe there was a better way to skin that cat,
 but I used the blade that was put in my hand--
 or my claw, I should say.

Anyway, what it all comes down to is this:
 The story of Sacagawea, Indian maid,
 can be told a lot of different ways.
 I can be the guide, the chief.
 I can be the traitor, the Snake.
 I can be the feathers on the wind.
 It's not easy skinning cats
 when you're a dead woman.
 A small brown bird.
 (Allen *Skins and Bones* 18)

End Notes

1. Following Edward Said's ground breaking work in Orientalism, as well as critiques from feminist and womanist theorists like bell hooks, Gloria Anzladúa, Cherríe Moraga, Norma Alarcón, and others, the prevalence of "white" theoretical tourism through Third World texts, it would seem that more care has been taken by "white" critics to attend to cultural, ethnic and racial specificity. However, if one attends to who is still doing the critical consuming of Third World production, it becomes clear that the tensions remain unresolved.
2. The moment of contact is textualized by Parsons, moving it from the realm of verbal art to that of textual production. However, following Richard Bauman's formulation of the emergent nature of verbal performative events, I would argue that this kind textualization stands between the moment of "completely novel" speech event of ethnographic field work, when social change is immanent, and the static nature of "completely fixed" written texts grounded in other written texts rather than speech events (see Bauman 41).
3. This information, and further biographical information is found in Daughters of the Desert: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest, 1880-1980, Babcock and Parezo, eds. and A Woman's Quest For Science, Hare.
4. I take this phrase from Arnold Krupat's The Voice in The Margin, where Krupat argues for and about the inclusion of Native American texts and aesthetics in a revised canon of American literature.
5. Freud's notion of the fetish as standing in for what is lost or denied is not unrelated to the use of fetishes in indigenous tribal groups. Freud, and Lacan in his wake, recast tribal fetishistic practices in individual terms, rather than through community agreement. Parsons individual disavowal of the very nature of her enterprise connect her to this Western European paradigm.
6. See especially Krupat's The Voice in the Margin, Evers' "Going Along With the Story," Owens, Other Destinies, and any Vizenor.

7. See Norma Alarcón in "Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism" for a pertinent discussion of the figure of La Malinche. See also Greenblatt in Marvelous Possessions, and his chapter "The Go-Between," and Hulme in Colonial Encounters.

8. See "The Laguna Migration to Isleta" p. 180, note 1.

9. See Time and The Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object for a more complete discussion of this concept. In particular, see page 27 for a chart of time/space distancing.

10. In a 1976 interview, Silko noted, "One of the things I recall reading in one of the anthropologist's books was the Lagunas had a seemingly inexhaustible capacity for cataloguing and listing. . ." then later in the interview, she talks about an ". . . old story, which I'm sure is in Parsons" (Evers and Carr 32).

In Joseph Bruchac's interview with Allen in Survival This Way, Bruchac mentions Parsons, and Allen's response seems to indicate that she is familiar with Parsons' work.

11. This is a portion of the title of Gerald Vizenor's recent Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance.

Chapter Two Mothers

: AFRICA
 the mother raises her luminous dark head
 her mouth encircles my tongue. . .
 Paula Gunn Allen, *Coyote's Daylight Trip*, 31

One of the most striking features of current analyses of the constitution of indigenous tribal identity, what I am calling "red-ness," is their minimal engagement with issues of gender and racial formation. Brief mention is made on occasion of the "Pocahontas" complex, but never fully examined. As noted in the Introduction, there are those feminist thinkers who are beginning to ask the questions of racial construction and how gender (masculine and feminine) supports, sustains, contains, and resists certain kinds of constructions, particularly that of "white-ness" and "black-ness." Other racially gendered subjectivities are elided in the "black/white" binary. Paula Gunn Allen points to one of those "others," that of the "red" absent presence in the history of ideological formation and literature in the United States. In "Who Is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism" Allen takes the white myth of "self" as 'rational,' 'ordered,' and 'modern' at face value, then proceeds to show just how those very aspects of "self" are at the heart of white alienation and isolation, the seeds of "our" collective disintegration. What saves "us," for Allen, is what "we" have learned from indigenous peoples--

from our mothers.

Because the trope of mothers, mothering, and motherhood appears frequently in the works of Parsons, Silko, and Allen, and because of the gendered and (em)powered nature of the mother figure in "white" ideology and Laguna Keresan world view, this chapter will look at 'mothers' as a screen and mirror into the larger problem of the representation of "white-ness."

Collusion

How does a gendered and racialized other participate in projects of social constructions? Is a subject which is 'othered' both complicitous and resistant within the paradigm in ways that affect the construction of a "white self?" In what ways does the subaltern alter the discourse of racial formation? Critical debates at this point have an ongoing history of inquiry around the politics of identity, the constitution of cultural inclusion/exclusion, and the problem of the speaking subject, when the speaking subject is speaking outside of the dominant order. The question to be asked is that of the position of the "other" within the dominant framing of ideology. Is the "other" complicit and resistant in ways that affect the construction of a "white self?" In what ways can the subaltern alter the discourse of racial formation? No longer the question of "who may

speak," but the question, "speaking or not speaking, does the constructed 'Other' operate as more than a blank page, thereby revising the text of the 'white self'?" Carl Berkhofer has this to say:

To the extent that the way different ethnic groups see each other is not purely a function of the power relationships prevailing among them, then the conceptual and ideological screens of their own cultures must still interpose between the observer and the observed to color the "reality" of mutual perceptions. (198)

These "mutual perceptions" circulating between observer and observed operate to contain and represent each other. This becomes a mutual propping of subjectivities in different positions of power.¹

As we have seen, in the circulation of racial discourses, "race" is most often constituted as "black/white" relations. Aldous Neilson articulates the dichotomy in this way:

This [discursive] veil [between black and white] is maintained between the two terms of a racial dialectic, one of which is privileged. . . . To one side of the veil is the white thesis, which is given primacy, which is considered originary, and which names itself. To the other side of the veil,

cloaked in darkness, stands the black antithesis, which is always seen as secondary, and which receives its name from the white term. (1-2)

I would argue that in interrogating the construction and representation of "whiteness," the insertion of a self-identified "red" other puts into circulation the problem of the polarity of "black" and "white" as **the** racialized terms. With more than two terms operating within the discursive construct, the dialectic becomes about more than **just** power; the conversation becomes polyphonic.²

The "black/white" binary dance of opposites is lived out in other categorical constructions of identity as well. The masculine/feminine binary represents another version of this kind of mutual propping in opposition. Binaries turn against a possible community of "we," and coerce an identity politics fraught with "us"/"them" exclusionary practices on all sides. Breaking the binary code of race vis á vis "black" and "white" with a "red" presence opens a possible space to break binary relations, whether in racial or gendered economies, if that "red" presence is also gendered. As Jenny Sharpe indicates, ". . . an attention to gender can reveal the weak links in narratives of colonial legitimation" (Allegories 8).

Toni Morrison's dismissal of indigenous peoples in Playing in the Dark, a pivotal examination of race in

American literature by one of the most important contemporary thinkers on the subject of race, only mirrors the dismissal and absence of the Africanist presence in white literature which she indicates requires analysis, and which ultimately provides the basis for establishing "difference." Is the hierarchy of racialist thinking manifested in this interesting elision? In pointing to, then slipping past, the crucial presence of the other "Other," Morrison maintains the binary, keeping hierarchy in place, sustaining the propping that puts in motion the "black/white" dualism.

"Tribal Imagination, experience, and remembrance, are the **real** landscapes in the literature of this nation; discoveries and dominance are silence" (Vizenor Manifest Manners 10; emphasis added). Vizenor points to an absent presence in U.S. cultural rhetoric in the history of ideological formation and literature in the United States. In "Who Is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism," Paula Gunn Allen, like Vizenor, points to the silenced "tribal imagination, experience, and remembrance."

The belief that rejection of tradition and of history is a useful response to life is reflected in America's amazing loss of memory concerning its origins in the matrix and context of Native America. America does not seem to remember that

it derived its wealth, its values, its food, much of its medicine, and a large part of its 'dream' from Native America. It is ignorant of the genesis of its culture in this Native American land, and that ignorance helps to perpetuate the longstanding European and Middle Eastern monotheistic, hierarchical, patriarchal cultures' oppression of women, gays, and lesbians, people of color, working class, unemployed people, and the elderly. (211)

Allen ties this cultural and racial erasure to a forgotten indigenous mother, an absent presence that is **the** absence, the underlying erasure.

I think this is the reason traditionalists say we must remember our origins, our cultures, our histories, our mothers and grandmothers, for without that memory, which implies continuance rather than nostalgia, we are doomed to engulfment by a paradigm that is fundamentally inimical to the vitality, autonomy, and self-empowerment essential for satisfying, high-quality life. (214)

From Eve through Freud to rap music and Good Housekeeping, mothering continues to be a central trope and concern of white, Western discourse and ideology--

motherhood, maternity, childrearing--tied with apron strings to female bodies. The trope is always one of disavowing the real in favor of the metaphor, the ideal. How this concern of mothering is manifested in discourses **about** other mothers in other cultural paradigms has been one of the central questions of women anthropologists and feminist ethnography. It is the shadow and mirror of mothers, mothering and motherhood at and through which we might look in order to explore the construction and representation of whiteness, as it constructs, contains, and represents itself through the construction and representation of other mothers, in particular here, red mothers, Pueblo others.

Mothers/Red and White

we had dreams
 that everyone would have their freedom
 and never have to learn anything
 or give anything or hurt at night
 or care about anything but fun
 and freedom
 and icecream lollipops and applepie
 forever mommie to provide everything
 and never say i'm tired i'm sad
 Allen **Skins and Bones** 29

Before the totalizing narrative of Pueblo Indian Religion, Parsons published several detailed ethnographic notes, which, as we have seen, for the most part eschewed generalizing for a Boasian specificity of detail. In our access to the Other under construction *vís a vís* Parsons and

her native informants we see a "white" self set in opposition to (and at times in connection with) the "red" vanishing other. Simultaneous to Parsons' account of what constitutes the "red" other, her assumptions point to what constitutes the racial category of "white" tacitly as that which "white" is **not**.

". . . Parsons' feminism definitely informed her Pueblo ethnology in its concern with the cultural construction of gender, sexuality, and reproduction--with motherhood as experience, as discourse and as institution" (1). Babcock here points to motherhood as the central figuration in an investigation of gender construction as it is embedded in racial discourses, both for Parsons, as well as our purposes.

In her introduction to Pueblo Mothers and Children, Babcock acknowledges that Parsons is

. . . guilty, of what M. Z. Rosaldo has described as the feminist abuse of anthropology: using cross-cultural data on women to comment on the position of women for better or worse in our own culture, and to construct universal generalizations about women's status. "Primitive cultures," Parsons recalled years later, "were merely background for our own." (19)

While this charge of cultural relativism is well founded, it

would seem that Parsons' articulation of the way in which representing other cultures is really a representation in 'difference' of the representer, was quite prescient.

For Parsons, both her sociology and her ethnography posited as central to social organization the ways in which maternity and childrearing practices are "culturally configured and locally elaborated" (Babcock "Mothers and Children" 6). In "Mothers and Children at Laguna," published in 1919, based on notes taken in 1918 at Laguna, Parsons carefully reports each available detail of birthing, naming, and child-rearing practices as reported to her by Wana, Parsons' Pueblo insider with information. As noted in Chapter One, the details of childbirth and naming rituals are given here without contextual analysis. For instance, the mysteries of the altar which the *shiwanna cheani* constructs for use in the first presentation of the baby outdoors to the gods, which in this instance is laid out facing North instead of East, as is usual, are not solved. While this narrative of naming is not romanticized, white Western outsiderhood is unmistakable. "Rational" misunderstanding of the sacred signifiers of the *naiya* (*mother*) *iyetick* fetish, the turquoise, white shell, olivella and abalone beads, the flint knife, and the mapping of lines in meal, serves to produce a silent white superiority, in which this paraphernalia is inferior to the paraphernalia

surrounding white newborn presentation practices like sprinkling with holy water. While Parsons' description retains a binary structure of superior/inferior oppositionality, it also plays as another, different dualism, that of indigenous irrationality/civilized reason. The lines of yellow corn meal assert covertly the incoherent barbarism of red/indigenous ritual, rituals which when inserted into contemporary discursive economies of "black" irrationality/"white" reason call both sides into question.

Later in "Mothers and Children at Laguna, Parsons describes the kinds of presents Laguna children receive, "presents of a more distinctively native character" than those given at Christmas by a comadre. Boys are given a bow and arrow, girls are given an auwak (baby/doll). What is it that makes these gifts distinctly native? The bow and arrow, or baby are marked, "distinctively native" because they are **not** "distinctively white" (72). Indigenous cultural practices that are not unlike white practices of gift giving are marked as native and set apart, while white gift-giving practices are un/marked and un/remarked.³ Bows and arrows and dolls are gifts given to "white" boys and girls as toys, but they are packed with different assumptions regarding their genesis, uses, and meanings. Parsons' mothers and children are represented only by those aspects that are "distinctively native."

The "corruption" of what Johannes Fabian calls the ethnographic present by "modern" versions of domesticity are minimized in this report, or read as diffused from other ethnographic presents, i.e., the Spanish influence. Babcock indicates that Parsons' concern with "the consequences of acculturation and [attention] to the pragmatics of Pueblo cultural survival...stands in marked contrast to the ahistorical essentialism and romantic primitivism" practiced by earlier ethnographers like Cushing. (7) Prior to the brief note on presents, Parsons describes the naming of an infant.

How she [the infant] would get her Indian name I did not hear from Wana, but there was talk of how in course of time she would be given an "American" name in baptism at the Catholic church. Water would be put to her head and salt to her lips and the Spanish godparent institution would be entered into. Every Christmas thereafter her godmother, her mother's *comadre*, would give her a present-- and her mother would give a return present to her godmother. (71)

The double naming, the acculturation, apparent in this Laguna practice as Parsons represents it, calls upon "American" and "Spanish" influence, but only in relation to a lack of information on the indigenous or marked naming

practice. Here is a perfect example of the operation we have seen in Chapter One, wherein the 'native informant' withholds information, gives-a-piece of Laguna Keres practice, shaping the version of Laguna Keresan culture she wants Parsons to see. In withholding information she silently marks the absent white practice.

The prayer which Gestitsa, an older woman who heads the household of the mother of this baby, says to the sun as she is presented, is a prayer to "mother sun" (70). On behalf of the infant daughter of Wana, Wana's aunt (head of her household), and the male *shiwanna cheani* (who invokes both *iyetiku* and a father sun in his prayer, which follows the aunt's prayer), invoke two female deities in this ritual--*naiya iyetiku*, and *naiya osach*, earth and sun. This is in unspoken contrast to the masculine deities invoked in Western ritual naming and presentation ceremonies. The privileged status of female figures here assures the "backwardness" and "irrationality" which adheres to the feminized Other. These deities are marked and feminine, rather than unmarked and masculine. Marking functions to de/naturalize bodies; what is marked is outside of the norm.⁴ Not only are the figures of *naiya iyatiku* and *naiya osach* feminine deities, they are **mothers**--mother earth and mother sun. They function as mothers in ways which undercut white notions of motherhood--the good mother who serves,

cooking, cleaning, and caring for the ever more independent child. Rather than serving husbands and children, these mythic mothers are **served**.

This interstitial moment points to what Bhabha calls "ambivalent identification," where the colonized operates not as a mirror of the colonizer, but as a "shadow of colonized [wo]man" which "splits [her] presence, distorts [her] outline, breaches [her] boundaries, repeats [her] action at a distance, disturbs and divides the very time of [her] being ("Interrogating" 187). Parsons "moves on two planes," but she, unlike Bhabha's generic colonizing man, is made uncomfortable by the slippage, the shadow self of the colonized woman who is *informing*. Unable to ignore the shadow, Parsons draws the shadows into the text, noting her presence in the margins, where Gawiretsa and the other women who tell the stories are repetitions which distort, mimicking Parsons' ethnographic stance in their "giving-a-piece work."

a beautiful woman at Laguna
isn't much like a beautiful woman
in L.A. except for some parts
Allen, "The Beautiful Woman Who Sings" in
A Cannon Between My Knees

In 1905, Alice Marmon, one of Leslie Silko ancestors and one of Parsons' informants at Laguna, published an essay in Indian Leader⁵ on "A Practical Domestic Training" in which turn of the century white notions of womanhood are re-

produced for "The uplifting of the Indian Race." Marmon establishes the "value of a thorough, domestic training to an Indian girl" as "almost beyond calculation. The white girl as a general rule has more of a chance to receive some training from her mother than has an Indian girl" (4).

Marmon here sets up the "good" white mother and the "inadequate" red mother, positing appropriate training as that which is marked (in its unmarkedness) as white. "Properly cooked food" and "well managed homes" contribute to "the molding of character." "...if she makes the home beautiful and all that it should be, its ennobling effects will be felt throughout the family, tending to refine and elevate all who come under its influence" (2). The model of motherhood Marmon seems to be adopting is that of the nurturing housekeeper, who makes of children good white people through the well-managed home (not a pueblo home, but a wood frame home, with a nuclear family rather than a matrilineal kinship group), and nutritious food (not fry bread but scones). To reverse what we have come to understand of *naiya iyatiku*, the good mother for Marmon is one who serves, rather than being served.

In such a formulation, motherhood and mothering become the space of what Mary Louise Pratt calls "the contact zone."⁶ A Pueblo girl takes on the "civilized" nature of white domesticity and eschews publicly in print the "Indian"

version of hearth and home, where she will "learn little of cooking or those things that will help to make home healthful, attractive, or beautiful" (Marmon 2). Inherent in this taking on of white cultural practice is the disavowal of what constitutes good food, beauty, or character in Keresan terms. For Bhabha, "...in the colonial psyche there is an unconscious disavowal of the negating, splitting moment of desire" ("Interrogating" 195), a moment of desire for both the Other as well as the un/marked white Self.

Parsons acknowledged and pointed to these influences at Laguna in 1919 in the margins of her ethnographic portraits. But Silko also acknowledges her aunt's white, western practice, and the process of borrowing and acculturation that occurs in Aunt Susie's telling of stories, especially as she appears in Storyteller:

She [Aunt Susie] was taken from Laguna, New Mexico, on a train when she was a little girl, and she spent six years at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in an Indian School, which was like being sent to prison. But listen and you will hear the Carlisle influence. (Language and Literature 61)

She must have realized
that the atmosphere and conditions
which had maintained this oral tradition in Laguna culture
had been irrevocably altered by the European intrusion--
principally by the practice of taking the children.
Silko, Storyteller 6

The hybrid moment is em/bodied in Aunt Susie--textually--by Silko and Parsons. As we will see later, Aunt Susie, like Silko and Allen, is "almost but not quite" white.

Naiya Iyetiku

Naiya Iyetiku is "a deity who is to the Keresans a source of being and the most revered of all their supernaturals" ("Mothers and Children" 79). This is how Parsons reports on the figure Allen claims as central to Laguna cosmology--Corn or Earth Woman. She is an aspect of Thought Woman, the "Creatrix...She Who Thinks rather than She Who Bears," (Sacred Hoop 15). This mother is one who creates through thinking rather than through materiality--Ts'its'tsi'nako. Allen devotes much of her writing to developing in and for her readers an understanding of the woman-centered Keresan cosmology she details. Naiya (mother) Iyetiku/Corn Woman ". . . maintains the connection between individuals in the tribe as well as the connection between the nonhuman supernaturals and the tribe" (17). The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions is Allen's collection of non-fiction essays which, taken as a whole, describes and analyses the place and cosmology of "where she comes from" specifically as a maternal gynocracy, connecting in several ways to feminist practices. It is the text most often turned to by white

feminists for the 'indigenous' representative voice.

In "Who Is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism," Allen, who has progressively left aside the "white" parts of her ancestral connections in her biographical notes on herself,⁷ takes the "white" myth of self as rational, ordered, and modern at face value, then proceeds to show just how those very aspects are at the heart of white alienation and isolation, sewing the seeds of a collective disintegration. What might save "white" people (particularly "white" feminists) is what has been learned from indigenous peoples--"our mothers." She argues that our loss of memory in relation to our mothers and grandmothers, as she constitutes them in "America," is "the root" of oppression, and that "[i]f American society judiciously modeled the traditions of the various Native Nations, the place of women in society would become central..." (211). In a recent essay, "The Woman I Love Is a Planet," Allen reaches into and then speaks from the center of radical ecofeminism, claiming that "[w]e are each and all a part of her, an expression of her [Grandmother Earth's] essential being" (54).

By such a formulation, Allen embodies maternal presence as Grandmother Earth, Thought Woman, Earth Woman, in a way which broadens what constitutes mothering. AnnLouise Keating argues that Allen redefines "the maternal as

transformational thought" thereby destabilizing the binary of "masculine" and "feminine" and their attendant associations with "transcendence, culture, and the mind" and "immanence, nature, and the body" ("Getting Back To the Mother" 8). That Allen herself "creates" or thinks into being a particular version of Keresan representation, and particularly of how the feminine operates within this zone, is certain. Indisputable is the idea that this creation is not necessarily grounded in "contemporary academic discourse." The uses that might be made of thinking into being a gynocratic tradition through "other" knowledges, Keating describes as "transcultural transformation" (12).

Maybe She knew that we could do without her presence
 in the flesh and She left the perfect ear of corn
 behind to remind them that she was near, to honor
 women, the woman in the earth, and in themselves,
 but they call themselves her name, they call themselves
 Mother, so maybe they sent her away and made up the rest.
 Allen, "Suicid/ing(ed) Indian Woman"
 in *A Cannon Between My Knees*

Allen, writing from the same location as Parsons, but from the Other side, asserting herself as an insider, offers a transformed version of motherhood and the maternal *vís a* *vís* Laguna and Keres cosmogony that refuses the specific, and claims motherhood for **all** indigenous women in America in relation to the white women who are, in essence, their spiritual, political, and cultural daughters. At Laguna, "... your mother's identity is the key to your own identity" through your relationship to clan membership through

matrilineal descent. "Failure to know your mother, that is, your position and its attendant traditions, history, and place in the scheme of things, is failure to remember your significance, your reality, your right relationship to earth and society. It is the same as being lost..." (209).

Standing in mythic
space / we
meet

Allen, *Coyote's Daylight Trip* 23

In Keeping Slug Woman Alive, Greg Sarris questions Allen's tendency to generalize, to shape what she has heard and seen beyond detail, to "nail down the Indian in order to nail down the text. The Indian is fixed, readable in certain ways, so that when we find him or her in a written text we have a way to fix and understand the Indian and hence the text" (128). He goes on to argue that "the Indian writer is both Indian speaker and cross-cultural mediator, and readers must consider the Indian writer's specific culture and experience and how the writer has mediated that culture and experience for the reader" (130). Certainly Allen fixes the Indian in ways which often deny a tribal specificity. This tendency to 'generalize what she has observed as the texture of daily life into what constitutes a psychological race profile,' reminiscent of Parsons' sociological writings and what we have noted in regards to Pueblo Indian Religion, generates a relational identity without supporting detail.

In "Interrogating Identity," Homi Bhabha asserts that
 ". . . one of the original and disturbing
 qualities of *Black Skin, White Masks* [is] that it
 rarely historicizes the colonial experience.
 There is no master narrative or realist
 perspective that provides a background of social
 and historical facts. . .it is through image and
 fantasy--those orders that figure transgressively
 on the borders of history and the unconscious--
 that Fanon most profoundly evokes the colonial
 condition. (186).

Though not completely refusing standard academic discourses
 and disciplines, Allen's evocation of "other" knowledges
 which are **not** historicized in "white" practices functions in
 similar ways to Fanon's own use of image and fantasy. The
 internal colonization of U.S. indigenous populations is
 "profoundly evoked." Because Allen's generalizing, unlike
 Parsons', is in the mouth of one who is more commonly
generalized about, it operates first and foremost to assert
 a subject position for the hitherto object/other.
 Implicitly it also stages the prior subject ("white" people)
 as a less than adequate, de-naturalized, called-into-
 question object/other--one who is "lost." "White-ness" is
 marked in the act of forgetting, in leaving aside one's true
 mothers, mothers now naturalized, literally, as Earth, Sun,

and Corn. Motherhood becomes a "post colonial trope to power" (Vizenor).

Mother Earth

In Allen's novel The Woman Who Owned the Shadows, Grandmother Spider, mythic yet present, intervenes and counteracts the ill effects of white influence on the central figure of Ephanie. Motherhood and mothering are articulated in the goddess mode, and embedded in a contentious but unmistakable connection to new age spiritualism's use of mother earth, all of which seems to displace the flesh and blood immediacy of the maternal body. As in Joseph Campbell's universal mythic hero cycle, the dis/embodied mother/goddess steps outside of time, perhaps into circularity, perhaps into the freeze frame of western sacred space, perhaps into the shadowland "outside the sentence."

The trouble with "mother" for Ephanie fixes on the failure of the white model of motherhood, the inadequacy of the lone individual standing there ironing. Ephanie, as both mother and daughter, is not a good mother in the "white" Euro-American mode. She often appears to abandon her children, generally leaving them with her own mother (grandmothers raising the children is not necessarily a matter of abandonment in cultures outside of "white"

houses). Ephanie's children's father is entirely absent, and there is no attempt to make of the familial picture something nuclear. Ephanie comes closest to participating in some version of white nuclear family practice when she marries Thomas, the Nisei man. But by the time their twins are born, the marriage is already nearly finished. One twin dies, and the other is given over to the father to raise. The nuclear family, which is given highest value in western rhetoric, is absent in this representation of indigenious "ethnic," "red," "Other" paradigm because it is untenable.

In the end, it is the presence of Grandmother Spider, mythically and physically, which brings Ephanie around to her place in the cosmic framing from which she has fallen. The symbolic nature of her suicide attempt means something quite different for her than it would if Ephanie were "white." It becomes a ritual death into life, into a "right relationship," a way of balancing the world, rather than the desperate call for help in the midst of personal alienation and crisis which suicide signifies in "white" culture. Bhabha points out that in order to understand "how culture signifies, . . . [i]t becomes crucial to distinguish between the semblance and similitude of the symbols across diverse cultural experiences--literature, art, music, ritual, life, death--and the social specificity of each of these productions of meaning as they circulate as signs within

specific contextual locations and social systems of value" ("Post Colonial Criticism" 438). The specificity of the presence of Grandmother Spider is distinguished from the symbolic similitude of "Grandmother Spider." "Other" knowledges are implicated in the textual re/production of Allen's story of mothering, and being mothered, into a gender balanced community and a "right relationship to earth and society."

*The earth is your mother,
she holds you.
The Sky is your father,
he protects you.
Silko, Storyteller 51*

As "cross-cultural mediator" Allen successfully fixes a story of Mother Earth that is one of "the stories of a nation" which "serve common tribal identities. . . Mother earth is a simulation, not a tribal reservation; mother is the absence of the real, the earth" (Vizenor Manifest Manners 121). For Vizenor, Allen becomes a "postindian warrior" participating in "the simulations that overcome the manifest manners of dominance" (6).

Always playfully ironic, Vizenor refuses, however, in his discussion of mother earth, to make of her an uncomplicated figure. She is an abused mother, ". . . a misogynous metaphor traced to the long gaze of Christopher Columbus," an ironic simulation of both survivance and manifest manners (120-1).⁸ It seems that the figure of

Mother Earth asserts difference in both "red" and "white" rhetorical strategies, tribal traditionals and radical ecofeminists, "white" historians and BIA subordinates.⁹ Allen *reproduces* this same strategy, generalizing and de-historicizing through the figure of Grandmother Spider/Mother Earth, rather than taking up with Vizenor the ironies surrounding this shared assertion of difference.

Transgressor Mothers¹⁰

Western stories, fairy tales, and nursery rhymes often seem obliged to kill off original birth mothers in favor of surrogates--generally scripted as wicked step-mothers--to facilitate the movement of children into adult life. This motion plays into the passion for blaming mothers for everything. As Adrienne Rich notes in "The transgressor mother," "Accusations against the mother, whatever her uses of her passions, proliferate . . . wherever social institutions fall short of human needs and expectations" (146). Rather than vilify "real" mothers, the surrogate mother enters, keeping in place the unsullied, originary good "white" mother.

In Ceremony, Leslie Marmon Silko draws on this western trope, reversing what is "at the heart of the anthropological endeavor" (Moore 195). Instead of "rendering one culture ["white"] in terms of another

["red"]" (157), Silko renders "white" culture in its own terms. Ceremony's central figure, (a figure not unlike Ephanie), Tayo, has a series of surrogate mothers. As a tribal man just coming to his place in the story, Tayo must rely on these surrogate mothers to find that place. His birth mother has died, and is obscured in mists of memory. She is the Little Sister who abandons the community for white ways, white men, and white shame before she dies.¹¹ The story Silko tells about a nameless "she" who lives with her small son in the arroyo near Gallup **seems** to be the story of Tayo and his mother, but this is never made clear. It is made clear, however, that this mother is an inadequate mother, one whose loss is the catalyst for the lonely and abandoned boy child's search for a place in the story. She is also a mother who moves from Laguna ways to white ways, endangering the community. (113-118). The white version of the good, dead mother is replaced here with Silko's **use** of the white trope of killing off the mother, but this mother transgresses both white **and** red cultural boundaries. Old Grandma and Auntie have physical custody of Tayo. Auntie slips easily into the slot of the wicked stepmother, while at the same time duplicating in reverse Little Sister's transgressions, being too white **and** too red. However, Tayo is mentored through the series of events that bring him into the circle of the story by Ts'eh and Night Swan, powerful

women with important pieces of the story for Tayo.¹² As Patricia Jones has pointed out in relation to Silko's Storyteller, "The mother fails, at least in Western terms, to meet the child's needs and desires; yet, ultimately, good results for the community out of the individual tragedy" (218). Tayo's mother fails, but those good surrogate mothers embedded in the larger story Tayo is enacting assist him in the communal ritual for the larger group. From Tayo's tragedy comes rain and renewal for the tribe and the landscape.

It is Old Grandma who has the final word in Ceremony, and who in fact makes sense of white cultural practice. "Old Grandma told him while he was still sick and weak, lying in the darkened room. She shuffled in and sat down on the edge of his bed. 'I have been thinking of something,' she said" (256). Old Grandma and Grandmother Spider 'have been thinking.' "'It seems like I already heard these stories before . . . only thing is, the names sound different" (273). Like Grandmother Spider in The Woman Who Owned the Shadows, Old Grandma, mythic yet present, intervenes and counteracts the ill effects of white influence on the central figure of Tayo.

There are also many mothers in Silko's Almanac of the Dead. All of the mothers are troubling, but two women stand out as particularly troubling examples of motherhood. Lecha

is one of the Mayan twin sisters, figures that stand in as the War Twins Ma'sewe and O'yo'yo'we of Laguna cosmology. She abandons her son Ferro in her twin sister Zeta's kitchen when he is one week old. Seese, a white junkie and stripper, is searching for her own son, Monte, who has been kidnapped by her ex-husband and his lover Serlo. Serlo¹³ skins the child alive and makes a movie of it to sell to wealthy pedophilic sadists (mostly white men). Neither Seese nor Lecha is representative of the Euro-American paradigmatic myth of mothering and motherhood, which is caught in the web of nuclear family and nurturance for the life of the "child" by a mother who has no other function within that Western cultural matrix, nor are they modeled as resisting that paradigm. Rather, Seese, for example, is a horrifying reflection of a "white-ly" post modern pattern of abuse and bodily disconnection between mothers and children. Seese searches for Monte, but the haze of drugs and greed and violence through which she conceives and gives birth dooms any possible reunion between mother and son.

It is through the figures of Seese and Lecha that Silko reflects "white-ness" back on itself in its own terms, in the mirror and shadow of identity, and in so doing constructs an oppositional "red" subject via motherhood. Lecha, who willfully abandons her own child to her sister, succeeds in ways that Seese cannot, and Lecha's son, Ferro,

while hating his mother for leaving, lives and learns in ways that Seese's child Monte never could, had he lived. If the central question at Laguna, as Allen suggests, is "Who is your mother?" then only Ferro can answer that question. It is in knowing, not owning, that Mother is constructed. "White-ly" versions of motherhood become the disordered "other." Silko and Allen are ethno-graphing white motherhood, much in the spirit of Parsons.

Halfie Ethnography

A halfbreed woman
can hardly do anything else
but attack herself,
her blood attacks itself.
There are historical reasons
for this.
Allen, *Skins and Bones* 56

Silko and Allen both choose to speak from positions of mixed (cross) blood "tribal survivors." German shopkeepers, Keres chianni, Lebanese immigrants, and others make up the familial and cultural spaces, as well as the interstices, from which Silko and Allen draw. They make use of motherhood as a cross cultural paradigm in ways which call upon the many places they call home through blood and bone, kin and clan. Lila Abu-Lughod, in "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography" sees this inherited speaking position as particularly potent, one able to break up the negative binary division of East and West. 'Halfies'--"people

between cultures, the West of their upbringing, one parent, or training, and the culture of their origin, their family's origin, their other parent's, or some part of their identity, in which they do fieldwork" (27). I would extend that argument to include the possibilities inherent for halfie ethnography to break up any number of binaries-- "black/white" or "masculine/feminine."

In both feminist and halfie ethnography, the creation of a self through opposition to an other is blocked, and therefore both the multiplicity of the self, and the multiple, overlapping, and interacting qualities of other cannot be ignored. (Abu-Lughod 27)

Allen takes this oppositional space of multiple and overlapping means to self-creation further.

The process of living on the border, of crossing and recrossing boundaries of consciousness is most clearly delineated in work by writers who are citizens of more than one cultural community, whose experiences and languages require that they live within worlds that are located geographically in similar space, but are as markedly different from one another as Chinatown, Los Angeles, and Malibu; . . . Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico and literary London's Hamstead Heath. ("Intersection"

305)

In the interstices of culturally specific versions of motherhood and claims of the "universal" nature of Mother we inhabit our geographic similarities, our cultural differences. Between nurturance as servitude and Naiya Iyatiku's thoughtful connectivity lies identity as it is bound up in gendered, racialized self.

It would seem that it is here, in the "halfie," the "lived borderlands" (Bartkowski), that much of the constructed nature of "whiteness" can be brought into **sharp relief** (in every sense that relief is needed in the racial polarization of the late 20th century) and how "we" are containing and representing *each other*.

I know you can't make peace
 being Indian and white.
 They cancel each other out.
 Leaving no one in the place.
 And somebody's gotta be there,
 to take care of the house,
 to provide the food.
 And that's gotta be the mother.
 Allen, *Skins and Bones* 56

End Notes

1. The uses and abuses of both social constructionist theories and essentialism in relation to identity are detailed in Essentially Speaking. Fuss here makes a case for **both** sides of the debate. "Propping" refers to the ways in which theories of social construction and essentialism rely upon each other. In what ways do "identity politics both unite disparate social groups on the basis of shared political strategies and goals, but also frustrates the possibilities for successful 'coalition politics' by insisting on the mutually exclusive nature of these identities" (96). As Fuss concludes,

. . . we need both to theorize essentialist spaces from which to speak and, simultaneously, to deconstruct these spaces to keep them from solidifying. . . . essentialism underwrites theories of constructionism and that constructionism operates as a more sophisticated form of essentialism. (118-9)

2. Nancy Caraway points out the structural character of race identity in Segregated Sisterhood. She quotes Omi and Winant from Racial Formation in the United States, "To challenge the position of Blacks in society is to challenge the position of whites" (85). This sustains the notion of mutual propping in the dance of identity politics which keeps black and white as the couple at the center of the dance floor.

3. See p.3 in Chapter 5 for Frankenberg's White Women, Race Matters for her discussion of the un/markings of white practice.

4. Edward Said has laid out the premises of the feminizing of male colonized bodies as a means of emasculating, thereby conquering and controlling those bodies. See Orientalism.

5. The Indian Leader was a publication of The Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas. The institute was one of the schools for Indians which, like Carlisle, was dedicated to indigenous assimilation to white ways.

6. This is Mary Louise Pratt's term for the social space in which contact between cultural entities occurs. See Imperial Eyes.

7. While consistently maintaining a Laguna ancestry, and usually noting her Sioux lineage, Allen of late will sometimes drop Lebanese-American as an identifying marker (Voice of the Turtle, Spider Woman's Granddaughters). Most recently, any ethnic or racial markers have been dropped from biographical notes on her book jackets (Skins and Bones, Grandmothers of the Light).

8. In Vizenor's world, survivance is that which is possible, that which colonized "red" bodies can do in the face of what he calls "manifest manners," or the actions and behaviors of colonizing bodies.

9. Sam Gill in Mother Earth and Jerry Mander in In the Absence of the Sacred describe and discuss the ways in which these groups have made use of this figure, metaphor, trope, sign. See Vizenor, Manifest Manners, for his critique of Gill's history of Mother Earth as "Native American goddess" (121).

10. See Adrienne Rich's essay of the same title in What is Found There.

11. "The feelings of shame, at her own people and at the white people, grew inside her, side by side like monstrous twins that would have to be left in the hills to die" (Ceremony 71). Little Sister gives birth to the monstrous twins of red and white embodied in Tayo.

12. See Allen's essay "The Feminine Landscape of Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony" in The Sacred Hoop for one of the earliest and most influential discussion of T'seh and the other women in the novel.

13. For a more complete discussion of Serlo and his nastiness, see Chapter 5 in this manuscript.

Chapter Three Shadows

the woman whose waking means
wonder.
water.
want and need.
and her awakening is not death or war, not rage.
she's in love, that woman the world. she's imove.
Allen *Skins and Bones* 53

Chela Sandoval, in "U.S. Third World Feminism," posits the possibility of using the outsider position, or the borderlands, as a position of "tactical subjectivity" out of which existing modes of oppression can be confronted (14). In a similar gesture, Cherríe Moraga writes in "From a Long Line of Vendidas" that "the Radical Feminist [presumed "white"] must extend her own 'identity' politics to include her 'identity' as oppressor as well" (188). I would like to place Sandoval's and Moraga's positions into circulation together and argue that Sandoval's "tactical subjectivity" in the space of the much discussed 'borderlands' operates effectively in tandem with Moraga's call for the inclusion of the position of oppressor **and** oppressed in the scripting of speaking subjects in dialogue, thereby revising the dominant version of self, scripted as white, male, heterosexual.

This chapter interrogates the work of Paula Gunn Allen, who positions herself as *essentially* Native American, lesbian and "feminine," identities chosen from among several

possible identities which she has taken up and set aside within the body of her oeuvre. In Allen's novel The Woman Who Owned the Shadows, the central figure in the text, Ephanie, (re)constructs herself in much the same way that Allen has autobiographically. This text provides a decentering confluence of the subject positions of reader, writer and text, within which we can begin to examine the issues of positionality and essentialism. Allen's work stands in a unique relationship to the debates over raced identity as socially constructed or biologically determined, because her claims to authority to speak from an essential identity as Native American are made within a constructed domain of blood and bone.

Reading

The reading transaction is precisely the space I wish to explore as the borderland of self and other, a potent location in which to raise these questions. I come to Allen's The Woman Who Owned the Shadows as an outsider-- someone not Native, nor Keresan (Laguna)--but as someone seduced, taken in, as it were, transformed by the text. The questions taken up are those that interrogate this particular transaction as one between positions of insider/outsider. If it's in the blood and bone, then the reader (presumed white) is outside. On the other hand, if

identity is being constructed in the act of textual construction, then the blood and bone are only partial sites of difference, or similarity.

In Essentially Speaking, Diana Fuss posits that the two seemingly opposed concepts of socially constructed identities and biologically essential selves actually "underwrite" or "prop" each other. Using Lacan's "concept of the 'split subject,' divided against itself," Fuss offers "the strategy of positing the reader as a site of differences" and asserts that subjectivity allows for "the notion of the reading process as a negotiation amongst discursive subject-positions which the reader, as a social subject, may or may not choose to fill" (34).¹ Reading becomes a 'borderland' in which subjectivity is negotiated at will.

In the terms of Fuss's argument, then, a reading by someone outside of Paula Gunn Allen's own "discursive subject position" in The Woman Who Owned the Shadows is a negotiation of different subject positions, with "fluid boundaries," positions "always constructed, assigned, or mapped. . . undermining any notion of 'essential reader.'" For Fuss, "all of these points suggest that if we read from multiple subject-positions, the very act of reading becomes a force for dislocating our belief in stable objects and essential meanings" (34-5). While Fuss is speaking of

gender as a category of analysis, a similar approach to subjectivity might possibly work in the dislocation of reading in and from other subject-positions, in particular, that category designated "race." Because positionalities of gender and race are never split, both subjectivities operate within the same field.

In Woman, Native, Other, Trinh T. Minh-ha articulates the relationship between writing, reading and textuality in this way:

In a sense, committed writers are the ones who write both to awaken to the consciousness of their guilt and to give their readers a guilty conscience. Bound to one another by an awareness of their guilt, writer and reader may thus assess their positions, engaging themselves wholly in their situations and carrying their weight into the weight of their communities, the weight of the world. (11)

If, in Trinh's formulation, Allen is a committed writer, and our discursive positions are situated in a historicized guilt, the weight of my guilty conscience as I occupy a dominant (white, heterosexual) subject position within prevailing power relations will, of necessity, require me to assess my own position and engage myself wholly with race as a primary feature of the writings of women committed to

tribal consciousness and tribal survival, carrying the weight of their tribal communities. There is a way in which occupying this position as a reader is one that silences. My acts of resistance to 'illicit power' may be in listening to the ones speaking in that place, in listening to what Allen, Trinh and many U.S. third world feminists are speaking of, and how they are speaking.

sky still bright
we weed, companionable.
she on her side of the low wall
me on mine

. . . .
her petunias, my corn, beans, squash and I
nod amiably.
Allen *Shadow Country* 132

How then might a "white," heterosexual woman speak of the texts of a "red," lesbian writer like Paula Gunn Allen without playing Prospero? The exclusionary practice of essentialism falters when our "selves" are socially constructed, but the social construction of identities threatens to evacuate the political possibilities of essences in blood and bone. As Gayatri Spivak notes in "The Problem of Cultural Self-representation," "What can the intellectual do toward the texts of the oppressed? Represent them and analyze them, disclosing one's own positionality for other communities in power" (56). I would argue that there are sites from which I might read, beyond a guilty silence, grounded in a weave of theoretical strategies. Determined by the text itself, informed by the

aesthetics of the multiplicity of contexts out of which the writer writes, positioned in the fluctuating power relations of what Trinh signs as I/i, in this mesh I/i as reader might find a place from which to read, learn, and engage with the text in order to speak in the writerly/readerly dialogue.

Writing

Contemporary Native American writers occupy subject positions which are not monolithically Native American, but are embedded in specific tribal communities (Sioux, Navajo, Piute, Cree...). This does not, however, divorce them from sites within those constituted **as** Native, sites which are in turn surrounded by non-Native/dominant cultural and political discourses. Because Native and tribal aesthetics and assumptions about art and creativity often inform and underlie writings by Native women, and because those systems are not divorced from either the sacred or the secular for many tribal people, my responsibility to attempt an understanding of those systems is clear. However, as Richard Dyer has noted in relation to gay and lesbian authorship, ". . .all cultural artifacts, are not culturally pure. . . uncontaminated by [white Anglo-European] norms and values" (190). Therefore, an examination of the aesthetics which underlie and inform writings by Native American women must include the contaminating elements of dominant regimes.

Aesthetic determinations emanate from individual moves within larger cultural regimes. Those regimes as understood and enacted by the writer are part of what I as reader must come to understand in order to engage in this dialogue. In her most recent collection, Voice of the Turtle: American Indian Literature, 1900-1970, Allen asserts a unified, monolithic "Native people" participating in a "Native Narrative Tradition," a community of people "who belong to the Turtle Island branch of the [multicultural] encounter" (5-8). She constructs here what she calls the "Native Narrative Tradition," a unifying paradigm for identifying and reading a generalized Native American literature. In her desire for the inclusion in her definition of this Native Narrative Tradition of themes of magical transformations, social change, cultural transition, shifting modes of identity, as well as "certain structural features--diversity, event-centeredness, nonlinear development . . . and transitional modes," Allen expresses some of what constitutes her personal aesthetic (Voice 8). These features are refinements of what Bevis, Owens, and others have identified elsewhere as necessary features of a text in order for it to be defined as Native American, including use of the oral tradition, a sense of place, and time as "circular" (rendering simultaneous past, present, and future).² In earlier interviews, and in fact in her

poetry and prose, Allen also claims Joyce, Shakespeare, Keats and Shelley as influences, thereby also claiming the artistic and aesthetic practices of Western European literary discourse.³ How do these fluctuating authorial subject-positions screened in or out through these influences play out in a given text? And how do I read a text grounded in an oral tradition with which I have become familiar only through written texts, even as it is imbricated with discourses in which I participate?

Lately I write, trying to combine sound and memory,
 searching for that significance once heard and nearly lost.
 Allen *Shadow Country* 105

The genres out of which Allen's text arises, like the literary and cultural influences of many Native women writers, are Anglo and Eurocentric traditions. The novel, poetry, autobiography, are all forms from within the Western literary tradition. They are forms (in collusion with language) that arise from and reflect on patriarchal, hierarchical, imperialist hegemonies.

The English language has been the linear tongue
 of colonial discoveries, racial cruelties,
 invented names, the simulation of tribal cultures,
 manifest manners, and the unheard literature of
 dominance in tribal communities; at the same time,
 this mother tongue of paracolonialism has been a
 language of invincible imagination and liberation

for many tribal people in the postindian world. English, a language of paradoxes, learned under duress by tribal people at mission and federal schools, was one of the languages that carried the vision and shadows of the Ghost Dance, the religion of renewal, from tribe to tribe on the vast plains at the end of the nineteenth century. (Vizenor 105)

The double-edged possibilities of liberation and oppression found in language and form become a space of community between "Native writer" and "white" feminist reader--I, too, read and write with(in) and against the language and forms of the dominant discourse.

Text

Following in the tradition of Virginia Woolf, as have French feminist poststructuralists like Irigary, Wittig, and Kristeva, Allen breaks the sentence in The Woman Who Owned the Shadows. In Allen's linguistic subversion, the gaps and silences are so profound that there isn't a whole sentence that can be spoken; there is no way of using language--the sign system of the oppressor. So the sentence is broken; the narrative "inarticulate in the silence" (Shadows 11). "Fear. Bloody fingers pressing her temple. Her breastbone. Her gut. I will not be afraid. Fear, the destroyer"

(Shadows 6). In the connective tissue of the noun/verb--
 fear, separated by periods, **her** body is stressed, used,
 defining the thought. In the gaps, between the periods, are
 the unspoken, unspeakable parts of her body and her fear.
 This is the narrative of the broken sentence. The text is
 theory--it theorizes an impossible silence, an
 insurmountable gap between identity formation and received
 identity.⁴ Between speaking the self, and the silenced
 self.

And low, so low, she had finally managed to
 say. "Stephen. I want." Pausing then. For a
 beat. One beat the length of one single word.
 Then finishing. "To go away." She did not say
 that one, that crucial word. "You. I want you to
 go away." Nor did he hear. What the tiny pause,
 that silence was intended, inarticulate, to say.

(Shadows 11)

There is silence, there are gaps, there are tiny pauses,
 filled with meaning, filled with the essence of Ephanie, the
 desire that is unspeakable. To write Ephanie--mixed blood,
 female, lesbian--is to write the impossible. In "Imitation
 and Gender Insubordination," Judith Butler points to this
 kind of silence, this "unnameability" as a covert strategy
 of hegemonic oppression:

Here it becomes important to recognize that

oppression works not merely through acts of overt prohibition, but covertly, through the constitution of viable subjects and through the corollary constitution of a domain of unviable (un)subjects--*abjects*, we might call them--who are neither named nor prohibited within the economy of the law. Here oppression works through the production of a domain of unthinkability and unnameability. Lesbianism is not explicitly prohibited in part because it has not even made its way into the thinkable, the imaginable, that grid of cultural intelligibility that regulates the real and the nameable." ("Imitation" 20)

To learn what Allen is teaching, to hear what she is saying, I must listen/read to/in the gaps and silences for the unthinkable, what Allen names, speaks in the gaps and silences, just as Ephanie wishes her lover/brother/double Stephen to do (but he doesn't because he can't). Listen to Ephanie's silence, the momentary pause, that contains the meaning, the self, the who of her. Like Stephen, I cannot necessarily hear what is in the silences, but unlike Stephen, I understand that Allen's silences name the unnameable and speak the unspeakable in their subversive linguistic play.

What is the secret I whispered to myself,
so secret that I don't dare remember it?

It hovers now, above my head,
 in the shadows of the wall beside me,
 on the ceiling and on the floor
 under me.
 Allen *The Blind Lion* "Shadows"

Tribal Stories

There is another location in the borderland where reader and writer meet. Allen's use of Native American narrative offers a space in which to write in words the unspeakability of race. By telling the stories over and over again, from as many discursive positions as possible, Allen writes Ephanie into the "shifting modes of identity" (Voice 8). I want to return to the uses of versions in storytelling in the next chapter in identity formation. Like Old Grandma in Ceremony, "it seems like [we] already heard these stories before. . ." (273). Silko and Allen both return to stories again and again; in this case, Allen returns to the Haudenoshonee (Iroquois) story "The Woman Who Fell From the Sky." It is a story she is also concerned with in her critical work. In "Grandmother of the Sun: Ritual Gynocracy in Native America," Allen recounts the story this way:

Sky Woman is catapulted into the void by her angry, jealous, and fearful husband, who tricks her into peering into the abyss he has revealed by uprooting the tree of light (which embodies the

power of woman) that grows near his lodge. Her terrible fall is broken by the Water Fowl who live in that watery void, and they safely deposit Sky Woman on the back of Grandmother Turtle, who also inhabits the void. On the body of Grandmother Turtle earth-island is formed. (Sacred Hoop 15)

In "The Intersection of Gender and Color," Allen calls for a way of reading texts that attends to "the actual texts being created, their source texts, the texts to which they stand in relation, and the otherness that they both embody and delineate" (314). One of the sources of the narrative of The Woman Who Fell From the Sky is that of written accounts of narratives told **by** Haudenoshonee tribal informants **to** white ethnographers and missionaries, then collected in Sanders and Peek's Literature of the American Indian.⁵ This is also a story which continues to circulate amongst Haudenoshonee tribal people, as well as Native and non-Native writers other than Allen. My attention then, should be directed to the sources and versions of this and other texts, and how they work to create this new text.

Allen's use of a tribal story she would not necessarily have heard as a Keresan child, and with which her own Keresan cosmology may have no concrete connections, appears to be based on this notion of her "Native" subject position as assuring her unique access to material marked "Native"

but not necessarily Keresan. An essentialist position would argue that because Allen is mixed blood, she would have a greater connection to and understanding of the original Haudenoshonee version, even though she isn't Haudenoshonee herself, but Keres. She may, of course, have heard this story told by someone with tribal affiliations that connect them to its telling. In eliding the boundaries of tribal affiliation in favor of a generalized Indian, Allen in some sense co-opts this Haudenoshonee story as one of the strands of the web of The Woman Who Owned the Shadows. This move positions her within an essentialist dynamic which sets aside the socially constructed aspects of her tribal identity in favor of "Native" as an unexamined and naturalized essence. Allen in effect creates an "essential Pan-Indian" (Sarris). This essentialist position forecloses my own participation in The Woman Who Owned the Shadows as an essentialized white reader. Leslie Marmon Silko, also a Laguna writer, sees this essentialist position as problematic. "The community is tremendously important. That's where a person's identity has to come from, not from racial blood quantum levels" (qtd. in Fisher 19). Since Allen does not participate in the Haudenoshonee community within which the story she is telling is embedded, we (reader and writer) are both inside and outside of the story, undercutting Allen's appropriation of tribal material

unrelated to her own blood and bone.

By telling and retelling this particular story, Allen transforms it into more than a Haudenoshonee story. It becomes more than the sum of its tellings, rather a Native American story, part of the Native Narrative Tradition-- 'transtribal.' In Keeping Slug Woman Alive, Greg Sarris indicates that it is in a readerly reflexivity, an ongoing dialogue with Indian written literatures that readers of American Indian written literatures might best enter the dialogue. He argues that "the Indian writer is both Indian speaker and cross-cultural mediator, and readers must consider the Indian writer's specific culture and experience and how the writer has mediated that culture and experience for the reader" (130-31).⁶ While Allen's use of *The Woman Who Fell From the Sky* is de-contextualized from a tribal cultural specificity, she works to mediate cultural experiences with which she claims greater connection, a closer community. In this way, theory becomes fiction, and fiction reflects and becomes theory.

It is important
to know how they thought,
the white ancestors of the woman
I walk beside:
needed something to fear,
something frightening to name,
to speak about their inner sense
Allen *Shadow Country* 145

The story is told in the novel for the first time in a

mode comparable to that of the version in The Sacred Hoop, as a brief, almost anthropological, recounting of the "legend." "According to legend a woman had spoken to her dead father. He had told her to marry the sachem in the village downstream, who then put her to a series of unusual and cruel tests that proved her power greater than his" (Shadows 38). In this skeleton of a plot, devoid of the pulse of cultural context--an incomplete telling--Ephanie is disconnected from the story--it is not hers and it fails to offer her any healing at this point. But the story has now been remembered, and it is in the act of remembering that identity is (re)claimed. As Allen has so powerfully asserted elsewhere:

. . .we tell the stories and write the books and trade tales. . .My great-grandmother told my mother: Never forget you are Indian. And my mother told me the same thing. This, then, is how I have gone about remembering, so that my children will remember too. (Sacred Hoop 50)

It is Ephanie's task to remember and tell the stories. Until she finds her place in those stories, she remains out of balance, without identity.

Ephanie herself falls through the sky and through the text, just as Sky Woman does, catching herself or being caught in the web of community and memory several times

along the way. At the end of Part I, when **she** instead of Stephen leaves, she falls onto the road, leaving behind the community in which she has been embedded (mother, children, the apple tree of childhood). She falls into a new community consisting of urban Indians and Anglos in therapy. In Part II, she marries Thomas, a Nisei man, and gives birth to their twin sons. Ephanie falls again through the hole in the sky as she falls through the hole in her marriage. The fall is a document--her final divorce decree from Thomas. She falls into the next world, Part II, with her twin sons. This is when bits and fragments of her identity begin to cohere. The sickness caused by separations, silences, disconnection, and authority begins to be healed in dreams and remembering, learning to tell time and stories properly and finding a connection to "place." But she continues to fall, because she hasn't yet fully understood her place in the story. Her final fall is a suicide attempt, which she survives with the help of Grandmother Spider, Naiya Iyatiku, a mythic and sacred Keresan figure.

The fall becomes a ritual death into life, into a "right relationship" with the stories and her 'home location.'

She understood at last that everything was connected. Everything was related. Nothing came in that did not go out. Nothing was that did not

live nestled within everything else. And this was how the stories went, what they had been for. To fit a life into. To make sense. Nothing left because there was no place else to go. Nothing left out because everything was remembered. Everything was told. What had happened in time immemorial, as the old ones called that time before time, happened now. Only the names were different. (Shadows 191)

Everything is remembered and told, which brings us back to the notion of remembering as identity. If everything is remembered, then Ephanie's identity has been fully realized as Grandmother Spider brings Ephanie into the web, nestles her within the stories, thereby bringing her into a balanced community and a "right relationship to earth and society" (Sacred Hoop 209). As Silko asserts, identity is embedded in community.

The version of the story of Sky Woman told in Part IV immediately following Ephanie's suicide and return begins like a European fairy tale--"Once upon a time, long ago so far, a young woman was told by her dead father to go and marry a stranger" (192). Allen uses two culturally specific metanarrative framing devices. "Once upon a time..." is the traditional opening for Western European fairy tales, and "Long ago so far..." opens mythic Keresan stories. There

appears to be a deliberate juxtaposition of Native American and Western European storytelling practices.⁷ This final version of *The Woman Who Fell From the Sky* sets in motion a merging of all of the versions and other stories used in the text, and it is with this telling that Ephanie becomes balanced, because she understands her place in the stories, both Western European and Native American, as they are merged in this final telling.

It is when Ephanie realizes that she is Sky Woman, the one who falls from the sky, in this **epiphanic moment**, that she remembers her first fall from the tree of light/apple tree as a little girl. "After she fell everything changed. How she dressed. How she walked. What she thought. Where she went. How she spoke. The old ease with her body was gone" (*Shadows* 202). It is after this particular, first fall that she is forced to separate from her friend, Elena, her first doubling friend. Their deep lesbian attraction for each other brings on authoritative, Christian intervention. "'You know,' she said, her voice low. 'The way we've been lately. . . Hugging and giggling. . . I asked the sister about that, after school. She said it was the devil. . . That it was a sin. And she told my mother. She says I can't come over any more'." And Ephanie understands "That she was falling. Had fallen" (*Shadows* 30). This original fall and separation from her other self sets off

the cycle of illness and disintegration Ephanie suffers from for most of the text. And it is in her realization that this fall is only a repetition of all of the other falls--past, present, and future (mythic, historic, personal)--that she can be healed. She has fallen, separated and returned. Allen describes this same movement in N. Scott Momaday's House Made of Dawn: "It is not about redemption, for redemption is not a Pueblo (indeed, not an American Indian) notion; it is not about a fall from grace. It is about sickness and disharmony, and about health and harmony" ("Bringing Home the Fact" 571). The similarity between this insight into Momaday's work and Ephanie's trajectory is not accidental, I think. The text is, again, fiction theorizing.

The text itself is, in fact, another telling of the Sky Woman story which incorporates other versions of the same story (as well as other stories). Ephanie has a stronger power than Stephen, but she is unable to use it. She falls slowly through her sickness until Grandmother Spider saves her, and the soil of Ephanie's re-emergent identity forms around the community of the stories she has re-membered and re-told. She is both inside and outside of the story, and "Inside and outside must meet, she knew, desperately. Must cohere. Equilibrate. No one mentioned it. They said it was all within. They said it was all outside. But she was

the place where the inside and the outside came together.
An open doorway." (Shadows 174).

Crossblood/Lesbian

The open doorway is the one in and through which Ephanie comes into harmony and balance. As Allen's vision of balance and harmony, this text is an open doorway for me, the reader. Allen teaches her readers about who she is, through Ephanie, who "goes back to teach white people" (This Is About Vision 105) through both Western European and American Indian practices and world views. My reading of this text is not a "form of theoretical tourism on the part of the first world critic, where the margin becomes a linguistic or critical vacation, a new poetics of the exotic" (Kaplan 191). I am drawn to it because it seduces me, takes me in, moves me.

In "Deterritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse," Caren Kaplan offers another possible position from which I might read:

For the first world feminist critic the process of becoming minor has two primary aspects. First, I must acknowledge that there are things that I do not know. Second, I must find out how to learn about what I have been taught to avoid, fear, or ignore. A critique of where I come from, my home

location, takes me away from the familiar. Yet, there is no pure space of total deterritorialization. I must look carefully at what I carry with me that could help me with the process. This is crucial if I am to avoid appropriating the minor through romanticization, envy, or guilt. Becoming minor is not a process of emulation. (194)

As Kaplan, Spivak and Sarris suggest, in order to read without foreclosing or appropriating Allen's "minor" position, I must include in this reflexive dialogue a critique of my own position in relations of dominance and subordination and acknowledge my "home location" in relation to Allen. The listing of identity affiliations (as in my case, white, working class, feminist, heterosexual, academic . . . and I could go on) has become the primary trope of the debates mentioned at the beginning of this essay. These lists never do enough. Rather, I hope to have performed a version of what Greg Sarris advocates, "written criticism" as a "kind of story, a representation of a dialogue that is extended to critics and other readers who in turn inform and are informed by the report" (Keeping 131). So, whether or not she intends it, Allen begins to teach me, strategically forces me to begin learning about what I have been taught to avoid, perhaps even fear. Cross-blood, lesbian--these are

the places in the borderlands and on the margins where I have not been or am unable fully to go. In speaking, naming what is unnameable in hegemonic relations, Allen troubles my relation to the center. Ephanie's disintegration will not happen to me, because where I come from is a different location in the margins. The ways in which Ephanie's story moves me may or may not be the same as other readers speaking and reading from other identity categories. As Butler has suggested, identity categories are "invariable stumbling-blocks, ...sites of necessary trouble." Yet it is the troubling nature of those categories that makes them so compelling. (14).

heyoka time.

koshkalaka.

ceremonial dyke. another way of making.

re making. initiated means re made.

are the days of *heyoka* coyote? *koshkalaka*?

(spider the changer)

(spider coyote)

when the earth turns to mush,
before it becomes ripe, is it
transformational time?

did you hear a flute

in some other distance?

did you feel the passing

of butterfly wings?

Allen *Star Child* 56-7

It is here I want to return to Butler's constitution of the "abject," the lesbian as "unthinkability and unnameability" (20). It is precisely within the constitution of a lesbian identity that Ephanie is able to find balance and harmony. She in fact has access to a culturally specific practice,

nameable and knowable, which allows her to draw together the disparate parts of a split self. Ephanie understands and names lesbian desire, after falling and landing on Grandmother Turtle/Spider's back.

And she understood. For those women, so long lost to her, who she had longed and wept for, unknowing, were the double women, the women who never married, who held power like the Clanuncle, like the power of the priests, the medicine men. Who were not mother, but who were sisters, born of the same mind, the same spirit. They called each other sister. They were called Grandmother by those who called on them for aid, for knowledge, for comfort, for care. (Shadows 211)

From her home location as American Indian, Ephanie remembers the figure and presence of the "medicine-dyke."⁸ And where I come from, the double women have become known to me, have been emerging from the closet. When they come out, they may or may not be punished; however, they are not called Grandmother and looked to for knowledge or comfort. They have been, in fact, unthinkable and unnameable--abject. Ephanie, however, **does** find a place where double women are nameable--they are **double** women--twice female. In speaking and naming lesbian identity, Allen centers the double women for reader and writer in a "mythic transformation."

What I have brought to the text from my "home location" determines in part what I will take from the text. What I ultimately understand here is that I am required to learn before I can participate effectively as a reader. In speaking her own unspeakable position, Allen presses me to hear her speaking. I remain on the outside, but even as outsider I glimpse a bit of what it is to be Ephanie. Allen's tactical claims to authority as an "essential identity" of blood and bone construct a space in which she may speak and name, through Ephanie, a constructed social identity that transforms the borderlands of reader/writer/text--"an open doorway."

perhaps all women are
 Lesbian though many try
 to turn knotted sinew and stubby cheek
 into that ancient almostremembered scene
 perhaps all know the first
 beloved so well
 they can shape the power
 to reclaim her
 Allen "Beloved Women"

End Notes

1. For a full discussion of both the uses of Lacan and the problems with the uses of such a theory, see "Reading Like a Feminist" in Fuss's Essentially Speaking.

2. See William Bevis, in "Homing In," Louis Owens in Other Destinies, and Andrew Wiget in Native American Literature. Bevis and Owens take cogent positions in constructing paradigms of what constitutes a Native American text. For a critique of Wiget and others working in similar ways, see Gerald Vizenor in Manifest Manners.

3. There are several interviews in which Allen refers to texts and cultural contexts which have influenced both her work and her sense of identity. See Joseph Bruchac's Survival This Way for a more complete discussion by Allen of these considerations. See also her most recent essay, "Glastonbury Experience," in which she describes her pilgrimage to Keats's home for healing transformation.

4. To understand how the text writes itself as theory, we can turn to Barbara Christian's important formulation:

For people of color have always theorized--but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic. And I am inclined to say that our theorizing (and I intentionally use the verb rather than the noun) is often in narrative forms, in the stories we create...in the play with language...(Christian 52).

Christian's moves here are essentializing in that they assume an irreducible essence to which a kind of logic can be attributed, unexamined in its politicized, historical construction--"people of color" are always already "theorizing." This unexamined essence is problematic, but if we take Christian's argument at face value, then we can see that Paula Gunn Allen's The Woman Who Owned the Shadows does just this kind of narrative theorizing via her use of tribal stories and in her play with language.

5. See Note 5 in "Grandmother of the Sun" in The Sacred Hoop for Allen's reference to this version of the story, as well as reference to the Mohawk version.

6. The troubling underlying assumption of Allen and others that the status of the reader of American Indian written literatures is that of an outsider presumes raced categories which define Native

writer and non-Native reader. However, the reader's position, like that of the writer, is one of a multiplicity of subjectivities. So it is that the reader is coming to the text from many different positions, as does the writer.

7. Barbara Babcock develops the notion of framing devices as metanarration in "The Story in the Story."

8. See Allen's essay "Hwame, Koshkalaka, and the Rest: Lesbians in American Indian Cultures" in The Sacred Hoop for her discussion of this term and American Indian lesbians.

Chapter Four
Storytelling/Places

This is my home
this thin edge of barbwire.
Gloria Anzalúa

Yoeme had believed
power resides within certain stories;
this power ensures the story to be retold,
and with each retelling
a slight but permanent shift took place.
Almanac of the Dead 581

Native American verbal art is a defining characteristic of what constitutes tribal aesthetics and cultural values. What whites have called myths or folktales are the oral literate tribal productions that seek to create and affirm tribal world view. As Silko has subtitled a section of her important piece on Pueblo cosmology, "THROUGH THE STORIES WE HEAR WHO WE ARE" (Silko "Landscape" 86). Native American writers employ verbal art in ways which can undermine the European American forms in which they write. Writing down the story as a unified field with the finality that pen and paper, keyboard and printer imply operates against the grain of tribal storytelling. This operation is complicated, oscillating between telling as dynamic and writing as static. Silko resolves some of the difficulty of oscillating between written and oral aesthetic assumptions by telling several versions of the same stories, some of which Parsons also recorded. It is in the differences between versions where we might explore identity formation

and cultural survivance. One story which Silko has returned to in all of her published fiction, and the story she chose to put on film, is the Keresan/Pueblo story of "Arrowboy and the Destroyers." In this story, Arrowboy (Estoy-eh-muut), the hunter hero of many Keres tales, finds himself married to Yellow Woman (Kochininako), an 'everywoman' figure who steps outside of proper behavior, but also functions to maintain harmony and balance for the tribe.¹ Yellow Woman is discovered to be a practicing witch or destroyer (Kunideeyas) and Arrow Boy, with the help of Grandmother Spider, destroys Yellow Woman and restores balance, evidenced by the return of rain to the pueblo. Witchcraft is viewed as evil and destructive, but a part of the balancing of the world in Keresan cosmology. Droughts, epidemics, bad crops can all be attributed to witchery, a problem that is resolved ritually by reinstating the necessary balance between good and evil. As Paula Gunn Allen asserts in "Kochinnenako in Academe: Three Approaches to Interpreting a Keres Indian Tale," the story as part of a ritual sequence which Silko is enacting in writing is a story calculated to preserve balance and harmony (234). In Arrowboy's final act, the Grandmother Spider's ritually woven *maas-guuts* strikes Kochininako in the chest, becomes a rattlesnake and kills her. Like other Keresan ritual enactments, this is not an act of individual heroism, but

one in which Arrowboy, Grandmother Spider, and even Yellow Woman, perform proper ritual actions at the appropriate time, in order to restore whatever may be out of balance, like the weather, to its appropriate relationship.²

The man across from me
sits tight, holding
together all the plans
of another time,
pointed toe edging
cautious toward a future
of electronic landscape.
Allen "Coyote Jungle"

Linda Danielson notes in "'Storyteller': Grandmother Spider's Web" that "[t]he witchcraft section, at the physical center of [Storyteller], leads into the heart of the web, to the dark side of existence where Grandmother Spider lives. . ." (340). Here, in "the heart of the web," Silko locates in clear juxtaposition two stories of witchcraft and destruction, stories that feed upon each other, dancing through the web. Danielson, Jaskowski, Langen, and many others³ have explored the themes of witchery, destruction, Yellow Woman, and the Bomb. Rather than revisit that territory, I would like to look closely at the story which directly precedes "Estoy-eh-muut and the Kunideeyahs is a humma-hah story, "Long Time Ago." This is the same story Silko places squarely in the center of her novel Ceremony, and is Silko's second telling of her own fantastical story of the creation of white people.⁴ At this wild witches' convention, an intertribal council of

evil, if you will, the participants compete to contrive ever nastier acts. One witch steps up, a stranger of ambiguous gender and unknown tribal affiliation. While others are showing off dead babies and "Whorls of skin/cut from fingertips/sliced from the penis end and clitoris tip" (132) (cruel images Silko revisits verbatim in Almanac of the Dead), s/he tells the conventioners a story, a far more powerful act of creation than any of the dirty deeds described so far. "white skin people/like the belly of a fish" who "see no life," for whom the "world is a dead thing" will come across the ocean and kill the animals, starve the people, poison the water, steal the land. "They will bring terrible diseases." They are the destroyers, set in motion by witchcraft. Their final horrific act will be the creation of the atomic bomb.

Up here
in these hills
they will find the rocks,
rocks with veins of green and yellow and black.
They will lay the final pattern with these rocks
they will lay it across the world
and explode everything. (136)

Telling this story literally unleashes the power of white colonial imperialism, which is contextualized and fully realized in the physical and metaphoric power of the bomb.

Two photographs follow this story. The first is identified as a photograph taken by Silko's father, a close-up of an old woman, eyes partially closed. The second is a wide landscape shot identified by Silko in this way: "The Navajos say the black peaks in this valley are drops of blood that fell from a dying monster which the Twin Brothers fought and fatally wounded" (271). Specific associations of place and storytelling are clearly articulated. The next story is "Estoy-eh-muut and the Kunideeyahs." Bridging the two stories are representations of land/place and bodies/time--balanced, active participants in the storytelling.

This is the re/telling of "Arrowboy and the Destroyers" in this particular text. While it might be argued that this story is related to the problems encountered by Tayo in Ceremony, this is Silko's earliest complete telling of the story, and the one upon which we will overlay the later versions. The destroyers introduced in "Long Time Ago" return, this time situated within the framework of a traditional Keresan story and located by the surrounding photographs at Laguna, a Laguna that is in the midst of a drought. Through this juxtaposition, Silko alludes to a specific geographic location, but leaves open the temporal location.

Green leaves in the wind
 Wet earth on my feet
 swallowing raindrops
 clear from China.
 Silko *Laguna Woman* 24

In "Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination," Silko posits storytelling as the space in which identity formation takes place. It is communal identity, collective memory, to which individual identity contributes, and from which individual identity is stabilized (87). "In the ancient times, cohesiveness was all that stood between extinction and survival, and while the individual certainly was recognized, it was always as an individual simultaneously bonded to family and clan by a complex bundle of custom and ritual" (93). I would argue that simultaneity is both spatially and temporally located, the distinction being crucial to undermining any notion of the ethnographic present discussed in Chapter One.

Communal storytelling was a self-correcting process in which listeners were encouraged to speak up if they noted an important fact or detail omitted. The people were happy to listen to two or three different versions of the same event or the same humma-hah story...Implicit in the Pueblo oral tradition was the awareness that loyalties, grudges, and kinship must always influence the narrator's choices as she emphasizes to listeners

this is the way *she* has always heard the story told. The ancient Pueblo people sought a communal truth, not an absolute. For them this truth lived **somewhere within the web of differing versions . . .** (Silko, "Landscape" 88; emphasis added)

Performance

In Place and The Politics of Identity, Michael Keith and Steve Pile posit what they call the "freeze-frame photograph" quality of textualizing the process of identity formation, what must of necessity is a momentary stoppage. Because identity formation is "always a process, never an artefact" (30), "[T]he photograph represents a momentary stop in this gallop, simultaneously real and unreal, it is a moment at which closure occurs" (28). Similarly, the moment of "arbitrary closure" of the representation of identity formation is both true and false. By virtue of this stop/gap freeze-frame, textualized identity is always a mis/representation, in fact, a mis/recognition. This stop/gap freeze-frame is precisely what Leslie Silko works to destabilize by telling the story of Arrowboy and the Destroyers over and over--the temporal moment is no longer a single freeze-frame, but a series of frames in the same geographic location which operate as a sequence, as in film, to show identity formation in motion. While Allen's

re/tellings of "The Woman Who Fell From the Sky" help to create a transtribal essential Native Narrative Tradition, Silko's sequencing works to resolve the tension between textualized and verbal storytelling, and to locate carefully tribal and personal identity.

Stolen Rain, Silko's unreleased movie version of the Arrowboy story, makes an immediate connection between the destroyers in the Storyteller texts under consideration. In this "freeze-frame" in motion, a Laguna family seated around the kitchen table hears the story of Arrowboy from Grandmother. As she narrates this story in what is identified by subtitle as 1980, the story itself is shown, but set in 1956. 1956 in Laguna was a time of heavy uranium mining activity. Frequent returns to scenes of the uranium mine prior to or following references to Kochininako and the destroyers clearly connect the nuclear military industrial complex directly to the destroyers--witchcraft.

In Stolen Rain, visual cues identify the destroyers as those responsible for mining uranium near Laguna. A black '47 sedan becomes the representative embodiment of the destroyers, driving across the frame at key moments. Kochininako rides in the black sedan, at which point the music becomes tension filled and ominous. Heavy dump trucks moving towards the nearby uranium mine glide along the frame just in the wake of the destroyers, often cutting across the

screen just after Kochininako appears. At one point, Grandmother Spider⁵ is telling Arrowboy who the destroyers are. She describes the balance of the world, long time ago when people were kind. They "didn't destroy plants and animals unnecessarily. . . But then the balance was lost, and that's when the trouble began." The symptoms of this lack of balance are discontent, greed, hatred--people who enjoy seeing hatred and destruction. At this moment, the film cuts from Grandmother Spider and Estoy-eh-muut to the uranium mine--filled with trucks moving dirt, destroying the earth. More importantly, those trucks carry the seeds of ultimate destruction in the rocks that will become bombs, in the yellow and green veins that will become radioactive slag.

The drought is a clear indication that crucial elements are out of balance for the pueblo. In Stolen Rain, Amooh, the grandmother who is telling the story to her grandchildren, answers their question, "How come there isn't enough rain?" by saying that it wouldn't rain ". . . unless everyone is living like they should." She wants them to know that good living is doing the proper things at the proper time, which will help bring the rain. The world is out of balance. Her very telling of the story becomes a part of doing the proper things at the proper time to bring the rain.

the white man goes to yosemite
 on vacation. it's his recreation.
 yes, says another man, black. it's
 your recreation, but it's their life.
 Allen *Skins and Bones* 60

Silko metanarratively frames in unfamiliar cultural landscapes for outsiders. Barbara Babcock points out that metacommunicative events like metanarrative or framing devices call attention to "the ways in which the tales themselves tell us both implicitly and explicitly what their conventions and standards of esthetic judgment are" (Babcock "Story" 71). Specifically, Silko embeds the long time ago story of Estoy-eh-muut and the Kunideeyahs within a contemporary storytelling event, framed within Laguna family structures, which is itself embedded within a filmic performance, the kind of performance familiar to a wide range of audiences, viewers for who the long time ago story will be confusing and for the most part, without impact. Silko's use of this kind of framing helps make accessible culturally unfamiliar systems.

The first 'frame within a frame' is that of the Grandmother of 1980, the one telling the Arrowboy story (humma-hah) to her family at the dinner table. The storytelling occasion is set within the landscape of drought--the corn will not produce. This Grandmother is participating in a cycle that is about doing the proper things at the proper time--she is telling the story. As we

have seen, storytelling is the key to being, means to survival and communal identity and cohesion. This telling will help to return weather and growth back into balance.

The ambiguity of the endings of **all** of the versions Silko tells of "Arrowboy and the Destroyers" is crystallized in the film. The 1956 version ends as Kochininako disappears into the whirl of the maas guts turning into a snake. At this moment, the rain begins, ending the drought, an event which highlights the return to balance only alluded to in Storyteller through the juxtaposition of the photograph of storm clouds. The 1980 setting in the film also only alludes to the possibility of rain. Grandmother Amooch has finished telling the story to the family gathered at the table, and is sending the grandchildren back to their mother's house. As they leave the house, the wind whips the gate and blows the dust, while dark, water-laden clouds hover ominously. But no rain falls. As the children pass across the road, the music associated with the destroyers returns, and the black '47 sedan snakes past the camera, signifying the continuing presence of the witchery. Has the drought ended? It may be about to rain, but we as viewers are left to make our own connections, again through the juxtaposition of the images, and with the metanarrative devices of the 1956 version erupting into 1980.

In a framing event outside of the narratives

themselves, and much like the framing devices Silko uses in Ceremony, the film opens with an epigraph which appears on screen as written text without background, spoken by a voice later associated with Grandmother Spider:

You may ask what value these old time stories have for us now. But don't be fooled--they aren't just entertainment. They tell us about ourselves. Listen closely--certain dangers will always be with us.

Silko has framed the other narratives with an explicit directive about the uses, as well as the ambiguities of the stories she is telling. Witchery as a force for evil isn't going away, it will always of necessity be with us. But, as we have seen, by keeping things in balance, doing the proper things at the proper times, the world can be ordered and understood, in the stories, over and over again.

Grandmother Amooch is telling her 1980's Laguna family the story as a humma-hah story, but Silko's visual representation is temporally located in 1956, rather than humma-hah/long ago, with the possible repercussions of the stereotypes of "savages" which would be called up through previous filmic representations of "the old west." Given the filmic history of indigenous representations, Silko's move is appropriately avoids the problems of stereotypes already floating through a non-indigenous film audience's

repertoire of cultural images. But this choice also serves two other functions. 1956 points directly to a chronologically previous historical matrix linked to the Bomb, an era with which most viewers have some more immediate cultural relationship, thereby offering a frame within which outsiders are given familiar cues. More importantly for us, by locating three different temporal moments in the same geographic location, Silko demonstrates the synchronous nature of location/landscape/place, in fact, maps onto the specific location of Laguna Pueblo global issues of imbalance and destruction, colonization and genocide. Shamoan Zamir notes in "Literature in a 'National Sacrifice Area': Leslie Silko's *Ceremony*" that,

What most distinguishes Silko's myth of malign magic is her transformation of local oral narratives into a comprehensive cosmological mapping of evil. Such a globalization, familiar in Christianity, is, in fact, not found in the Native American cultures of the Southwest. (401)

As Zamir and others have noted,⁶ the Four Corners region where Laguna Pueblo is located has been threatened with designation as a 'National Sacrifice Area,' yet another layer of story blanketing the geographic landscape of Laguna. This would appear to be, in Silko's formulation, another "taking" (in legal/colonial discourse) by those

destroyers set in motion to steal rivers, mountains, and children.

Silko's *performance* of verbal art in *writing*, and then in film, constitutes an emergent performative event, with all of the potential for social change inherent in such performance. This moment of emergence can be tied to the moment of decolonization, as Fanon asserts, when a national literature begins to emerge from the rubble of colonial repression of pre-colonial tradition and culture.

On another level, the oral tradition--stories, epics, and songs of the people--which formerly were filed away as set pieces are now beginning to change. The storytellers who used to relate inert epic\sodes now bring them alive and introduce into them modifications which are increasingly fundamental. (Fanon Wretched 240)

The radical point of departure at this constructed moment of decolonization which is the collection of "freeze-frame photographs" of versions of "Arrowboy and the Destroyers" is in the writing and then filming of the telling. Richard Bauman has described the emergent quality of the performance of verbal art in this way: "The point is that completely novel and completely fixed texts represent the poles of an ideal continuum, and that between the poles lies the range of emergent text structures to be found in empirical

performance" (40). Between the fixity of writing and the completely spontaneous moment of the spoken word lies the possibilities for performance inherent in film. In motion, yet fully textualized, spontaneous at the moment of exposure, film oscillates between the two poles, a location in which Bauman claims there is ". . .a distinctive potential in performance by its very nature which has implications for the creation of social structure in performance. . . ." It is "in the special emergent quality of performance the capacity for change may be highlighted and made manifest to the community." Ultimately for Bauman, performance ". . . constitutes . . . the nexus of tradition, practice and emergence in verbal art. (Bauman 40-48)

This is precisely the moment of emergent performance, the articulation of social contexts beyond local knowledges within which Silko is implicated and embedded. In telling versions of Pueblo stories, she also draws upon western narrative stories and traditions, which, as I will argue in chapter 5, constitutes a guerilla attack upon those very traditions.

**Landscape/Place/Space:
Locating Identity Politics**

One desires 'a bit of the Other' to enhance the blank landscape of whiteness.

hooks Black Looks 29

Allen asserts in "'Border Studies'" that critical attention to texts by Third World women writers should consider "the self-in-relation rather than . . . self-in-isolate splendor" ("Border" 314) as characterizing most literary production. The hero metaphor of the bildungsroman applies to a relatively small population of elite white males. As noted earlier, she advocates erecting a criticism which attends "to the actual texts being created, their source texts, the texts to which they stand in relation, and the otherness that they both embody and delineate" (314). Again, as in Allen's uses of re/telling, while Silko's tellings of "Arrowboy and the Destroyers" stand in relation to each other, and to the complex of Silko's own stories, as well as the Keres Arrowboy and Yellow Woman story cycles, these tellings are also related to the other tellings of this same story by non-Keres anthropologists and travelers. Toby C. S. Langen has carefully chronicled the multiple versions and stories connected to this particular constellation of elements in "Estoy-eh-muut and the Morphologists." Her structuralist approach, drawing on Propp and Dundes, is useful in establishing a framework for looking at the ways in which versions operate to sustain and influence each other, how they might "stand in relation." Karl Kroeber has suggested that what seems useful in looking at versions is not so much in the ways in which they are

structurally similar, but the ways in which the "idiosyncratic features of particular tellings" are foregrounded, rather than the extent to which they highlight the map of common elements. Individual "divergence, difference, and originality" reflect different recitalists and different tellings by the same recitalists ("Scarface" 99). Again, the emergent nature of the performance is traced through tellers and tellings--not the same story, but similar stories with important differences.

The language deployed to this point has often drawn upon what Keith and Pile call "spatial metaphors" (1), "position, location, mapping, space, place." These metaphors are related to the problem of location, of how we are implicated bodily in the politics of location. To "stand in relation" is to be located metaphorically, grounded, so to speak, in a physical as well as a social sense.

Where I come from is like this
 the warmth, the fragrance, the silence.
 Blue sky and rainclouds in the distance
 we ride together
 past cliffs with stories and songs
 painted on rock.
 700 years ago.
 Silko *Laguna Woman* 17

Native American literary critical practice emphasizes the importance of a "real" sense of place for Native American writers. In fact, it is a key component of any text identified as 'Native American Literature.'⁷ A sense

of place has become a kind of mantra, a crucial element for drawing categorical boundaries. The list of identifying characteristics of Native American literature seems to be based in its contradistinction to other cultures literary production. Yet, there is a sense of place in all textual production, even in the very absent presence of "place." What is meant when a critic of Native American literature says that a text includes a sense of place remains ambiguous for me, even after years of reading and searching for this place. I have come to believe that it is really a particular **relationship** to a sense of place that is meant, a relationship grounded in a particular tribal, communal, culturally embedded cosmology, 'standing in relation' to the cultural and physical geography of "place."

Cultural landscapes are social and cumulative. They are the natural result of a process which has been carried on for centuries in native communities on this continent. Cultural landscapes are made whenever communities of people join words to place. They enable man to feel a sense of place, to hear the darkness rub the water. (Evers and Pavich 11)

The landscape in question in "Arrowboy and the Destroyers" is geographic, temporal, cultural, and personal--all at the same time. Again, in Place and the Politics of Identity, it

is clear that

". . . simultaneously present in any landscape are multiple enunciations of distinct forms of space - and these may be reconnected to the process of re-visioning and remembering the spatialities of counter-hegemonic cultural practices" (7).

The multiple versions of "Arrowboy and the Destroyers" are versions which, as I have indicated earlier, inscribe on the geography of the Laguna/Pueblo/New Mexico/Southwestern location these subjectivities and social and political positionalities which are simultaneously resistant and synchronous.

Keith and Pile point out that

. . . the metaphoric and the real do not belong in separate worlds; that the symbolic and the literal are in part constitutive of one another. That meaning is never immanent, it is instead not just *marked* but also in part *constituted* by the spaces of representation in which it is articulated. These spaces of representation subvert the representation of spaces so that the ground we stand on becomes a mongrel hybrid of spatialities; at once a metaphor and a speaking position, a place of certainty and a burden of humility, sometimes all of these simultaneously, sometimes

all of them incommensurably. (Keith & Pile 23)

All of the stories in question, all of the stories lived in and located on this "National Sacrifice Area" are both metaphor and representation, grounded in and constituted by the very space in which they converge.

"The remarkable thing about the cultural landscape that whites call the 'American West' is that it was created in absolute ignorance of the cultural landscapes of the native communities it displaced" (11). Evers and Pavich highlight this significant elision,⁸ an elision that is a matter of "forgetting," an act Allen has pointed to as self-destructive. While the indigenous cultural western landscapes were ignored and forgotten, they did not disappear, and like all good repressed energies, they return. The desire to find a more organic relation to the social and political space/geography expressed in Keith and Pile's recent collection on the politics of location is precisely a desire to re/discover the suppressed cultural landscape which **is** a sense of place more relational, less metaphorical. Here is one of the ways in which I can begin to understand what constitutes a sense of place in terms of Native American literature--it is in the way in which landscape stands in relation to the "texts" which are mapped onto its body.

Even the forests
have been wired, plugged in

to terminals far away.
 He doesn't understand
 that the furrow on his
 forehead was transferred
 from the furrows he once turned
 on the land, embedded there

Allen Skins and Bones 34

For elite "white" Western subjects, landscape is a commodity to be consumed by the Sierra Club members and deer hunters alike. Airbrushed landscape photography hangs on kitchen walls, while earth and animals bear the slings and arrows of tourist trash in Yellowstone. As Silko has said,

So long as the human consciousness remains *within* the hills, canyons, cliffs, and the plants, clouds, and sky, the term *landscape*, as it has entered the English language, is misleading. "A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view" does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow *inside* or *separate from* the territory he or she surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on. (Silko, "Landscape" 84)

Here Silko shows how in her cosmology, and by inference, what she is constructing as Keresan cosmology, landscape is not a consumable commodity, but something in which all

participate, something to which all are 'essentially' connected. Both the use and abuse of landscape as commodity, as well as 'essential relation' set white and indigenous practices apart. How these cultural landscapes are articulated in space and time in specific locations creates a palimpsest, a series of stories which render both "white" and "red" textual subjectivities.

Keith Basso, in Portraits of the Whiteman, suggests that

. . . whereas the opposition 'Indian' versus 'Whiteman' is fixed and culturally general, the manner in which this opposition is interpreted is mutable and culturally specific. 'The Whiteman' comes in different versions because 'the Indian' does, and it is just for this reason - that conceptions of the former constitute negative expressions of conceptions of the latter (and vice versa) - that in rendering Whitemen meaningful, 'the Whiteman' renders Indians meaningful as well.

(Basso 5)

I would argue that in rendering the "redwoman" meaningful, Silko renders the "whitewoman" meaningful, in fact, renders a portrait of "white" that is grounded in its difference from not only "red," but in its dis/location in and on the landscape.

Storytelling

In Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream, Greg Sarris returns several times to point out that while trying to record the life story of Mabel McKay, she tells him the same stories over and over again. "I knew the story. It seemed I knew all the stories. Over the years, ever since I was a kid, I had heard them again and again" (4). He wonders why she re/tells them, and at one point he clearly feels that she isn't telling him what he needs or wants to know about her life. But ultimately he understands that in hearing the same stories over and over, and then in re/telling the stories to us as [mostly "white," often academic] readers, Sarris also tells us who he has become through the stories, and through his own re(dis)covery of family, kin, and history. As "part American Indian, Filipino, and Jewish" adopted child, Sarris is a part of a multitude of "People who had met only in my blood" (157). When he finally comes to terms with his own ways of writing down Mabel's stories, a task she quite clearly leaves to him, he also comes to terms with the convergences of blood and bone, kin and clan that are at once syncretic--not the same but simultaneous.

Silko, like Mabel, keeps telling us the same stories, over and over, leaving us to either come to terms with their significance to us as readers, offering us the opportunity to come to terms with our own convergences, our own part in

the stories, or remain locked in entrenched paradigms of race, identity and geography.

Silko doesn't just subvert or transform, her purposes are multiple. She tells a good story, which helps to create us all. We participate in the shift she makes in each telling. She worries contemporary problems, using timeless stories which she binds to multiple temporalities. As we will see in the following chapter, for Silko, time comes not chronologically, passing forward in a line, but folds upon itself, taking on the shape of a tortilla, a photograph of a distant galaxy, a distant photograph of our own galaxy. In guerilla warfare, the timeline fails, the days return.

Joe, I said when we'd gotten inside the chic apartment,
I'd like you to meet the old Indian ruins
I promised.

My mother, Mrs. Francis, and my grandmother, Mrs. Gottlieb.
His eyes grew large, and then he laughed
looking shocked at the two
Allen *Skins and Bones* 22

End Notes

1. Ruoff, Vangen, Jaskowski, Danielson, and Langen are the most thorough contemporary sources on the figures of Yellow Woman and Arrowboy in American Indian literature. For the most part, they turn to Paula Gunn Allen in The Sacred Hoop for culturally specific understanding of these figures.

2. Again, Paula Gunn Allen in The Sacred Hoop explains this insider knowledge, interpreting Keresan cosmology for a white, particularly feminist, audience.

3. See Linda Danielson, Kate Shanley Vangen, Helen Jaskowski, and A. LaVonne Ruoff for their work on Storyteller and the discourses of witchcraft.

4. But what I realized was, or so I never had the idea that all evil came from Europe, or all evil came of christianity. That's stupid and simple. If it was, there there's [sic], so so [sic] I made up that story about the creation of white people in Ceremony and later had people say that ah Moslems, or somebody, somebody else has a story like that. (Poetics 61)

This is how Silko describes the genesis of the witch's creation story in Storyteller, the story which, as I have argued, reappears in Ceremony, and finally, by implication, in Almanac of the Dead.

5. See Chapter 3 for an introduction to Grandmother Spider/Spider Woman.

6. Zamir joins Ward Churchill, Jack Forbes, Jerry Mander and others in uncovering the racist internal colonizing moves made on reservations which ask tribal peoples to become part of a National Sacrifice Area. This would seem to be part of an ongoing commitment to genocide, as described in Boyarin's "Europe's Indian, America's Jew."

7. Nearly every major critic of Native American Literature has either formulated or reiterated a set of criteria for determining the authenticity of a Native American text. Bevis, Owens, Krupat, Allen, Lincoln, and Wiget come most immediately to mind as having developed the most influential paradigms. As noted elsewhere,

Allen has most recently formulated what she calls the "Native Narrative Tradition," and included her own set of criteria for inclusion. (see page 78 in this manuscript.)

8. See Drinnon Facing Far West, Berkhofer, The White Man's Indian, Deloria, Custer Died For Your Sins, and Churchill, Struggle For The Land, for longer inquiries into this particular white communal suppression.

Chapter Five Guerilla Ethnography

"There's something endemic to white culture or to American culture or to European-Anglo **genes** that says "It's my right, I get to have anything I want now. And aren't I special. And if you don't think I'm special then you're horrible and I'm going to kill you'." (Allen "Interview" 53; emphasis added)

Word Warriors, breaking silence, becoming speaking subjects--all are positions white women and women of color have used to resist and undermine hegemonic racial and gendered relations in the United States. Picking up the pen and writing a self, a subject position, into existence has been an effective tool for what Chela Sandoval calls "oppositional consciousness." The pen, breaking silence, like any tool of resistance, works at some levels but not consistently at all levels of social and cultural consciousness. Recent mass market and literary productions reflect an escalation of violence for both the "have's," increasingly at risk of losing their privilege, and the "have not's," increasingly at risk of losing their lives. While it seems that things are more the same--calls for "racial harmony" when people of color express outrage against racist suppression--they also remain in a constant state of change, where balance could swing in a moment towards an empowered "other."

What happens to the male and female white bodies of the first world when confronted by the female body of the "third world" wrapped in the culturally loaded garb of revolution, talking "like a man" and taking up the gun? Is there a difference between white women taking up the gun (à la Thelma and Louise) and women of color taking up that gun, which is culturally inscribed as a white masculine subject position? I would argue that by taking up the pen and writing the gun into a text which in turn turns the gun onto white bodies, women of color such as Leslie Marmon Silko and Paula Gunn Allen commit what I am calling 'guerrilla ethnography.' Such an act of writing is a surprise attack across the borders of racial demarcation/categorization.

As we have seen, ethnography is the practice of writing the culture of the other, a "serious fiction." Lila Abu-Lughod offers one of the more succinct definitions of the foundations of "the ambiguous term 'ethnography,' which refers both to the activity of doing anthropological research, and more commonly, to the "written results" or accounts of the lives of other cultural groups" (9). What lies at the heart of this anthropological enterprise are "Western knowers and representers, and non-Western knowns and representeds" (11). By definition, guerrilla actions are surprise attacks committed by individuals behind enemy lines, in opposition to formal, hierarchically organized

battles fought by trained and disciplined soldiers. Guerrilla ethnography, as I'm constructing it, would have to overturn that formulation by operating behind enemy lines of ethnographic discourses, writing an informal, non-hierarchical representation of culture, instigating a reversal of ideology. So we need a represented Western and a non-Western representor to commit guerrilla ethnography, a serious fictional portrait of Western (White) cultural practice, a written account of the lives of "white" people, a picture of what it means to be culturally "white" by one who is not.

White

"White-ness," according to "white" folks like Richard Dyer and Marilyn Frye, is scripted as "everything and nothing, [which] is the source of its representational power" (Dyer 45). It is "invisible" because it is *natural*, "colourless multi-coloredness," and is read as the positive pole in the binaries of modernity/backwardness, reason/irrationality, order/chaos, stability/violence, and most specifically for Dyer, it is masculine. "White" masculinity has become the un/marked, naturalized category from which demarcation emanates.

. . . one effect of colonial discourse is the production of an un\marked, apparently autonomous

white/Western self, in contrast with the marked, Other racial and cultural categories with which the racially and culturally dominant category is constructed. In this context, it has also for the most part been Other, marked subjects rather than white/Western, unmarked subjects whose racial and cultural identities have been the focus of study. (Frankenberg 17)

The task then, would be to mark "white" bodies in some way, to make them "the focus of study," to de-naturalize "whiteness." Marilyn Frye describes what she calls "whiteliness" as not a matter of skin color, but as a matter of a "deeply ingrained way of being in the world" (152), of being "judge . . . peacemaker . . . preacher . . . martyr" by virtue of the superiority or privilege accruing to whiteness. "Whitely people generally consider themselves to be benevolent and good-willed, fair, honest and ethical...[with] a staggering faith in their own rightness and goodness, and that of other whitely people" (154). At least this is how "white-ly" folks construct selves and each other, and how "white-ly" folks strategically maintain positions of domination.

I don't care, he said. I love
the united states. it isn't fair.
I never killed any indian. I am not
responsible for what my ancestors did.
I love the wilderness, he said. the indians
can't keep me out of it.

bells hooks, in "Eating the Other", points out that whiteness has been ignored as constructed rather than natural, and essential presence, and critiques the ways in which this operation is ignored or suppressed in the debates over essentialism.

Those progressive white intellectuals who are particularly critical of "essentialist" notions of identity when writing about mass culture, race, and gender have not focused their critiques on white identity and the way essentialism informs representations of whiteness. It is always the non-white, or in some cases the non-heterosexual Other, who is guilty of essentialism. Few white intellectuals call attention to the way in which the contemporary obsession with white consumption of the dark Other has served as a catalyst for the resurgence of essentialist based racial and ethnic nationalism. (Black Looks 30)

The "consumption" of the Third World by the first world calls to mind the "cannibals" Columbus claims to have first encountered, and his consumption of their cultural body.¹ Rather than the rational, ordered "white-ly" people of the myth, hooks gives us back a white culture of "cannibalism."²

In Almanac of the Dead, Silko, like hooks, holds a mirror up to white folks which reflects white in its "cannibalistic" chaos. And this is what I mean by the term guerilla ethnography, a picture of what it means to be culturally white by one who is not. Almanac of the Dead is a written portrait of "white-ly" culture and a surprise attack; a re-version of the conventions of ethnographic writing, and a dark/red consumption of the white Other--reversing hooks's formulation of a white consumption of a dark other. If Silko were a student of anthropology's fathers Boas, Malinowski, or even Clifford, she would possibly fail their course; in holding up the mirror to "white," her fieldwork becomes (in)appropriate. She is non-Western and non-white. She has no legitimate access to white male privilege of the phallogocentric kind. She's dark **and** she's female. Her covert operations in white backyards and bedrooms and on summer beaches (the epic/soap opera/historical/ romance/thriller/apocalyptic novel form) commits guerilla warfare in words; some seven hundred odd pages of hit and run.

Howling and roaring
 Toe'osh scattered white people
 out of bars all over Wisconsin.
 He bumped into them at the door
 until they said

'Excuse me'

And the way Simon meant it
 was for 300 or maybe 400 years.
 Silko *Storyteller* 239

To reverse Clifford's formulation, instead of producing a "constructed domain of truth, [a] serious fiction" (10), this is an unequal exchange with a subjectivity produced by one presumed less powerful, one who creates a domain of fiction, playful truths in a multivocal exchange.

Silko's is not a text about bad "white" people and good "red" people; rather the text brings into sharp relief the struggle between opposing forces for balance. Red people sometimes do "bad" things, white people sometimes do "good" things [albeit infrequently]. One of the great mistakes characters commit in Almanac of the Dead is to deny or forget "where they come from." Menardo, the salesman of apocalypse insurance is both Mexican and mestizo. As a child, he understands his connection to the indigenous community and his mestizo grandfather, until the Anglo Brothers separate him from his "pagan people." His life is spent becoming more and more like "white" folks--he denies first his indigenous ancestry, then works to rid himself of his Mexican identity as well--denying where he comes from and becoming "white-ly" (258). To become "white-ly" if you are "red," or to make "white-liness" invisible, as if it came from nowhere, sets the condition for cultural and racial dislocation. This dislocation leaves bodies vulnerable to what Jack Forbes calls, in Columbus and Other Cannibals "Wétiko psychosis"--a "disease of aggression

against other living things, and, more precisely, the disease of the consuming of other creatures' lives and possessions" (10). Like bell hooks, Forbes identifies this cannibalism as consumption of cultural *bodies* as a "white-ly" act. To be "white-ly" then, is to be diseased, to consume **any** other, not only **the** Other. To inoculate oneself against wétiko psychosis is to remain connected to the stories and the people. Like Fanon's psychosis of colonialism, for Forbes you needn't be white to catch the wétiko disease--non-Europeans can be recruited into the psychosis (87). The sane people stay sane by remaining connected--"remembering" their true selves. Memory is resistance.

Binary

The binary inherent in the contemporary use of the word "race" is one of the issues I would like to call into question. The word race comes into play most frequently as it points to black/white relations and discourses.³ To return again to Morrison's troubling assertion, we see that she looks at American literature and its "responses to a dark, abiding, signing Africanist presence" (5). She asserts that it is this Africanist presence, marked as absence and "deployed as rawness and savagery, that provided the staging ground and arena for the elaboration of the quintessential American identity" (44). In our reversal of

Morrison's formulation, we see the missing but assumed 'unbound and free' indigenous "red" population, in opposition to the "bound and unfree . . . black population" she articulates, which buttresses both "white" and "black" notions of what constitutes "red." In this chapter, I argue that Silko's Almanac of the Dead breaks the binary of "black/white," and inserts "red" as an articulating presence between the "Other" two categorical imperatives. This insertion succeeds as a representation of "white-ness" in the "red" imagination. bell hooks asks the questions about representations of "white-ness" in the "black" imagination:

Without evoking a simplistic essentialist "us and them" dichotomy that suggests black folks merely invert stereotypical racist interpretations so that black becomes synonymous with goodness and white with evil, I want to focus on that representation of whiteness that is not formed in reaction to stereotypes but emerges as a response to the traumatic pain and anguish that remains a consequence of white racist domination, a psychic state that informs and shapes the way black folks "see" whiteness. (Black Looks 169)

hooks associates "white-ness" as terrifying and terrorizing in the black imagination: "[to] name that whiteness in the

black imagination is often a representation of terror" (172).

Insertion

How does red "see" "white?" Does "white-ness" get worked out in the "red" imagination as terrifying in the same way that it does in the ways hooks asserts constitutes the "black" imagination? How does the stereotype of the "savage red" and the "rational civilized white" get turned about? I would argue that for Silko, whiteness is not necessarily as terrifying as it is terrified. White people use drugs, kill each other, and Others, and buy insurance against every possible disaster, including "uprising" by those who terrify them most--the non-white other. Silko's critical narrative of destruction and convergence--white apocalypse--becomes a cultural critique of white terror.

Is there not a similar wind, moan, howl, will
in me--placed there by double helix,
their dance and spiral--RNA, DNA--or by
living beside you as I have all my life

Allen Skins and Bones 65

In Almanac of the Dead, Silko undercuts white racist domination completely, disavowing its association with autonomous intentionality. Rather, white people are controlled by and operate under the aegis of the Gunadeeyahs, the destroyers, one of several Keresan clans. Her use of the tribal identificatory marker of clan implies

that "red" begat "white." In all three of her fictional productions, Silko retells the Keres story discussed in Chapter Four, the story of the Gunadeeyahs, a clan organized around a hunger for blood, violence and destruction. In Ceremony, Emo and his group are the tools of the destroyers, set to the task of keeping Tayo from completing his part in the ritual of the text. Here is the version of the witches' convention Silko tells in Almanac of the Dead:

Now the old story came back to Sterling as he walked along. The appearance of Europeans had been no accident; the Gunadeeyahs had called for their white brethren to join them. Sure enough the Spaniards had arrived in Mexico fresh from the Church Inquisition with appetites whetted for disembowelment and blood. No wonder Cortes and Montezuma had hit it off together when they met; both had been members of the same secret clan.

(760)

This version is shorter than the other versions we have seen, and it is desacralized, de-ritualized in its language and its details. The witches' contest has disappeared. The appearance of white people is now a matter of calling kindred spirits, rather than a creation story. A "red" clan creates or calls up white people, rather than the "naturalized" creation stories which are versions of a

"white" or "black" god baking clay into burned, undercooked, or just right "red" people, or the tale of a white patriarch doing magic tricks with water and DNA.

WOMANSPLACE

I dreamed
 I was the pillsbury biscuit
 someone
 asked me how
 I viewed my body-
 as uncooked dough I
 said, pliable
 god knows
 undone.
 When poked in the belly
 cutely
 I laugh
 and know how much I
 won't be seen.
 That's
 what I dreamed.

Allen *Shadow Country* 114

Silko's refusal to privilege whiteness as creator, prime practitioner of evil, or even clan inventor is crucial to her representation of whiteness as terrified rather than terrifying, and in fact weak and vulnerable. Serlo, a cold hearted, brutal, white European male virgin, brings into sharp relief this terrorizing fear. Serlo works to save the Sangre Pura of the European nobility. All of his sperm is frozen, preserved for posterity, as a genetic representative of the European monarchies. He ejaculates into a sterile vacuum pump commonly used for the artificial insemination of cattle. For Serlo, the whitest of the whites, **all** bodies

are polluted and polluting, except those with Sangre Pura.

Serlo did not mind Beaufrey's cheap street boys, or the gringos, not even Eric; how could Serlo have possibly felt anything at all about them? Jealousy was out of the question. Serlo had *sangre pura*; 'blue blood' deserved 'blue blood.' In the end there could be nothing better.

(Almanac 542)

The rabble is "black," "red," and "white," all vulgar and cheap. In his paralyzing fear of apocalypse, Serlo is the one who suffers most from wétiko psychosis in this text. Without a "white" protector/god to save him from the apocalypse, Serlo's vulnerability makes him cruel and sadistic, behaviors that cover his fear and terror.

as so they form a club
and meet each week to purge
themselves but not of grief,
idling over scotch and hor
d'oeuvres, assuring each and all
have at some time been good
to a "colored person." All
fear the brightening truth
that stalks the beige livingrooms
and will soon become its own
televised scream.
Allen Coyote's *Daylight Trip* 11

And what ethnographic picture of "white," middle class femininity does Silko write? Are women, as part of the sisterhood, somehow less likely to be connected to the Gunadeeyahs? Are they less likely to be greedy, violent, selfish, racist colonialists? No. There are two white

women whom we get to know fairly well in Almanac of the Dead: Seese, a drug-addicted stripper who has lost her child, and Leah Blue, a real estate mogul married to the mob who is more white boy masculine than even her contract killer husband, Max. Both of these women are failed mothers, first and foremost. Seese's baby is kidnapped by the father's lover, Beaufrey.

Afterward, Seese had drifted as if she were a sea-green ribbon of kelp caught in a current with a voice that accused her over and over. A less distinct voice said she had done the best she knew how. Her baby had not drowned in his bathwater. He had not been born addicted. But she could find no consolation for this loss. (Almanac 111)

The kidnapped baby is used by Beaufrey's lover Serlo, the terrified Sangre Pure virgin, as a body for pedophilic violent pornography. The living white male baby body is mutilated and murdered for the camera, its Caucasian organs harvested (563). Genocide and violent domination is literally written onto the body. Seese's search for the dead baby, and her decision to give up drugs, is the most she can do to nurture and mother. The maternal is corrupt and destructive, high on cocaine. Like Serlo, Seese's fear is covered over by her refusal to nurture.

Leah Blue, another white mother, sells real estate

while her two young sons wait in the air-conditioned Cadillac. She fails to attend to her younger son, Bingo, when he has nightmares, and refuses entrance to her heart to both Sonny and Bingo all along. They grow up on their own, and they grow up mean-spirited and psychotic. Leah is cold, calculating and unemotional. When the two boys are young, and Leah is just beginning to buy and sell real estate in Tucson, she uses the boys as leverage in a deal about to be made. When Bingo finally tires of Sonny's teasing, he slumps against the wheel of the car in tears, setting off the car's horn.

The first time it had happened, the agent representing the seller turned pale. He paused, expecting Leah to rush across the vacant lot to get the kid off the horn. And Leah might have done that except she saw the agent's discomfort. Cars on the street were slowing, and it was Leah, in her bright green mumu and matching heels standing in the center of the vacant lot, people were staring at. Leah had sensed the agent was about to give in on the interest rate; the sound of the car horn had worked like a vise. Leah never even glanced in the direction of the car. The agent broke At that moment she had felt something she had never felt before. The

horn had stopped and she could hear the voices of the boys approaching behind her. But nothing could interfere or change what she had just experienced . . . The sensation was the closest to anything sexual she'd felt since Max got shot.

(360)

This vision of white, upper middle-class motherhood and Leah's use of her sons to close a real estate deal is as disturbing as the portrait of drug-addicted, working-class Seese. These are the failed mothers.

Given Silko's cosmology, another devastating critique of these two white women centers around their inability to tell the stories that matter to their children. Storytelling is the good that binds, a primary method for nurturing. It is in the act of remembering through storytelling that there is resistance. The one mother in the book who succeeds is Old Yoeme, a Yaqui woman who initiates the twins Zeta and Lecha through storytelling. She tells the twins about snakes and seeing, about Guzman and cottonwood trees, the family history and Geronimo's mistaken identity. Yoeme is the one who tells the twins that "You are Indians" (114). Seese has no stories that could initiate her baby son, except the ones that white people in this text create--stories of greed, violence, self-gratification, pleasure in pain, and destruction.

Leah's stories are also about greed, but more importantly, her land-grabbing, water-claiming stories involve the land and the rape of the land.

a continent awash in blood
babies splattered against cave walls
where the people ran to hide
or had been herded by the white men
with guns
its how the west was won
Allen Wyrds 19

Here is the crux of Silko's reclamation effort--the land and the body are the terrains most violated, and the terrains most entwined. They are also the terrains being taken back in the march north by marked and colonized bodies. The fate of the body is linked directly to the fate of the colonized land. Angelita la Escapía and Zeta operate from violent revolutionary positions to "take back the land" and "protect Mother Earth from destruction," the same landscape Silko works to reclaim through storytelling. These two women warriors (as well as Rose the Yupik woman later in the book) wrest a "subjectivity denied" by taking up the gun and using it against the masculinist culture they are overthrowing.

[Angelita] had come to the healers convention in Tucson to make contacts with certain people, the people with the weapons she needed to protect the followers of the spirit macaws from air attacks. Those amazing shoulder-mounted missiles worked as

simply as holiday skyrocketers. Angelita had fired one herself. . . Angelita heard from spirits too-- only her spirits were furious and they told her to defend the people from attack. (712)

Zeta has been running guns back and forth across the "border" for several years, stockpiling guns for this day of redemption for the "American continents . . . soaked with Native American and African blood" (739). She agrees to sell the missiles to Angelita, and they form an alliance of women warriors--with real guns and real power.

Resistance

bell hooks and Chela Sandoval posit strategies of racial resistance that emanate from positions of oppression. bell hooks talks about her location in the margin "as a space of radical openness."

I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as a site of resistance-- as location of radical openness and possibility. This site of resistance is continually formed in that segregated culture of opposition that is our critical response to domination. (Yearning 153)

hooks clearly acknowledges the agency of choosing that site,

on this desperation journey north.

Silko *Laguna Woman* 26

Silko's scenario in Almanac of the Dead is just this kind of new "tactical subjectivity." The disenfranchised other (the repressed) returns to take back the land in an **assertion** of subjectivity. In an interview for The Bloomsbury Review, Silko hints that this is not the result of mere revolution, but of the return of days in their living essence, the denouement of prophesy of the kind found in almanacs. (10). Time, circular time, is described similarly in Almanac of The Dead. "The days, years, and centuries were spirit beings who traveled the universe, returning endlessly. The Spirits of the Night and the Spirits of the Day would take care of people" (523). It is not Einsteinian relativity or linearity, which controls the discourses and operations of subjectivity and identity. Rather, Mayan time is the controlling principle of motion and action. Silko describes Mayan time as a round "tortilla," "...like water, they're [the years] all around, we're in it, we're just in all the years, all the time that's ever been in the past and all the time that's yet to come. You can see the future. The future is here now..." (Poetics 37).

The text's final empowerment is in the hands of The War Twins Ma'sewe and O'yo'yo'we of Keres tradition, embodied as

El Feo and Tacho, as well as in the hands of Grandmother Spider (old Yoeme) or Thought Woman Ts'its'tsi'nako, who sends into being two more goddesses, Naotsete and Uretsete (Zeta and Lecha). This group of psychic beings operates to balance the world, a balancing in which gender is one of the important operating principles.⁵

The portrait of "white-ness" Leslie Marmon Silko paints in **Almanac of the Dead** is bleak at best. Greedy, "ruly," violent natures are assigned white status, even if blood belies this position. This ethnographic version of Euro-American cultural production and social construction, written in the interstices and between the lines of the aesthetic form and appearance of Western European fictional genres operates to de-stabilize those historical and sociological versions of culture and society which buttress white supremacist internal colonialism in the Americas. As a presumed response to the ethnography of Parsons and others, who were in fact re-visioning Laguna cultural production and social construction for white consumption and redemption, **Almanac of the Dead** re-visions contemporary white culture for red and white consumption and terror.

Grandmothers

Paula Gunn Allen commits a similar practice in Grandmothers of the Light: A Medicine Woman's Sourcebook.

Using current Euro-American ethnographic practice, she revises previous images of indigenous peoples using "thousands of stories collected from hundreds of tribes [that] have been published in the United States" (Grandmothers 3). By making use of these accounts, which were collected by white people for the most part, she takes up the ways in which white people have revised tribal narratives, and what that means about "white-ness." Allen, while serious about her intent to re-center what she terms "cosmogyny," also plays trickster or clown, putting on the markings of white ethnographers, but in reverse.⁶ Silko steps outside of ethnographic practice into fiction in order to turn the mirror onto white folks, but Allen works in a different medium, borrowing both ethnographic materials and conventions to, among other things, comment upon and highlight "white-ness."

Allen intends Grandmothers of the Light to be a "sourcebook" of stories for those women wishing to follow the "medicine path" or shamanic tradition as she defines it. She has collected several Native American stories from several sources. Some of her sources are oral or written versions of stories told by Native Americans.

Stories change, and the teller, the audience, the occasion, the time all combine to create a man's story from a woman's story. . . . Galeano [the

writer of the story being introduced] cites Joseph Bruchac's *Stone Giants and Flying Heads* as the source of his retelling. Bruchac has, of course, retold an old story in his turn. (Grandmothers 38)

Many of Allen's sources, however, are written accounts of narratives told **by** tribal informants **to** white ethnographers and missionaries. Nowhere does she question the context of the sources she is 'interpreting' for what will be consumed, more than likely, by a white feminist audience.⁷ In the opening chapter of Grandmothers of The Light, Allen recounts the relationship between Frank Linderman, a white ethnologist, and Pretty Shield, the Crow Indian woman whose life story Linderman collects and publishes. Where are the questions of gender and power circulating in this encounter? Allen does not ask them, nor even allude to them; in fact, she misses the opportunity to perform the kind of critical work we have seen that she herself calls for, attention to text, source texts, relational texts, and their embodied otherness ("Border" 314).

This is similar to the problem Greg Sarris sees in relation to Allen's work on "Cache Creek Pomo Dreamer and basket-weaver Mabel McKay, and in Kashaya Pomo Dreamer and prophet Essie Parrish."

It seems that in Allen's strategy to develop and

support a tribal-feminist or feminist-tribal approach to American Indian women's written literatures--an approach that can both locate an Indian (woman) presence in the texts and critique patriarchal tendencies to suppress Indian women's power and subjectivity--she replicates in practice what she sets out to criticize. Allen does not **question how she reads each of the Pomo women's words She does not examine the women's particular histories and cultures to inform her ideas** (Keeping 124-6)

While contextualizing the Native American content of the stories she re-produces, and even at times offering citations for the source material from which she gathers them, she does not contextualize their collection. The problematics of white ethnographers, trappers, and missionaries--travelers across the landscape--writing **their** versions of what they have seen or heard as outsiders discussed earlier remains unexamined.

The implication of Allen's introductory remarks to the collection is that somehow these stories and the manner in which she has collected them will be in opposition to "the rationalist world where the linear mind reigns supreme [read "white"] . . ." (5). Yet the paradigm of growth through the medicine path is relatively chronological, each of the

"seven ways of the medicine woman" functioning in ways very similar to those of Western/"white" coming of age narratives for women. In their similarity to the female bildungsroman, these stages of growth offer a familiar ground of white cultural socialization. Her pattern is "*almost the same but not white*"; producing what Homi Bhabba calls "its slippage, its excess, its difference" ("Mimicry" 126), disrupting the authority of "white-ness" as represented by the white/Western paradigm. As a repetition or rearticulation of colonial (ethnographic) discourse, Allen's mimicry represents a "*metonymy of presence*," an "ambivalence . . . [that] suggests that the fetishized colonial culture is potentially and strategically an insurgent counter-appeal" ("Mimicry 131).

The stages along the medicine path are written for women, a slight shift from the male pattern most often associated with coming of age fiction in America. While much recent feminist work has been done on the female bildungsroman, that work, too, is a bit of mimicry that highlights the "almost the same but not quite" mirror of colonized female subjectivity. For instance, the sixth way on the medicine path is that of the teacher. While not striking in and of itself, the medicine woman becomes a teacher as a menopausal woman. Menopausal women are nearly invisible to the internal colonial apparatus of North

America, and when they are visible, they are abject in the extreme. The slippage between the image of the young, eager, white-faced teacher bringing even younger white-faced children into the rationalist disciplines of math, science, even literature, and the figure of an older, menopausal woman with brown skin and wrinkles bringing brown and white skinned women into greater knowledge of the "mystical and psychic" world of women's shamanic tradition is fraught with "immanent threat" (Bhabha 126) to the production of knowledge within the economy of colonization.

Allen employs ethnographic form, but in so doing **becomes** the shadow, "mimicking" the colonizer, like Silko's mirroring, shadowing, following, looking back. "Red" returns the "look of surveillance" of colonial ethnographic practice, rearticulating the whole and threatening the stability of white identity. "The *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" ("Mimicry 129). Bhabha goes on to say, "The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from *mimicry*--a difference that is almost nothing but not quite--to *menace*--a difference that is almost total but not quite" (132). In Grandmothers of the Light, Allen reverses ethnographic practice by seeking and recording the "metaphysical," de-objectifying these stories just as the anthropologists who collected the

stories objectified what was once solely metaphysical.

In the oscillation between mimicry and menace, this ambivalence presses the audience here to continually ask, "But how is this **different** from the way of becoming a monk, or a priest, or a good wife?" And in the asking, "white" readers will see the distortion in the mirror, and perhaps sense that there has been a surprise attack. The stories Allen retells are not my cultural stories, but like The Woman Who Owned the Shadows, they speak in some way that draws me to them. In taking up "white" versions of tribal stories, and then doing what poets like Jerome Rothenburg and Mary Austin have done to tribal stories also collected by white observers, poetically re/translating them in their own cultural terms, without questioning authenticity or cultural context, Allen takes up the pen and commits an act of guerilla warfare. It is, as I have argued, a surprise attack behind the lines of academic, feminist, ethnographic and religious discourses.

Guerrilla ethnography is a strategic response to internal colonialism. In the struggle for land rights and cultural survivance, those who commit guerrilla ethnography pose more than a theoretical threat to the stability (such as it is) of the ruling settler classes. The response to skirmishes like Almanac of the Dead and Grandmothers of the Light by white folks tells a story not of their righteous

anger over "clumsy comic book fare," (St. John 124) "self-righteousness," (Jones 36) or naivete "to the point of silliness" (Birkets 41), but of their fear--"white" fear of the "Other," the "immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers" (Bhabha 126). It is the story of white fear that what Silko prophesies as the apocalyptic end of white rule of the Americas is not just a story, but a serious fiction. It is an apocalyptic end **only** if you are "white/white-ly." In Almanac of the Dead and Grandmothers of the Light, "[red] skin splits under the racist gaze, displaced into signs of bestiality, genitalia, grotesquerie, which reveal the phobic myth of the undifferentiated whole white body" (Bhabha 132)" Not only black bodies, but marked bodies--black, red, female--split, disrupt, and resist. As in Viet Nam, colonial America, or South Africa, guerrilla warfare is a strategy of resistance and a place of radical openness and possibility. To paraphrase Vizenor, Silko and Allen commit guerrilla warfare in words, "socioacupuncture" in a wild reversal of "the social science monologue and trope to power."

bind up the wounds
 dig the graves
 light the fires
 pitch the bodies into them
 remember
 the past, honor
 it with your tears
 healing as female rain
 what you could not feel
 attending now to need

to the singe of new life
flowing with new tears
grateful that the destruction
cleared away the useless
the senseless
the never-to-be-born
the stillborn
the walking dead
making clear
the way
for cleansing winds to blow
Allen *Skins and Bone* 68-9

End Notes

1. See Peter Hulme's Colonial Encounters for a detailed discussion of the rhetorical and discursive systems surrounding the term "cannibal" as product of first encounters in the Americas between Western and indigenous cultures and bodies.

2. Ruth Frankenberg investigates whiteness as a socially constructed racial category in her recent White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness. Her introductory remarks offer a succinct history and contextualization of the issues at hand, in relation to white matters.

3. I'm thinking here in particular of the example of the 1993 series of television commercials in the New York City area which were designed to somehow calm racial tensions in the wake of the Crown Heights riots and the burning of L.A. The logo consists of one black and one white hand clasped, enclosed in a circle of white. There are only two colors here. There is no attempt to represent a multiplicity of categories.

4. In "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World."

5. Paula Gunn Allen in The Sacred Hoop describes these supernatural beings and their functions within Keres Pueblo traditional practice. Her position asserts that within this constellation, there is a balance maintained, and that gender plays a crucial role both in the maintenance of that balance, and in the ordered, circular motion of time and space.

6. The closing scene of Victor Masayesva, Jr.'s film "itam hakim, hopiit" plays this out. The camera focuses on Hopi clown dancer's feet, which are shod with hightop sneakers, rubber soled platform shoes, mis-matched and crazily striped stockings. As the dance progresses, the director shifts the film and the clown dancer's feet to the fast forward mode of a video tape player. Western/white shoes on indigenous/red feet participating in non-white ritual functions operate as transgression and social commentary on the craziness of white people.

7. Allen's audience has consistently been white feminists, particularly academic feminists. Her early work is grounded deeply in the academy, and her more recent work is often contextualized more along the lines of New Age spiritualism. Both of these audiences tend to be white. Their apparent predominance doesn't mean that Allen is not read in other communities and in other ways.

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