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**Early Native American women writers: Pauline Johnson,
Zitkala-Sa, Mourning Dove**

Stout, Mary Ann, M.A.

The University of Arizona, 1992

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EARLY NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS: PAULINE JOHNSON,
ZITKALA-SA, MOURNING DOVE

by

Mary Ann Stout

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ABSTRACT

Turn of the century Native American women's published writing is examined for the elements which presage contemporary Native American women's writing. In particular, three writers' works and biographies are examined in order to determine why they wrote, how they wrote and what they wrote. Pauline Johnson, Zitkala-Sa and Mourning Dove made early contributions to the field of Native American women's literature.

CHAPTER 1

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN'S WRITING AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The richness and depth of contemporary Native American women's writing defies the current myth, in which it springs forth in the 1960s and '70s fully developed, like Athena's birth. In truth, the development of Native American women's literature has been a gradual process, grounded in existing traditions and fostered by early transitional foremothers, such as Mourning Dove (Humishuma), Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonnin) and Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake).

Although there is evidence of native American writing as early as the 1700s, hostilities between the Indians and whites of that era precluded the publication of Native American-authored works in popular vehicles for the most part until the turn of the century. This climate of hostility towards Native Americans, combined with a their general lack of education in the English language and the prevailing attitudes towards women prevent us from seeing Native American women's writings in print until the turn of the century. That there is a strong background of a traditional oral literature among Native American cultures,

and in some cases a written tradition in a native language has been shown. In fact, this was the starting place of "modern" Native American literature. Another assumption is that it is not likely that a literary tradition appears abruptly; far more likely that it was not visible or accepted in the conventional society of the time. As Rayna Green indicates, a result of the Pocahantas Perplex was that ". . . Indian women have to be exotic, wild, collaborationist, crazy or white to qualify for white attention." (8)

In fact, the majority of published writing by Native American women at the turn of the century can be found in Indian school publications, such as Carlisle's Red Man and the Indian Craftsman. These student publications contain a variety of brief written legends, histories and poems, and are, for the most part, not well-written. They are typical of student publications; if they do not address an "Indian" topic, they are concerned with school life or represent an inspirational look at the future. Some representative piece titles are "Why the turkey is bald," "How medicine originated among the Cherokee," and "Origin of the green corn." These interesting pieces also tend to draw upon traditional native oral literature as sources for written work in a second language.

At the turn of the century, America was in the grip of

the romantic novel. Native American fictional publications of the period were also written in the same vein. This is not surprising; a practicality is that they would have to be in order to be published. However, much of the early Native American writing was not fictional at all, but autobiographical. Wiget suggests that this was done in order to present their ". . . cultures and values in a positive light." (64). Bataille and Sands regard the rise of autobiographical writing as rooted in a combination of the old native oral tradition and the new individualistic American personal narrative (3-8). This literary form has had continued significance for Native American authors. During the turn of the century, it provided a way to enlighten a vastly ignorant American public about the lives of the Native Americans in a form that was related to oral tradition. In the autobiography, the author communicates familiar subject matter in a personalized manner. Often, autobiographical material was actually communicated to a listener who wrote it down; an "as told to" narrative. The autobiography has the additional advantage of not requiring the author to act as an "expert" or speak on behalf of the people, a concept repugnant to many Native Americans. Rather, the author only speaks for herself. Early examples of autobiographical essays include Zitkala-Sa's "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian

Girl," and "An Indian Teacher among Indians," all published by the Atlantic Monthly in 1900. Pauline Johnson takes the next step in her sketch of her mother's life entitled simply "My Mother." Mourning Dove left scraps of writing that recorded Okanogan cultural history in a personalized format, which were later gathered by Miller in his work Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography. For each author, these literary essays comprised some of their more substantial and revealing writing. Each woman lived in white, non-traditional cultures and experienced an ambivalence exacerbated by her upbringing, which valued native traditions. Zitkala-Sa was raised traditionally when her white father deserted her Sioux mother. Her subsequent immersion in a boarding school education created a cultural conflict which she spent the rest of her life resolving. Pauline, born into a stable, loving family, was educated at home by her white mother while her Indian father worked. While not raised in the Native American tradition, she was imbued with a deep respect for her father's culture. Mourning Dove, raised traditionally by her parents, lived through the results of government land allocation policies which stripped the tribe of their traditional hunting grounds and changed their nomadic lifestyle to one of farmers confined to plots of land. Each woman, later in life, created her own strong identity which owed much to her

Native American background. Each, it is clear from their writing, experienced the prejudice directed towards Indians and alienation from the prevailing white society. Each felt compelled to champion the Native American people in their writing.

Another form of non-fiction which grew in popularity at the turn of the century was the collection of traditional stories by Native American authors. This was part of an effort spearheaded by anthropologists; the pervasive feeling at the time being that the ancient Native American cultures were dying, and those writers with the education, skill and ability ought to preserve some aspect of their culture by recording the traditional stories. Some, like Mourning Dove, were convinced that it was their obligation to do so, in fact. In a letter to Mourning Dove, Lucullus McWhorter, her mentor, exhorts, "It is a duty she owes to her poor people, whose only history has been written by the destroyers of their race." (Mourning Dove, Cogewea viii) Zitkala-Sa published Old Indian Legends in 1901, Mourning Dove's Coyote Stories was finally published in 1933, and Pauline Johnson's Legends of Vancouver was published in 1911. The problems inherent in and the implications of transforming an oral tradition into a written one, which is what these women were doing, is discussed at length in Alice P. Fisher's thesis The Transformation of Tradition.

Both of these early literary traditions, that of the autobiography and of the traditional stories, are evident in the first published anthology of Native American women's writings. Jane B. Katz's I am the Fire of Time: the Voices of Native American Women was published in 1977. The book is divided into two parts: "From the tribal world," which showcases some traditional songs and accounts of rituals or tribal life. Part II, "Voices of today," contains some poetry, contemporary short fiction, and fragments of life accounts by the authors. Clearly the contemporary literary tradition owes much to early traditional stories, legends and songs, as well as the autobiographical tradition that Bataille and Sands describe so well. Yet today's written literary tradition has evolved beyond the simple use of these themes into a body of work as rich, complex and laden with truth as that of the oral traditions. Paula Gunn Allen remarks:

Transformation, or more directly, metamorphosis, is the oldest tribal ceremonial theme; one common to ancient Europe, Britain, and America. And it comes once again into use within the American Indian poetry of extinction and regeneration that is ultimately the only poetry a contemporary Indian woman can write (230).

Another influence present at the turn of the century in

America was the popularity of oration. Prior to the age of instant mass communication, townsfolk flocked to hear speakers who traveled a circuit throughout the country: they provided entertainment, news, and culture to a far-flung, rapidly growing country. Jones, in his Aboriginal American Oratory, alludes to the importance of being eloquent within the oral tradition of the Native American. It is logical to value a persuasive speaker in a society where consensus rules the day; in a nation which must form foreign policy with other nations, none of whom have a written language. Jones goes on to give examples to show that native oratorical skills were carried over into the arena of the dominant culture in the nineteenth century. Oratorical skills continue to be highly valued in some contemporary Native American societies. Wiget also refers to the remarkable oratorical skills of the Native Americans and describes the tradition of oratory among them (22-25). He proceeds to describe the tradition of lyric poetry, or song, as a related oral tradition which forms the precursor to the coming written literature (26-31).

Pauline Johnson, who never married, supported herself as a public speaker, touring North America and England, but for the most part circuiting her native Canada. She performed at music halls and at "literary evenings" for private parties, reciting her own poetry and short stories.

Although Pauline performed initially to support her writing until she was published, it soon became her career. She was billed as "The Mohawk Princess" at her recitals, and often wore a fringed buckskin dress for part of her performances, finishing in an evening gown.

Zitkala-Sa lectured widely across the United States later in her career (1916-33) as she pursued reforms for American Indians under the auspices of the Society of American Indians, in which she was an officer, and subsequently, the National Council of American Indians, which she founded. In her case, public speaking replaced her writing as an outlet for her beliefs and passions. She had always been a good public speaker, winning two oratorical contests during her school years (Stout 71).

Mourning Dove, the least educated of the three women, supported herself as a migrant laborer; she and her husband, Fred Galler, followed the work in the northwest United States. Fisher indicates that she did do some public lecturing with the encouragement of her mentor, Lucullus McWhorter, and was even invited back East to speak. However, due to monetary and possibly confidence difficulties, she did not pursue this course (Fisher 86). Even so, she was allowed to speak in Council on the Colville Reservation, an unusual position for an Okanogan woman.

Pauline Johnson, Zitkala-Sa and Mourning Dove all are

noteworthy, not because of the similarities and/or differences in their backgrounds and contributions, but because they all had published fiction, short stories and poetry at the turn of the century, marking the addition of an embryonic written literary tradition to an already mature and rich continuing oral tradition. Along with this notable transition in form, which itself embodies the conflict between traditional native cultures and the dominant Euro-American culture, the subject matter mirrored the same conflict.

Larson, in his American Indian Fiction, traces the emergence of the Native American written literary form, which at first glance is not a form consistent with native traditions, in that it requires the authors to express the results of individualistic imaginations in a second written language. Perhaps it is not surprising that Larson observes that the earliest novels by Native Americans were ". . . conventional in form, traditional in subject, anything but innovative -- indistinguishable from hundreds of other fictional works of the time" (34-35). Larson refuses to deal with the novel Cogewea by Mourning Dove in the body of his work, as her collaboration with Lucullus McWhorter has confused the voice of the novel and made it suspect. That McWhorter took unconscionable liberties with the text of Cogewea is generally accepted by literary scholars, and,

unfortunately, an original manuscript by Mourning Dove is not extant to verify his tampering. However, the novel cannot be dismissed in a discussion of early Native American fiction. It is, after all, the earliest novel to be published which was written by a Native American woman. Too, it is distinguishable from other popular romantic western novels of the time.

Certain elements used by Mourning Dove separate her story from other "typical" Western romances, and also blaze a trail for writers yet to come. Her novel is plotted with Cogewea, the half-blood protagonist, taken in by the wily, evil Alfred Densmore, an effete white Easterner who woos her for her supposed fortune while actually despising her. The hero, James LaGrinder, is as true and unselfish a hero as ever was, and, like Cogewea, a half-blood.

One unique element is the use of traditional stories in her fiction. Cogewea's Indian grandmother, the Stemteema, provides a natural vehicle for relating stories which Mourning Dove had probably heard. The second element is that of using the novel to depict a social situation which was of great personal concern to the author, namely, the inequitable and hypocritical treatment of mixed bloods by the dominant white society. Cogewea is scorned by Indians and whites alike when she enters in the ladies' and squaw's horse races. Her treatment at the hands of her

evil, grasping fiancée, Densmore, is a distillation of the betrayal of Indian women by white men. According to Fisher, Mourning Dove's Indian grandmother had been "married" under false pretenses to an Irish Hudson Bay Company man in a tribal ceremony, so there's little need to look far for the origins of that plot twist (81).

Larson characterizes the period of earliest Native American fiction as "assimilationist," choosing to review the novels of Simon Pokagon, John J. Mathews and John M. Oskison as being representative of the period. "In point of fact, the novels of these three writers are basically assimilationist. Their characters accept white values and cultural traits, often rejecting their own traditional way of life" (Larson 36).

Ambivalence in dealing with two cultures and a perception of the imminent demise of their native cultures informs the fiction of the three women writers. But there is also a willingness to use their writing to directly address problems and a value attached to their traditional backgrounds that emerges in their writing. When after finishing Indian school, Cogewea laments that she cannot understand herself and could find no place in life (Mourning Dove 22), reflecting the ambivalence of a person caught between two cultures, she also shows great respect for her traditional life as exemplified by her grandmother and

despises the hypocrisy and prejudice she encounters. Mourning Dove's character shows no embarrassment about her native heritage, rather, she values it more highly than her Euro-American background in the story. Surely this is a step beyond "assimilationist" literature.

Zitkala-Sa also wrote during the so-called assimilationist era. While politically she favored many causes which we now would dub "assimilationist," such as supporting full enfranchisement and citizenship for American Indians, the abolition of the reservation system and the elimination of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, this is perhaps a simplistic view of complex issues. For she also advocated pride in heritage, and castigated the white educational system for its deleterious effects on her people and constantly sought to right overwhelming injustices to her people caused by a callous and inadequate political and legal system. In a short story, entitled "The Soft-hearted Sioúx," she portrays the effects of a white Christian education upon a young Sioux man; he is wholly unsuited to life back home after his return to the reservation. In the story, his new beliefs bring death and disaster to himself and his family. Is this the work of an "assimilationist" writer? "The Widespread Enigma concerning Blue Star Woman" revolves around the chicanery of corrupt lawyers and land apportionment schemes. Zitkala-Sa's life and writings are

filled with confusion and contradiction. What is clear is that she identified herself strongly as a Native American and devoted her life to working for justice for American Indians. Her embryonic literary career became subsumed into her political one, and in the end she chose to use words as weapons rather than as windows to imagination and possibility. Her body of writing is limited, but significant for its sharp criticism of the prevailing society at such an early time.

E. Pauline Johnson, in addition to her poetry, wrote short stories for magazines and for her performances. She drew on her heritage, and her Native American or mixed blood characters are usually represented as finer and nobler than their white counterparts. Although several of her stories which were written for boys magazines seem to advocate assimilation, for example "The Shagganappi" which tells of how a young man of mixed descent becomes accepted at a white boys school after a daring rescue, many of her stories do not fall into the assimilationist category. One story, "The Tenas Klootchman," contains only Native American characters; other stories are based on native legends and stories, and still others, such as "A Red Girl's Reasoning" and "As it was in the Beginning" prophesy disaster for matches between Native Americans and whites. Although Pauline's writing suffered from a large dose of romanticism in her portrayal

of native people as well as from ambivalence, like Zitkala-Sa, she identified most completely with her Native American heritage and used her work to champion that culture.

One of the major tools of assimilation was education; a white education was a watershed in Zitkala-Sa's life and was a subject that appeared in the writings of all three women. Mourning Dove and Zitkala-Sa both talk about the results of placing a traditionally reared Native American in a white educational facility. The well-educated Cogewea reveals the confusion and uncertainty inherent in those trying to pick their way through conflicting value systems. Zitkala-Sa's autobiographical sketches depict the horror and inhumanity of the Indian boarding school system. As Larson so correctly points out, education took much away from the Native American, yet ironically, provided a means for exploring the conflict for a person caught between two cultures (65).

Although the three women authors mentioned were writing at the time of the assimilationists, it is hard to see their writing as pro-assimilation, or even as apologetic as some of the other writings by Native Americans of that era. True, their work suffered from the melodrama and romanticism which permeated most writing of the time, but what was more amazing is that it also dealt with real issues, it reflected a criticism of the prevailing culture, and it portrayed a

variety of Native American characters. (One of the Native American male writers of the era utilized traditional white cowboy characters).

These women came from a rich oral tradition, and turned to that as a source for written stories. Two of them wrote autobiography or biography, an important step in terms of use of narrative language as an expression of self. All three took the extra step to write fiction, utilizing the English language for imaginative personal expression. In doing so, each opened a new door. None of these women are noted for their outstanding excellence in writing, or for their large body of work. For two of them, the driving force behind the writing was diverted to public speaking or performing, which in turn informed their writing. For Mourning Dove, the struggle to live a life precluded much time spent on a literary career. This is not surprising, as there was no support system for any of the three to exist as a writer. Yet their contributions are not unnecessary nor should they be unobserved. They are a vital part of the growth process which has spawned contemporary Native American women's literature. Their contributions are these: They listened to stories people told them and wrote them down, they used imaginative stories to illustrate social injustices, and they used writing to share a part of themselves with the rest of the world. They came first.

CHAPTER 2

PAULINE JOHNSON

It is 1899 in a small Canadian mining town. Life is hard; the nearest city is hundreds of miles by rail over mountains. It is the age before radio and television. A playbill announces an evening of recitation and oratory on the local school stage and the room is packed:

She read from her own poems and appeared in costume, a beautiful buckskin dress trimmed with ermine skins, and with silver brooches scattered over the bodice. These were very old and had been hammered from silver coins by the native Indian silversmiths. Two scalps hung suspended from her waist, a Huron scalp and one that had been give to her by a Blackfoot chief. Around her neck was a beautifully graded cinnamon bear-claws necklace, and on her wrists bracelets of wampum beads. Draped around her shoulders was the red broadcloth blanket used in the ceremony of Chieftanhood conferred upon the Duke of Connaught. In her hair was an eagle feather. The costume was laid aside in the second half of the programme when she appeared in conventional evening dress (McRaye 61-62).

The grey-eyed Native American woman walks out on stage and proceeds to recount "A cry from an Indian wife":

They but forget we Indians owned the land
From ocean unto ocean; that they stand
Upon a soil that centuries agone
Was our sole kingdom and our right alone.
They never think how they would feel to-day,
If some great nation came from far away,
Wresting their country from their hapless braves,
Giving what they gave us--but war and graves.

(Johnson, White Wampum 17)

She is breathtakingly beautiful, her flashing eyes, her emotion-laden voice rouse the audience. At the end of the performance, after the standing ovation, she is besieged with admirers. This scene was repeated hundreds of times throughout Canada and the United States between 1892 and 1909.

Emily Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake) was a well-known and beloved public figure in Canada when she died. After seventeen years of performing on the stage and being lionized in Canadian and British literary circles, she was a celebrity upon her death. However, not much is known about her these days. Who was she? Did her literary contributions not stand the test of time, like her performances; temporal things overwhelmed and forgotten in

an age inundated with media?

Emily Pauline Johnson was born in 1861, the youngest child of George Henry Martin Johnson, a Mohawk chieftain who was directly descended from a member of the first Iroquois Confederacy and Emily Susanna Howells, daughter of a British Quaker family and sister-in-law to the preacher on the Six Nations Reserve in British Columbia. It is true for Pauline Johnson, as for us all, that we are shaped by our background. One of her best prose pieces, "My Mother" is a biographical sketch of her mother's life and marriage to George Johnson, called George Mansion in the piece. In direct, simple prose, she recounts the joys and sorrows enfolded in two lives of simple heroism: the very fact of their mixed marriage, and of the gracious and open stance taken with all people they came into contact with, infuse the characters with warmth and nobility. The reader cheers when Pauline's mother's grand house is finally finished as an expression of her husband's devotion, and mourn when Pauline's father is brutally beaten more than once by those who oppose his efforts to stop the sale of liquor on the reserve and the illegal removal of timber from it. We can see where the child got her values of nationhood and her idealism regarding good and evil beings. This piece is timeless, serving not only as a historical piece, but as an insight into the writer herself.

Her background and upbringing were unusual, but fitted Pauline to move easily in the best society in Britain as well as endure the exigencies of the hard traveling life demanded of a platform performer. She was born and raised at "Chiefswood," the family manor near Brantford, in British Columbia. Most accounts of her life agree that, as a youngest daughter, she was indulged, but showed an early predilection for verse. She had very little formal schooling; her mother taught her at home, and, with the resources at her disposal, Pauline probably fared better than she would have at the local Indian schools. After two years at a business college, she took up a life of leisure at her home, entertaining her father's varied and important visitors, visiting with her friends and canoeing on the nearby rivers; always an activity which brought her peace and solace. She also joined the Hamilton Amateur Theatrical Club, and, enjoying this above all things, spoke of becoming an actress; a career which her family heartily discouraged. Her father was often away on tribal business, but Pauline had a strong relationship with her grandfather, Smoke Johnson, who told little Pauline stories of Native lore, imbuing her with a deep respect for her people and for the land, a respect shared by her British mother, who defied contemporary opinion in order to marry George Johnson, and raised her children to embrace both of their heritages.

It is well known that Pauline's love for poetry was cultivated and encouraged by her mother. Upon her father's death, after a final beating by outlaws, the family found they could not afford to keep up Chiefswood, and her brothers and sister moved away and took jobs. Pauline's mother moved into a small apartment in nearby Brantwood and Pauline was confronted, for the first time, with the problem of earning a living. She continued to write verse, as she always had, and began submitting it, but received little recompense. She was paid 75 cents for one poem and received \$3.00 for "The Song my Paddle Sings", her most famous poem, during this time (Van Steen 17). On a January evening in 1892, she was invited to recite one of her poems at a Toronto literary evening given over to Canadian literature. She recited "A cry from an Indian wife." Pauline's reading immediately impressed those present, and first an entire evening, then a series of evenings, then a tour were arranged by Frank Yeigh for her to read her verse across the country. This was the beginning of a performing arts career for Pauline which became inextricably entwined with her writing, and supported her financially for the rest of her life.

Pauline's initial tour was a success, and enabled her to spend the 1894 season in London, where she achieved a long-held goal: her first book of verse was accepted for

publication. The White Wampum was brought out to a great deal of attention, and Pauline Johnson soon became a darling of the London literary set, performing in salons throughout the city. She returned to Canada to tour the country again, and proceeded to cross the Rocky Mountains 19 times and visit innumerable cities and towns of all sizes. She was a consummate performer, and worked hard to enjoy the public adulation she received. She was also a generous woman, quickly agreeing to numerous benefit performances; in one town giving the proceeds of a benefit performance to purchase a wooden leg for the town constable (McRaye 91). Her last manager and performing partner, Walter McRaye reminisces that:

Those years were packed with experiences and incidents full of tragedy and comedy to us, railroad and boat wrecks, late trains, fires that burned our hotels and opera houses, drives across the prairie in weather that registered forty below, being frozen in the straits of Northumberland -- all accepted by Pauline Johnson as part of the game (66-67).

In 1903, her second book of verse, Canadian Born was published, and the first edition sold out within a year. She returned to England in 1906 to perform in Steinway Hall. It was on this trip that she met a delegation of Squamash

Indians, in England to protest to the King that Canadian railroads were going to desecrate traditional burial grounds, and became fast friends with Chief Joe Capilano. Soon after, she returned to Vancouver to write. She not only wrote more poetry, but also short stories for magazine publication, the most notable being for boys magazines and another group of stories for Mothers Magazine. She earned more for these submissions than she did for her poetry, although her heart and interest lay in her poetry. Near death in 1912, her collected poetry was published in a volume entitled Flint and Feather. This was arranged in order to assist Pauline in earning enough money to take care of her doctor bills as she was dying of breast cancer. In 1913, her "boys stories" were gathered into a volume entitled The Shagganappi and her stories with Canadian Indian themes were published posthumously in a volume entitled The Moccasin Maker during the same year.

There is no denying the impact on her writing that her family life had. Although some aspects of her life were very much that of a well-to-do anglo Canadian, she was raised to appreciate her Mohawk grandfather, Smoke Johnson's stories as well as the Longfellow, Byron, Shakespeare and Emerson in which her mother schooled her (Ruoff 5). Smoke Johnson, known as the "Mohawk Warbler," served for forty years as speaker of the council, testament to his great

oratory powers. He often held young Pauline spellbound with the old tales.

Pauline was also affected by feelings for the land, having grown up in an idyllic childhood on the beautiful acres of Chiefswood, in the Six Nations Reserve in Brantwood, Ontario. Her passion for the land and for the sport of canoeing is echoed in her work. Her naturalistic poetry is not unexpected; Pauline's connection to the land came through her upbringing as well as her inclination; her feeling for nature often inspired her to jot down verses as she traveled to her next performance. "Shadow River" is one such poem:

Mine is the undertone;
The beauty, strength, and power of the land
Will never stir or bend at my command;
But all the shade
Is marred or made,
If I but dip my paddle blade;
And it is mine alone. . .

(Flint and Feather 48)

Pauline also used her work as a vehicle to reconcile her two heritages. Ruoff states that ". . . Pauline is best known as an interpreter of the Indian to non-Indian audiences" (31). She consciously set out to counteract the prevailing stereotypes at the turn of the century which were

formulated during the Westward movement and reinforced by the Riel Rebellion and the Ghost Dance Movement. Her Indian characters tend to be strong, good, and somewhat idealized, but the situations portrayed are realistic. Johnson uses the old stories, traditional enmity between tribes, and the negative impact of Christianity and white civilization on the native culture as themes for her material. One example, "A Red Girl's Reasoning" is a short story which details a doomed love relationship between an Anglo Canadian and an Indian Canadian due to differing customs and beliefs. In "A Cry from an Indian Wife," one of Johnson's most famous platform performance poems, a woman sends her husband to fight in the Riel Rebellion, while cursing the circumstances creating the necessity for war. In "The Cattle Thief," she castigates the Canadian cavalry for killing a starving old Indian:

What have you left to us of land, what have you
left of game,
What have you brought but evil, and curses since
you came?
How have you paid us for our game? how paid us
for our land?
By a book, to save our souls from the sins you
brought in your other hand.

(Flint and Feather 15)

There is also no doubt that the economic necessity governing her life impacted Johnson's work as well. Her performances demanded a particular kind of writing and the performing life she chose shaped her writing as surely as her childhood and social marginality. Many of her pieces were written specifically for her platform recitations; these short stories or poems are tinged with melodrama. One of her popular performance pieces was "Ojistoh," a poem narrated by a Mohawk wife who was kidnapped by the hated Huron. Through treachery, she disarms her captor, slays him, and escapes:

He cut the cords; we ceased our maddened haste.
 I wound my arms about his tawny waist;
 My hand crept up the buckskin of his belt;
 His knife hilt in my burning palm I felt;
 One hand caressed his cheek, the other drew
 The weapon softly-- 'I love you, love you,'
 I whispered, 'love you as my life.'
 And-- buried in his back his scalping knife."

(White Wampum 3)

Johnson's short stories were written for the prevailing popular magazine market, and she sold to a variety of publications, of which Mother's Magazine and The Boys' World were primary. This would account for many of her stories such as "The Tenas Klootchman" (translation from the

Chinook: "The girl baby") in which Maarda, a heartbroken Indian mother who has lost her own baby, unstintingly aids another homeless woman with a newborn child whom she envies. As the second woman dies, she gives her "Tenas Klootchman" to Maarda.

All of Pauline Johnson's "boys' stories" are gathered together in a volume entitled The Shagganappi published in 1913 and dedicated to the Boy Scouts. The title story of that same name is about a mixed blood boy's courage at a boys school here he is initially despised for his background. Johnson has the wise and influential Governor-General of Canada praising the boy, ". . . fostering within him pride of the two great races that blended within his veins into that one might nation called Canada" (Shagganappi 13). This character very much reflected Johnson's own belief that both anglo and native peoples and cultures were necessary for Canada's success; and indeed, that the combination of the two cultures provided the unique Canadian identity so fiercely sought at the time.

While her magazine stories adhere to the then-popular convention of "trials and triumph" themes (Ruoff 19), they are unique in their use of Indian characters (Ruoff 24). The characters are never apologetic; always strong and ethical portrayals are used. Today, controversy remains about Johnson's awareness of the exploitation of her

"Indianness" due to the marketing of the poet billed as the "Mohawk Princess." While there is little doubt that Pauline remained fiercely proud of her heritage, there is speculation that she took advantage of her exotic heritage in order to increase her "box office appeal."

Perhaps due again to the household in which she was raised, and certainly to her touring throughout the entire country, Johnson had a political vision of Canada that few had at that time. She truly foresaw the day when the unconnected diverse communities that made up Canada would come together to form a great single nation. She felt that the Indian had a large part to play in her vision of Canada. She herself played a key role in the Canadian nationalistic movement during a time when there were no roads or media to tie together this vast country. Her patriotic feelings are expressed in her poetry, especially that body of work published as Canadian Born in 1903. The first stanza of the title poem reads:

We first saw light in Canada, the land beloved of
God;

We are the pulse of Canada, its marrow and its
blood;

And we, the men of Canada, can face the world and
brag

That we were born in Canada beneath the British

flag (Canadian Born 1).

Although Elizabeth Loosley finds her nationalism "jingoistic and cheap" (87), Johnson had a sincere and fervent patriotism based upon a deep appreciation of the landscape and peoples which was fostered by her extensive travel throughout the country.

Contemporary critics try to describe Pauline Johnson's place in our literature. Leslie Monkman attempts to explain Pauline Johnson's popularity as Canada's ". . . eagerness to locate red heroes . . ." (96). She goes on to say that had Johnson not embraced her Native heritage, it would probably have been projected upon her (Monkman 97). As earlier anglo Canadian literature portrayed the country's native inhabitants as savage antagonists, Johnson's work, which seeks to reconcile the red and white histories of Canada without threatening the prevailing anglo culture, was embraced by the people of the day. Although dismissed by Roy Daniells in the Literary History of Canada as a "minor poet," Johnson turns up consistently in the treatise, in sections on folktales, travel literature, and nature writers. He acknowledges that her poems have been in demand for fifty years, and that every schoolchild in Canada knows "The Song my Paddle Sings" (Daniells 441). Yet when he seeks to describe the value of her poetry, he can only maintain that she fulfilled a need of the people ". . . for

fresh contact with primitive and unspoiled life." (Daniells 442). Contemporary critics still fiercely debate Pauline Johnson's place in Canadian literature. Having been so popular in her own time; having a legend and a persona grow up about her have ultimately hurt Pauline Johnson in later critical assessments. In fact, the recent Oxford Book of Canadian Verse contains none of her poetry, and its editor, A. J. M. Smith, while admitting that Pauline had a good sense of the theatre and a well-known personality, indicated that he found her poetry conventional, shallow, imitative and theatrical (qtd. in Shrive 26-27). Shrive, another Canadian critic who feels that Pauline Johnson deserves to be interpreted within the climate that she wrote, finds that she was strongly influenced by the English Victorian poets which were part of her education, as well as the desperate search at the time for a truly original Canadian voice (27). "In short, they (her poems) reflected those aspects of flabby Victorian romanticism so familiar in much of the fiction, music, architecture and art of the period" (Shrive 29). Shrive also indicates that popular literary taste of the period "was of a consistently low level" and that more than one writer was forced to cater to it in order to make a living (30). George W. Lyon also reconsiders Pauline Johnson, commenting on the difficulty of separating her writing from her public personae, and indicating that most

contemporary critics refer to her chiefly as a platform performer, not a poet (136-137). He ascribes her unevenness of talent to both the necessities of performing for a living and to the lack of contact with a literary community (Lyon 138). Lyon indicates that in her work, Johnson correctly identifies religion as a major concern, but shows confusion in her portrayal of Native American characters.

It is interesting that in her own time, the fulsome praise that Johnson received from her contemporary critics is practically overwhelming while much of the current criticism is condescending and dismissive in tone when she is mentioned at all, that is. While Johnson may have eschewed greatness for expediency, she made significant literary contributions in an extraordinarily difficult environment. Pauline Johnson should be looked at in the context of her times and her culture, and her contributions assessed in terms of her own mission. Johnson, raised in a privileged household with essentially an anglo education, was taught to value her Native American heritage, and, indeed, personally identified with that part of her culture so closely that she adopted her great-grandfather's name for her own (Tekahionwake) and signed her manuscripts using that name. She desired to be known as an Indian, and actively championed the Native American culture. As a performer, she appeared on stage for half of her performance wearing her

version of Native American garb. Doubtless she was aware at some level that this lent an exotic aspect to her performances which increased her popularity. Doubtless, also, that she chose to use the popular fascination for the exotic in order to get her point across. She desired to let Canadians know that they owed much to the prior inhabitants of their land who were often unfairly dealt with. She also tried to erase the currently popular image of the indigenous peoples as bloodthirsty savages and replace it with a picture she felt was more accurate, that of human beings with pride and nobility. She also desired to prove through example that any native Canadian could interact with well-bred people at the highest level of society. Too, she sought to foster the Indian's contribution to the Canadian literature by reinterpreting local Indian stories and legends into print. Finally, Johnson made an enormous contribution by simply using Native American people as characters in her works.

Pauline Johnson existed in a difficult, marginal position in the Canadian society of the day. She received little support from friends and family for earning her living on the stage. By the constant travel demands made upon her by her profession, she admitted she did not have the leisure to write as she desired, and further, had no coherent literary support group; no enclave of writers and

critics who could help guide her writing. What she had was two heritages, one from the Mohawk, who valued oral eloquence and dubbed her grandfather the "Mohawk Warbler." The other valued writing and poetry. She grew up loving the land; although gregarious and the center of many friends in her youth, as she matured, she found that, though desired, marriage was not part of her future. Her engagement to Charles Drayton, a Winnipeg banker several years her junior, was discouraged by his family and she consequently released him from it. As an Indian and an "actress", she was not regarded by society as prime marriage material, although it was a society she moved in easily. So Pauline Johnson wrote poetry and stories; first of all, in order to live. Next, she used them as a tool to educate people about Indians. She also used them as a means of preserving the legends and stories of the people. And finally, she was, by calling, an entertainer. She was a storyteller. She was the true descendent of the "Mohawk Warbler," and sought to spellbind an audience, to use her voice and her words and her body to make them believe what she would have them know; and to create a reality and fulfill her vision of Canada. As with most storytellers, it is difficult to analyze the written work separate from the performance; they were both integral pieces of the whole.

Today Pauline Johnson lives in Canadian history. Books

and plays have been written about her life. She is recognized as an Indian, a performer, a poet, and a role model. Her life had meaning and inspiration. Best of all, she inspires others still. A new young Canadian poet, Joan Crate, has written a book of her own poetry dedicated to Pauline Johnson. Much of it is about Pauline's life; saying today some of the things that Pauline couldn't express during her lifetime. Published in 1989, it is entitled, Pale as Real Ladies: Poems for Pauline Johnson.

See this necklace?

It is made from the claws
of a cinnamon bear that went mad
when her young were slaughtered.
These are my poems.
The words have been scraped clean
of death and anger,
and will shine in your mouth
like a string of white pearls (10).

Bill me as the Mohawk Princess
Exhibit me buckskinned on a platform,
chanting, my skin bitten
by teeth, quills, clawed.
To have you hear my voice,
I will turn any trick at all (41).

CHAPTER 3

ZITKALA-SA

Zitkala-Sa, born Gertrude Simmons on February 22, 1876 on the reservation in South Dakota inhabited by the Yankton Sioux band, was raised in a traditional manner by her Sioux mother, Ellen Simmons (Tate I Yohin Win, or Reaches for the Wind), in the absence of her white father, a man named Felker. Her mother named her for her second husband, rather than Felker. Gertrude describes her early years as idyllic; she played on the prairie and learned beadwork from her mother. Missionaries would visit the reservation in order to entice the children with stories of the "red apple country" to recruit students for boarding schools. Gertrude begged to be allowed to follow her brother to boarding school and found herself on her first train ride at age eight, heading for White's Manual Labor Institute, a Quaker missionary school in Wabash, Indiana. The trauma of a typical boarding school experience, where she was separated from her family, not allowed to speak her own language, and had her hair shorn, fermented in Gertrude for a long time. Her earliest published pieces were autobiographical accounts: "Impressions of an Indian Childhood" published in January 1900 by Atlantic Monthly reminisced about her early

traditional upbringing; "Schooldays of an Indian Girl" and "An Indian Teacher Among Indians," installments which were published in February and March, covered her boarding school experiences and her later teaching experiences, respectively. Her written work idealizes her traditional upbringing and she brings all of the horror she must have experienced as a young girl at the boarding school to her writing; Zitkala-Sa eloquently describes the shame of having her hair cut within a day of arriving at missionary school: "Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!" (American Indian Stories 4). "The melancholy of those black days has left so long a shadow that it darkens the path of years that have since gone by" (Zitkala-Sa, American Indian Stories 67). In spite of this, the fact is that when she returned to live with her mother at age eleven, she was miserable, and unable to readjust to life in South Dakota. "During this time I seemed to hang in the heart of chaos, beyond the touch or voice of human aid" (Zitkala-Sa, American Indian Stories 9). She returned to school against her mother's wishes in order to pursue her education, culminating with two years at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana (1895-97), where she worked hard at her studies. "By daylight and lamplight, I spun with reeds and thistles, until my hands were tired from their weaving, the magic design which promised me the white

man's respect" (Zitkala-Sa, American Indian Stories 76). She describes herself as isolated and lonely at college, and dwells upon an incident which occurred at a statewide oratorical contest. Having won the Earlham oratorical contest, she represented the school in the Indiana State Oratorical Contest of 1896. Simmons noticed from the platform a banner in the audience which proclaimed simply "squaw." Burning with fury and humiliation, she spoke eloquently enough to receive second prize, which she accepted with feelings of bitter triumph. The subject of her winning essay: the American Indian. Author and critic Dexter Fisher says that in this, her earliest writing, she establishes a pattern which recurs in her later works, ". . . the pattern of ambivalence is already there, as she alternates between a controlled rage over the mistreatment of Indians and a desire to convince America of the Indian's humanity" (19). Zitkala-Sa also participated in musical programs, and attended the Boston Conservatory of Music during her college years.

After two years, Zitkala-Sa claims that illness prevented her from completing college, and she left to teach briefly at Carlisle Indian School (Pennsylvania) from 1898-1899. Zitkala-Sa was thoroughly disillusioned with the corrupt politics which permeated the place, and in her third autobiographical essay, "An Indian Teacher Among Indians,"

reveals her disgust with the teachers who cared more for their own self-preservation than for instructing their charges, and accuses the school of continuing to hire a drug addict as a teacher (described by her as an "opium-eater") simply because he "had a feeble mother to support." (American Indian Stories 95). Likewise, an alcoholic doctor was employed by the school. Here at Carlisle, Gertrude spent time teaching and performing in the school's orchestra. In 1900, she traveled to Paris with the Carlisle Indian school band as violin soloist, where the band played at the Paris Exposition.

After Gertrude Simmons resigned from Carlisle and had some success with getting her autobiographical essays published, she decided to return to the reservation in order to collect stories for her first book, Old Indian Legends (Boston: Ginn, 1901). She was motivated by many of the same feelings of others during this time: the old stories were being lost and needed to be preserved, preferably by a tribal member. Zitkala-Sa, a writer, poet and orator, undoubtedly took some liberties with the stories. She did not simply record them, and there are differences in comparison with the same tales recorded more scientifically by Ella Deloria (Fisher 49-51). Zitkala-Sa states in her preface that these were stories written for children of all cultures to enjoy. She selected 14 legends consisting

mainly of Iktomi trickster tales and some tales of culture heroes, all classified by the Sioux as ohunkankans; tales told at night primarily for entertainment, as opposed to another group of tales which are more mythic and sacred. Picotte tells us that "the ohunkankans were told in the evening as everyone in the family went to bed, during the time between lying down and sleep" (xiv). Formulating a version of a story to fit a particular audience and to fulfill a particular purpose has traditionally been the purview of the storyteller; and Simmons saw no difficulty in continuing this tradition in the written arena. Her book is also a precursor to the works of contemporary Native American authors, signalling the legitimacy of twining a personal voice with traditional themes.

During the years of 1900-1902, in addition to the autobiographical essays published in Harper's and the publication of Old Indian Legends, Zitkala-Sa had other short stories published in major American periodical publications. These short stories are important, because they represent the first fiction published by a Native American woman. Zitkala-Sa made the transition from recording her autobiographical account, and recording her version of the traditional Iktomi tales, to creating a piece of fiction for publication, which said something that she wanted to say.

The first published story, "The Soft-Hearted Sioux", was published in Harper's Monthly Magazine in March 1901. In this piece, Zitkala-Sa sets the scene of a young man who has been educated by missionaries and is sent back to his own tribe as a missionary. His sick father is being treated by a medicine man, whom the nameless young man repudiates. The medicine man and the rest of the tribe move, leaving the young man's family tepee alone. As the young man was educated back East, he doesn't know how to hunt in order to provide for his family, and returns to the tepee one day to see his father gnawing on a buffalo-skin robe, near death. In desperation, he takes a knife and kills a cow from a neighboring white man's herd. As he is taking meat to his dying father, he is accosted, and in the ensuing fight, accidentally kills a white man. He returns to the tepee with meat to find his father dead. The last scene has the young man awaiting death by hanging in a local jail. He ponders his life after death as only one who straddles two cultures can:

Yet I wonder who shall come to welcome me in the realm of strange sight. Will the loving Jesus grant me pardon and give my soul a soothing sleep? or will my warrior father greet me and receive me as his son? Will my spirit fly upward to a happy heaven? or shall I sink into the bottomless pit,

an outcast from a God of infinite love?
Soon, soon I shall know, for now I see the east
is growing red. My heart is strong. My face is
calm. My eyes are dry and eager for new scenes.
My hands hang quietly at my side. Serene and
brave, my soul awaits the men to perch me on the
gallows for another flight. I go" (508)

In this story, Zitkala-Sa writes in the first person about the life of a young Native American man. The writing is mature, the plot, though somewhat contrived, could flow naturally enough from the set of circumstances she erects. Using the vehicle of the short story, Zitkala-Sa effectively explores the negative impact of Christianity upon the lives of the Native Americans, and the incongruity of a white education for those returning to a traditional lifestyle through the nameless protagonist. Although the moral is somewhat heavy-handed, and the style sentimentalized, it doesn't detract from the quality of the writing. This is an important landmark in Native American literature; the point at which a Native American author, using Native American characters, uses the medium of fiction to explore an issue central to the Native American community. Dexter Fisher, in her forward to American Indian Stories, indicates that the Carlisle school newspaper reviewed the story as "morally bad" and chided the author for her ingratitude (viii).

Soon after "The Soft-Hearted Sioux" appeared, "The Trial Path" appeared in Harper's Monthly Magazine in October of 1901. In this tale, a grandmother recounts a story to her granddaughter as she is going to sleep at night. It is the story of her grandfather, who, having slain his best friend in a quarrel over her grandmother, is required to ride an unbroken horse to the tepee of the slain man's family; should he fall during the ride, he chooses death for his actions. Her grandmother's lover completes the ride; and is accepted back into the community, the horse Ohiyesa (winner) always holding a special place in the household.

This story is framed around the role of the storyteller in a traditional Native American community. However, instead of using a traditional Iktomi tale as the centerpiece, Zitkala-Sa has chosen a fictional account which illustrates the lifestyle of the Sioux and portrays the attributes of compassion and forgiveness; in fact, she paints them as opposite from the stereotypical "bloodthirsty savages."

In April of 1902, the following year, "A Warrior's Daughter" is published in Everybody's Magazine. Another short story, it is unusual in that it portrays a female rescuing her lover who is held captive after a raid upon the enemy village.

Rooted to the barren bluff the slender woman's

figure stands on the pinnacle of night, outlined against a starry sky. The cool night breeze wafts to her burning ear snatches of song and drum. With desperate hate she bites her teeth.

Tusee beckons the stars to witness. With impassioned voice and uplifted face she pleads: 'Great Spirit, speed me to my lover's rescue!'" (American Indian Stories 146).

Again, the story is sentimentalized, but reveals a strength of action in the female character which is notable for the times, as is the subject matter of the story.

In December 1902, the Atlantic Monthly published an essay by Zitkala-Sa entitled "Why I am a Pagan." In this provocative article, she favorably compares the traditional spirituality of her people, which she refers to as "paganism" to Christianity. ". . . I prefer to their dogma my excursions into the natural gardens where the voice of the Great Spirit is heard in the twittering of birds, the rippling of mighty waters, and the sweet breathing of flowers" (American Indian Stories 107).

Zitkala-Sa's autobiographical stories, the published stories mentioned above, and the essay (under the new title of "The Great Spirit") were gathered into a book, American Indian Stories, published in 1921 by Hayworth. In addition to the previously published works, three additional pieces

were included in the book. "A Dream of her Grandfather" is a brief selection describing a dream of hope and rebirth for the Sioux people by a young woman working in Washington, D.C. "The Widespread Enigma Concerning Blue Star Woman" is a tale of deceit and chicanery in which helpless Native Americans are cheated out of their land rights by lawyers and bureaucrats, including two young Native American lawyers, who manage to trick two elderly Sioux out of a great deal of land. An interesting sequence in the story has the old chief dreaming of a friend he has written to for help, an American woman:

Before his stricken consciousness appeared a vision. Lo, his good friend, the American woman to whom he had sent his messages by fire, now stood there a legion! A vast multitude of women, with uplifted hands, gazed upon a huge stone image. Their upturned faces were eager and very earnest. The stone figure was that of a woman upon the brink of the Great Waters, facing eastward. The myriad living hands remained uplifted till the stone woman began to show signs of life. Very magestically (sic) she turned around, and, lo, she smiled upon this great galaxy of American women. She was the Statue of Liberty! It was she, who, though representing human liberty, formerly turned her back upon the American aborigine. Her face was aglow with

compassion. Her eyes swept across the outspread continent of America, the home of the red man (American Indian Stories 179-180).

The story itself reflects Zitkala-Sa's cynicism about the bureaucracy that dealt with the American Indian. By 1921, she had plenty of experience with that bureaucracy, and plenty of real life stories to draw upon. The ending of the story is a cynical one, with the greedy young Native American lawyers emerging as the only winners. However, this scene, the old chief's dream, acknowledges a hope that Zitkala-Sa always had. Her intensive work with the General Federation of Women's Clubs proves that she thought that she had found a group who would listen to the story of the Native Americans; a group which even had enough political clout to right the wrongs she saw. It is interesting that she viewed this group, undoubtedly represented in the old chief's dream, as the hope of the red man.

The final addition to the book, "America's Indian Problem" is an excuse of an article which allows Zitkala-Sa to quote liberally from the report of the Bureau of Municipal Research's investigation of the Indian Bureau (later the Bureau of Indian Affairs) published in the September 1915 issue of Municipal Research. The selections from this report are composed of some of the more inflammatory statements of mismanagement by the Indian

Bureau.

In 1902, one of the few reviews of Zitkala-Sa's work appears in The Book Buyer, in an article by Elisabeth Luther Cary entitled "Recent Writings by American Indians." It is interesting to see what the reaction of the time was to her writings, as strong and unapologetic as they were for the turn of the century. Her works are reviewed along with those of Charles Eastman and Francis LaFlesche. All of these authors wrote of their experiences with anglo schooling, and Cary compares their narratives:

. . . But the life seems not to have been an unhappy one, and the manly little fellows undergoing the very radical transformation are not indifferent to their advantages --certainly not rebellious or bitterly opposed to their surroundings. When, however, we read the biographical papers of Zitkala-Sa, contributed to the Atlantic a year or so ago, a very different note arrests our attention, a poignant and utterly despairing note of revolt against what Stevenson calls 'the dingy, ungentlemanly business of civilization'" (23-24).

Cary goes on to attribute Zitkala-Sa's attitude to her "melancholy" and her "intensely sensitive nature." "But it is a kind of melancholy that forces sympathy, even where it is not admitted to be rational" (24). "Strange, pathetic,

and caustic, her phrases burn themselves into the reader's consciousness" (Cary 25). Cary acknowledges the power of Zitkala-Sa's writing, while clearly expressing discomfort with her published sentiments.

Most of Zitkala-Sa's imaginative work was authored before 1902. On May 10, 1902 she married Raymond Bonnin, also a Sioux, and moved with him to the Uintah and Ouray reservation in Utah, where they spent the next fourteen years. Bonnin was an official with the Indian Bureau. Their son, Raymond Bonnin, was born in 1903. He was called "Ohiya", or "The Winner." During this period, Zitkala-Sa worked on the reservations organizing community activities, and worked briefly as a clerk, a teacher and a home demonstration teacher; even starting a children's band. According to Fisher, she collaborated with William Hanson on the composition "Sun Dance," an Indian opera based upon the Plains Indian Sun Dance, which debuted in Utah in 1913 (Foreword xiv).

In 1916, the Bonnins moved to Washington, D.C., where Gertrude took office as secretary of the Society of the American Indian (SAI). She began the career she was to pursue for the rest of her life, that of redressing wrongs against Indians in any way that she could. When she was made temporary editor of their publication, American Indian Magazine, from 1918 to 1919, her writing skills were

channeled into a new forum and for a new purpose. While she used the name Zitkala-Sa in authoring her imaginative works, after her marriage, her editorials all bore the name "Gertrude Bonnin."

Bonnin was labeled a "progressive" Indian during her lifetime, and held an amalgam of strong beliefs which formed her vision of the Indian's place in the United States. Today many find her views contradictory and find they point to a confused notion of how the Native Americans could straddle two worlds. In one editorial which appears in the Winter 1919 American Indian Magazine, she urges her readership to learn English, that they may all communicate with each other using a single language. In the same editorial, she exhorts her readers not to sell their ancestral lands, but speaks to the importance of maintaining a traditional way of life:

Sometimes I fear they are selling their lands too fast and without consideration for the future children of our race. Indians are an out-of-doors people, and though we may become educated in the White man's way and even acquire money, we cannot really be happy unless we have a small piece of this Out-of-Doors to enjoy as we please" (197).

In another article, "America, Home of the Red Man," Bonnin describes the patriotism of the Native Americans

during the war, detailing contributions both to the war effort at home and heroic actions of native soldiers in Europe. Upon the occasion of the Paris Peace Conference, Bonnin wrote an eloquent editorial demanding citizenship for the American Indian. The enfranchisement of the people who fought side by side with all other Americans was to become a major cause for Bonnin.

In 1920, the Society of American Indians dissolved, but Zitkala-Sa continued to increase her political impact by appealing to the women of America. Her close relationship with the General Federation of Women's Clubs resulted in the establishment of an Indian Welfare Committee in 1921 and the education of a large portion of the American population, themselves politically ignored, about the "Indian situation." In an article written for the Pen Woman Magazine, Bonnin compares the lives of Indians on the Sioux reservation with those of white Americans living in towns:

Suffice it to say that by a system of solitary isolation from the world, the Indians are virtually prisoners of war in America. Treaties with our Government, made in good faith by our ancestors are still unfulfilled, while the Indians have never broken a single promise they pledged to the American people. American citizenship is withheld from some three-fourths of the Indians of the United States. On their

reservations they are held subservient to political appointees upon whom our American Congress confers discretionary powers. These are unlovely facts, but they are history ... Womanhood of America, to you I appeal in behalf of the Red Man and his children ... Revoke the tyrannical powers of Government superintendents over a voiceless people and extend American opportunities to the first American -- the Red Man ("Americanize the First American").

In another article, "Bureaucracy versus Democracy," Zitkala-Sa castigates the Indian Bureau as an enormous despotic machinery which should be relieved of its duties supervising an orderly people and be assigned the task of "restraining the unscrupulous citizens of whatsoever color, who are menacing the liberty and property of the Indians." These articles, and others, were written for publication in the organs of the American women's clubs. Zitkala-Sa no longer produced imaginative literature, but sublimated her creative writing to more pressing political work, and used it as a tool to educate others. Always outspoken, her articles reflect her views which earned her supporters and detractors from both Indian and white ranks. She would never return to fiction as a literary form.

One of her greatest political triumphs came when a commission undertook an investigation of the Indian probate

situation of the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma. Zitkala-Sa was appointed a member of the investigative trio in her capacity as representative of the Indian Welfare Committee of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Joining her were M.K. Sniffen of the Indian Rights Association, and Charles H. Fabens of the American Indian Defense Association. They spent five weeks in Eastern Oklahoma during November and December of 1923. The resulting document, authored primarily by Bonnin, was a shocking testament to the depravities suffered by the Oklahoma Indians after Congress removed jurisdiction over Indian probate matters from the Indian Department in 1908 and placed it into the hands of the local courts. The summary of the document contends that ". . . the estates of the members of the Five Civilized Tribes are being, and have been, shamelessly and openly robbed in a scientific and ruthless manner" and "that in many of the Counties the Indians are virtually at the mercy of groups that include the county judges, guardians, attorneys, bankers, merchants -- not even overlooking the undertaker -- all regarding the Indian estates as legitimate game" (Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians 5.) The conclusion of the document adamantly states that "there is no hope of any reformation of the present system, and if action is delayed for a few years there will be no Indians with property to be protected. Legislation

should be enacted at once . . ." (39). As a result of this document, a bill (S. 2313) was quickly introduced into Congress for the purpose of protecting the restricted lands and funds of the Five Civilized Tribes. Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes -- Legalized Robbery was published in 1924, the title barely able to contain Bonnin's fury at the conditions that she found in Oklahoma.

It was also in 1924 that Indians obtained full citizenship in the United States, which represented the achievement of one of Bonnin's primary goals. Nonetheless, she never considered her work done, and in 1926 founded her own political organization, the National Council of American Indians. Zitkala-Sa remained President of the NCAI until her death in 1938.

Zitkala-Sa, or Gertrude Bonnin, was a remarkable woman. She is probably the first Native American woman to write her autobiography without the aid of an interpreter or transcriber, and certainly the first to have it serialized in a popular periodical of the day. While she certainly had some talent, and used writing fiction to educate others about Indians, as an outlet for her feelings, and to showcase positive Indian characters, she ultimately turned away from imaginative writing in order to concentrate on her work in obtaining justice and improved conditions for the

Native American people. Here, her oratorical skills, hinted at in her college career, came to the fore, and she became a most effective speaker. Like others who were raised traditionally and then exposed to white mainstream schooling, she struggled continually to create a whole from her separate selves. She urged Native Americans to learn English and to learn the white man's ways as a means of self-protection and communication. Yet she was extremely concerned about losing native traditions, so much so that she spent a couple years of her life gathering traditional stories for a book. She started her professional career as a government bureaucrat, yet later called for the abolishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. She deplored the reservation system and the conditions prevalent upon the reservations, yet exhorted her brothers and sisters not to sell their lands. While Zitkala-Sa's vision might be criticized for being somewhat confused, she can never be accused of remaining mute in the face of an issue about which she cared. For a Native American woman at the turn of the century in America, she was remarkably outspoken, and never apologetic. While she did not singlehandedly originate a great literary tradition, she nonetheless established impressive precedents for others to follow.

CHAPTER 4

MOURNING DOVE

Mourning Dove, born Christine (or Christal) Quintasket, arrived in a canoe as her mother and grandmother were being ferried across the Kootenai River near Bonner's Ferry, Idaho in April 1888. She relates that she was wrapped in one of the paddlers' shirts after her birth (Coyote Stories 10). Her Indian name was Humishuma, which later came to be translated as "Mourning Dove." Mourning Dove claimed to be three quarters Okanogan and Colville. She grew up on the Colville Reservation and with relatives in British Columbia, and was raised in a traditional manner, although her writings show that her life spanned that period of great upheaval, during which the northeastern tribes were forced to give up the traditional nomadic gathering, fishing and hunting life for one of individual farming, to which they were ill-suited.

Mourning Dove had barely achieved three years of formal schooling, when she returned home to care for her siblings upon her mother's death at the age of thirteen. Later, she attended classes sporadically as she could, and enrolled in a two year business college in 1912, when she was 24, in order to learn typing and to improve her English (Fisher,

The Transportation of Tradition 81). Her first husband, Hector McLeod, was a Flathead; they were married in 1909. It was a brief and stormy marriage. According to Miller, Mourning Dove was living in Portland in 1912, at which time she probably began her novel. In 1919, she married Fred Galler; they lived the nomadic life of migrant agricultural laborers but her determination to write remained palpable. Dexter Fisher quotes from a letter written to Lucullus McWhorter by Mourning Dove:

I have had too much to do outside of my writing. We got work apple thinning at Brewster, Wash.; it is about thirty-five miles south of here, and after working for ten hours in the blazing sun, and cooking my meals, I know I shall not have the time to look over very much mss, but fire them on, and between sand, grease, campfire, and real apple dirt I hope I can do the work . . .

(Transformation of Tradition 83).

Mourning Dove is best known as the first female Native American novelist for her work Cogewea, which was finally published in 1927 by Four Seas Press. She also gathered and published Coyote Stories, a collection of traditional Okanogan stories which came out in 1933. Cogewea, besides representing a milestone in Native American literature, also represents the result of a complex collaboration between

Mourning Dove and her anglo-American friend, Lucullus McWhorter. McWhorter, also known as Shopowtan (Big Foot), was known as being sympathetic to and interested in the plight of the Native Americans. They met, probably in 1915, at the Walla Walla Frontier Days Celebration (Miller, "Mourning Dove: The Author as Cultural Mediator" 166). McWhorter offered to help Mourning Dove get her novel published, and she shared her draft with him. He worked on editing it, she returned to making a living, and their correspondence traces the progress of the novel, and of McWhorter's continued and genuine efforts to get it published.

Their collaboration ultimately succeeded with the publication of Cogewea, the Half-Blood: A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range in 1927. Unfortunately for current scholars, there is no clear record of the extent of McWhorter's editing of the novel; apparently the original manuscript does not exist. However, it seems possible that some of the vitriolic harangues against the government that the novel's characters indulge in, which are parenthetical to the novel's plot, may have been inserted by McWhorter, a sincere, impassioned champion for Native American rights during his time. The language and vocabulary of these identifiable soapbox speeches are complex, and not typical of Mourning Dove's simpler prose. One such excerpt from the

novel rails against the Bureau of Indian Affairs:

Unqualified for the new conditions thrust upon him, no voice in affairs most vital to his very existence, the tribesman is obliged to accept a pottage mixed for him in the kitchenry of a political pap-fostered Bureau of more than six thousand salaried guardians (?) of his interests, paid for out of his own tribal funds"

(Mourning Dove, Cogewea 141-42).

Dexter Fisher points out that while the outcome is clearly a novel with a Native American point of view, "the result is that the narrative, which is very much within the tradition of the western romance with its stock characters and measure of melodrama, becomes overburdened in parts with a platitudinous moralizing that does not always mesh with other sentiments expressed in the novel" (The Transportation of Tradition 94). It is unfortunate that, due to the confused voice of the novel, some have refused to recognize it as the first novel written by a Native American woman. Larson's American Indian Fiction treats the novel parenthetically, in an appendix, due to its suspect nature. Dearborn uses Mourning Dove's collaboration with McWhorter as a case study in her work, Pocahontas's Daughters. She contends that it is impossible to ascertain how much of the novel was written by Mourning Dove, and how much by McWhorter (22). Dearborn goes on to say that "Cogewea is

representative of an important tradition in ethnic literature in which the relationship of author to audience, and the transmission of the author's work to the audience, is mediated by a midwife figure" (22-23). She argues that ". . . McWhorter to a certain extent was responsible for the 'birth' of Mourning Dove's novel, and that her authorship within this structure necessarily became compromised" (Dearborn 23). Miller, another major Mourning Dove scholar, offers the most detailed biographical information about her, but refrains from comment on the issue of the Mourning Dove/McWhorter collaboration. Other scholars deal with it gingerly, not knowing how much of the novel is Mourning Dove's; tacitly agreeing to Dearborn's and Larson's views that it represents a piece of work that has been compromised and is therefore suspect, and must consequently relinquish its place in the history of Native American literature. It seems ironic, as surviving letters seem to document McWhorter's sincerity in assisting in the publication of this work, that his very efforts to get it published (i.e., "improve" the prose, add explanatory notes, strengthen the voice decrying unfair treatment of Indians, etc.) have ultimately resulted in its questionable and marginal position as an early "Native American novel."

Mourning Dove herself appears shocked at the extent of McWhorter's editing when the novel is finally published

after years of delays. Of course, this is mixed with her absolute delight at having her novel published, and her gratitude for McWhorter's role in its publication. In a letter to McWhorter in 1928, Mourning Dove writes:

Dear Big Foot,

I have just got through going over the book Cogeawea, and am surprised at the changes that you made. I think they are fine, and you made a tasty dressing like a cook would do, with a fine meal. I sure was interested in the book, and hubby read it over and also all the rest of the family neglected their housework till they read it cover to cover. I felt like it was some one elses book and not mine at all. In fact the finishing touches are put there by you, and I have never seen it" (Fisher, Transportation of Tradition 98).

It is clear from this letter that Mourning Dove never saw the final draft after McWhorter's changes, so the collaboration was, in a sense, a one way collaboration in that Mourning Dove ultimately did not get the chance to respond to final changes made in the manuscript. However, perhaps Dexter Fisher's words on the subject of this problematical collaboration are finally the best:

. . . Perhaps the most that can be said is that neither Mourning Dove nor McWhorter could have written the book without the other. Their

collaboration was unique and all the more special because they were breaking new ground in bringing together two disparate traditions: the oral culture of the Okanogans with the literary form of the western romance. Without question, the book is uneven, wrenched in parts, replete with cliches and unnatural language, but for all that, it does stand as the first effort of an American Indian woman to write a novel based upon the legacy of her Indian heritage, and for that alone, as well as for the preservation of those concepts and stories of Okanogan culture that surely would have disappeared, we must be grateful for Mourning Dove's aspirations and McWhorter's assistance" (Transportation of Tradition 117-18).

Cogewea is a Western romance that, in many ways, is typical for its time. The heroine, Cogewea (Little Chipmunk) is a "half-blood," living on the Horseshoe Bend ranch (H-B) in Montana, which is owned by her brother-in-law, John Carter, who married her older sister Julia. The book is filled with the requisite bunch of ranch hands who are depicted speaking in a teeth-grinding slang that has not weathered the time well, including an upright, patient ranch foreman, James LaGrinder, also of mixed blood, who loves Cogewea quietly and from afar. His gentle unobtrusive

wooing is interrupted when Alfred Densmore, an effete Easterner, is hired by Cogewea as a prank. Alfred soon becomes the butt of the H-B boys highjinks and enacts the greenhorn role to their delight, agreeing to ride a bronc because he believes that it is slang for "donkey." After a wild ride in which he is hurt, Cogewea's sympathy initially is excited by Densmore, then she falls in love with him. Densmore, believing that Cogewea owns most of the stock and the ranch, thanks to another joke the H-B boys play on him, determines to "marry" Cogewea, take her land, then abandon her.

Densmore secretly rejoiced that the friendly shadows were conducive to concealment of his exultation. His sordid dream of wealth was materializing. Of all the innumerable schemes which he had 'put over' -- this had been the 'easiest.' A light marriage ceremony -- acquirement of property title -- accidental drowning while pleasure boating -- fatal shooting accident while hunting -- sudden heart failure -- or safer still -- the divorce court. In mad ecstasy he again unsuccessfully attempted to kiss. Oh! the ways of the Shoyahpee!" (Mourning Dove, Cogewea 254).

During their elopement, the occasion for which Cogewea has

withdrawn from the bank one thousand dollars, most of her inheritance from an absent father; Alfred Densmore learns that Cogewea is not the owner of the H-B, and he robs her of her money and leaves her tied to a tree, making his escape. Jim LaGrinder rescues her, of course, and she realizes that he is her true love.

This is the basic plot of the novel. However, certain elements used by Mourning Dove separate her story from other "typical" Western romances of the era, and also blaze a trail for writers yet to come. One such element is the use of traditional tales or stories in her fiction. The grandmother character (Stemteema) provides a natural vehicle for relating stories such as "Green Blanket Feet," "The Dead Man's Vision" and "The Second Coming of the Shoyapee." Alanna Brown, in her article "Mourning Dove's Voice in Cogewea" shows us that Stemteema's stories are in actuality previously unrecorded stories based largely in true experience. "In a letter dated April 28, 1916, Mourning Dove remarks, 'Green Blanket Feets granddaughter Susie Winegard is at the present living in Spokane'" (12).

Stemteema tells Cogewea the story of her friend, Green Blanket Feet in simple eloquent language. It is here, one feels, that Mourning Dove's power as a writer shines through. Green Blanket Feet was so called, because she fell in love with a "false Shoyapee" (white man), had two

children with him, then was taken along to care for the children on the long road back East as he returned home to his other wife. He wanted the children, as he and his first wife were childless. Green Blanket Feet suffered in abandoning her land and tribe, but could not bear to have the children taken away from her. She soon perceived that she would be maltreated, or worse, killed by her erstwhile husband unless she escaped. She managed to escape with her newborn, leaving behind her older daughter. As she made her way west to the Okanogans, her people, she endured many hardships, not the least of which was being captured and enslaved by the Blackfeet and the death of her young son. When she arrived home, it was after walking halfway across the country under unimaginable conditions. She had strips of blanket tied around her feet after her moccasins wore out from walking; the green blanket that was her gift from the Shoyapee when she first went to him. Stemteema charges Cogewea to keep this story; and uses it to warn her against Alfred Densmore, the Easterner.

"The Dead Man's Vision" (Cogewea 122-128) again utilizes the grandmother, Stemteema, who tells of an Okanogan medicine man who prophesied of the coming of the white men. The prophecy was of pale people coming, too numerous to combat, who would take the Okanogan hunting grounds. The medicine man foretold that the first white men

to come would help the Okanogan; that those who followed would not. Stemteema's story goes on to tell that this was almost forgotten by the people when the first man, called "Black Robe" appeared.

"The Second Coming of the Shoyapee," much later in the novel, has Stemteema again in her role as storyteller relating the tale of the next encounter, years later, between the people and two white trappers. Stemteema laments that her aunt died of heart grief after being left behind by one of the men, and she tells the story to Jim LaGrinder in order to ask for his assistance in rescuing her granddaughter Cogewea from the Easterner, Densmore.

The second element which sets Mourning Dove's novel apart from the typical Western romance is that of using the novel as a vehicle to explore a contemporary social situation. Cogewea plainly states the dilemmas facing a young woman of mixed blood at that point in history through the character of the heroine. On an afternoon outing with Densmore, Cogewea tells him the story of the Frog Woman and how she will bring rain if he turns her on her back.

'I supposed that you were enough educated to know better than to believe all those ridiculous signs of your people,' chided the Easterner.

'What if I am slightly educated!' came the retort with a tinge of resentment. 'The true American

courses my veins and never will I cast aside my
ancestral traditions. I was born to them!

(Mourning Dove, Cogewea 160).

More than that, her social position in relation to both Indian and white society is clearly elucidated during the chapter on the "ladies" and the "squaw" races. Cogewea enters and wins both the ladies and squaw races at the Fourth of July fair, but is rebuffed by both groups as being an outsider; a "breed". Several times in the novel, Mourning Dove has Cogewea discuss the difficulties of marginality; of belonging wholly to neither the dominant race nor to the Native American community. In many different ways, and at many different times, she is forced to choose between her two worlds. The most obvious choice comes in her choice of a suitor; will it be Alfred Densmore, the Easterner, or Jim LaGrinder, the mixed blood ranch foreman?

Perhaps it is not surprising given McWhorter's appreciation of Mourning Dove's inclusion of traditional stories in her novel (Brown, "Mourning Dove's Voice" 3) that he would encourage her to collect what she called "folklores" for her next publication. Mourning Dove also believed in the importance of recording the stories; along with Zitkala-Sa and Pauline Johnson, she was highly aware of the danger of the permanent disappearance of the "old"

traditions and stories due to the era of rapid change experienced by them all at the turn of the century. As a result of her labors, Coyote Stories was originally published in 1933. This collection of 27 tales was heavily edited by Heister Dean Guie. A later republication, Tales of the Okanogans (1976) contains 38 stories based upon Mourning Dove's original manuscripts as they were originally submitted to McWhorter, who assisted her in securing an editor and publisher for the collection. In the forward, Donald Hines states: "Important, this edition does not bear the handiwork of Dean Guie, for the original edition was extensively rewritten and made 'proper'" (10). Guie also illustrated the original edition; the later edition combines a large format with a different illustrator. It contains some stories not in the original, notably "Coyote as a Beautiful Woman" in which Coyote, who is starving, disguises himself as a woman and woos a neighboring warrior, Badger, who is a good hunter. Badger seeks Coyote as his wife, but must provide food for her family first. Thus Coyote tricks Badger into providing some badly-needed provisions. In "Coyote Takes his Daughter as a Wife," Coyote falls in love with his daughter after seeing her shapely leg. He pretends to die, after making a deathbed request that his daughter marry a good friend from the distant Kootenay tribe. He then disguised himself as the Kootenay and arrived to marry

his own daughter. When she discovers his duplicity, she throws herself over the falls and turns into a large rock.

In her preface, Mourning Dove names some of the storytellers she worked with and discusses the setting of the Animal World, when animals were in the intermediate stage between man and animal. She goes on to thank McWhorter:

My interest was in writing novels showing the Indian viewpoint. But he suggested that I preserve that which is fast vanishing out of our reach, namely the traditions of the Okanogans and Swah-netk'-gha people. . . . I first wrote the lines of these stories much against my will, but as I worked and gathered tales among the oldest Indians of my people, I found a rich field that had hardly been touched by the hand of the white man . . . Although my people of today may have lost their confidence in me for exposing their guarded traditions, I will feel well rewarded if I have preserved for the future generations the folklore of my ancestors" (Mourning Dove, Tales of the Okanogans 14).

The stories are primarily about coyote, a trickster figure in the Okanogan tradition.

Central also to the tales is the power and importance

of the sweat house. This is a point Mourning Dove also makes in her novel, where she again uses the Stemteema character to describe the importance of a sweat house, how it is constructed and used. In chapter 26 of Cogewea is a description of these traditions, and the Stemteema, Cogewea's youngest sister (Mary, the shy girl), Jim LaGrinder and Cogewea herself participate in the building and using of the sweat house. Indeed, it is in the sweat house chapter that Cogewea receives a negative sign from the powers regarding Densmore, the Easterner: a rock she rolls from the fire into the sweat house shatters. The sweat lodge was also a subject upon which Mourning Dove wrote at great length, and her writing on this topic is included in her papers edited by Jay Miller.

After the publication of Coyote Stories, Mourning Dove set to work on writing down other vignettes of traditional Okanogan life and Okanogan history. Much of the information was written in the first person, as Mourning Dove could best illustrate the life and times with her own experience. Also, in this way, she was not placed in the position of spokesperson for all her people, possibly an uncomfortable position. Mourning Dove already earned some ridicule when her novel was published so many years after its submission, and her motives earned suspicion during her collection of traditional tales. Unfortunately, Mourning Dove died prior

to the publication of these papers, which remained archived until Jay Miller edited and published them in a book, Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990). According to Alanna Brown, sections of the manuscript were originally entitled by Mourning Dove as "History of the Okanogans", including sections on "Tipi Life" and "Educating the Indian." In addition to this historical and ethnographic knowledge, she records the period of time of deep erosion of the traditional culture, when government policies forced the nomadic Okanogans onto allotted agricultural plots. Brown feels that Miller misrepresents this narrative as a personal autobiography ("A Voice from the Past" 20).

Scholarship about Mourning Dove and her writing has become as controversial as the original collaboration between Mourning Dove and Lucullus McWhorter on the novel Cogewea. There is some contradiction inherent in the literary scholarship about Mourning Dove that has been done by contemporary scholars. The records are skimpy and inaccurate, thus there is no definitive answer as to Mourning Dove's true name, age or heritage. We will also probably never know the exact parameters of the Mourning Dove-Lucullus McWhorter collaboration on Cogewea. Mourning Dove writes in her preface to Coyote Stories that her father's father was ". . . a Hudson's Bay Company man, a

hardy, adventurous Celt" (9). Miller quotes from one of her letters to McWhorter:

That is, my grand father's name was Haynes or Haines, but my father never took his name and went by his step father's name who really raised him . . . It would dig up the past because in the early days many white men never married their Indian wives legally and only cast them aside for white women when thire [sic] kind came" ("Being and Becoming Indian" 173).

Other scholars speculate that this is where part of the plot of the novel came from; the theme of the duplicitous white man is not far from her own family's experience. Yet Miller goes on in the same article to say that he finds ". . . all evidence indicates her father had only native ancestry" and goes on to speculate that Mourning Dove was creating a fictional identity for herself ("Being and Becoming Indian" 173).

In terms of the collaboration, Dexter Fisher indicates that part of McWhorter's contribution to the novel was the poetic epigraphs which begin each chapter, as well as the extensive footnotes describing Okanogan words and customs; and the detailed and elaborate explanations within the text of some Native American customs (The Transportation of Tradition 98). While Dearborn agrees that lengthy

explanatory notes are indubitably McWhorter's (23-24), she finds that "Mourning Dove's hand is evident, for example, in the use of epigrams and chapter titles, some which militate rather violently against the contents of the chapters" (26). Most of the scholars agree, however, that the stories related by the Stemteema come the closest to authentic texts, related solely by Mourning Dove and untouched by McWhorter, possibly due to his respect for the oral tradition of the Okanogan. One can also speculate that it was his enthusiasm for these particular elements of the novel that led him to exhort Mourning Dove to continue to collect the traditional oral texts for future publication.

In her later years, Mourning Dove, like Zitkala-Sa and Pauline Johnson, became a spokesperson for and a champion of her people. Like them, she worked to act as an interpreter of her people for the dominant culture, and inevitably got caught up in work which would improve conditions for her people. Miller details her social activism in his article "Mourning Dove: The Author as Cultural Mediator." She was elected to the state historical society and helped to found the Eagle Feather Club, whose function was social welfare programs within the community. Locally, she became an active public speaker on behalf of her people, and battled injustices in equal employment of Native Americans in local lumber mills and on the issue of Indian fishing rights. In

May 1935, she was elected to the Tribal Council. "After several years as a spokeswoman, Christine became widely recognized as a concerned advocate of her people's rights" (Miller, "Mourning Dove: The Author as Cultural Mediator" 179).

Mourning Dove's life had other parallels with the other two turn of the century Native American women writers. Not only was she an outspoken political activist, a champion and interpreter for her people; she contributed some elements to indigenous women's literature that have persisted through time. She utilized elements of her own oral tradition in her writing. Her developed characters were of Native American descent; seemingly a small thing, but quite revolutionary in a time of stock Indian characters in literature. She utilized the written story or novel to portray a contemporary problem or situation from the indigenous viewpoint. In Cogewea, she investigates the place of a mixed blood person in that contemporary world, as Zitkala-Sa investigated the effect of a Christian education on a young man returning to the reservation in her story, "The Soft-Hearted Sioux." Mourning Dove also was not content to write, but became a spokeswoman for her people; became involved politically in bettering her people's lives. In addition, Brown cites the following elements as being Mourning Dove's literary achievements:

1. The moving and accurate depiction of a critical period of transition for Native Americans around the turn of the century, 2. The close identity between Mourning Dove and her character Cogewea, an identity that approaches spiritual autobiography, and 3. The skillful use of material from the oral traditions of Mourning Dove's family and tribe ("Mourning Dove's Voice in Cogewea" 11).

Despite the questionable collaboration of Mourning Dove and Lucullus McWhorter, Mourning Dove's contributions to Native American literature remain intact. Like her sisters, Zitkala-Sa and Pauline Johnson, she blazed a trail for others to follow.

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