

The Emergence and Development of Native American Literature

A Fascination with All Things 'Indian'

With the arrival of European settlers in the New World, there developed a fascination throughout Europe with all things 'native'. This was demonstrated both through the consumption of Indian culture as entertainment through 'travel narratives' that described Indian social practices; and through concerted efforts to Christianise indigenous communities through missionary activity and the creation of an Indian education system. Thus, very early in America's settlement, copious publications emerged that were aimed at an increasingly curious European audience, and discussed Native American cultures often in direct contrast or comparison to European 'civilisation', either as popular entertainment or as an experiment in religion and/or education.

Some of the earliest settler publications illustrate the often simultaneous attraction and dread with which the Europeans viewed America's indigenous peoples.¹ Thomas Harriot's 'A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia' (1588) is in effect an ethnography of the Native population, describing their lifestyle and customs. Badly clothed, badly armed, and of limited cultural, intellectual and physical development, Harriot concludes that 'in respect of us [the English settlers], they are a poor people'.² As Governor of Plymouth Colony, William Bradford describes the dangers offered by the 'stout and warlike' Pequot who 'slew sundry' settlers.³ Such descriptions catered for a growing European market for New World 'travelogues', and Bradford assuages any fears of potential settlers by reporting that the Pequot were subsequently 'fry[ed] in the fire' of English victory.⁴

The popularity of this type of narrative, with its sense of titillation for far-removed European readers, is perhaps most evident within Mary Rowlandson's narrative of her captivity (1682), which became a 'bestseller' in seventeenth-century Europe. Rowlandson's tales of her experiences emphasised the physical, spiritual and sexual dangers in

which she found herself. While Rowlandson is quick to note that 'not one of them [the Indians] ever offered ... the least abuse of unchastity to me',⁵ it is possible that the undertone of sexual danger played a key role in assuring the popularity of the text. Rowlandson's text is also important for its emphasis upon Christian endurance and depiction of Native peoples in emphatically religious terms: her captors are a 'company of hell-hounds' engaged in 'devilish cruelty'.⁶ While Rowlandson's attitude is common, the alternative was a more philanthropic and religious/spiritual approach to Indian assimilation. Roger Williams' project to provide 'keys' (1643) to indigenous languages was a declared attempt not only at better communication (a desire to 'spread civility'), but also at promoting a wider understanding of Native culture as something other than inherently sinful.⁷ Although Williams himself was not an advocate of assimilation, his text is significant for its subsequent use in highlighting the positive benefits of Indian religious conversion and social assimilation, and for enabling Christian missionary activity.

These two attitudes – Indians as sources of fascination and/or as souls to be saved – became quickly ingrained and normalised both within popular culture and within discourse on the 'Indian Problem'. Consequently, a combination of the two can be detected throughout the nineteenth century and the Indian Wars in the concerns of federal Indian policy, and in philanthropic projects such as Indian education. Thomas Jefferson's letter to Meriwether Lewis (1803), giving detailed instructions for the Lewis and Clark Expedition's approach to the Native Americans they would encounter, clearly outlines a list of ethnographic data that should be collected, including 'peculiarities in their laws, customs, & dispositions'.⁸ Significantly, details of 'the state of morality, religion & information' are requested for the subsequent benefit 'of those who endeavour to civilize & instruct them'.⁹ This paradoxical combination of hostility and philanthropy is perhaps most evident in the principles of the Carlisle Indian School, founded in 1879 in former army barracks in Pennsylvania by Captain Richard Pratt, a veteran of the Indian Wars. An extension of Pratt's experiments of the early 1870s in acculturating Indian prisoners of war in his charge at the notorious Fort Marion prison in Florida, Carlisle was run in accordance with military principles and Pratt publicly stated that his educational policy was to 'kill the Indian, and save the man'.¹⁰

It is in response not only to European settlement but also to these types of entrenched popular attitudes that many Native American

authors begin to write, often — like slave narratives of the nineteenth century — with the published word used as a means by which a dialogue with white society could be established. Many of the early writings can be read as responses to ongoing social problems, such as racism, violence and land theft (for example, John Rollin Ridge's 1854 novel *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta*); the increasingly precarious social status of the 'mixed blood' Indian (discussed in Mourning Dove's 1927 novel *Cogewea*, among many others); or the alienating experiences of Native children forcibly removed from their families to attend 'Indian schools' such as Carlisle (for example, Luther Standing Bear's reminiscences in *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (1933)). Native writers also often responded directly to specific and sometimes traumatic national or local events (the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 is the final focus of S. Alice Callahan's 1891 novel *Wynema*); to the ramifications of implementing federal policies such as the 1887 Dawes General Allotment Act (discussed by John Joseph Mathews in his 1934 novel *Sundown*); or to the ongoing power wielded by the Christian church and American legal system over reservation communities (evident in D'Arcy McNickle's 1936 novel *The Surrounded*).

In this sense, much Native American writing clearly embodies and expresses the concerns of indigenous Americans as colonised peoples: for example, the effects of displacement, language loss, enforced Christian conversion, enforced education and the loss of sovereignty, to name but a few. Equally evident are the economic, legal, social and political conditions of colonisation, and Indian responses to them. Nonetheless, the use of 'postcolonial' theory within Native Studies remains contentious: while postcolonialists have long identified literature as one of the means by which colonised peoples respond to their colonisers, there has generally been a marked (and remarked) tendency to disregard Native Studies entirely.¹⁰ One distinct problem seems to be that the concept of the 'post-colonial' is usually taken to apply to post-Revolution American society, which is clearly problematic in terms of the colonisation to which America's Native peoples are still subject. Paradoxically, contemporary American society is therefore both colonial *and* postcolonial, and the application of postcolonial theory to Native Studies should be understood as a process by which the responses of colonised groups can be assessed. In this context, many Native writings exhibit a range of strategies of resistance and also foreground not only indigenous cultures but specific storytelling traditions and techniques. These are presented as an alter-

native to Euro-American literary techniques and expectations, and as a form of active resistance to imperial worldviews, but also as a discussion and celebration of Native cultural ideas and values. Most importantly, the writings discussed in this study highlight the continued agency of Native peoples in their interactions with the colonial power. Accordingly, the following readings will both assess specific Native writings as negotiations with, and resistances to, the forces of colonisation, and also explore Native writings more fully within their own cultural contexts.

Early Native Writings: the 'Christian Indians' of Connecticut, 1772–1836

Given the emphatically Christian context of American settlement, it is both inevitable and ironic that the first published Native text in English (1772) should be a Christian sermon. Its author, the Mohegan Samson Occom (1723–92), had converted to Christianity at the age of sixteen or seventeen, during the religious revival (the 'Great Awakening') that swept Connecticut in the 1730s and 40s. Occom subsequently attended a private Christian school run by the evangelical preacher Eleazar Wheelock. Becoming an ordained minister in 1759, Occom also recruited further Indian students for Wheelock, and undertook a two-year fundraising tour of England in the mid-1760s, where he testified unsuccessfully on behalf of the Mohegan in a land claims case in London. Wheelock's failure to support the case, and his decision to use the monies raised in England to found Dartmouth College rather than the Indian Charity School for which it was collected, fed Occom's disillusionment with Euro-American culture. In 1774, Occom negotiated a tract of land — Brothertown — in central New York for a community of Christian Indians, where he remained as a teacher and spiritual leader until his death in 1792.

Occom's writings emerged directly from his own personal circumstances and interactions with white settler society. Occom's status as a Christian Indian, and his work among his fellow Mohegan as a Christian missionary, ensured that his role — and to some extent his identity — was one of constant negotiation and mediation. His writing inevitably reflects this liminal socio-cultural status. Occom's text, *Sermon Preached By Samson Occom ... at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian* (1772), was attractive for a white audience due in part to the general popularity of execution sermons (which had become something of a New England tradition); and in part to an ongoing fascination with Indian lives and

the concept of Indian 'savagery': Moses Paul was a Christian convert who had murdered a respected white citizen while under the influence of alcohol. Thus pervasive popular Indian stereotypes, and entrenched ideas of Native Americans as biologically 'savage' and ultimately irredeemable, were satisfied: the event was a unique opportunity to assess 'the moral capacities and disabilities of the Indians'.¹¹

Occom's *Sermon* is notable primarily for the care with which he negotiates the varied, often conflicting, concerns of his multiple audiences, all of whom are individually addressed. While Occom's speech is inevitably compromised by the inherent imbalances of power within the colonial relationship, he nonetheless offers a tentative response to problems within Indian-white relations. Although he condemns Paul's crime and an increasing reliance upon alcohol within Indian communities, he is also careful to point out to his white listeners that 'vice and immorality ... are abounding every where amongst *all* nations'.¹² More emphatically, rejecting popular ideas of biological inferiority, Occom insists upon racial equality in the eyes of God: 'Negroes, Indians, English, or whatever nation soever; all that die in their sins must go to hell together'.¹³ As A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff notes, Occom's text is significant because it 'convey[s] the implicit message that human nature, not race, makes us susceptible to temptation'.¹⁴ Given the drunken nature of the crime coupled with the disreputable history of alcohol provision to Indians by settlers,¹⁵ it is significant that Occom's subsequent argument is aimed at the additional crimes resulting from white abuses of unequal power relations: Indians 'have been cheated over and over again, and ... have lost ... [their] substance by drunkenness', and Biblical sources are identified that 'denounc[e] men ... who put their bottles to their neighbours [sic] mouth to make them drunk'.¹⁶

While Occom's message is veiled, it nonetheless equates the sin of alcohol abuse with the sin of alcohol provision, detailing the devastating effects of alcohol on Native communities, where families are 'half-starved' and homeless, and children 'suffel[e] every day'.¹⁷ Since the majority of Occom's white listeners would have been well aware of this less than Christian history, his 'call ... to arms' that invites 'all orders ranks and degrees of people, to rise up against sin and satan',¹⁸ and his insistence that all sinners of all races will be forgiven by a Christian God, is especially pertinent. Most importantly, Occom's endeavour can be interpreted as ultimately successful: his *Sermon* proved so popular that it was reprinted at least nineteen times and also translated.¹⁹

This act of cultural negotiation is evident in the writings of another Connecticut Christian Indian, William Apress (1798–1839). Apress was of mixed ancestry: his father was part-Pequot and his mother a former slave, possibly part-African. Apress's poverty, the physical abuse he suffered at home, plus his experiences as an indentured servant, had a direct impact on his interest in Christianity, and his subsequent role as a Methodist minister and missionary. In spite of a very patchy formal education, Apress published the first known Native American autobiography in 1829, plus four other influential texts that presented eloquent arguments in support of Indian self-governance. Most significantly, Apress's writings called for equal rights, as ordained by Christian teachings, for both Native peoples and African slaves. In this context, Apress is highly significant not only as a forerunner of the abolitionist movement, but also as the first advocate and activist for Indian civil rights, appropriating Christian discourse to directly challenge white racism: 'does the proud white think that a dark skin is less honourable in the sight of God ...? All are alike ... To say they are not alike to him is an insult to his justice. Who shall dare to call that into question?'²⁰ The circumstances of Apress's final years are unknown, and his death in 1839 of apoplexy was possibly the result of alcoholism.

Apress's cultural negotiations are far more forceful than those of Occom, yet his writings were popular due to an ongoing fascination for the details of Indian lives, especially of those who undertook missionary activity among their own communities. Thus the appeal of Apress's texts for a white audience is similar to the popular appeal of published slave narratives, also beginning to appear more regularly from the 1820s with the rise of the abolition movement. Significantly Apress's works, including his life writings, all had a clear political focus. His discussion of his near-fatal beating by his drunken grandmother argues that this 'cruel and unnatural conduct was the effect of some cause', namely the role played by white settlers in introducing alcohol to the Indians who, once intoxicated, were then 'wronged ... out of their lawful possessio[n] ... land' by settlers.²¹ For Apress, 'the whites were justly chargeable with at least some portion of my sufferings'.²²

Significantly, a topic to which Apress would repeatedly return was the entrenched prejudice and racism he encountered as an Indian. To Apress's mind, this prejudice was a 'flagrant ... breach' not only of 'good manners' but also – far more tellingly – of the "'civilization"' that white American society claimed.²³ Apress extends this politically

aware approach to address multiple blunt questions to his white audience regarding their treatment of Native communities: 'I would ask you if you would like to be disenfranchised from all your rights, merely because your skin is white ... I'll venture to say, these very characters who hold skin to be such a barrier ... would be the first to cry out, "Injustical awful injustice!"'²⁴ The most powerful of Apess's works is the *Eulogy on King Philip* (1837), which reviews King Philip's War of 1675–6, one of the bloodiest encounters between the New England tribes and the English settlers. Comparing the values informing King Philip's 'revolution' with those of the fledgling Republic during the Revolutionary War, Apess 'go[es] on the offensive' by portraying King Philip as 'a freedom fighter ... acting in defence of his people'.²⁵

Identified by Robert Warrior as 'a stunning revision of history' that 'condemns the historical and contemporary practices'²⁶ by which Native Americans were losing their lands, Apess's *Eulogy* clearly challenges the popular concept of Native Americans as a 'vanishing' race that was central both to the doctrine of Manifest Destiny and to the 1830 Indian Removal Act, which relocated all tribes west of the Mississippi. Thus Apess's comments not only confront white racism and hegemonic national history, but also the agendas of federal Indian policy; what Anne Marie Dannenberg identifies as a period of 'new ruthlessness' in federal-Indian relations.²⁷ It is as a Christian minister that Apess contests the racism inherent within Manifest Destiny to 'find no excuse in the Bible for Christians conducting toward us as they do'.²⁸ Significantly, Apess makes a clear comparison between the treatment of Native peoples and enslaved Africans within the United States, claiming that it was only through violent struggle that tribal peoples had evaded attempts to 'enslave a free people'.²⁹ In this sense, Apess is highly important not only as a forerunner of civil rights activism, but also for his conscious and highly visible attempts to ally Native interests with the concerns of the abolitionist movement.

Native Lives and Life Writings, 1883–1931

Popular American interest in Native lives increased throughout the nineteenth century, creating opportunities for a range of Indian authors to publish. Often a direct response to federal policies, or to events and atrocities of the Indian Wars, these 'life writings' publicised otherwise absent Indian histories. Like Occom and Apess, these writers proved of interest due to their negotiations between Indian and white worlds:

Dr Charles Eastman (Dakota, 1858–1939) was a graduate of Dartmouth College and a physician, while Sarah Winnemucca (Northern Paiute, c. 1844–91) was an interpreter and teacher. Significantly, both Eastman and Winnemucca were highly successful at 'translating' tribal cultures and concerns for wider American audiences, highlighting the need for reform within federal-Indian relations. Both devoted themselves to lecturing on Indian rights, yet both also attracted criticism for their active roles in promoting Indian cultural assimilation. However, as Andrew McClure comments, 'some degree of assimilation is essential to cultural and physical survival' within any colonial relationship.³⁰ Therefore recent reassessments of Eastman and Winnemucca's work can identify within their rhetorical strategies 'the language of survivance (survival + resistance)' by which they 'refigure "the Indian"' to successfully 'transfor[m] their object-status within colonial discourse into a subject-status'.³¹

Such rhetorical strategies are clearly evident within the writings of Charles Eastman (Ojibwa). Born in 1858, Eastman was raised traditionally by his grandmother, before his Christian convert father³² placed him within the Euro-American education system, from which he graduated with a medical degree in 1889. Given this unusual background and Eastman's successful negotiation of two often conflicting cultures, he proved of interest to those concerned with Indian assimilation and was subsequently employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Eastman's work with the BIA was to prove a turning point in his writings when he was assigned to the Pine Ridge agency and, in 1890, amid fears of an Indian uprising, witnessed the aftermath of the massacre at Wounded Knee. Eastman later served as a physician to the Carlisle Indian School and the Crow Creek agency before devoting himself full time to writing and lecturing. Eastman died in 1939.

Eastman's own life had enormous bearing not only upon his writings but also upon his status as an object of fascination: he was a traditionally raised Indian who very successfully moved within Euro-American society. Yet Eastman's careful negotiations between two very different cultures are evident in his writings, which cater for an increasing Euro-American interest in ethnography and autobiography while simultaneously emphasising the value of key Indian cultural ideas. In this sense, Eastman clearly acts as a 'cultural broker',³³ and thus the totality of his assimilation into white society can be questioned. Eastman's autobiography, *Indian Boyhood* (1902), presents a snapshot of traditional Dakota life juxtaposed with examples of Indian stories. Eastman persistently

emphasises the civilised habits of 'pagan' people, often in comparison to white American society: thus Euro-Americans are 'a heartless nation' who 'have made some of their people ... slaves!'.³⁴ The text carefully creates a dialogue between the young Eastman and a range of elder Dakota voices to present a series of important Indian values that he identifies as 'wonderful and lively conceptions'.³⁵ Significantly, Eastman describes his initial translation from tribal culture to white society in terms of absolute finality: 'I felt as if I were dead and travelling to the Spirit Land ... my life was to be entirely different'.³⁶

Yet it is Eastman's later writings in response to the Wounded Knee massacre³⁷ that are the most vivid. Eastman was the only physician at hand to help the wounded and dying, and he pointedly comments on the 'many grievances' that the Dakota previously suffered at the hands of national bodies and local agents, before describing the sight of Indians 'frightfully torn to pieces of shells' or 'relentlessly hunted down and slaughtered while fleeing'.³⁸ Eastman's own reactions suggest a growing critique of his adoptive white culture: 'All this was a severe ordeal for me who had so lately put his faith in the Christian love and lofty ideals of the white man'.³⁹ Although a long-term advocate of acculturation and assimilation, Eastman's increasingly critical approach to Euro-American culture can be clearly detected: 'there was no "Indian outbreak" ... [only] dishonest politicians, who through unfit appointees first robbed the Indians, then bullied them, and finally in a panic called for troops to suppress them'.⁴⁰ Eastman's conclusion clearly indicates the difficulties he experienced in his negotiations between cultures: 'I am an Indian; and while I have learned much from civilization ... I have never lost my Indian sense of right and justice'.⁴¹ As David Murray argues, there are thus many 'contradictions' of Eastman's cultural identity that 'are too pressing to be ignored'.⁴²

Such contradictions are equally evident in Sarah Winnemucca's writings. Born about 1844 in Nevada, Winnemucca (Thocomentony) was raised primarily among white settlers and her family saw many benefits in white society and favoured acculturation. Winnemucca subsequently established strong links with the US military, both through marriage and her work as an interpreter. In 1880, she began a series of lecture tours that promoted Paiute rights and highlighted a range of mistreatments. Having founded an Indian school (1886) which was briefly successful, Winnemucca died in 1891. Like Eastman, Winnemucca made concerted and successful negotiations between Indian and white cultures, with

the result that her work has been interpreted as problematic due to her constant accommodation of Euro-American cultural demands and her public support of the infamous Dawes General Allotment Act.⁴³ Nonetheless, Winnemucca also persistently argued in favour of Indian self-governance and her writings, which display these internal cultural tensions, are significant for the ways in which she 'imagin[e]s' new possibilities for Native resistance and survival.⁴⁴

The first Indian woman to publish an autobiography, Winnemucca's concerns are evident in her title: *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883). Witnessing white settlement on Paiute land as a child, and settlers who 'kill[ed] everybody that came in their way', Winnemucca bluntly outlines her agenda in the first pages: 'I mean to fight for my down-trodden race while life lasts'.⁴⁵ Her strategy is significant: an embracing, and subsequent subversion, of popular and romantic Indian stereotypes such as the 'Indian Princess'. As McClure comments, Winnemucca's writing is significant for its ability to 'uphold Native identity and simultaneously adapt to the dominant culture'.⁴⁶ Like Eastman, Winnemucca depicts an idyllic childhood of freedom alongside images of traditional Paiute culture increasingly eroded by white settlement, which would appeal to a white audience interested both in ethnographic detail and in the notion of a 'vanishing race'. Yet Winnemucca's linguistic strategies are often subversive: persistently using the term 'our white brothers',⁴⁷ Winnemucca both invokes Christian discourse and critiques the less than brotherly or Christian behaviour of the white settlers. Facilitating a discussion on Paiute 'domestic and social moralities',⁴⁸ Winnemucca demonstrates implicit Native 'civilization' and contradicts persistent stereotypes of Indian 'savagery'. Her subsequent analysis of respect – for oneself, for others, and especially for other races and genders – is bluntly concluded by her comment on the partiality of Euro-American concepts of democracy and equality, and on Indian resistance: 'my own people are kind to everybody that does not do them harm; but they will not be imposed upon'.⁴⁹

It is within this context of mutual miscommunication and cultural misinterpretation that Winnemucca draws upon her role as an interpreter to discuss white settlement, and acts of hostility between settlers and Natives. In her discussion of 'hostility', a term normally used solely in relation to war, Winnemucca outlines the repeated breaches of Indian trust by officials such as the Indian agents who persistently cheat the Paiute out of goods provided for them by the government which are sold

on for profit. This extension of the notion of war to include hostile acts of settlement or colonisation is evident in Winemucca's direct address to her audience, which contradicts Euro-American assumptions of blood-thirsty Indians: 'Dear reader, if our agent had done his duty ... there would be peace everywhere, on every agency'.⁵⁰ It is this emphasis on Indian morality and ethics, often in direct contrast to her experiences of Euro-American behaviour, which is evident in the most eloquent argument of the text:

Oh, for shame! You who are educated by a Christian government in the art of war; the practice of whose profession makes you natural enemies of the savages, so called by you. ... you rise from your bended knees seizing the welcoming hands of those who are the owners of this land, which you are not ... [and] your so-called civilization sweeps inland ... but, oh, my God! Leaving its pathway marked by crimson lines of blood and strewn by the bones of the two races ... I am crying out to you for justice.⁵¹

Winemucca's consciously rhetorical literary style emphasises her own education and civilisation while also clearly embodying the contradictions that she identifies within the Christian yet warlike, and civilised yet savage American nation. Most importantly, it also embodies those contradictions which she herself must negotiate in her complex mediations between Indian and white cultures. In this context Winemucca's writings, like those of Eastman, indicate that the 'greatest irony] of federal assimilation policy' was that it created a distinct 'space for the preservation of native cultural traditions'.⁵²

One of the most damaging federal Indian policies was the enforced education of Indian children, beginning with the introduction of the boarding school system in 1879 at Carlisle. This type of enforced Indian education was to prove highly damaging to Native cultures: children were often forcibly removed from their families and relocated hundreds of miles from home, their hair was cut, their traditional clothing replaced, they were given Christian names, and their Native languages were banned.⁵³ Such cultural insensitivity played a crucial role in the assimilation process, where 'Indianness' (including traditional Native forms of education) was seen as a barrier to progress which had to be eradicated. Carlisle was a paradoxical blend of military discipline and misguided philanthropy: while Pratt clearly believed that Indian students could be 'educated' into civilisation, his emphasis upon the English language

and vocational training caused cultural chaos. Many of his students lost their Native languages, causing them to become alienated both from their immediate family and from the wider tribal group. Additionally, Carlisle's focus upon vocational training (it was an 'industrial school') proved to be useless: students returned to reservation life where there were simply no opportunities for tinmiths or domestic servants.

Yet Indian education did have one unexpected side effect: the creation of a range of Indian graduates well versed in white culture and discourse, many of whom became writers and/or educators, extending the type of mediation and negotiation undertaken by individuals such as Eastman and Winemucca. One of the earliest students to arrive at Carlisle was Luther Standing Bear (Ora Kte, c. 1868–1939). Standing Bear is another interesting product of cross-cultural and inter-cultural negotiations: born into a traditional Lakota family, Standing Bear returned to the Pine Ridge reservation where he was elected as tribal chief in 1905. Although Standing Bear was in his sixties when he first published, his experience of inter-cultural negotiations was extensive, and his wide-ranging interactions with Euro-American culture ensured a clear understanding of prevalent white perceptions of Indians. As part of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, Standing Bear toured both America and Europe, and he later worked successfully in Hollywood as an actor and as a consultant for western films, both of which well situated him to assess the popularity of enduring Indian stereotypes for white society. Standing Bear died in Hollywood in 1939.

Standing Bear's analysis of Carlisle became far more critical in his later years. His reminiscences in *My People, the Sioux* (1928) view Pratt's experiment as beneficial, and express his disappointment that his father had sent him to Carlisle as if to battle, with the charge 'be brave and get killed', when he 'should have told me ... to go and learn all I could of the white man's ways, and be like them'.⁵⁴ Here Standing Bear outlines his desire to assimilate: to learn how to 'be white'.⁵⁵ Indeed, Standing Bear initially believed so deeply in Pratt's mission that he returned home to successfully recruit 'more than fifty' Indian students despite strong resistance from parents.⁵⁶ However, Standing Bear's attitude toward the Indian education system was to change dramatically during the early 1930s possibly, as Frederick Hale argues, as a result of a growing 'disillusionment with ... the unbridled greed ... and other manifestations of cultural decadence' that he witnessed in Hollywood.⁵⁷ As Hale comments, Standing Bear's increasing criticism may also have been

encouraged by changing popular attitudes among Euro-Americans, who were themselves becoming more critical of assimilationist policies.⁵⁸

In *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (1933), Standing Bear draws clear distinctions between traditional Lakota knowledge (the wisdom required for all individuals to lead morally and ethically sound lives) and the Christian education system (designed to make children 'conscious of ... [their] shortcomings'⁵⁹). Standing Bear's analysis of Carlisle outlines his misgivings: although he 'truly liked' Pratt, he cannot forget 'those hours of silent misery I endured'.⁶⁰ As an alternative, Standing Bear presents a range of traditional Lakota wisdoms, covering the 'home and family', 'civil arrangements' and 'social customs'.⁶¹ Like the works of Eastman and Winemucca, the appeal for a white audience lay in the 'romance' of the ethnographic material, which had become popularised by Euro-American writers and artists in the 1920s.⁶² The text is, significantly, a celebration of enduring Lakota values in the face of extreme cultural loss, emerging directly from Standing Bear's own sense of shock upon his return to Pine Ridge from Hollywood. In this context, he comments bluntly on 'the changed life of my people' who, as a direct consequence of federal assimilation policies, are 'degraded by oppression and poverty into but a semblance of their former being'.⁶³ Standing Bear's conclusion is that, due to 'nearly four centuries of ... misinterpret[ion]', white attitudes to Indians are implicitly racist and have become embodied within federal Indian policy.⁶⁴ Like Apress before him, Standing Bear calls for a re-vision of accepted histories of federal-Indian relations to address 'the fact that a bonded and enslaved people lived in "the land of the free ..." more than fifty years after the abolition of slavery'.⁶⁵

Standing Bear's emphasis upon the value of traditional Native cultural practices as a response to the failure of a range of assimilation programmes and the cultural devastation they caused, is also evident in the autobiography of Nicholas Black Elk (1863-1950). Another Lakota from Pine Ridge, Black Elk had also taken part in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. A participant at the Battle of the Little Bighorn (1876), and a survivor of the massacre at Wounded Knee, Black Elk was forced to convert to Christianity, under a federal ban making the practice of Native religious ceremonies illegal (1921).⁶⁶ Nonetheless, Black Elk remained committed to traditional spiritual practices and participated through a range of 'underground' activities, becoming a respected Lakota spiritual leader. Due to his expressed concern that crucial Lakota cultural and spiritual traditions were being lost, Black Elk decided in 1930 to

preserve information through a collaboration with a white poet, John G. Neihardt. The resulting material, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* (1932), celebrated Oglala culture and warned of the dangers of assimilation. Black Elk died in 1950.

As with the works of Apress, Winemucca and Standing Bear, the 'authenticity' of Black Elk's autobiography has been persistently questioned since its publication due to its collaborative nature.⁶⁷ As Murray comments, readers should 'be aware' that these are texts 'produced by, and in, white literate America'.⁶⁸ In this sense, the text can be identified as both autobiography and biography, a 'composite form' that embodies a combination of the ideas and cultural/religious biases of the subject, translator, transcriber and editor.⁶⁹ Black Elk's story appealed to a white fascination that, ironically, seemed to grow the more that Indian culture was perceived as 'endangered'.⁷⁰ This notion of the 'vanishing Indian' is evident in Black Elk's text, and remains one of the primary criticisms of Neihardt's role as an editor. Indeed, the text concludes with an image of inescapable cultural disintegration: the Oglala nation is described as 'broken and scattered. There is no center any longer, and the sacred tree is dead'.⁷¹ This 'end of the dream'⁷² is one of the most disputed statements of the text, and subject to repeated questions regarding Neihardt's culturally biased 'translations'. Yet to emphasise Neihardt's role is to negate Black Elk's own agency within the project. In this context, readers should read carefully, to avoid both 'the nostalgia of Neihardt' and 'any tendency to see Black Elk as ... an object of someone else's textual production'.⁷³ In this context, Black Elk and Neihardt's collaboration is an especially interesting example of inter-cultural negotiation.

Black Elk depicts a complex culture that directly challenges Euro-American assumptions of cultural inferiority which form the basis of the land losses associated with settlement and 'progress' during the nineteenth century. Chapter titles revise the history of the American West, emphasising 'the compelling fear' of the Lakota that culminates in 'the butchering at Wounded Knee'.⁷⁴ Black Elk's experience at Wounded Knee, which he recounts in great detail at the close of his narrative, is crucial for interpreting his concluding comments on the death of 'a people's dream'.⁷⁵ The piles of 'butchered' bodies remain very much burned into Black Elk's memory - 'I can still see [them] ... as when I saw them with eyes still young'⁷⁶ - and the tone at the close of the text reflects his inability in 1890 either to help or to save his people.

Accordingly, the postscript details his despair, the 'tears running' and his request to a greater power to 'make my people live!'⁷⁷ In this sense, it is likely that Neihardt's editing accurately portrays Black Elk's reaction both to the events of the Indian Wars, and to the range of social and economic measures by which the Indian Wars were continued, under the guise of federal Indian policy, in the early twentieth century. Thus Black Elk's text remains a pertinent intervention into the ongoing dialogue that Native writers were establishing with white American society.

Popular Fiction: The Native American Novel, 1854–1936

A further highly significant intervention into this ongoing dialogue was also the direct result of cultural assimilation and the Indian education process: the emergence of the Native American novel. While the imposition of the coloniser's language is a crucial part of the process of colonisation, education does equate to power. A range of Native fiction writers were to usurp the imperial discourse and 'write back' to their oppressors, actively making an imposed and enforced language 'carry the weight' of the colonial experience.⁷⁸ Many Native writers thus undertook a form of 'translation', whereby elided Indian experiences found full expression in a form of discourse ordinarily associated, in the nineteenth century, with the white middle classes. Indian writers thus intervened within an almost exclusively white discourse to re-inscribe a Native presence, and critically engage with topics such as race and racism, the politics of land settlement, and American notions of 'freedom', 'justice' and 'democracy'.

One of the earliest Native fiction writers was John Rollin Ridge (Cherokee, 1827–67), who is significant for publishing a novel that is both the first Native American novel and the first Californian novel: *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit* (1854). As a mediatory cultural broker, Ridge (Yellow Bird) is especially interesting. Born in Georgia, he was a member of one of the 'five civilised tribes' who adopted a range of white cultural customs such as clothing, farming methods and housing; and, contentiously, introduced plantations and slave ownership. These tribes were also significant for having 'recognisable' (i.e. Euro-American modelled) legal systems, education systems, legislatures and written constitutions. The Cherokee also introduced a 'syllabary' (1819–21) by which the spoken language could be written,⁷⁹ and the first Native bilingual newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix* (1828), produced. While there was general public recognition

that these tribes were 'civilised', they were nonetheless still subject to the 1830 Indian Removal Act which, in spite of well publicised attempts (including legal action⁸⁰) to remain on their ancestral lands, forced the Cherokee to move west of the Mississippi. Internal divisions among the Cherokee led to one faction, including Ridge's father and grandfather, illegally signing away all Cherokee rights in the Treaty of New Echota (1833). In spite of widespread tribal protests, the treaty was ratified in 1836, leading directly to the infamous enforced removal of the Trail of Tears (1838) during which more than 4,000 Cherokee died from disease and adverse conditions.⁸¹ Ridge's father and grandfather were subsequently assassinated by tribal members in 1839, with the young Ridge witnessing his father's brutal death. After killing a Cherokee believed to have been involved in his father's murder, Ridge was forced in 1850 to flee to California, where he died in 1866.

This tumultuous and unusual personal background, coupled with his 'mixed race' (his mother, Sarah Bird Northrup, was white), greatly influenced Ridge's subsequent interactions with Euro-American and Indian cultures. As a member of the 'civilised tribes', Ridge had experienced a 'white' education, had been a slave owner and remained opposed to abolition, and was a long-term advocate of assimilation. All of these views (some explicitly racist) are evident in his published work, and Ridge's position and personal convictions are even more contested than those of Eastman and Winnebucca. As a result, his writing exhibits a range of contradictions and cultural tensions. This is especially evident in his novel, *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta*. As the subtitle indicates, Murieta is a 'celebrated California bandit', which ironically pits Ridge's sympathies against established ideas of American law. The popular appeal of Ridge's character, a composite of several real figures, is immediately evident: Murieta (a prototype for Zorro) is a murderous yet strangely loveable rogue, robbing and killing racist white settlers both in revenge for his own ills, and for the wider benefit of dispossessed Californian Mexicans. The text displays complex internal tensions that reflect Ridge's own ideas and attitudes towards white America, Indian assimilation, his identity as a Cherokee and other Native American tribes. And Ridge illustrates his own biases towards 'progress' in his depictions of a range of unassimilated Californian Indians as 'poor, miserable [and] cowardly'.⁸²

However, in spite of his commitment to full assimilation, what emerges in the text is a critique – at times damning – of Euro-American

racism: in particular, the racist mistreatment of Mexicans in California by encroaching white settlers during the Gold Rush (1848–50). His land stolen, and forced to witness the rape of his mistress, Murieta is thus made a monster. Ridge comments upon prevalent popular Euro-American beliefs, after the US–Mexican war (1846–8), that Mexicans within the US were ‘no better than conquered subjects’ who ‘ha[d] no rights that could stand before a . . . superior race’.⁸³ Significantly, Murieta becomes politically emblematic within the text as both ‘a persecuted and exiled minority and a proto-guerrilla movement’,⁸⁴ providing a range of dispossessed minority groups with the means to resist, even if only through fiction, and accounting for the enduring popularity of the character. Consequently, it is difficult to read Ridge’s comments and not acknowledge his own experiences as a Cherokee at the hands of the American government: as John Lowe argues, ‘the rape of Rosita . . . comments . . . obliquely, on the “rape” of the Cherokee . . . [which] is surely on Ridge’s mind’.⁸⁵ In this context, Ridge’s concluding remarks are highly pertinent: ‘there is nothing so dangerous in its consequences as injustice . . . whether it arise from prejudice of color or from any other source’.⁸⁶

This commentary on injustice is equally evident in the novel *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* (1891),⁸⁷ by S. Alice Callahan (Muscoogee Creek, 1868–94), the first known novel to be published by a Native American woman. Callahan was of mixed ancestry – her father was part-Indian and her mother white – and, like Ridge, a member of one of the ‘civilised’ tribes, belonging to a wealthy slave- and plantation-owning group of Indians identified as the ‘Creek Aristocracy’.⁸⁸ Her father was a prominent tribal figure, but little is known of Callahan herself except that she became a teacher and died in 1894. Yet Callahan’s personal circumstances as an educated and wealthy mixed-blood Indian from a prominent tribal family are evident within her writing; her text is, as Ruoff notes, a complex negotiation between a range of ideas and positions, ‘Indian and non-Indian . . . male and female’⁸⁹ which are, perhaps inevitably, suffused with her own ideas on cultural assimilation. Additionally, Callahan’s negotiations are also extra-textual, commenting on many issues affecting Muscoogee life in the early 1890s, such as land loss and the continuing Indian Wars.

Callahan’s choice of genre – a domestic romance – is perhaps unusual for the politics of her subject matter: her story is of the Muscoogee Wynema Harjo who finds first friendship with the Euro-American teacher Genevieve Weir, then love with Genevieve’s brother Robin. Yet

Callahan’s approach was to appeal to a white middle-class female readership fascinated with the notion of a romanticised Indian (the ‘child of the forest’) who could then be educated into civilisation. Callahan therefore uses what Susan Bernardin identifies as the ‘meeting grounds of sentiment’, already successfully employed by a range of ‘reformist’ novelists including Harriet Beecher Stowe.⁹⁰ Callahan’s inclusion of arguments concerning the rights of women, which directly addressed the concerns of her readership while allaying them with specifically Indian interests, served to strengthen that appeal. Consequently, Callahan’s novel addresses and mediates between deeply conflicting ideas and ideologies. Callahan’s primary focus is upon the white character Genevieve Weir, who provides appeal for her Euro-American audience but whose entrenched cultural ideas and prejudices are then persistently critiqued. Despite her initial ‘mistaken belief[.]’ in the inherent godlessness of Indians, Genevieve soon learns from her future husband that ‘when you live among the Romans, you must abide by their laws and follow their customs’, the majority of which are presented as both inoffensive and of equal cultural value.⁹¹ While the novel focuses on Wynema’s assimilation into Euro-American culture it therefore, unusually, also comments on Genevieve’s education in Muscoogee culture.

However, it is Callahan’s focus on Indian politics and Indian women’s rights that makes the novel especially significant. Recognising the damage caused by illegal sales of alcohol to the Indians, Wynema becomes a member of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union to act against ‘the unholy and unlawful practice’.⁹² Genevieve makes a passionate case against allotment, arguing that Indians ‘would be persuaded and threatened into selling their homes . . . until finally they would be homeless outcasts’ rejected by white society.⁹³ And Wynema makes clear cross-cultural connections between the rights of Muscoogee women and those being demanded by white women, which extend the racial boundaries and responsibilities of suffrage: ‘“we are waiting for our more civilized sisters to gain their liberty, and thus set us an example that we will not be slow to follow”’.⁹⁴ However, it is the focus upon the traumatic events at Wounded Knee that is most pertinent: Callahan’s novel is the only known piece of contemporary Indian fiction to include a commentary on events. Callahan asks the blunt titular question: ‘Is This Right?’⁹⁵ and, in answer, a range of characters provide commentary: the government and Indian agents have precipitated events by acting ‘together to starve and slaughter this defenceless people’; and the massacre itself depicts the

iron-clad hand of the white soldiers beating down... helpless, defenceless women and children';⁹⁶ Callahan purposefully presents an Indian account of Wounded Knee ('I am not relating the brave (?) deeds of the white soldier'⁹⁷) and, although her negotiations between Indian and white worlds become more strained, her text ultimately is, as Ruoff argues, 'a moving and powerful call to action'.⁹⁸

This 'call to action', and the increasing use of literature as a form of resistance, builds upon the tradition of activism established by writers such as William Apress in the early nineteenth century. A growing popular awareness of individual and civil rights enabled a new range of Native writers to call for recognition and action in the first half of the twentieth century. Consequently a continuing expression of Indian concerns, and an increasingly critical view of the devastating effects of federal Indian policies, can be traced in the novels of Mourning Dove (Okanogan, 1888–1936), John Joseph Mathews (Osage, 1894–1979) and D'Arny McNickle (Chippewa-Cree, 1904–77). Additionally, an engagement with, and politicisation of, Modernist ideas of socio-cultural alienation can also be identified.

Born in 1888, Mourning Dove (Christine Quintasket) was from a relatively poor background (she was a migrant farmworker), from mixed ancestry (her father was part-white) and had less than four years of formal education.⁹⁹ Consequently her writings have, like the work of Black Elk, been subject to both close scrutiny and a certain amount of scepticism due to her close collaborations with a Euro-American editor and Indian rights activist, Lucullus McWhorter. In spite of McWhorter's sometimes heavy and overbearing editing of the text, the basis of what McWhorter helped 'develop' is Mourning Dove's own response to her role within tribal politics and campaigns for Indian rights, and to enduring negative perceptions of tribal peoples. In this respect, Mourning Dove was a highly active campaigner on legal issues and Native women's rights, and the first woman to be elected to her Tribal Council (1935). Mourning Dove's personal story as a writer is one of triumph over adversity: her poverty meant that her writing was undertaken after long hours of manual labour, and she published only with difficulty – her novel *Cogewea* took eleven years to emerge in print, while her autobiography was published posthumously. Mourning Dove died in 1936.

The extensive collaboration with McWhorter, undertaken due to Mourning Dove's sometimes hesitant translations of her ideas and dialogue into English, remains central to discussions of the novel

Cogewea, the Rain-Bird (1927). Writing to McWhorter, Mourning Dove expresses her astonishment at the extent of some of the editorial polishing, which included glosses explaining Okanogan customs and language, and epigraphs for all chapters: 'I felt like it was someone else's [sic] book and not mine at all'.¹⁰⁰ As a result, the majority of the dialogue is one of two extremes: highly polished and full of rhetoric, or somewhat stilted and reliant upon slang. However, as Dexter Fisher notes, in spite of the difficulties we have in disentangling Mourning Dove's writing from McWhorter's editing, this collaboration is significant because it '[br]oke] new ground in bringing together two disparate traditions'.¹⁰¹ In this sense, *Cogewea* presents an important picture of Okanogan culture as it struggled with the pressures of increasing assimilation and acculturation, and with the ramifications of ongoing Euro-American prejudice and racism. Most importantly, the linguistic tension within the text demonstrates the cultural tensions that both *Cogewea* and Mourning Dove attempt to negotiate.

Set on a ranch in Montana, *Cogewea* is a western romance yet Mourning Dove's analysis of the relationships between *Cogewea*, a Carlisle graduate, and her two potential love interests, Jim LeGrinder (another half-blood) and Alfred Densmore (a sophisticated white Easterner), also carefully considers the prevalence of racism, and the cultural and individual damage caused by assimilation. Thus the character of Densmore exposes the history of duplicity within white-Indian relations: although carefully courting *Cogewea*, Densmore is actually interested in her inheritance from her (white) father. Most significantly, *Cogewea* interrogates the cultural spaces available to the 'half-blood'. Situated between her grandmother Stenreema, who is emblematic both of traditional Okanogan culture and of a 'vanishing race', and the white world into which her sister has successfully integrated through marriage, *Cogewea* is 'regarded with suspicion by the Indian' and 'shunned by the Caucasian'.¹⁰² This is especially evident when she enters – and wins – both the 'squad' (Indian) and 'lady' (white) horse races, and is subsequently penalised for attempting to evade strictly enforced cultural and racial categories. In this context, *Cogewea* is an interesting intervention into established discussions on Indian assimilation, mixed blood and Euro-American fears of miscegenation. Rejecting standard Euro-American literary traditions that, as Alicia Kent comments, insist upon death for the mixed blood to resolve 'an unresolvable social anxiety',¹⁰³ the novel ends with the union of *Cogewea* and Jim, and thus a celebration

and pronunciation of *han-ghou*. While mourning, Love has been criticised for presenting stereotypical vanishing Indians and for advocating assimilation, the novel belies these criticisms through its emphasis upon adaptation – including textual and linguistic adaptation – as a useful form of cultural negotiation and mediation during the transitional years of the early twentieth century.

These types of cultural adaptation, negotiation and mediation are all also evident in John Joseph Mathews' novel *Sundown* (1934) which emerged just after *Cogewea*, during a new phase of federal Indian policies. For example, Roosevelt's 'Indian New Deal' recognised the mistakes of past federal Indian policies, such as allotment, and heralded the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. Born in 1894 in Oklahoma, Mathews was an unusual figure: a veteran of World War One and a graduate of Oxford University, who travelled widely in Europe and Africa before returning to his childhood home in the early 1930s. A founder of the Osage Tribal Museum (1938), a member of the Osage Tribal Council and a participant in the re-organisation of the BIA in the 1930s, Mathews was an active campaigner for, and protector of, Indian rights. He died in 1979.

Of both Osage and white ancestry, Mathews' awareness of his liminal cultural status can clearly be traced within *Sundown*, which discusses mixed race, 'progress' and assimilation, and the possibilities and problematics of cultural mediation.¹⁰⁴ Equally evident in the text is Mathews' awareness of the devastating effect of the Oklahoma oil boom of the 1920s and 30s on Osage culture, when tribal members were legally exploited by self-interested white authorities and individuals. Mathews' mixed-blood protagonist is Chal (Challenge) Windzer, pointedly named by his father in the text as a 'challenge to the disinherited of his people'.¹⁰⁵ Although these disinheriteds are identified primarily as self-interested and exploitative white groups, they also include the well-meaning yet culturally insensitive, such as the white teacher who had fallen 'under the spell of Feminore Cooper'¹⁰⁶ and embraced the romantic stereotype of the 'noble savage'. This type of cultural insensitivity is identified within the text as equally damaging.

Introduced to Euro-American education and aspiring to become white, Chal comes to despise and reject his Indian heritage as he moves through university and military service, where he feels persistently 'out of step' due to his inter-cultural position.¹⁰⁷ Once in the airforce, Chal denies his heritage to claim Spanish ancestry with the result that, even as he becomes 'a man among civilized men', he also becomes 'separated by

a great abyss' from both culture and home.¹⁰⁸ This is evident especially when Chal returns home on his father's death and is subject to an ever-increasing tension between the place he instinctively identifies as 'a paradise on earth',¹⁰⁹ and the discomfort he feels when viewing traditional Osage culture alongside the values of the encroaching white settlers. Chal's alienation is problematised by rapid changes in Osage culture: the sudden vast wealth produced by oil discoveries on lands to which the Osage retain mineral rights, which hastens acculturation and assimilation; and the equally sudden influx of corrupt Euro-American individuals and corporations interested in exploiting Indian wealth, which polarises Osage culture between 'progressives' and 'traditionalists'. Mathews comments on the duplicitous role played by both local Indian agents and the federal government: Congress 'made a new law' identifying the Osage as legally incompetent to manage their financial and business affairs and requiring white 'guardians', with the result that 'white mans that is lawyer and white mans that sells clothes and houses, and white mans that is doctors, cheat Indian[s]'.¹¹⁰ Significantly, by the 1920s the Osage were, as Carol Hunter indicates, in a 'unique' situation for Indians: 'the richest people per capita in the world'.¹¹¹ Osage oil boom towns consequently become 'a lawless haven for ... [crime]',¹¹² and it is in this context that Chal's father is murdered for the symbol of his wealth, his new automobile. Reflecting actual events, *Sundown* ends with the multiple murders of Osage individuals that force the intervention of FBI investigators.

It is against this backdrop of enforced Osage allotment, and the chaos caused both by the oil boom and by the activities of the Euro-American 'Robber Barons', that Mathews interrogates Euro-American understandings of the concept of 'progress'. By the close of the novel, the promise of Chal's youth has been undermined by a range of socio-cultural forces, and he has become reliant upon alcohol to release his 'dammed up emotion';¹¹³ the pressure he feels to assimilate to an unreceptive Euro-American culture, that is coupled with a concomitant sense of cultural loss. It is through this emphasis upon an uncertain ending that Mathews illustrates the cultural instability caused by the assimilation process and by federal Indian policy, and demonstrates the difficulties of mediating between disparate cultures. As Hunter comments, the 'human tragedy' of the novel is the result of 'an abrupt assimilation' which 'alienated those [like Chal] that were caught between the Indian and white values'.¹¹⁴

While the concept of alienation can be traced in Modernist concerns

of the same period, for example in the writings of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway, there is no doubt that Native fiction of this era expands upon these ideas to express the ways in which a sense of alienation is exacerbated for those caught between cultures. Alienation is therefore also the topic of D'Arcy McNickle's 1936 novel *The Surrounded*. Born in Montana in 1904, McNickle was of mixed ancestry and consequently 'passed' as white during his university education. Like Mathews, McNickle also attended Oxford University and travelled in Europe, before returning to the US where he joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Euro-American interest in his Indian heritage was the basis for McNickle's role in the implementation of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, which aimed to rectify the culturally devastating mistakes of previous federal Indian policy by emphasising local tribal self-government. McNickle subsequently worked with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to better co-ordinate campaigns for Indian Civil Rights, and was a lecturer at the University of Saskatchewan. In 1972, he was appointed as Director of the Center for the History of the American Indian in Chicago. McNickle died in 1977.

Continuing the themes of Mathews' *Sandown*, McNickle's novel *The Surrounded* analyses the problems facing Indian communities in the 1930s, where Euro-American demands for greater socio-cultural integration and assimilation are pitted against Indian attempts to maintain traditional cultural concepts and values. Significantly, as Birgit Hans argues, McNickle's novel failed to 'fit into [either of the two accepted [Indian] categories] of modern assimilation or romantic history.'¹⁵ In this sense, the novel is a 'realistic treatment' not only of contemporary Indian life, but also of the cultural alienation experienced by many Indian peoples as a direct result of the history of federal-Indian relations.¹¹⁶ The pressures of external demands for cultural assimilation are evident in McNickle's choice of title: not only are the Indian textual characters 'surrounded' by hostile external forces, but their homeland is so-called because this is where 'they half] been set upon and destroyed'.¹¹⁷ The protagonist, Archilde Leon, is a mixed-blood product of the Indian education system, and the novel traces his return to the Flathead reservation and his attempts to negotiate between the polarised cultural values represented by his Spanish rancher father and his increasingly traditionalist Indian mother. The complex difficulties of Archilde's negotiations are immediately apparent: within hours of arriving home, 'he was wishing to God that he had stayed away'.¹¹⁸ Significantly, it is this emphasis upon

religion, and upon the power of religion as a form of social control, that provides the basis for McNickle's discussion of Euro-American cultural imperialism.

McNickle traces the legacy of Christianity among the Salish through Archilde's mother, 'Faithful Catharine', who is so-called because she is one of the first tribal members converted by Jesuit missionaries.¹¹⁹ The Jesuits subsequently bring 'progress' and 'civilisation' to the Salish in the form of religion and education, yet Catharine identifies the result as 'a chaotic world' where there are 'so many things dead' and so much 'confusion and dread and emptiness' that she is driven to ask '[w]hat had come about since that day of the planting of the cross?'¹²⁰ In terms of textual authority, it is significant that McNickle includes a text within his text — Father Grepilloux's journal — which provides a Euro-American, Christian and ethnographic commentary on Salish culture from the point of view of the colonising assimilative force. In this context what becomes apparent, as Laird Christensen comments, is the devastating impact of 'a new moral code' that 'will effect a culturally lethal separation' of the Salish people from their 'social and ecological' cultural traditions.¹²¹ Most significantly, what McNickle demonstrates are the damaging results of cultural collision and the expectations of swift cultural assimilation, which demands 'a tremendous epistemological and psychological leap' of the newly converted Salish.¹²² The results can be seen in the undermining of traditional Salish culture through an increase in alienation, alcoholism and crime brought on by the Jesuit education system that has taught the younger Salish generation to respect the Christian church and to reject (and thus to disrespect) Salish culture and their parents.

For the majority of the text, therefore, Archilde either seeks acceptance from a range of familial and cultural figures or becomes entangled in criminal activities, often as a passive witness. The text ends in multiple deaths that occur through both error and retribution: Archilde's horse thief brother Louis is shot by a hunting warden, who is then killed by Archilde's mother; when Archilde flees in order to shift the blame from his mother, the Sheriff tracking him is killed by his girlfriend Elise and Archilde is arrested for murder. In spite of distinct mutual cultural misinterpretations and misconceptions it is notable that, for the white Indian Agent who makes the final arrest, Archilde represents a failure for Indian assimilation and becomes a symbol of the Euro-American belief in the biological inability of Indians to 'progress': 'You had everything, every chance, and this is the best you could do with it! ... It's too damn bad you

people never learn that you can't run away'¹³² In spite of this emphasis upon facing facts, it is significant that the Indian Agent is equally representative of Euro-America's refusal to accept the damaging effects of its demands for Indian cultural assimilation. In this context, McNickle makes it emphatically clear that Archilde — and all of his problems — is, quite literally, 'our child'.

From the earliest works of the eighteenth century, Native American writing changed greatly in terms of form, eventually resulting, in the early twentieth century, in the emergence of the 'American Indian novel' which clearly engaged with more widespread literary developments and concerns. However, regardless of form, it is notable that all of these early texts expressed three clear objectives: a re-assertion (and cultural translation) of important Native cultural values; an exposure of ongoing Euro-American racism and its legacy in federal-Indian relations and policies; and an emphasis upon Indian rights. As a result, the emergence of highly focused and prominent Civil Rights movements in the 1950s and 60s heralded a further proliferation, and a new generation, of Native writers and writings.

Notes

1. While the majority of early American texts are available in literary anthologies such as *Norton* and *Heath*, they are now also easily available in online editions.

2. Thomas Harriot (2003), p. 82.

3. William Bradford (2003), pp. 186–7.

4. *Ibid.* p. 189.

5. Mary Rowlandson (2003), p. 337.

6. *Ibid.* pp. 311, 336.

7. Roger Williams (2003), p. 228

8. Gunther Barth (1998), p. 19.

9. *Ibid.* pp. 19–20.

10. For a detailed overview, see Eric Cheyfitz (2002).

11. David Murray (1991), p. 45.

12. Samson Occom (1997), p. 644, emphasis added.

13. *Ibid.* p. 650.

14. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff (1992), p. 79

15. By the time of Occom's speech, it had become commonplace for self-interested white settlers to supply tribes, who often had no experience of alcohol, with spirits in order to influence trade and land deals in their own favour.

16. Occom (1997), p. 658.

17. *Ibid.* p. 657.

18. *Ibid.* p. 656.

19. See Ruoff (1992), p. 78.

20. William Apess (1992), p. ix.

21. *Ibid.* p. 7.

22. *Ibid.* p. 7.

23. *Ibid.* p. 36.

24. *Ibid.* p. 96.

25. Murray (1991), p. 63.

26. Robert Warrior (2004), p. 1.

27. Anne Marie Dannenberg (1996), p. 70.

28. Apess (1992), p. 136.

29. *Ibid.* p. 107.

30. Andrew McClure (1999), p. 29.

31. Malca Powell (2002), p. 400. Survivance is a term popularised by the Anishnabe critic Gerald Vizenor (1994).

32. For the first fifteen years of his life, Eastman and his family believed that his father had been killed in battle.

33. See Margaret Szasz, *The Cultural Broker* (1994).

34. Charles Eastman (1977), p. 241.

35. *Ibid.* p. 18.

36. *Ibid.* p. 246.

37. At Wounded Knee, the seventh cavalry massacred 153 Dakota and wounded a further forty-four, primarily old men, women and children, who were camping under both American and white flags. The encounter was investigated and the army officers exonerated, but public opinion has always been damning, and in 1990 the US government finally offered a 'statement of regret' and redesignated the 'battle' as a massacre. For a full text of the statement, (House of Representatives, 25 October 1990), see the records for the 101st Congress at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/rr101query.html>.

38. Eastman (2001), pp. 272, 286, 290.

39. *Ibid.* p. 296.

40. *Ibid.* p. 301.

41. *Ibid.* p. 363.

42. Murray (1991), p. 76.

43. Responding to the need for more land for white settlement, the 1887 Dawes Act allowed the 'allotting' of reserved lands to individual Indians. The result was the rupture of tribal notions of communality in favour of Euro-American notions of private property, and — since there was more land available than individual Indians to take it — the opening up of Indian land to white settlement. Widespread misuse of the Act was condemned by the Meriam Report of 1928 and it was repealed in 1934.

By this point, more than half of all tribal lands had been lost.

44. Powell (2002), p. 404.

45. Sarah Winnemucca (1994), p. 5, p. 11, p. 6.

46. McClure (1999), p. 31.

47. Winnemucca (1994), p. 12.

48. *Ibid.* p. 45.

49. *Ibid.* pp. 53–4.

50. *Ibid.* p. 136.

51. *Ibid.* p. 207.

52. Powell (2002), p. 427.

53. A substantial number of children died either as a result of separation from their

- families (often accompanied by severe cultural shock) or from a range of epidemics. Standing Bear notes that parents were regularly given no warning that their children were ill, and no invitation to the burials (1977: 162).
54. Luther Standing Bear (1977), p. 141.
 55. Standing Bear had to ask Pratt's permission to speak to his visiting father in his own language.
 56. Standing Bear (1977), p. 166.
 57. Frederick Hale (1993), p. 33.
 58. *Ibid.* p. 33.
 59. Standing Bear (1978), p. 16.
 60. *Ibid.* p. 18.
 61. *Ibid.* p. xx.
 62. Living in self-proclaimed 'colonies' among a range of southwestern tribes were, among others, Georgia O'Keefe, D. H. Lawrence, Ansel Adams, Mabel Dodge Luhan and Willa Cather.
 63. Standing Bear (1978), p. 226.
 64. *Ibid.* p. 227.
 65. *Ibid.* p. 245.
 66. The criminalisation of Native American religions continued until 1978, with the introduction of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.
 67. As with nineteenth-century African-American slave narratives, questions tend to arise concerning the role of the white editor, and the extent to which that editor influences, shapes or even writes/rewrites texts and topics. This is especially pertinent when the subject matter is 'cultural' or ethnographic. Such questions, although important, do tend to negate the agency of the Indian authors, effectively erasing or discounting their voice/opinions.
 68. Murray (1991), p. 65.
 69. *Ibid.* p. 71.
 70. The increasing popularity of Black Elk's text in the late twentieth century is indebted to the rise of a new kind of Euro-American fascination: the 'New Age' or 'Eco-Indian'.
 71. Nicholas Black Elk (1979), p. 270.
 72. *Ibid.* p. 263.
 73. Murray (1991), p. 72.
 74. Black Elk (1979), pp. vii-viii.
 75. *Ibid.* p. 270.
 76. *Ibid.* p. 270.
 77. *Ibid.* pp. 273-4.
 78. Chinna Achebe (1993), p. 434.
 79. The exact origins of the syllabary are subject to some debate, but the general consensus is that the creator was Sequoyia, or George Guess (c. 1760-1843), son of a Cherokee mother and English father.
 80. In 1831, the Cherokee took their case to the US Supreme Court, who ruled in their favour and declared Georgia's action illegal. The case proved useless when President Jackson refused to uphold the ruling.
 81. In total, more than 50,000 (numbers are still disputed) Native Americans lost their lands and were forced west.
 82. John Rollin Ridge (2003), p. 27.
 83. *Ibid.* p. 3.
 84. John Lowe (1992), p. 115.
 85. *Ibid.* p. 107.
 86. Ridge (2003), p. 136.
 87. *Hyemema* was only recently 'rediscovered', and republished in the late 1990s.
 88. Annette van Dyke (1992), p. 124.
 89. Ruoff (1997), p. xix.
 90. Susan Bernardin (2001), p. 209.
 91. S. Alice Callahan (1997), pp. 6, 18.
 92. *Ibid.* p. 44.
 93. *Ibid.* p. 52.
 94. *Ibid.* p. 45.
 95. *Ibid.* p. 94.
 96. *Ibid.* pp. 74, 90.
 97. *Ibid.* p. 92.
 98. Ruoff (1997), p. xliii.
 99. Mourning Dove did return to education at a later date in an attempt to improve her writing skills.
 100. Cited in Dexter Fisher (1981), p. xv.
 101. *Ibid.* p. xxvi.
 102. Mourning Dove (1981), p. 17.
 103. Alicia Kent (1999), p. 48.
 104. *Sundown* is often loosely autobiographical.
 105. John Joseph Mathews (1988), p. 4.
 106. *Ibid.* p. 26.
 107. *Ibid.* p. 98.
 108. *Ibid.* pp. 230, 208.
 109. *Ibid.* p. 233.
 110. *Ibid.* pp. 235-6.
 111. Carol Hunter (1982), p. 67.
 112. *Ibid.* p. 68.
 113. Mathews (1988), p. 297.
 114. Hunter (1982), p. 71.
 115. Birgit Hans (1996), p. 236.
 116. *Ibid.* p. 236.
 117. D'Arcy McNickle (1994), frontispiece.
 118. *Ibid.* p. 14.
 119. *Ibid.* p. 22.
 120. *Ibid.* p. 22.
 121. Laird Christensen (1999), p. 3.
 122. *Ibid.* p. 7.
 123. McNickle (1994), pp. 296-7.