University of Tennessee, Knoxville

TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange

Doctoral Dissertations

Graduate School

8-1998

What the grandchildren learned : the relationship between English and indigenous languages in North American Indian autobiography

Leslie M. LaChance

Follow this and additional works at: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss

Recommended Citation

LaChance, Leslie M., "What the grandchildren learned : the relationship between English and indigenous languages in North American Indian autobiography. " PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 1998.
https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/9294

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Leslie M. LaChance entitled "What the grandchildren learned : the relationship between English and indigenous languages in North American Indian autobiography." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

Ilona Leki, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Marilyn Kallet, Michael Keene, Carolyn Hodges

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Leslie M. LaChance entitled "What the Grandchildren Learned: The Relationship Between English and Indigenous Languages in North American Indian Autobiography." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for content and form and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

Ilona Leki

Ilona Leki, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Marilyn Kallet

Professor Marilyn Kallet

Professor Michael Keene

Carolyn Hodges

Professor Carolyn Hodges

Accepted for the Council:

Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

WHAT THE GRANDCHILDREN LEARNED: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH AND INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree in English
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Leslie M. LaChance
August 1998

Copyright © *Leslie M. LaChance*, 1998

All rights reserved

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents

Dolores LaChance and Joseph R. LaChance

and to my grandmother

Mary Mincarelli

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the faculty and my fellow students in the Department of English for their assistance, guidance, and enduring friendship over the past seven years. In particular, I would like to thank my Dissertation Committee, Ilona Leki, Marilyn Kallet, Mike Keene, and Carolyn Hodges for their dedicated support and encouragement of this project. Their careful reading of the dissertation and their insightful suggestions on the many drafts and revisions have been invaluable. Ann Walker has provided me with vital research and editorial assistance, for which I am truly grateful. Thanks is also due to Dinah Brock for her assistance in logistical matters. In addition, I have received generous financial support from the Department of English and the College of Arts and Sciences. Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to my friends and family, whose loving support has helped to make this undertaking possible.

Abstract

Since the time of early contact with European imperialists, indigenous peoples of the Americas have negotiated linguistic differences with colonial powers. Where colonial oppression and attempts at cultural genocide have not rendered the complete extinction of indigenous languages, these forces often have brought about remarkable language shifts compelling North American natives to rely on European languages as discourses of wider communication and to use indigenous languages in limited contexts. This study examines the relationship between English and indigenous languages as depicted by North American Indian autobiographers living in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The works of early autobiographers such as Charles Eastman, Zitkala-Sa, and Luther Standing Bear document the writers' experiences acquiring English as a second language through the often oppressive teaching practices of the nineteenth century Indian boarding school system. Autobiographies by Leslie Marmon Silko and N. Scott Momaday document the long-term consequences of imperialist language practices resulting in a generation of Indian autobiographers who write in English and who do not speak their ancestral languages fluently. By approaching these texts through qualitative content analysis, this study considers how Indians writing in English dehegemonize the

language and compel scholars to develop a critical discourse reflective of Indian concerns regarding language.

Preface

This study investigates the connection between language and identity in North American Indian autobiography; it focuses in particular on autobiographers' accounts of how individual and community identities are shaped by the relationship between English and indigenous languages. The work presented here is founded on an interest in second language acquisition theory and the social, economic, and political aspects of teaching English as a second language in colonial contexts.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of traditional Euroamerican perspectives on autobiography and summarizes recent scholarship discussing the limitations these perspectives pose for study of North American Indian autobiography. Autobiographical narratives written in English by North American indigenous people may be read as forms of ironic synchretic resistance to traditional Euroamerican paradigms of monolingual narratives focused on emerging autonomous selves. The chapter outlines a methodology for reading depictions of the relationship between English and indigenous languages as manifestations of ironic synchretic resistance in Indian autobiographical narratives. This methodology relies on a qualitative content analysis of the autobiographies and contextualizes the work in terms of language planning theory and the

history of English language education at Indian schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The chapter describes selection criteria for the data and methods of collecting and organizing the materials for discussion.

Chapter 2 discusses issues in language planning and considers the social and political implications of colonialist language policies in general. These issues are then readdressed through a survey of historical research on language education policies at North American Indian schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Extensive consideration is given to historical documentation of language teaching methods and materials used in these schools.

Chapter 3 focuses on autobiographical writings by North American Indians, many of whom acquired English as a second or other language in the Indian school system. Autobiographical excerpts depicting language learning or non-learning experiences at schools and in wider communities are analyzed in terms of the qualitative approach described in Chapter One.

Chapter 4 considers the work of two autobiographers who are native speakers of English and who do not speak the languages of their ancestors fluently. In this chapter, the author explores how the autobiographers shape their depictions of the relationship between English and indigenous languages in response to this situation. These

depictions reflect the autobiographers' ideas about the relationships between older and younger generations, between orality and literacy, and between the privileged and the disenfranchised. The question of community and individual identity as expressed in the autobiographers' depictions of English and indigenous languages is also explored.

Chapter 5 discusses movements in contemporary North American Indian writing and language education aimed at decolonizing English. Recently, North American Indian writers and educators have worked to transform thinking about English and indigenous languages in ways that destabilize the colonial hegemony previously established by the dominance of English. This chapter connects the current dehegemonizing language practices of North American Indians to theories of post-colonial writing developed by scholars from other colonized nations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION..... 1

CHAPTER ONE: METHOD AND FRAMEWORK..... 12

FRAMEWORK: SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES..... 12

Language, Conquest, Ironic Synchretic Resistance. 12
Frontier Texts..... 17
Traditional Views and Definitions of Autobiography..... 19
Another World View..... 22
The Dominance of the Bicultural..... 25
The Question of Self and Referentiality Restated in Bicultural Terms..... 33

MULTIPLE METHODS RESEARCH IN A QUALITATIVE MODE.... 37

Basis of the Model..... 39
Extending the Model and Developing a Multiple Methods Approach..... 40
Selection of Materials..... 44
Collection and Organization of the Data..... 51

CHAPTER TWO: LANGUAGE PLANNING AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT... 55

LANGUAGE PLANNING ISSUES..... 55

INDIAN EDUCATION AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: A CONTEXT..... 58

Colonial Missions..... 60
Missionaries and Language Tolerance..... 65
Recruiting..... 68
Ethnocentrism..... 72
Reform..... 85

CHAPTER THREE: A NEW ENGLISH-SPEAKING GENERATION WRITES BACK..... 100

MATERIALS..... 100

The Texts..... 101

INTRODUCING A NEW LANGUAGE..... 108

And your name is?..... 108

INSTITUTIONAL AND STUDENT GENERATED LESSONS..... 117

Immersion..... 119
You Had Better Speak English, Or Else!..... 121
Circumventing the English-Only Rules..... 126
An Exception to English Only..... 127
Fun With Dick and Jane..... 128
The Influence of Peers..... 134
Other Motivations..... 138
Word Power: Authorial Aspirations..... 144

RE-PLACING IDENTITY: LANGUAGE, SELF, COMMUNITY..... 146

Sustaining Language..... 160

CHAPTER FOUR: WHAT THE GRANDCHILDREN LEARNED: ENGLISH AND ANCESTRAL LANGUAGES IN THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS OF LESLIE MARMON SILKO AND N. SCOTT MOMADAY..... 162

WORD STORIES AND THE (GRAND)MOTHER TONGUE..... 162

MATERIALS..... 167

Autobiographical Writings..... 167
Interviews..... 173

THEMES..... 177

The Role of Elders' Voices..... 181
The Spoken and the Written..... 195
English as the Language of Loss in *Storyteller*... 209
Choosing English..... 214

CHAPTER FIVE: REINVENTION..... 223

REFERENCES..... 243

VITA..... 256

Introduction

> Christopher, among the things that haven't changed since your arrival is the dissemination of false information about native peoples. Yes, it has really become quite an industry here in America. Lots of people since you have made their living writing just whatever they please about Native Americans, or whatever would most please their audiences.
>
> --Kimberly M. Blaeser
> "Dear Christopher"
> In *Dear Christopher: Letters to Christopher Columbus by Contemporary Native Americans*

Typically, when researchers and writers are in the midst of long term projects, friends, acquaintances, and fellow scholars may express some interest or at least mild curiosity about what the writer has been doing lately. "What are you working on now?" "What are you writing about?" they ask. The writer may give them a brief synopsis of the current project, talk a little about the stages of research, or discuss the genesis of the idea. Some colleagues, friends, and acquaintances may be more interested in the topic than others are, and often those who inquire about it do so out of a kind of polite curiosity. Such is protocol, and such has been the protocol I expected and, to some extent, engaged in while working on this project.

However, my conversations with the politely curious or the genuinely interested individuals who asked about my project began to take on a predictable pattern, one that went beyond the conventions of academic protocol and moved

into a disquieting dimension. "It's about the relationship of English and indigenous languages in Native American[1] autobiography," I would tell those who asked. "Oh, that's interesting. Are you an Indian?" would come the inevitable response. Given the fact that my physical features may resemble those features some individuals identify with mixed-blood ancestry, this question should not have been, and indeed was not, a surprise. However, after I began to realize that this would be the most immediate and typical response to follow my one-sentence dissertation abstract, and that a pattern was beginning to develop, I also began to wonder if the question would have been asked if my hair had not been quite so straight and dark, if my eyes had not been

---

[1]When writing or discussing people whose ancestors are considered indigenous to this continent, one can be overwhelmed by the sheer number of names and misnomers used to refer to them. Indian, Native American, indigenous people, native peoples, Native, First Nations people, and tribal people are all names used by people who emigrated from Europe to North America to talk about the people who were already here and had been here for centuries. These long-time inhabitants of the continent already had their own names for themselves, and many of these names have since been adapted to fit English-, Spanish-, or French-speaking tongues. In this dissertation, I use some of these specific and general names interchangeably but make every attempt to follow the cues of the Indian writers discussed here in determining which names are most appropriate in which contexts. For instance, if a writer refers to herself or himself as "Sioux," I use the word "Sioux;" whereas if the writer uses the word "Lakota" or "Dakota," this is the name I use. However, when specificity is not possible, I draw my terminology from the many names available, thus illustrating the continuing difficulty Euroamerican discourse encounters in naming the Other. For the most part though, I rely most heavily on the word "Indian" for generalizations, since this name seems now to be widely accepted and often used in scholarly and popular literature authored by Indian writers.

somewhat almond shaped and dark brown, if my skin had not had darker tones than some other person's skin. Would it have been asked if my physical features had been more distinctly African or Teutonic, or if my name had been Keiko and I had spoken English with a Japanese accent?

It was asked, and asked, and asked again. In fact, it was the exceptional casual conversation about my dissertation during which the inquirer did not pose the question about my ancestry almost immediately upon learning my area of interest. As anticipated as the question became, each opportunity to answer the query about my heritage proved more difficult to negotiate as my research and writing progressed; I began to see the issues surrounding the question as more complicated and disturbing. Part of this complication arose from my inability to know what was really being asked or to know exactly why the question had been posed. At the most basic level, it was a question about identity, but more profoundly, it was a question, or perhaps many questions embraced by one, about the relationship between identity, research, and writing. Did this person want to know if I had arrived at my dissertation topic out of some desire to better understand what they believed might be my own ancestry? If so, what might I be trying to understand about it? Was I being asked to assume the role of an expert on the experience of being Indian because some of my physical features matched those

identified as "Indian"? Did the question imply that, if I were indeed Indian then I would have a better claim or more logical motivation for "doing" Indian scholarship? If I were not Indian, was the question challenging my presumption in writing about Indian issues? Was it a question about how an Indian might look in the clothes of an academic? Was it a question about blood quantum?

At first I would try to explain about the gaps in genealogical records on my father's side of the family, about my Canadian paternal grandfather who had disappeared before I was born, about how there were family stories of Indian ancestors, and about how one of my uncles and an aunt were trying to get the family history sorted out. I would talk about the birth records in Quebec and how no one in my family here in the U.S. spoke enough French to get good information about a very common name, so I could not really say whether or not I was what they or anyone else would call an Indian. I would talk about my three other Italian immigrant grandparents and my middle-class upbringing in a small, mostly white community. In some cases, after my less-than-rapt audience would blink away the glaze that had covered their eyes when it had become apparent I was not going to discourse about life on the reservation, they might mention something about their Cherokee great-grandmother, a princess, and how it would be nice to have a piece of that new casino action. I started to get nervous.

I was already three chapters into my project by the time I developed serious concerns about the pattern of response I saw emerging just in the course of casual conversation. If these individuals who had never read, and perhaps never would read a word I had written, wondered about my Indian status or lack thereof, what would people who actually might read my work begin to ask about its writer? I was not made any more comfortable by reading articles such as Karen Gayton Swisher's (1996) "Why Indian People Should Be the Ones to Write About Indian Education," in which she advocates Indian self-determination and writes

> If non-Indian educators have been involved in Indian education because they believe in Indian people and want them to be empowered, they must now demonstrate that belief by stepping aside. They must begin to question their motives beyond wanting to do something to improve education for Indian people. In writing about Indian education, they must now defer to Indian authors, or at least co-author in a secondary position. Far too often non-Indian people have been writing the books on Indian education, so to speak. For example, just three non-Indian authors have written more than 30 articles and books about Indian education since 1985. (p. 85)

Likewise, Devon Mihesuah's (1996) discussion of "ethnic

fraud and new Indians" (p. 100) cautions non-Indians away from imperialistic approaches to scholarship in Indian studies. She rightly shames academic wannabe "Indians," those individuals who try to stake claims on identities that belong to them about as much as the land on which they live belonged to their European ancestors who drove the Indians off it. Mihesuah cites the cliché "I'm part Indian (but can't prove it)" and attributes it to "any number of academicians or students, c. 1970-present" (p. 100). She continues

> Ethnic fraud in university settings is not wanting. Fact is, some scholars who once were not Indian now are because they are aware that most universities will not ask them to prove it. Other scholars have sifted through archives in desperate attempts to find an Indian ancestor in order to prove that they "belong." The latter people, the "New Indians," are especially troublesome because they often have no cultural ties whatsoever with tribes, but they write as if they do. (p. 100)

Finally, Ward Churchill's (1994) critique of "Do It Yourself 'Indianism'" and his writings on blood quantum theory and practice (1994) linking federal policy on Indian blood quantum to Hitler's Final Solution, South African apartheid, and struggles between Israelis and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories should give any scholar pause.

If I had encountered these writings before I had begun this dissertation, it is entirely possible I would have chosen another topic. Who was I to further my career by trading on the writings of already terribly exploited people who were working so hard to reclaim their cultures, lands, and lives? Who was I to talk about the possibility of Indian ancestry when I had never had any cultural ties to these supposed mysterious and distant relatives? Regardless of the fact that I had already invested so much time and energy into my own project, wouldn't it just have been best for me to set it aside, to let Indian writers deal with the material on their own terms?

The easiest answer would have been "yes." Yes, Indian writers and scholars must take, and have taken, on issues in language and autobiography, and yes, non-Indians must make room in professional literature for this discourse. However, I do not believe that all Indian writers and scholars want to utterly silence their non-Indian colleagues any more than they themselves wish to be silenced. In being asked to step aside, non-Indians are being asked to listen, to think, and to re-think their ideas about Indian writing, Indian education, Indian culture. Perhaps, as Swisher suggests above, non-Indians may sound their voices along *with* the voices of their Indian colleagues in support of Indian writing and scholarship. However, instead of writing or speaking from an assumed position of power based on

academic achievement, instead of speaking *for* Indian writers who are well able to speak for themselves, non-Indians who choose to write about Indians should strive to avoid subsuming Indian discourse as part of their own in an attempt to be "inclusive." Non-Indians who write about Indians should not assume that they can "ma[ke] their living writing just whatever they please about Native Americans" (Blaeser, 1992 p. 7).

One of the reasons I chose to continue with my project is that I hoped, in the end, it would reflect some aspect of this re-thinking process Indian scholars and writers have challenged others to undertake. In the early stages of writing this text, represented by Chapters One and Two, I relied heavily on the work of non-Indian scholars, framing my thesis and discussion in terms defined by non-Indian paradigms of autobiography and history. I believe the non-Indian scholars I relied on here approach their topics on Indian writing and the history of Indian education responsibly, but my focus on what these scholars had to say eclipsed the possibility of making room for the work of Indian scholars and writers who publish on the same subjects but whose work may not be as widely known in academic circles or as frequently cited by non-Indian scholars. In the methodology section of Chapter 1, I write of my intention to make room for the voices of Indian writers later in the dissertation, and to focus on non-Indian

historical narratives first in order to provide a "context" in which to read the autobiographies. In doing so, I have made apparent my bias toward the conventions of non-Indian academic thought which still gives priority to non-Indian texts and still seeks to understand Indian works in terms of how they reflect or differ from what is already familiar, namely Euroamerican theories of self, language, and history. However, the last three chapters of this dissertation, mostly written after numerous encounters with the "Are you an Indian?" question, represent, I hope, another way of thinking. These chapters by design focus almost completely on writing by Indians, and while I do incorporate scholarship by non-Indians, their work does not represent the bulk of the discourse. I strive to move away from a bias favoring Euroamerican scholars in my later chapters, and to leave room for Indian writers who create their own context and fill it with their ideas about learning language, about the relationship between English and indigenous North American languages, and about the relationship of self and language. These last three chapters are an attempt to re-contextualize the discussions of the first two.

The caveat here is that the structure of this dissertation in many ways reflects the culture of colonialism in North America. In Chapters One and Two, the voices of Indians are overpowered by the voices of non-

Indians, thus mirroring the circumstances of early contact between Europeans and indigenous North Americans. The remaining chapters document the struggle and achievement of Indians in their attempts to throw off the silencing forces of non-Indians. While this structure can be said to indicate a change in my thinking marked by the inclusion of Indian voices, ultimately the structure's foundation is determined by colonialism. The temptation, then, is to regard the project as a failure, to concede that non-Indian academic discourse is not up to the task of addressing Indian concerns. In writing about Indian autobiographies it may be that for non-Indians the experience is akin to what Susan Gardner (1995) describes in her essay about teaching Indian literature. She writes "For Euramericans to remain comfortable with themselves, Indian people must be viewed in certain ways only. If that is the case, then my teaching is not really about Native America: it is about our fragile, conflict-ridden, haunted selves" (p. 373).

Gardner's observation returns me to the question which initiated this introduction. The fact that the question of my own identity became virtually unavoidable in my conversations with others about this dissertation says something about the nature of this project. In such an undertaking, the question of identity comes to matter more than anything else. It is both a question for the individual and a question for the multitude of people,

readers, and writers, who find themselves engaged in cultural conflict. Identity determines what and how one chooses to write. If one questions identity, then one must question what and how one chooses to write. Perhaps a project such as this, which considers the relationship between language and self and, thus, forces a confrontation with identity and its effect on writing, has both its beginning and its end in the question of who we are.

Chapter 1

Framework and Method

> He was now anxious to have his boys learn the English language and something about books, for he could see that these were the "bows and arrows" of the white man.
>
> Charles A. Eastman
> *From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters In the Autobiography of An Indian*

FRAMEWORK: SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES

Language, Conquest, Ironic Synchretic Resistance

Clichés about pens and swords not withstanding, the metaphor above from the 1916 autobiography of Charles Eastman, a Santee Sioux, points to an important paradox of nineteenth and twentieth century North American Indian autobiographical texts: a great number of them are composed by authors using English as a second language to tell stories of lives lived between two languages. In other words, the white man's "bows and arrows" are deployed by the Indian to tell the Indian's own story. In Eastman's case, it is partly his father's story as well, and it is the father's perception of English which is adopted by the son. The elder Eastman, known as Many Lightnings, had been jailed after a Sioux uprising against U.S. troops in 1862, and while in prison he became a Christian and learned to read and write some English (Eastman, 1916). Though not as proficient in the language as his son would become, Many Lightnings had come to believe that the Sioux's best defense in light of

Anglo conquest would be to adopt these weapons of the white man: English words.

Charles Eastman's autobiography does not make the intent to use the white man's words as weapons an overly explicit point, but any text recounting the struggles of a North American Indian to survive and thrive in the face of cultural genocide offers the possibility of reading the text as a critique of Anglo cultural hegemony. Certainly post-colonial literatures of nations around the world and the scholarship on those literatures have demonstrated that colonized people who have become proficient in the language of their colonizers have turned its use into an act of subversion through critique of the dominant culture. As Salman Rushdie observes regarding the critical success of the East Indian English language author G.V. Desani, English in a colonial context "turn[ed] against itself: the instrument of subservience became a weapon of liberation" (p. 8). Mary Louise Pratt describes a similar situation, though in this case with regard to Spanish as the language of conquest, in her study of South American colonialism; she finds "the invader's language [is] appropriated by the invadee to address the invader; the invadee's interests [are] expressed in discursive apparatuses adapted from the invader and redirected back at him" (p. 25). Gerald Vizenor (1994) writes of North America that

the English language has been the linear tongue of

> colonial discoveries, racial cruelties, invented names,the simulation of tribal cultures, manifest manners, and the unheard literature of dominance in tribal communities; at the same time, this mother tongue of paracolonialism has been a language of invincible imagination and liberation for many tribal people in the postindian world. English, a language of paradoxes, learned under duress by tribal people at mission and federal schools, was one of the languages that carried the vision and shadows of the Ghost Dance, the religion of renewal, from tribe to tribe on the vast plains at the end of the nineteenth century.
>
> (p. 105)

Like their colonized counterparts on other continents, North American Indian writers have created narratives which rely, in part, on the paradox of the language implicating itself and the dominant culture in an indictment of colonial oppression.

Thus, in many of the North American Indian autobiographies considered here, the very language in which they are composed, English, most especially *written* English, is itself an object of critique. The "bows and arrows" of written English in the white man's hands (in the form of treaties, anti-Indian government legislation, and assimilationist education policies) have played a

significant role in the theft of land and eradication of traditional lives of North American indigenous people. Yet the authors considered here recount in *written English* how the *written English* word is party to incidents of theft, deception, and oppression. For example, autobiographies such as those by Eastman, Francis LaFlesche, Zitkala-Sa, and Jane Willis, among others, describe in some detail the experience of acquiring English at Indian boarding schools through methods designed to extinguish native languages and replace them with English. These descriptions of Anglo-centric teaching methods, including accounts of harsh punishments for speaking native languages or unjust consequences for misunderstandings, contribute to the critique of English as well as colonialism. English from the autobiographical pen of a North American Indian can be understood as marking the apparent success of assimilationist efforts in terms of language, but it also can be read as a means of resistance to these assimilationist efforts, especially when turned to a critique of the dominant culture. This stance is addressed by many scholars of Indian autobiography, including Bataille and Sands (1984), Brumble (1988), Coleman (1993), Krupat and Swann (1987), Krupat (1985, 1989, 1992), Swann and Krupat (1987), Vizenor (1993), and Wong (1992).

The same has been said for the Indian's adaptation of what scholars, until recent years, have regarded an

essentially Western mode of narrative, the written autobiography. As those cited above and others have observed, autobiography as it is known in the West, namely as a chronologically written narrative of an autonomous self, is not a narrative mode traditionally practiced by North American indigenous people.[1] Yet, this Western literary form as adapted by some Indian autobiographers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also demonstrates how the writers resist colonial conventions. It is not a static resistance, as in an outright refusal to accept the changes wrought by conquest, but what I would choose to call an ironic synchretic resistance.

I use the term ironic synchretic resistance here to indicate more than mere synthesis or adaptation of traditions and cultures; rather, it is meant to convey a sense of selectively forming or reforming pieces of myriad cultures as represented by artifacts, and layering and interweaving the pieces in such a way as to make the meaning of a whole entirely dependent on the often antithetical relationship among the parts[2]. Taking an example from

---

[1] Swann and Krupat (1987), for example, write "Although tribes, like people the world over, kept material as well as mental records of collective and personal experience, the notion of telling the whole of any one individual's life or taking merely personal experience as of particular significance was, in the most literal way, foreign to them, if not also repugnant" (p. ix).

[2]The term ironic synchretic resistance is one I have derived specifically to describe these features of North American Indian autobiographical narrative.

another context, the motif of the upside down American flag (an American symbol of distress) which appeared in Indian visual arts such as beadwork and weaving after the conquest is more than an adaptation of a U.S. icon to traditional materials. Rather, its meaning, read by some as a critique of conquest embedded in ironic implications of the synchretic artifact, is only understood through the seemingly incongruous relationship among the parts, the flag of the conqueror flown in such as way as to signal distress and depicted in the traditional art of the conquered. A similar type of resistance is found in Indian autobiography, most obviously through subversion of the form (as will be addressed later in this chapter) or inclusion of content damning to the colonial enterprise (as in accounts of Anglo-centric teaching methods).

Frontier Texts

While North American Indian autobiography has captured the interest of scholars for many good reasons, significant among these would have to be the culturally charged circumstances surrounding the creation of these texts, which encourage readings sensitive to themes of cultural identity or to indications of resistance or assimilation to colonial power. Some autobiographies such as Mary Crow Dog's *Lakota Woman* (1990) or her later *Ohitika Woman* written under the name Mary Brave Bird (1993) document a more overt resistance

to white culture by providing a chronicle of the author's anti-U.S. government and pro-Indian political and spiritual activities, but even those autobiographies like Eastman's, which may seem, initially, to tell the story of what some would regard as successful assimilation, also offer critiques of cultural imperialism. A critical approach such as the one developed by Krupat in *Ethnocriticism: Ethnography, History, Literature* (1992) offers a useful perspective on the situation of North American Indian autobiography. Relying on Clifton's (1989) definition of the frontier as "a social setting...a culturally defined place where peoples with different culturally expressed identities meet and deal with each other" (p. 24), Krupat (1992) writes

> Of course, the two cultures [European and North American Indian] which met and dealt with each other at the various frontiers noted by Western history were almost never two cultures of equivalent material power, so that an ethnocriticism founded upon ethnohistorical descriptions of the frontier must involve a recognition that the topics it takes up from an anthropological, historical, or literary perspective all must be set against the backdrop of a pervasive Western imperialism. (p. 5)

Thus, any discussion of the autobiographical texts of North

American Indians which failed to take this situation into account or demonstrate an awareness of its importance would be lacking. Acknowledging this power relationship at the "frontier" is especially necessary for a discussion of language in the texts, for, as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) observe, "one of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language. The imperial education system installs a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all 'variants' as impurities" (p. 7).

My concern here is to examine how North American Indian autobiographers depict this marginalization of native languages and coerced acquisition of English resulting from the imperial education system to which these writers have been subjected. This chapter attempts to address some of the critical issues presented by the nature of autobiographical texts and to develop a methodology which accounts for these issues. Such a methodology also needs to address issues presented by the historical situation of these texts. The historical background will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

Traditional Views and Definitions of Autobiography

In their attempts to define significant features of a genre called "autobiography," academics focus much of their attention on Western concepts of self as presented in texts

which have come to be called autobiography.[3] In most discussions of autobiographies, it is assumed that the author's main interest is herself or himself and that the text created reflects some aspect of that unique identity or the singular experience of existence as that particular individual. For Philippe Lejeune (1989) autobiography is primarily a "retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality" (p. 4). Albert E. Stone (1981) offers the sparse definition of autobiography as "simply and profoundly, personal history" (p. 3). Scholars who subscribe to decidedly poststructural views of subjectivity are also compelled to focus on a pre-occupation with self-hood in their approaches to autobiography. Michael Fischer (1994), for instance, describes autobiography as an attempt to "inscribe individual identity," which he calls the first voice of autobiography. While he also describes layerings of

---

[3]Indeed for Gusdorf (1980), the very existence of autobiography is made possible by concepts of self peculiar to Western culture. He writes "it is obvious that autobiography is not possible in a cultural landscape where consciousness of self does not, properly speaking, exist" (p. 30) Of course, this self of which we can properly speak is one dependent upon a linear conception of time and narrative. Gusdorf excludes so called "primitive societies" from self-consciousness since "humanity must have emerged from the mythic framework of traditional teachings and must have entered into the perilous domain of history" (p. 30) in order to conceive an autobiographical self. As I will demonstrate later in this chapter, the limits of Gusdorf's position in regard to North American Indian autobiography have been made clear by O'Brien (1973), Brumble (1988), and Wong (1992).

multiple voicings established by historical cross-cultural situations, the initial focus of his definition is still one of individual identity. Even to rely on the etymology of the compound word itself (as coined in English by the poet Robert Southey) by way of definition places focus on the life of a literate self: auto = self, bio = life, graphy = written. Indeed it would seem that the task of writing one's singular identity is at the very core of autobiography studies for Western scholars.

Another tack taken in attempt to set critical parameters for autobiography has been to address the question of reference. Critics ask: are the narrator and the narrative "real"? In other words, are they actual people (as opposed to fictitious characters) who have done historically documentable things (as opposed to making it all up)? I will address this issue at length later in this chapter since North American Indian autobiography affords a more complex view of this matter than do many other Western autobiographies on which most theories of referentiality are based. For now, it will suffice to say that in order to address this question of the "real," critical convention has come to consider the relationship between the autobiographer and the audience as a kind of pact which defines the genre of autobiography. What this pact entails on the part of the writer, according to scholars like Bruss (1976) and Lejeune (1989), is that he or she reports true events that actually

happened to him or her. What the pact requires from the reader is a seemingly naive acceptance of the autobiographer as a "real" person and a belief that the events recorded are historically proveable facts. This, for most critics, is what sets autobiography apart from other writing, most especially fiction. As Lejeune scholar Paul John Eakin (1992) writes, "readers and the autobiographers who write for them seem prepared to defend the existence of a generic boundary between autobiography and fiction despite knowledge that this distinction--or at any rate its basis--may well partake more of fiction than fact" (30). It is not a question of whether what is being reported is fact or fiction or exaggeration, the real truth or a symbolic truth, that determines autobiography; rather, it is that both parties, the reader and the writer, agree to believe that some version of what has been reported actually happened.

Another World View

While the notion of an autobiographical pact is a useful one for discussion of North American Indian autobiography, it will quickly become apparent that many of the texts I have chosen to call North American Indian autobiography in this study are not always well-served by definitions and parameters such as the ones sketched above. Though many are prose narratives, some are not; though many tell the story of an individual life, few are examinations

of developing personalities as Western psychoanalysis has come to define the concept. Some are authored completely by the individual whose life is being told, but many are the products of collaboration. While a given narrative may be retrospective and told in a linear chronological fashion, fact after fact, event after event, others may be recursive, repetitious. The resulting texts, though at times incorporating some aspects of Western autobiographical conventions noted above, have prompted scholars who study these works to approach them on terms dictated by the texts themselves rather than by the systematic applications of standard definitions derived from Western literary traditions. This is due partly to the fact that the texts seem a conflation of narrative traditions: oral and written; Western and non-Western; anthropological and literary; lyric and prose; religious and secular; mythic and historical; English language and Indian languages; and the list could go on. Langness and Frank (1981) observe that

> if an autobiography is, by [Western] definition, an account that focuses on the inner life, a very interesting problem arises, because there is evidence that not all people conceive of an "inner self," nor do they have the same ideas as those prevalent in contemporary Western cultures about personal development or change. Can we assume, then, that autobiographies collected by

> anthropologists in other cultures really reflect the subjects' authentic perspective? This is a question that, surprisingly perhaps, anthropologists have not been asking for very long. Yet it is important when using personal documents, such as the "autobiographies" collected cross-culturally, to consider what the individual's concept of the "self," as constituted by his or her culture, may be. (p. 90)

In some texts, especially those by Leslie Marmon Silko and N. Scott Momaday (who consciously aim at recovery of Indian narrative traditions while contrasting them with contemporary Western modes), distinctions between traditions are apparent. As will be seen in Chapter Four, these two authors incorporate languages, stories, and narrative styles of their ancestors in their writings, in addition to including passages which more readily fit parameters described by Western scholarship on autobiography. However, even in autobiographies like Charles Eastman's, which seem more closely to fit the Western model of self-narration described above, scholars such as Brumble (1988) and Krupat (1985, 1989) still find evidence marking the intertwining of diverse cultures in both content and form.

The Dominance of the Bicultural

In order to describe what they perceive as a blending of narrative traditions, scholars of North American Indian autobiography such as Brumble (1988) and Krupat (1989b) apply the term bicultural to the texts they study. This term is an attempt to describe particular narrative qualities emerging in texts produced at the frontier, in Clifton's (1989) sense of the term. However, to use the term bicultural as a generalization to describe all post-conquest North American Indian autobiography also assumes that non-Indian influence is an inevitability in all such narratives. In recent years, the term has become so widely accepted that most writings about North American Indian autobiography attempt to demonstrate an awareness of this feature of the texts, even if that feature is not the focus of the discussion.

While arguments for a perceived biculturality have been well supported by scholars and even acknowledged by Indian writers themselves, generalizations about the bicultural on the part of the scholar/critic can be ideologically problematic because they can lead to the tacit assumption that it is only white influence on Indian narrative traditions and not Indian influence on white traditions that renders the frontier quality of the texts. Rather than viewing the bicultural as a form of ironic synchretic resistance on the part of the Indian storyteller, the

scholar might assume that what is perceived as bicultural is an attempt at synthesis alone. However, the term bicultural has also been used to demonstrate how understanding the relationship between Indian narrative traditions and Western narrative conventions has helped scholars refine their conception of what constitutes autobiography. I will attempt to show here how the concept of biculturality has influenced critical writings on Indian autobiography, and I will address the bearing these issues have on the discussion of native language loss and second language acquisition as described in these texts.

The term bicultural, as used by Brumble (1988), Wong (1992), Krupat (1985, 1989), and Bataille and Sands (1984) is often used simply to describe the various collaborative circumstances of the composition, or, as Krupat, in his best Marxist stance expresses it, the modes of production, of these texts. In other words, bicultural, used in this sense, defines a spectrum that includes, at one end, texts which began as oral life histories in Indian languages and which may have been elicited, transcribed, translated, compiled, edited, and published by non-Indians. One such text is the very popular *Black Elk Speaks* (1932), for example, and John Neihardt's role in the shaping of the Oglala Sioux's narrative has been well documented and discussed by McClusky (1972) and Couser (1988). At the other end of the spectrum, we might place the more autonomously

composed autobiographical writings of authors like Ray Young Bear, Leslie Marmon Silko, and N. Scott Momaday, who are not writing in direct response to anthropological inquiries of an outsider, but who, nevertheless, have made conscious efforts to include Western and non-Western narrative modes in their works. Limited collaboration may have taken place at the professional editorial level in these cases, but the authors themselves would have retained considerable control over the final texts.

An example of texts falling within range of the spectrum would be Charles Eastman's *Indian Boyhood*, or the later *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, prompted in part by his Anglo wife Elaine Goodale Eastman's encouragement and also edited by her, but primarily authored by the literate, highly educated Charles. Or, there is also Irene Stewart's *A Voice in Her Tribe: A Navajo Woman's Own Story*, a narrative shaped and edited by Doris Ostrander Dawdy-from a series of letters Stewart wrote in English responding to letters of inquiry from researcher Mary Shepardson. Another sort of collaboration is demonstrated by Christine Quintasket[4]'s *Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography* (1990), which is

---

[4]Quintasket adopted the pen name Humishuma, which she translated from Salish into English as Mourning Dove. She is listed in the references here as Mourning Dove since that is the name of her public persona as well as the name under which her novel *Cogewa* (1927)was originally published. It is the name attached to the posthumous autobiography as well. For further discussion of Mourning Dove and naming, see Karell (1995).

based on incomplete manuscript drafts of narratives written in non-standard English, then edited towards standard English, compiled and arranged by Jay Miller after the author's death.[5] These are just a few examples to illustrate that, in short, the specific circumstances of collaboration may be almost as varied in number as the texts themselves. Nevertheless, the collaborators' roles in bringing many of these narratives to light must not be underestimated. According to Brumble (1988), about forty-three percent of the more than six hundred published Indian autobiographical narratives were collected by anthropologists. Anglos with other agendas, including artists, musicians, poets, missionaries, and all-around Indian enthusiasts, collected an additional forty percent.

Of course, the task of translation was fundamental to the collaborator's role early on, but, since the focus of this study is on those texts by autobiographers who learned English, it will not be necessary to consider the role of the translator here. However, considering Brumble's estimates, the role of the anthropologist, ethnographer, interviewer, amanuensis, or editor can have considerable bearing on the final text produced by an English-speaking autobiographer, and it is this relationship that provides

---

[5]In some cases, then, the degree of collaboration with Anglos is directly dependent upon the autobiographer's English language proficiency, obviously a point of relevance for this discussion, which will be further addressed in later chapters.

another illustration of biculturality at work in the resulting texts. More than just assessing the degree of Anglo influence, or attempting to draw a line between the Indian and Anglo elements in the texts, it is important also to consider the broader motivations and consequences of such collaborations (for Anglos and Indians) in that this adds complexity to the concept of biculturality.

Brumble devotes an entire chapter of *American Indian Autobiography* to discussion of Anglo collaboration. Though this chapter is a good example of how studies in biculturality can be more focused on the influence of the dominant culture on texts produced by the dominated, Brumble does raise some key issues with regard to collaboration. He is mostly concerned with what he calls The Absent Editor, who compiles an autobiography in such a way as to maintain the fiction that the text was composed entirely by the Indian narrator. Brumble also devotes some discussion to how Western conventions of autobiography and knowledge of audience expectations for such texts influenced the work of Anglo collaborators.

> Chronological order, for example, is usually strictly adhered to, even though the narrators themselves were often little concerned with chronology. Sometimes the editors feel the Chronological Imperative so keenly that they rearrange their material *despite an explicit*

> *awareness* that in doing so they are removing traces of their subjects' own habits of mind. (p. 76)

So, even when editors maintain a degree of self-consciousness regarding their role in shaping Indian narratives (as sometimes indicated by prefatory material included in the published texts, for example), this does not guarantee that their input will be less intrusive.

Krupat (1985) refines the distinctions within the category of bicultural, but still applies the term in a dangerously generalized way with regard to autobiographical Indian narratives. He employs the term original bicultural composite composition to describe what he calls "Indian autobiographies," those produced with significant collaboration, as distinct from "autobiographies by 'civilized' or Christianized Indians whose texts originate with them and contain, inevitably, a bicultural element, yet are not compositely produced" (p. 31). Thus, even with these distinctions in mind, the term bicultural, for Krupat, need not refer to the circumstances of the production of specific texts alone, or simply the degree of collaboration involved in their composition, but can be taken in a broader sense to characterize an essential quality of the narratives. In fact, as noted above, it seems to be the key point of consensus among scholars that a standard feature of these texts, whether "Indian autobiographies" or

"autobiographies by Indians," is their biculturality, which, for Krupat and others, can mean something else besides Anglo/Indian collaboration.

So, while bicultural is a useful term simply to describe the collaborative composition of these texts, there is another aspect of Indian autobiography, or autobiographies by Indians, that may also be indicated by the term bicultural. Scholars also use the term to describe how Indian narrative traditions influence Western modes of self narrative. Both Wong (1992) and Brumble (1988) have undertaken studies of pre-literate traditions of Native American narratives and have demonstrated the roles these traditions have played in shaping written autobiographies. Lynne Woods O'Brien's *Plains Indian Autobiography* (1973), which includes a discussion of coup tales (recounting of battle honors), pictographic art, naming practices, and spiritual vision narrative as autobiography, set the stage for including non-literate narrative in critical discussions of Indian autobiography. Subscribing to this position, then, would certainly qualify the point made by Swann and Krupat (1987) which was cited in an earlier footnote regarding the alien nature of autobiography among Native Americans. Indeed, Wong (1992) and Brumble (1988) go through much effort to point out that pre-literate Indians did engage in self-narration, but its forms have not accommodated themselves to the paradigms of Western autobiographical and

critical traditions. As Wong (1992) puts it, "it is Eurocentric theory, not Native American autobiography, that is lacking" (p. 4). And, as Krupat (1991) comments:

> ...inasmuch as the centrality of the self in Western autobiography finds no close parallel in Native American autobiography, any immediate orientation toward the self would inevitably have seemed ethnocentric, or at the least premature. But to say that the typical Western understanding of the self is neither prioritized nor valorized in Native American autobiography is not to say that all modes of subjectivity are, therefore, absent or unimportant in these texts. (p. 171)

Brumble's enumeration of other pre-literate autobiographical forms would indicate his agreement here. For example, he includes coup tales, self-examinations as to how well one has kept traditions and religious practices, educational narratives, and stories of the acquisition of powers (in particular, those of a shaman or medicine woman) among oral narratives which could be considered autobiographical. Following O'Brien, Wong cites the examples of pre-literate vision stories, pictographic narratives, and naming practices wherein individuals acquire new names as their accomplishments or heroic deeds inspire tribe members to bestow them.

The Questions of Self and Referentiality Restated In Bicultural Terms

O'Brien (1973), Wong (1992), Krupat (1991), and Brumble (1988) all stress that the thrust of traditionally oral autobiographical narratives is not to set the individual apart as a unique personality, but rather to identify the individual with her or his community. Members of the group participate in naming practices, in the recounting of coup. An individual's vision quest has consequences for the entire group, and thus so does the narration of it. O'Brien (1973), in fact, identifies the coup story and vision narrative among Plains Indians as "provid[ing] the framework for tribal government and religion" (p. 6).

However, when the concern is with written narrative rather than oral, the dynamics change.[6] In contrast to the immediate presence of an audience for oral performance, the audience for a written work is likely be an imaginary one. Whereas the communal significance of an oral narrative would be immediately apparent to the audience, this would not be the case for a written narrative reaching one reader at a time. The autobiographer of a written text would be aware that the narrative may well be read by someone the author

---

[6]The literacy/orality debate is, of course, an ancient one, but for an interesting view on its relevance to North American Indian Autobiography see Arnold Krupat's essay "Native American Autobiography and the Synecdochic Self," in Paul John Eakin's *American Autobiography: Retrospect and Prospect*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.

has never known and will never meet, someone who can only be imagined and who can only imagine the author, which is a situation that does not exist in the case of oral narrative. Without the community to confirm the truth of a given narrative, the audience for the written autobiography must be satisfied with the writer's word alone. The self in a written narrative is presented without the immediate affirmation or censure of others, which is quite different from the experience of self presentation in a community-driven oral narrative. Given these circumstances, Indians who write autobiographies find themselves in a similar position to their Western counterparts with regard to self and referentiality, and scholars find themselves turning to Western criticism to better understand this aspect of the narratives.

Idiosyncracies of human memory being what they are, autobiography and scholarship on autobiography are compelled to address the question of accuracy of memory and its bearing on truth (T. D. Adams 1990). Lejeune's concept of an autobiographical pact between the audience and the author of a written autobiography, though developed primarily with regard to a non-Indian autobiographical tradition, can be of some use here. For Bruss (1976) the pact requires that "information and events reported in connection with the autobiographer are asserted to have been, to be, or to have potential for being the case" (p. 11). But, as Stone

observes in his introduction to *The American Autobiography: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1981), "the autobiographer aims to re-create the self-in-its-world, not by literal reproduction of remembered facts (a boring as well as impossible achievement), but by patterning the past into a present symbolic truth" (p. 6). Or, as Timothy Dow Adams (1990) expresses it, "autobiography is the story of an attempt to reconcile one's life with one's self and is not, therefore, meant to be taken as historically accurate but as metaphorically authentic" (p. ix).

While these comments are all derived from studies of Western autobiography, scholars of North American Indian autobiography also find themselves addressing questions of literal and symbolic truths raised by the uncertain referentiality of language.[7] Given the immediacy of the

---

[7] For example Krupat (1994) writes the following in the introduction to a recent collection of autobiographical essays by Indians:

> One line of thought urges that we give up entirely the desire for 'reference,' the desire to encounter the 'real Black Hawk' and other persons we know to have existed outside of and beyond the words of their autobiographical texts, but whom we can only know through the words of those and other texts. Another, oppositional, line of thought insists upon the referentiality of the autobiographical text, admitting that, while the language of the text inevitably mediates our encounter with the real, historical subject of the autobiography, still the abiding appeal of autobiography is exactly the sense we have of an encounter with lives other than and apart from our own. If the former view insists that any feel for the real is only a produced effect of language, the latter tends to insist upon the autobiographical 'pact' between writer and reader

audience in *oral* performance, the dynamics of this relationship between accuracy and truth and the audience's role in shaping it may be somewhat different from the relationship between accuracy and truth found in *written* texts where the concept of an imaginary audience may allow for more play between what is literally and symbolically true for the autobiographer. But it should also be acknowledged that when it comes to collaborative textual autobiographies, the issues of memory, accuracy, and literal or symbolic truth become increasingly complicated if the text began as an oral narrative solicited by a researcher. In this case, we may have information about general cultural practices that the researcher has triangulated by observation of such practices in other contexts, thus further substantiating the literal truth of recorded events. On the other hand, the voice of the autobiographer may be subsumed by that of the collaborator in such a way that the "real" narrator may not necessarily be the protagonist of the narrative alone, as has been shown in the case of *Black Elk Speaks* and numerous other texts. Nevertheless, if we follow Stone and Adams, we can acknowledge that the narratives at least embody a relevant symbolic truth.

The range of literal truth and symbolic truth in the texts, the degrees of narrative "self" and referentiality,

---

> involving a conventionally-prescribed commitment to tell the 'truth,' albeit in words. (p. 8)

and the issues of biculturality certainly present a number of critical challenges for a research project which attempts to consider the depiction of the relationship between English and indigenous languages in texts where the status of authorial voices is often under intense scrutiny. A more literal minded scholar might be reluctant to regard information gleaned from such texts as reliable "data" documenting a "real" experience. However, for my purposes, obviously, such a dismissive stance would not be productive. Instead, in what follows I offer a description of a research methodology that makes room for such issues and yet demonstrates the value of the autobiographies as cultural artifacts, and shows how analysis of them produces real knowledge about actual circumstances of the lives of real people.

MULTIPLE METHODS RESEARCH IN A QUALITATIVE MODE

Social researcher Shulamit Reinharz (1992) has observed that one outstanding characteristic of cultural artifacts is "they are noninteractive, i.e., they do not require asking questions of respondents or observing people's behavior. Cultural artifacts are not affected by the process of studying them as people typically are" (p. 147). In some sense, this characteristic of artifacts provides certain advantages for researchers, especially in terms of

expedience (e.g., no interviews to schedule, no long-term research trips, no intensive participant observation). The seemingly static quality of artifacts allows researchers to return to them again and again, to engage in long-term analysis in ways that may increase our understanding of the artifacts' meaning or meanings.

However, when artifacts are the sole objects of study these same advantageous features also create complications for the researcher in that it is nearly impossible to come to a thorough understanding of the artifact's meaning without some sense of the context surrounding its creation or without acknowledging how the artifact may help us better understand something about the context. It is true that studying artifacts does not require questioning individual people, but it does require questioning the artifact and the culture it represents. Shaping and addressing those questions can require a researcher to draw on diverse strategies to better understand the relationship between an artifact's content and context.

Thus, in addition to considering the theoretical issues outlined in the first half of this chapter, the critical approach to North American Indian autobiography I take in this dissertation is informed by methods of qualitative research advocated in the emerging field of cultural studies. My aim is to offer an interpretive content analysis of selected cultural artifacts, in this case, small

sections of about 16 autobiographical narratives, to illustrate how particular late nineteenth and twentieth century North American Indians perceived and recorded the corresponding experiences of learning and using English as a second language, and how they perceived and recorded the experience of language loss or, in some cases, recovery. As suggested above, I try to address how the autobiographers' explorations of English language learning and native language loss and recovery suggest a critique of the dominant culture and its language. The critique I perceive resides in the ironic synchretic resistance demonstrated by these texts. In considering these issues, I have developed a research model that makes use of several different qualitative research techniques. Though the basis of my approach is founded on content analysis of autobiographies and historical documents, I also include studies of published interviews. In addition, the method described here takes into account the cross-cultural issues arising from a research situation in which texts produced by non-whites undergo the scrutiny of an audience of primarily white, highly literate academics.

Basis of the Model

My method draws heavily upon the example of Coleman's *American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930* (1993), a study in which the author examines particular features of

the Indian educational experience by relying extensively on data from selected autobiographies. Though Coleman triangulates this data with historical documents such as school records and government reports, it is his reading of the autobiographies that leads him to construct a thematically organized text highlighting issues he finds consistently represented in the primary texts, especially issues of assimilation and resistance. I follow Coleman's lead in the use of autobiographical data, and though my study represents a more intensive focus on themes of language acquisition and loss rather than the overall educational experience of American Indians, I use a similar organizational style. Like Coleman, I attempt to organize the data and analysis thematically, de-emphasizing chronology. However, the division between Chapter 3 (which for the most part considers the work of lesser known writers) and Chapter 4 (focusing on major contemporary writers) ends up being a chronological division simply because the writers I have chosen to discuss in Chapter 4 represent a later generation of English language users than those authors discussed in Chapter 3.

Extending the Model and Developing A Multiple Methods Approach

While content analysis of the autobiographies comprises much of the study, I have adapted several other

strands of qualitative research methods to my purposes, an approach Reinharz (1992) would term "multiple methods research" (p. 197). Reinharz uses the term in relation to feminist research, stating that "multiple methods enable feminist researchers to link past and present, 'data gathering' and action, and individual behavior with social frameworks" (p. 197). Here I use the term to describe not only the content analysis section, but my inclusion of the following: a) the theoretical summary beginning this chapter based primarily on literary/cultural studies theory; b) the historical narrative found in Chapter 2; c) data from published interviews with selected writers; and d) emphasis on particular cross-cultural issues.

The first two items on the above list mark an attempt to contextualize the primary works and key theoretical issues considered in this study. Theory provides the framework for my methodology, while the historical chapter provides an academic framework for the alternative narratives offered by the primary texts examined in later chapters. This section also links past events with some present language teaching issues in post-colonial situations.

In order to develop the historical narrative, I consulted works about Indian education written by scholars such as E.C. Adams (1946), D.W. Adams (1988, 1995), Coleman (1993), Peyer (1997), Reyhner and Eder (1989), Szasz (1974)

and others, some of whom provide fairly traditional chronological narratives of Indian educational history. These studies in turn led me to consult educational policy reports affecting Indian nations, among them Merriam's *The Problem of Indian Administration*, also referred to as *The Merriam Report* (1928). I also added to my reading list a U.S. government teacher's manual *Rules for Indian Schools* and a pedagogy text by Issac Lewis Peet (1875) used at the Hampton Institute. In addition, Ellis (1996), Haig-Brown (1988), Lindsey (1995), Lomawaima (1994), Mihesuah (1993), and Trennert (1988) provide thorough qualitative studies of specific boarding schools. All these items offer an interesting basis for comparing perspectives regarding what was taking place in Indian schools.

The histories and "official" documents tell the story of Indian education mostly from the point of view of those who determined language education policy from the early days of Anglo conquest through much of the twentieth century, namely, English speaking academics, government officials, religious leaders, and scholars. The autobiographies, on the other hand, sound the voices of those subjected to the policies, members of Indian nations. So, rather than considering the autobiographies alone in a content analysis, I try here to develop a research method which addresses the interplay of these two categories of narrative (Anglo and Indian) and thus provides an understanding of the

relationship between a particular type of context (an essentially Anglo one defined by a conventional events-driven historical narrative) and the artifacts, Indian writings which offer an alternative reading of language conquest.

My decision to use more inclusive multiple research methods has also led me to consider other materials besides historical documents, autobiographies, and theoretical works in my study. For example, as a way of making more room for Indian voices, in later chapters I have chosen to use data from published interviews with several contemporary autobiographers such as Leslie Marmon Silko and N. Scott Momaday, both of whom who offer a great deal of reflective insight on the English language, their own works, and their ancestral cultures. So, even though my project is not an interview study, and although my primary emphasis in the study is content analysis of the autobiographies, using multiple research methods allows me to include relevant information provided by interviews.

A study of narratives produced by linguistically and culturally diverse authors in a colonial or post-colonial context produces cross-cultural issues that necessitate a research method which can address these issues as well. Thus, the interpretive content analysis of the autobiographies is also colored by cross-cultural research methods which acknowledge "the importance of cultural

specificity" (Reinharz, p. 111). Another aim of this project is to engage in "consciousness-raising concerning...ethnocentrism" (Reinharz, p. 113). My project engages in such consciousness-raising in its attempt to address how ethnocentrism affects the development of language policy, which in turn influences the Anglo and Indian narratives arising as a result of that policy. In addition, while I provide some generalizations in terms of themes common among these narratives, the cross-cultural research mode of this dissertation acknowledges cultural specificity in that it does not attempt to characterize what some might call "the Indian experience" because there is great diversity among Indian nations. Rather, the aim here is to understand the significant relationships between *individual* accounts of the experience of learning and using English.

Selection of Materials

The primary materials for this study were selected from among more than five hundred published autobiographies available in English. The selection was guided initially by annotations provided in Brumble's *An Annotated Bibliography of American Indian and Eskimo Autobiographies* (1981) and the supplement to the bibliography which appeared *in Western American Literature* (1982). Additional texts were chosen from those listed in Coleman's bibliography and from

bibliographies of autobiographies in general. Wong's and Krupat's books on Indian autobiography also provided research leads. Computer database searches of the *MLA Bibliographies, Dissertation Abstracts, Humanities Index, ERIC*, and *Social Sciences Index*, etc. provided additional resources. Finally, personal input from colleagues has also guided me in the selection of autobiographical and related materials.

My main criteria in choosing autobiographies for this study are as follows:

1) The texts are composed in English. By this I mean that the bulk of the composition process took place in English and that the texts, therefore, are not translations from Indian languages. Because so many of the translated autobiographies currently available also involve a substantial amount of collaboration with non-Indians, and because I wish to avoid basing my discussion on word choices which may not have been the autobiographers, I decided to avoid using translated works.

2) The nature of any other substantial collaboration with others, especially non-Indians, in the composition of the text is indicated in some way, even if only by the phrase "as told to." This applies especially to texts derived from interviews, the transcriptions of which were modified and shaped into prose narratives.

3) The texts as a group represent a historical period

ranging from the mid nineteenth century until the present.

4) The texts deal in some way with the experience of language education or the relationship between English and indigenous languages.

5) The texts represent a diversity of North American Indian people.

The first specification above, that the texts be composed in English and not translated from another language, poses something of a paradox for this study, as indicated earlier. The focus of the study is on the depiction of English language acquisition in the autobiographies, but if the accounts of the experiences are composed in English, then one would have to assume that the author was successful to some degree in acquiring the language, and thus we would only have half of the story. What of all the other autobiographies by those who never learned English or who did not learn it well enough to communicate in the language, or who simply prefer to use their native languages? Isn't it possible that native language narratives, in translated form, may offer some insight regarding second language education, especially the failure of such education? This is an important problem, and one not easily dismissed, but, at the risk of tautology, for the purposes of this study it is possible to assume that the choice of composing an autobiography in a native language is in itself a statement regarding the perception

of English as a limited means of communication.

In contrast, however, it cannot be assumed here that a text written in idiomatic English demonstrates a high degree of success in learning English because many of these texts are the products of collaborations with native English speakers who, in addition to shaping content and narrative form, usually regularized the surface features of Indian English dialects in the autobiographies, editing what may have begun as transcriptions of orally conducted interviews towards a first person narrative in standard written English.

This brings me to my second criterion. As Brumble has indicated in *American Indian Autobiography*, the majority of the autobiographical texts available to us are the result of collaborations between Indians and non-Indians. Aside from a consideration of more autonomously produced works published mostly in the mid to late twentieth century then, it is almost inevitable that a study of American Indian autobiography will necessarily consider texts which have been shaped in some way by non-Indians. This makes it necessary to consider how collaboration figures into the research methodology of this study, particularly in regard to selecting artifacts. To that end, it should be stated that I have made attempts to ascertain the degree and possible effects of collaboration in the autobiographies wherever possible.

This has not always been a straightforward process. Initially I relied on the assessment of scholars of Native American autobiography (Brumble's annotations have been especially helpful) regarding the possible degree of collaboration in particular texts and then selected works by autobiographers perceived by these scholars as being fairly autonomous in the composition of the texts. As one would imagine, the majority of these texts have been produced by individuals with extraordinary proficiency in English, several of whom became professional authors and were published in the twentieth century. However, in order to get what I hope will be a more complete picture of the English language learning experience, one that accounts for the experience of individuals who may not have had literary aspirations, I expanded my reading list to include texts in which more extensive collaboration with non-Indians had taken place.

In determining the possible degrees and effects of collaboration, I relied on two main features in the main texts or, more often, in prefatory material: 1) what the autobiographers themselves may have said regarding any assistance they had, or 2) what the collaborators may have written about the extent of their involvement. The problem with this approach is that not all autobiographies contain such precise assessments to guide the researcher in attempts to discern just how much and just what kind of collaboration

may have taken place. Indeed, as noted earlier, Brumble (1988) calls to our attention the fiction of the absent editor in Indian autobiography, those highly collaborative works presented as entirely the Indian's text with little or no acknowledgement made by white collaborators as to the extent of their involvement. So, finally, we are left with texts which, although they may offer some important documentation regarding English language learning, offer not a clue as to how much, if any, collaboration may have taken place. However, despite possible ambiguity regarding the composition of the texts, I have decided to include some of them in this study because they meet the first criteria of being composed in English (albeit orally in some cases), and the insights they provide with regard to English language learning are relevant to the larger research issues posed by the study in general. In addition, the discussion above regarding the bicultural nature of Indian autobiography should provide another theoretical framework which will further demonstrate the relevance of collaborative texts under consideration here.

The next of the selection criteria, that the autobiographies represent the period between the mid nineteenth century and the present, and that they deal in some way with the English language learning experience, are designed to focus the study on the most aggressive period of assimilation in regard to education policies (the boarding

school heyday documented by Coleman) and to provide grounds for contrasting the mono-lingual language education policies of that period with the increasing emphasis on Indian self-determination and bilingual instruction in the mid to late twentieth century. Thus, autobiographies selected from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries document the authors' boarding school experiences and recount many language learning difficulties and successes in addition to offering critiques of language pedagogy. The more recent autobiographies, particularly those by authors using English as a primary language, document the experience of Indian language loss and subsequent recovery through the work of schools controlled by Indian nations.

The last of the selection criteria, that the texts represent a diversity of Indian people, compels a resistance to generalizations about "the Indian experience" by acknowledging that the first nations of the North American continent are many and their cultures as varied as their numbers. Though subjected to the same overall assimilationist education policies about which generalizations can be made (for example the uniform course of study which was established at federally controlled boarding schools in the late 1800's and pursued until the 1930's), these nations eventually came to deal with such policies on their own terms as the members themselves became increasingly involved in determining policy. The

autobiographies by Lakota, Dakota, Navajo, Hopi, Cherokee, Salishan, Ojibway, Cree, Kiowa, Laguna and many other individuals reflect the concerns of diverse nations through the particular accounts of these people.

Because many of the autobiographies are the products of collaboration with social researchers whose interests often dictated the focus of the texts, large portions of these narratives are devoted to descriptions of cultural traditions and the conflict between the Indian and white world views. They also vary in length, from the short autobiographical essay of no more than a few pages, to narratives over 200 pages in length. None focuses exclusively on language acquisition issues, though many devote themselves extensively to recounting boarding school life in general. Thus, the portions of the texts I focus on are often rather small, but the number of texts I consider here certainly allows for a thematic analysis of data relevant to language acquisition.

Collection and Organization of Data

Once materials for the project were selected by the criteria outlined above, I read the autobiographies with an eye toward sections which addressed what I felt to be key issues. My reading was guided by fundamental research questions, which bear repeating. How have late nineteenth century and twentieth century North American Indian

autobiographers perceived and recorded the experience of learning English as a second language, and how have they perceived and recorded the experience of native language loss and recovery? With these key questions in mind, I selected and copied from numerous autobiographies passages I perceived as having some relationship to the main research question. My aim was to collect the data I found pertinent and interesting and eventually to determine if any relationship might exist among ideas autobiographers expressed on this topic. I wanted to see if consistent themes were represented in these texts.

Of course, as I gathered material, additional issues and questions arose that gave shape to my research and helped determine which themes could be brought into focus. For example, it became important to see what connections an author made between language and identity. I found myself asking the following questions: What might an author have to say explicitly about the experience of self-hood in another language? What might an author imply about such an experience and what makes it possible for a researcher to interpret this implication? How does an author characterize her or his motivation to compose a narrative of self in English when this may not have been the author's first language? According to the autobiographer, what role has English played in professional and community life?

Other questions regarding language and identity arose

when considering the autobiographies written by members of later twentieth century Indian generations who may have actually acquired English simultaneously with, or in lieu of, an Indian language. For instance, how do authors like Leslie Marmon Silko and N. Scott Momaday, who are a generation removed from their families' Keresan and Kiowa languages, depict the relationship between Indian languages and English? How does their perception of the status of these languages shape their autobiographical works?

The passages related to language acquisition and loss also offered the opportunity to explore the role family and community life may have played in an author's language learning experience. Two key questions related to this issue emerged in the research process. How might the family or community have contributed to an author's learning/non-learning of English? How do the authors describe changes in their roles as family or community members resulting from their experiences with English? As with other aspects of this research, I have relied on interpretive content analysis of these issues to indicate thematic patterns of perception regarding language teaching and learning.

In addition to studying passages related to language and identity, I also looked for and found documentation of the effects of second language pedagogies in the authors' accounts of formal academic experiences. Language pedagogy at North American Indian schools in the past was certainly

shaped by an Anglo-centric world view, and an autobiographer's description of an institution's approach to second language instruction, and his or her reactions to it, serve as an indicator of the effects of such language pedagogy. Many of the autobiographies considered here document how the milieux of the Indian boarding school might have facilitated or inhibited the acquisition of English for individual writers. Autobiographers like Kay Bennet, Zitkala-Sa, Jane Willis, Charles Eastman, Francis LaFlesche, and others offer descriptions of methods variously perceived as effective, ineffective, or even detrimental to language learning in these authors' views. The following chapter provides a historical sketch of the development of North American language education policies which encouraged the mostly Anglo-centric language pedagogies affecting these autobiographers.

Chapter Two

Language Planning and Historical Context

LANGUAGE PLANNING ISSUES

In *Language Planning and Social Change*, Robert L. Cooper (1989) defines language planning as "deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes" (p. 45). This definition characterizes the efforts of missionaries and other educators in regard to American Indians. As the autobiographies and historical documents of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries indicate, educators deliberately have tried to influence the language behavior of their pupils. What is less simple to determine is how and why language planning has been undertaken in the education of North American Indians. For this, a broader context must be considered, one which accounts for the social and political forces at work in shaping language policy, both past and present, for, as McKay (1992) writes

> English teaching is an activity infused with social and political significance. Decisions regarding who learns English in a country, in what context, and for what purposes, are all made within the political arena. Deciding who learns

> English can have important social consequences such as maintaining the status of an elite, or aiding in the eradication of a minority language.
>
> (Introduction)

Carol Eastman (1983) also stresses the political nature of language use decisions, noting that

> when we consider the problem of how to analyze language use among members of different ethnic groups, we should start by considering the power relationships among the different groups in a particular place....When a group actually uses its own language....it expresses, by implication, its world view as socially integrated, culturally homogeneous, and economically well off. When a group does not use its own language, its members are most likely not at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy of the larger society (pp. 48-49).

Eastman is particularly concerned with the concept of language shift[1] in which large populations adopt new

---

[1]A conventional definition of language shift is provided by editors Charles A. Ferguson and Shirley Brice Heath in the glossary of their essay collection *Language In the USA* (1981). They define it as "The change in regular use or mother-tongue status of one language to another in a speech community, as when members of an immigrant community shift from their original mother tongue to the language of their new country." I would argue the definition could be just as easily illustrated with the example of indigenous people shifting mother-tongue status to the language of their conquerors.

languages, whether or not at the same time they also give up a language that they had previously used. Language shift may occur with or without total replacement of an indigenous language. Fishman (1981) writes:

> The greatest American linguistic investment by far has been in the Anglification of its millions of immigrant and indigenous speakers of other languages. Without either constitutional or subsequent legal declaration or requirement that English is the official (let alone the national) language, a complex web of customs, institutions, and programs has long fostered well-nigh exclusive reliance upon English in public life. The result of two centuries of the foregoing is that literally hundreds of millions of Americans have been led, cajoled, persuaded, embarrassed into, and forced to forget, forego and even deny languages that were either their mother tongue, their communal languages, or their personal or communal additional tongues (p. 517).

As will be shown in this dissertation, language shifts can be the result of language planning decisions made generations prior to the outcome presently being assessed, as is the case with North American Indian nations. In addition, if language is regarded in sociological terms as an expression of culture, then language shift marks a change

in that expression and in the culture itself. In other words, the issues of power and dominance considered when studying language shift are clearly related to those same issues arising from a study of, for example, the destruction of local culture in the face of economic imperialism.

Cooper (1989) provides a scheme for interrogating language planning which allows issues of power and dominance to be addressed. His model is based on the following question: What actors attempt to influence what behaviors, of which people, for what ends, under what conditions, by what means, through what decision-making process, with what effect (p. 88)? The issues raised by these questions are partly addressed by the larger historical narrative of Indian education which follows.

INDIAN EDUCATION AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: A CONTEXT

As noted in the preceding chapter, the nature of the artifacts that are the focus of this study practically necessitates a research style incorporating multiple methods. The aim of the multiple methods approach outlined in Chapter 1 is to ultimately provide an informed, interpretive content analysis of the autobiographies, personal essays, and published interviews with North American Indian writers who are the focus of this project. Through a method which includes the setting of a historical context, the focus of this chapter, I hope to place the

individual autobiographical narratives within a social framework demonstrating larger patterns of language acquisition and loss.

Since issues of language acquisition in many of these autobiographies are most apparent in portions of the narratives which deal with the authors' educational experiences in English speaking environments, it may be helpful to look at some of the history of Anglo-oriented Indian education in general. The historical scholarship of individuals such as D.W. Adams (1988, 1995), E.C. Adams (1946), Coleman (1993), Fuchs and Havinghurst (1972), Hoxie (1984), Lindsey (1995), Reyhner and Eder (1989), Reyhner (1992), Szasz (1974), Trennert (1988), and others is quite useful in this regard. Their interpretations of how education policy in general was shaped by myriad forces and attitudes (i.e., ethnocentrism, missionary zeal, manifest destiny, anthropological inquiry, cultural pluralism, self-determination, Indian activism) can also be applied to language education in particular. What follows then is a broad summary of historical perspectives on Indian education in North America with a particular focus on changing views regarding English and Indian languages, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This "chronology" is at times more of a recursive narrative because, rather than showing a steady progress from less informed to more informed ideas of language education over

time, what is more important to demonstrate is how various forces have worked in concert to shape language policy, and how patterns which established themselves during the colonial period and the period of removal with regard to Indian education have repeated themselves and still affect current attitudes towards language policy.

Colonial Missions

Throughout North America missionaries were among the first Anglos to attempt to educate the Indians and to teach them European languages. In what is now New England, one of the earliest educators was the religious leader John Eliot (Peyer 1997; Szasz 1974). In an attempt to convert the indigenous residents of New England, Eliot learned the Massachusetts dialect of the Algonquin language in order to instruct his would-be converts in the Christian faith and to encourage them to live in the small farming communities that came to be known as "praying towns," where they could be further educated. During the period of 1651-1674 fourteen such towns were founded, Natick being the first (Adams 1946; Fuchs and Havinghurst 1972; Szasz 1974). Of the 1,111 residents, 142 could read their own language in romanized form, and 72 could write in English (Reyhner & Eder, 1989, p. 14). Eliot was interested in training his students for missionary work, and, thus, they were also taught Latin and Greek in the community day schools of the praying towns.

Eliot, with the help of a Massachusetts Indian named Job Nesuton, who served as an interpreter/translator, produced an Algonquin-Massachusetts translation of the Bible, fifteen hundred copies of which were printed at Harvard University in 1663. (Reyhner & Eder, p. 14).

An Indian boarding college was established at Harvard in 1654, but the attempt to educate indigenous people in this manner was a failure because, according to Wayne J. Stein (1992), of the twenty Indians sent there "only two survived...The other students died from sickness, change in lifestyle (food, clothing, etc.) and loneliness" (p. 3). Despite this apparent failure, another Anglo, Yale educated religious revival leader Eleazar Wheelock, still believed it was best "to remove Indian children from their homes to a boarding school, Moor's Indian Charity School, to give boys the basics of a secular and religious education and 'husbandry' (farm chores) and girls what would be called today home economics" (Reyhner & Eder, p. 17). Latin, Greek, and Hebrew were also taught at Moor's as part of missionary training.

With eleven thousand pounds raised by his star Mohegan student, Samson Occum, on a speaking/preaching tour in England, Wheelock was able to found Dartmouth College. Dartmouth's success as an Indian college was also limited for reasons similar to those which made Harvard inhospitable. The College of William and Mary, founded in

1693, began admitting Indian students in 1700, also with limited success. While a few Indian students did attend, eighteenth century Iroquois leaders apparently refused an invitation to send their children to the College. In 1783 Benjamin Franklin recounted the negotiations regarding the 1744 Treaty of Lancaster, during which

> the Commissioners from Virginia acquainted the [Six Nations] Indians by a speech, that there was at Williamsburg a College with a Fund for Education Indian Youth, and that if the Chiefs of the Six-Nations would send down half a dozen of their Sons to that College, the Government would take Care that they should be well provided for, and instructed in all the Learning of the white People (p. 969).

In a bit of what could very well be imperial ventriloquism, Franklin goes on to tell his readers that the Iroquois responded as follows:

> But you who are wise, must know that the different Nations have different Conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of Education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some Experience of it; Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your

> Sciences; but, when they came back to us, they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the Woods, unable to bear either Cold or Hunger, knew neither how to build a Cabin, take a Deer, or kill an Enemy, spoke our Language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for Hunters, Warriors or Counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. We are however not the less obliged by your kind Offer, tho we decline accepting it; and to show our grateful Sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their Sons, we will take great Care of their Education, instruct them in all we know, and make Men of them. (pp. 969-970)

Franklin's "account" of the Iroquois "response" may well be more a document of Franklin's creative ability in articulating his views on cultural relativism than it is an actual account of the Iroquois view on white education. However, Franklin's illustration of a relativist's perspective is often cited by historians of Indian education because it is thought to demonstrate an early example of awareness regarding indigenous people's values. Of course, such awareness, if it really existed, did not in general characterize practices at Anglo-operated Indian schools in the coming years.

In addition to the colleges, day-schools like those

in Eliot's seventeenth century praying towns were opened near Indian communities after the American Revolution, though some Anglos complained that Indians reverted to "savage ways" because they returned home each day to the supposedly malign influences of their family and communities. Other early attempts at education during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were undertaken in more remote areas by other Christian missions, and according to Fuchs and Havinghurst (1972) most schools

> offered a curriculum to Indian youth that was the same as that offered non-Indian youth with major emphasis upon the area of academic study. Significantly, the school was established as an agent for spreading Christianity and the transmittal of Western culture and civilization. No consistent attempts to incorporate Indian languages, culture, or history were made in the curriculum offered. (p. 3)

In addition to the institutional options, Indians were sometimes schooled privately in the homes of settlers, where they worked as servants or farm hands. Occasionally, some were sent overseas to England for schooling, again with limited success.

Federal involvement in Indian education began early on with the appropriations of the 1775 Continental Congress for education of Indian youth at Dartmouth and the College of

New Jersey (now Princeton) (E.C. Adams, p. 28). Thus, the roots of the U.S. bureaucracy surrounding Indian education and the long standing mission of Indian schools to assimilate their students were established in the colonial and revolutionary periods.

Many of these schools were just outside the officially established boundary of the early nineteenth century U.S., and thus initially fell under the administration of the American Board of Commissioners For Foreign Missions (ABCFM) established in 1810 and supported by the Congregational, Dutch Reformed, and Presbyterian Churches (Szasz, 1974; Coleman, 1993). In other words, the work of missionary educators among the Indians of North America was regarded essentially as teaching abroad, with the students, in theory, regarded as citizens of foreign nations, though these nations' sovereignty as such was consistently undermined by U.S. government policies. And, indeed, the students bore all the characteristics missionaries would attribute to the residents of a foreign country, i.e., different religious practices, dress, food, housing, and of course, languages.

Missionaries and Language Tolerance

The main objectives of the mission schools were to convert Indians to Christianity and to encourage the students to take up Western European lifestyles.

Missionaries were well aware of the need for English language instruction, but it would appear in some cases that their desire to have Indians understand the message of Christianity took precedence, so, like the colonial Eliot, some missionaries of this later era also learned Indian languages in order to communicate their religious message in a way that was more expedient than teaching English first. These missionaries' abilities to speak, for instance, Dakota, Chippewa, or Cherokee may have even facilitated instruction of Indian students in other academic areas, including English.

Following Eliot's lead, missionaries continued to produce religious reading materials in romanized versions of indigenous languages. Charles Eastman (1916), for instance, recalls the headmaster of the Santee Normal Training School, Mr. Riggs, giving him a Dakota *Book of Psalms* (p.40). Riggs apparently taught beginning students literacy in the Dakota language before he taught English literacy. A government correspondent who visited Indian schools in the later nineteenth century observed in the *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners for the Year 1879* (1880):

> Mr. Riggs is of the opinion that first teaching the children to read and write in their own language enables them to master English with more ease when they take up that study; and he thinks, also, that a child beginning a four years' course

> with the study of Dakota would be further advanced in English at the end of the term than one who had not been instructed in Dakota. (p. 77)

Missionaries have also been credited with preserving Indian languages through philological pursuits. Reyhner and Eder note "Dictionaries compiled by missionaries still serve as basic sources of information on Indian languages. The Wycliffe Bible Translators are still very active on a number of reservations and have freely provided help to school bilingual programs" (p. 54). For Kidwell (1987), "the most lasting result of missionary activity among the Choctaw in Mississippi was the preservation of the Choctaw language" (p. 69). Riggs' father Stephen had published *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Dakota Language* in 1852, and another missionary, Frederick Ayer of the Western Evangelical Missionary Society of Oberlin College at Red Lake, Minnesota, used books written Chippewa (Fuchs & Havinghurst, 1972).

However, not all missionaries held attitudes favorable to the preservation of Indian languages. Haig-Brown (1988), in her study of the Shuswap students who had attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada in the early twentieth century, reports that

> language, that aspect of culture so central to its expression and transmission, was a major issue within the school. With obvious understanding of

> the importance of eliminating this tool of culture, the Oblates [Catholic missionaries] began their attack on the Native languages during the children's first days at school and continued to escalate the conflict with those who did not co-operate in abandoning their language. For the children who spoke only Shuswap on their arrival at school, their first days were ones of gibberish because older children were not permitted to speak the language and few supervisors ever spoke Shuswap. No transition time in which they might reach some understanding of the system before being asked to learn a new language was allotted. (p. 51)

Most of the autobiographies discussed here describe similar levels of intolerance for indigenous languages at both federal and missionary schools.

Recruiting

While some day schools were established on or near Indian lands which allowed indigenous children to return home to their families each evening, most white educators favored residential schools as the most expedient means to Christianize and assimilate the children. The factors contributing to the attractiveness of this approach for those missionaries and, later, federally employed educators

with assimilationist agendas are fairly obvious. By removing children from their homes for an extended period of time, in some cases, permanently, white educators could have complete control over almost every aspect of the children's lives, including what language the students spoke, how they dressed, what they ate, what religion they practiced, when and how they worked, studied, played, or slept (Coleman 1993). In this way, educators believed the "Indianness" could be driven out of the children, thus ensuring their futures as productive members of an English-speaking nation.

Students were recruited for these schools in various ways throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For instance, at the boarding schools and even at some day schools, missionaries were able to provide clothing and meals for their students, which, in the face of shrinking resources due to Anglo westward expansion, proved a considerable source of motivation for parents to send their children off to school. This form of coercion is documented by the narratives of Zitkala-sa (Sioux) and Polingaysi Qoyawayma (Hopi), both of whom claim to have been tempted away from their childhood homes by promises of exotic and delicious foods and new clothes. Some Indians, like those of Eliot's praying towns, were interested in learning more about Christianity. Others, like Charles Eastman's father, Many Lightnings, early on recognized the need for speaking, reading, and writing English in the face

of Anglo conquest. For instance McLoughlin (1984) reports that in 1824, a Cherokee told Baptist missionaries "We want our children to
learn English so that the white man cannot cheat us" (p. 155).

After the opening of the first federally operated off-reservation school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1879, government policies mandating education of indigenous people began to be more strongly enforced, with federal troops and local police actually removing Indian children from their homes by physical force, a practice which continued into the early twentieth century. Polingaysi Qoyawayma (1964) recalls the childhood experience of hiding in her grandmother's house when policemen came into her village to kidnap children and take them to a nearby day school. In fact, disagreements over whether or not children should attend these white men's schools divided the Hopi community.

> The Tenth Calvary was called out during the winter of 1890-91 and again in the summer of 1891...to force Hopi parents living in the village of Oraibi to send their children to school. The Oraibi leaders were arrested. In the fall of 1894 troops were called out again....Continued opposition led in 1906 to a permanent split. Conservative anti-school families were literally pushed out of Oraibi. They started the new village of

> Hotevilla. Indian agent Leo Crane called for troops to search houses for Hopi children as late as 1911. (Reyhner and Eder, p. 89)

In 1879, when Carlisle opened its doors in Pennsylvania, out of an estimated 46,000 school-aged Indian children in the U.S., just over 13,000 were enrolled in some 64 boarding schools and 292 day schools (Reyhner and Eder, p. 46). In the next decade, though overall enrollment figures did not increase substantially, there were considerably fewer day schools and more boarding schools. In 1887, *The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior* listed five industrial boarding schools (trade schools giving little attention to academics) with 1,573 students, 90 government day schools with 3,115 students, and 68 government boarding schools with 5,484 students. In addition, under contract with the federal government, religious organizations maintained another 20 day schools accommodating 1,044 students, and 41 boarding schools with a total of 2,553 students enrolled. (p. xv)

The growth of the boarding school system also correlates with increasing intolerance of native language use at school. One reason for this is that educators in the post-Civil War years of the boarding school movement seem to have believed that the promotion of white culture, especially speaking, reading, and writing English, would lead to greater enfranchisement of Native Americans in the

future, namely the granting of U.S. citizenship and with it, the right to vote. The 1887 *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* also stated

> that the Indians [must] acquire the English language as rapidly as possible. The Government has entered upon the great work of educating and citizenizing the Indians and establishing them upon homesteads. The adults are expected to assume the role of citizens, and of course the rising generation will be expected and required more nearly to fill the measure of citizenship, and the main purpose of educating them is to enable them to read, write, and speak the English language and to transact business with English-speaking people. When they take upon themselves the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship their vernacular will be of no advantage. (p. xxi)

Ethnocentrism

Underlying this view as to the true purpose of education were those ideas based more on ethnocentrism than on principles of democracy. Fuchs and Havinghurst (1972) note that as the post-contact centuries progressed and the U.S. government developed increasingly aggressive policies concerning Indians (as manifested in, for example, the Cherokee removal, the Wounded Knee Massacre), education

furthering the goal of assimilation came to be looked upon as a more expedient means of dealing with the "Indian problem" than the previously advocated policies of removal or outright extermination (p. 4). This sentiment is clearly expressed by an Arizona newspaper, which, when covering an 1890 speech given by then Indian commissioner Thomas J. Morgan in support of the establishment of the Phoenix Indian School, summarized the speaker's theme as "Cheaper to Educate Indians Than To Kill Them" (Cited in Trennert p. 22).

Szasz (1974) traces the historical connections between federal Indian policy and Indian education. Placing education policy within the larger context of an early assimilationist federal stance towards Indians, she links the pro residential school attitude which prevailed throughout the late nineteenth and into the early twentieth century to the larger issue of land allotment as follows:

> ...the Indian Bureau adopted a plan to remold the Indian's conception of life, or what came to be known as his "system of values." If this could be changed, assimilationists reasoned, the Indian would then become like the white man. The Indian's system of values was expressed in the education of his children and in his attitude toward the land. Consequently, the assimilationists chose to attack these two

concepts as the major targets of their campaign. (p. 8)

The benefit of the residential school in this regard was its ability to accomplish the two major tasks of assimilation. In addition to replacing the students' languages, religions, modes of dress, and other aspects of tribal heritage by sending children to residential schools hundreds or even thousands of miles from their ancestral homes and hunting grounds, educators were able to break the connection between the children and tribal lands which were held in common by all members of the group, thus gaining the opportunity to inculcate in the children Anglo-centric ideas regarding private land ownership and emerging Euro-American agricultural lifestyles.

While this system may have had its merits for students who went on to pursue lives in accordance with the values taught at the residential schools (see former student testimonies compiled by Lomawaima 1994), many who returned to tribal life on reservations found themselves in difficult situations. Almost nothing of what they had learned in school was of use to them at home, and many could no longer speak their native languages well enough to communicate effectively with their own relatives. "Thus," writes Szasz, "these pupils became the first victims of the 'either/or' policy of assimilation. Their education forced them to choose either the culture of the white man or the

culture of the Indian; there was no compromise" (p. 10). Szasz's perspective certainly harks back to the observations made by Franklin in his recounting of the Iroquois leaders' refusal to send their children to white schools.

Another aspect of this difficult situation is demonstrated by certain white attitudes towards indigenous languages, which tended to regard these tongues as barbaric, the mark of intellectual inferiority. In documenting the assimilationist stance towards English language instruction among the Indians, Szasz cites a quote from the 1898 Report of the Superintendent of Indian Schools claiming that "In our efforts to humanize, christianize and educate the Indian we should endeavor to divorce him from his primitive habits and customs...We want the power of the Latin expressed...as well as the intellectuality of the Saxon...we must recreate him, make him a new personality." (qtd. in Szasz p. 45). Thus, as Coleman (1993) writes, "English was both a part of the curriculum and the tool through which all other 'official' learning took place; further, it was a symbol of the whole enterprise of 'uplift'" (p. 105).

The use of English, and especially English literacy, was also a symbol of growing nationalism and of the white man's law. The 1887 *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* pronounces:

> Only through the medium of the English tongue can they [Indians] acquire a knowledge of the

> Constitutions of the country and their rights and duties thereunder...True Americans all feel that the Constitution, laws, and institutions of the United States, in their adaptation to the wants and requirements of man, are superior to those of any other country; and they should understand that by the spread of the English language will these laws and institutions be more firmly established and widely disseminated. Nothing so surely and perfectly stamps upon an individual a national characteristic as language. (p. xxi)

Intolerance and ignorance of Indian languages in general manifested themselves specifically in the schools in the form of what amounted to an English only policy at federal schools and federally supported mission schools. This policy was officially established in 1880 and justified by the 1887 *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* by comparison to policies in other colonized regions as follows:

> Only English has been allowed to be taught in the public schools in the territory acquired by this country from Spain, Mexico, and Russia, although the native populations spoke another tongue. All are familiar with the recent prohibitory order of the German Empire forbidding the teaching of the French language in either public or private

> schools in Alsace and Lorraine. Although the population is almost universally opposed to German rule, they are firmly held to German political allegiance by the military hand of the Iron Chancellor. If the Indians were in Germany or France or any other civilized country, they should be instructed in the language there used. As they are in an English-speaking country, they must be taught the language which they must use in transacting business with the people of this country. No unity or community of feeling can be established among different peoples unless they are brought to speak the same language, and thus become imbued with like ideas of duty.
>
> Deeming it for the very best interest of the Indian both as an individual and as an embryo citizen, to have this policy strictly enforced among the various schools on Indian reservations, orders have been issued accordingly to Indian agents...(pp. xxi-xxii).

The policy was reinforced by threatening withdrawal of federal support from all schools, including contract missionary schools, offering instruction to students in their native languages. This resulted in the often harsh English-only standard shaping curriculum at Indian schools well into the 1930s. As described by Leap (1993) "In

today's terms, the approach would be described as *total unstructured immersion*: the students were surrounded on all sides with English-only discourse, were drilled in correct use of grammatical inflections and sentence forms, and were expected to apply the patterns they memorized through rote-learning in daily language settings" (p. 158). A good example of this rote pattern learning is documented by a textbook which, according to Lindsey (1995), was used to educate Indians at Hampton Institute, a school which was founded initially to educate freed slaves and which began admitting Indian students in the 1870s. Written by Issac Lewis Peet (1875), *Language Lessons Designed to Introduce Young Learners, Deaf Mutes and Foreigners to a Correct Understanding and Use of the English Language on the Principle of Object Teaching* relied on written language drills coupled with the handling of classroom and household objects to teach vocabulary and sentence forms. In his preface, Peet describes his method as follows:

> The book opens with the names of twelve objects, which the teacher must have before him. These names have been selected with a view to embracing the whole alphabet, so that when the pupil has learned to write them, he has also learned to form all the letters in use. The teacher then directs the pupil, in writing, to touch one of these objects, and in reply to the written question

> "What did you do?" to write such a sentence as this, "I touched the box." (p. vi)

Peet's system attempts to address a number of grammatical structures using this same method. It relies heavily on imperative forms, questions, and simple declarative sentence response patterns to teach other points of grammar such as use of personal pronouns, singular and plural, articles, prepositions, etc. Peet claims as an advantage for his approach that "The foreigner, with this system, does not require the aid of an instructor versed in two languages, but can be taught the English language by any one who can read it understandingly and write it correctly..." (p. vii). However, the material presented in the text is highly context dependent, the context being the white classroom and home. Thus, the meaningfulness of the text's discourse for Indian students was probably quite limited.

Though some exceptions were still made in the case of religious instruction at missionary schools, as some Indian autobiographies and historical documents indicate, most institutions in compliance with federal regulations offered English-only instruction, often forbidding students to speak their native languages at all, even outside the classroom. This prohibition was sometimes enforced with physical violence such as caning, hard labor, or forced isolation. "This unnatural restriction only served to widen the chasm between boarding-school pupils and their own people when

they sought to return home," writes Szasz (p. 71). Lindsey also describes the assimilationist stance of language policies at Hampton Institute, though punishments meted out for speaking tribal languages were less severe than at other schools and Hampton actually employed a reward system for those who made an effort to speak English.

> In countless other ways, although less completely than government schools, Hampton undermined the culture and sacred beliefs of its Indian students. Indian students were prohibited from speaking their native tongue, except before breakfast and after supper, and on holidays and Sundays. Even on the Sabbath [school founder Samuel Chapman] Armstrong advised them to "pray all they can in English and the rest in Indian." They were awarded "pretty badges" called "eagles" if they spoke only English and were fined a quarter and sent to the commandant each time they did not. Nevertheless, Hampton did oppose Commissioner Morgan's policy of English only, since Indian students needed fluency in their native tongue to act as cultural missionaries. (pp. 200-201)

Despite the professed belief that English-only instruction was designed for the benefit of the student and thought to encourage rapid acquisition through complete immersion in the language, it was probably more likely that

practical considerations such as the educators' inability to speak tribal languages or the diversity of languages spoken among the students that led to the majority of instruction at Indian schools being conducted in English. Szasz (1974) points to the lack of instructors competent in Indian languages (an assessment corroborated by many autobiographies) as one of the main difficulties in using Indian languages as a means of instruction. (p. 71), and Coleman (1993) points out that many of the off-reservation residential schools like Carlisle or the Haskell were pan-tribal, with students speaking a variety of native tongues and dialects, a situation which encouraged the use of English as a lingua-franca (p. 105).

Other practical concerns necessitating the use of English as the main medium of instruction were the demands of literacy. The Western European style of education is dependent upon reading and writing, or, as Walter J. Ong (1982) expresses it, "the technologizing of the word." However, many students attending Indian schools in the nineteenth century spoke languages which had not yet been rendered into written form. Even after writing systems had been developed later in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the number of texts available in these languages was limited (Szasz p. 72-73). This was yet another difficulty that precluded the use of tribal languages for instruction at Indian schools.

The factors above which contributed to a policy of English-only language instruction thus made life at residential schools especially difficult for many of the children who attended them. As Coleman (1993) writes, "Many probably fled because they never achieved proficiency in the medium of instruction; others spent endless uncomprehending hours each day in class (such students could gradually learn to perform many of the manual duties around the school)" (p. 106).

Policies regarding Indian education began to change somewhat as social reform movements, spearheaded by a group of political and social thinkers calling themselves Friends of the Indian, began targeting assimilation and U.S. Indian policy in general in the early twentieth century. Many factors contributed to reformist attitudes advocating a course of cultural pluralism in dealings with Indians, a policy which Frederick Hoxie in *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians 1880-1920*, finds as destructive as the earlier policy of assimilation. According to Hoxie, advocates of Indian education reform had begun to wonder if federal expenditures were yielding the desired result of Indians being assimilated into white culture given the fact that many Indian children were returning to their reservations after receiving an education rather than joining the work force of an increasingly industrialized America.

> Educators, journalists, and even [assimilationist] reformers now doubted the appropriateness of common-school training for Indian children. And lawmakers frightened by the ballooning cost of the nineteenth-century programs began to argue that more modest expectations would require a smaller budget. Westerners--particularly Democrats who had been denied the patronage jobs that were the dividends of a growing Indian Office--often led this group, complaining that "civilized" instruction was wasted on "crude minded Indian youth." (Hoxie, p. 191)

In other words, it had become more cost-effective to regard Indians as incapable of learning all but the most basic menial skills. "In the modern view, Indians were incapable of rising to the level of their civilized country men. The Indian Office therefore should abandon its hopes of bringing the common school to the reservations; realism demanded a more modest approach" (Hoxie, p. 190). That more modest approach was undertaken by Estelle Reel who became federal superintendent of Indian education in 1898 and actively pursued a policy emphasizing manual training over academic education. While many schools already had a split curriculum providing academic instruction in the morning and manual training in the afternoon, and others emphasized manual training to a greater or lesser extent, it

was not until Reel's administration that manual training became the central focus of the entire Indian boarding school system. The next two and a half decades brought with them decreasing appropriations for boarding schools which resulted in increased reliance on student labor to maintain the schools; in some cases students themselves raised and prepared much of the food consumed at the schools. Thus, instead of strengthening the nineteenth century program of assimilation aimed to teach Indians to function as whites in an Anglo-dominant culture (an approach which, although fundamentally ethnocentric in its premises, allowed for the possibility of Indians obtaining higher education and entering professions), educators of the early twentieth century chose to prepare a generation of Indians to become a servant class of citizens.

> As they found their slots, Indians would not alter existing social relations or overturn accepted notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority. Instead they would be taught to follow the direction of their 'civilized' neighbors and labor patiently on the fringes of 'civilization.' In the twentieth century, schools would not transform the tribesmen; they would train them to live on the periphery of American society. (Hoxie, p. 210)

Reform

In contrast to this view, other voices began advocating for Indian reform in another vein, demanding respect and at times reverence for diverse Indian cultures and the struggles faced by members of Indian nations attempting to maintain their traditions. Among these voices were those of Indian autobiographers themselves, in particular Zitkala-Sa, Charles Eastman, and Francis LaFlesche, all of whom were highly educated and had become active in Indian political affairs to some degree by the early twentieth century. Their works will be addressed more fully in a Chapter 3. The difficult situation of Indian nations also gained some attention through the anthropological interests of Franz Boas and other researchers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These social scientists began documenting what they perceived to be the disappearing languages and cultures of indigenous North Americans, and collected many of the narratives cited in Brumble's lists. Ethnologists of this period also systematically began to record and translate sacred verse and songs of various nations, the publication of which attracted the attention of what Michael Castro (1983) calls "poet-interpreters," individuals like Carl Sandburg, Mary Hunter Austin, Frances Densmore and other enthusiasts who began to popularize Indian verse by publishing their own "interpretations" of the translations in prestigious literary magazines beginning

around 1905 (Castro, p. 17). Indeed "*Poetry*, the most influential poetry journal of the day, brought this activity to a head with a February 1917 number, a special 'aboriginal issue'" (Castro, p. 17).

Another influential force in the growing reform movement was John Collier, a New York intellectual who had spent a great deal of time visiting the Pueblo people of Taos, New Mexico in the 1920s. "Among the Taos Indians he found a perfect example of the communal life he valued so highly. From these Indians his interest spread, first to the other Pueblos, then to tribes across the continent" (Szasz, p. 14). Collier became Executive Secretary of the American Indian Defense Association, an organization which had been formed in response to the 1922 Bursum Bill, anti-tribal legislation designed to make Pueblo ancestral land claims more difficult for the Indians to prove. This organization began publishing a muckraking periodical, *American Indian Life*, and liberal magazines such as *The Nation* and *The New Republic* began to call for reform of Indian policy as well (Szasz, p. 14). John Collier was eventually appointed as Commissioner of Indian Affairs by Franklin D. Roosevelt. Collier's experiences in the Southwest apparently not only led him to hold Indian cultures (including languages) in high regard, but they contributed to his being quite well-informed regarding Indian-white relations, and he began working to find ways to

preserve elements of Indian culture in peaceful co-existence with white culture. Some of the policies established during his tenure created controversy among First Nations people (one example being the policy of sheep herd reduction on Navajo lands), but white historians typically point to Collier's advocacy work as one of the most significant and productive forces of Indian reform in the twentieth century.

A turning point in the shaping of Indian education policy came with the 1928 publication of a study undertaken by the Brookings Institute known as *The Merriam Report* (named for the study's director and primary author, Lewis Merriam of The University of Chicago) or *The Problem of Indian Administration*. The report condemned many aspects of U.S. Indian policy, including the Indian education practices of the time, and recommended substantial policy changes. Key among them in regard to education were the recommendations for the extensive curriculum re-organization or closure of most boarding schools.

> The most fundamental need in Indian education is a change in point of view. Whatever may have been the official governmental attitude, education for the Indian in the past has proceeded largely on the theory that it is necessary to remove the Indian child as far as possible from his home environment; whereas the modern point of view in education and social work lays stress on

> upbringing in the natural setting of home and family life. The Indian educational enterprise is peculiarly in need of the kind of approach that recognizes this principle; that is, less concerned with a conventional school system and more with the understandings of human beings. (Merriam, et. al, 1928, p. 346)

Thus, boarding schools were to be replaced by on-reservation day schools which would be more closely tied to the community. In other instances, when possible, local public schools would be required to admit Indian students and would be provided with federal funds to meet the needs of those students. Elimination of an assimilationist uniform course of study at federally controlled schools was advocated. Instead, the report encouraged development of a curriculum which would incorporate local culture and be geared toward all age levels, thus fostering greater community involvement in education. In addition to curriculum improvement, the report also recommended raising teacher salaries and noted "The national government could do no better single thing for Indian education than to insist upon the completion of an accepted college or university course, including special preparation for teaching, as the minimum entrance requirement for all education positions in Indian schools or with Indian people" (Merriam, et. al, 1928, pp. 359-360). The report's criticisms and recommendations were frank and

also happened to be published at a time when informed Indian sympathizers like Collier had the power to make some of the suggested changes. Pro-Indian activism prior to the report's release had set the stage for these changes.

Attempts were made to implement the recommendations of *The Merriam Report* during the Roosevelt administration under the supervision of Collier and Willard Beatty, Collier's Director of Indian Education. For instance, in 1934, Congress passed the Johnson-O'Malley Act, which provided federal funding to regular public day schools to enroll Indian children. Collier also managed to secure government funds to build more day schools and was able to close several boarding schools. Another piece of legislation with wide ranging impact, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, provided for Indian religious freedom, greater tribal self-government, and Indian preference for employment with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

In regard to improving language instruction for Indian children, implementing *The Merriam Report* recommendations was no small task. For instance, despite the efforts to teach an earlier generation the English language during the nineteenth century, by the 1920s, about 95% of Navajo students still came from homes where English was not the main language in use (Szasz, p. 74). However, most teachers in the Indian service had received no formal training in how to instruct such students, a problem recognized by Willard

Beatty. According to Szasz "a structured program on how to reach children who spoke another language had never been developed in the Indian Service...Earlier administrations had assumed that the child would absorb the language simply through regular exposure" (p. 74). Beatty did attempt to establish an intensive teacher training program and is credited with developing one of the earliest bilingual training programs in the country. "He recognized that the language problem was one of the greatest barriers for Indian children. If they stayed in school, generally teachers passed them each year in order to get them through, but their reading comprehension remained well below their grade level because they had failed to grasp the essential concepts of the English language in their first years of school" (Szasz, p. 74). Though Beatty was not himself a linguist, he did consult experts and came to the conclusion that the educator who is teaching English to a child is at the same time teaching him the cultural values of the English-speaking society. The error of the teacher, Beatty said, was in assuming that child already held those concepts when he entered first grade and, consequently, in speaking to him with the broad vocabulary upon which those concepts are based. (Szasz, p. 76)

One attempt to make better provisions for such students was the creation of bi-lingual printed materials for the classroom (Szasz, pp. 72-73). For example, linguists

familiar with the Navajo language were hired to produce bilingual pamphlets entitled the *Indian Life Series* 1940-1945. However, according to Szasz,

> Although the stories were based on legends or everyday incidents of the tribe described, they suffered one serious drawback--they were composed in English and then translated into the native language. Their subject matter was appealing, but their vocabulary, which was well suited to the primer level and pre-primer level in the English version, became ill suited to this level when translated (pp. 72-73).

The Roosevelt years and ensuing decades did bring with them increasing awareness of the need for better language instruction. Educators began to consider a broader range of socio-linguistic factors affecting English language acquisition at Indian schools. For instance, in *Education for Cultural Change* (1953) a collection of selected articles previously published in the federally sponsored periodical *Indian Education* between 1944-1951, Hildegard Thompson, a teacher who later served as Director of Education for the BIA (1952-1965) investigated student motivations (or lack of motivation) for learning English, the cultural appropriateness of teaching materials, and teacher attitudes toward students they perceived as "below normal" in language achievements. This administrator, and her predecessor,

Willard Beatty, understood that some of the principles of native language acquisition also applied to second language acquisition and that it was unrealistic to expect children to develop native-like proficiency in English in a few short months. For example, in one *Indian Education* article Beatty writes

> The non-English-speaking child who comes to Indian schools must, therefore, during his four to five hours a day of school, pass through the same stages in the acquisition of English that he has passed through in eight to ten hours a day for **five to six** years in acquiring the native language--and his teachers expect him to do it in a matter of months. (p. 400)

In articles aimed especially at Indian service teachers, Hildegard Thompson encouraged methods and attitudes which are today still considered a part of good ESL teaching practice. For example, she understood that what teachers perceived as students' lack of motivation for learning English probably had as much to do with cultural conflict as anything else and was, in part, "the result of the indignities and discriminations he has suffered because of his race...Unconsciously his feelings for the group which subjected him to discrimination may be transferred to a dislike for the language they speak" (Thompson, 1953a, p. 259). Thompson criticized Eurocentric selection of

inappropriate teaching materials such as *The Tale of Two Cities* (1953a, p. 260) and also advocated a student-centered systematic approach to vocabulary development. She encouraged pre-reading activities to enhance word acquisition, and advised teachers to offer their own definitions of new words rather than sending the student to a dictionary, noting that this "merely adds to his confusion, especially if the dictionary definition is in a vocabulary which is more difficult than the word he is looking up. Also, if there are a great number of unfamiliar words, the student is discouraged before he starts" (Thompson, 1953a, p. 267) Thompson was also sensitive to the issue of native language loss, noting that "Many Indians after learning and using English to the exclusion of their native tongue have felt at a disadvantage in talking with the older members of their tribe because their thinking in their native Indian tongue has not kept pace with their years. They find themselves using a childish vocabulary" (1953b, p. 396) Another contributor to *Indian Education*, Robert Young, promoted the use of local languages as a means to acquiring English, and Indian service teachers were encouraged to take up the study of these languages. This, no doubt, encouraged some empathy on the part of the teachers, whom Young reminded "If the white teacher finds it next to impossible to readjust her speech habits to the Navajo way, is it not possible that the Navajo finds it

equally hard to learn the English language? English is no doubt as hard for the Navajo as Navajo is for the white person" (1953, p. 412).

Educators also began to recognize increasingly the value of literacy in Indian languages. As justification for advocating Navajo literacy, Young, in the article cited above, points to the more ancient Latin/vernacular debate. "So also did the defenders of Latinity argue against the proposed replacement of this "most perfect of languages" by the crude and decadent speech of the people. The fact that more people could become literate in the languages they spoke daily than in the dead or moribund Latin was considered irrelevant" (1953, p. 408). Of course, English was neither a dead or moribund language at the time of this article, but the idea of encouraging literacy in Indian languages along with English literacy made sense according to Young's position.

However, the apparent advances in Indian educational programs which began in the 1930s suffered some serious set backs after the second World War. With much of the national budget diverted to the war effort, funds allotted for improvements in Indian education began to disappear and were not reinstated at the close of the war. By 1944, for example, about twenty day schools on the Navajo Reservation had been closed (Szasz, p. 109). The war also brought substantial demographic changes among Indian nations. Some

24,000 Indians served in the armed forces, and about 40,000 left their reservations to seek employment in industrial urban areas during the war years (Szasz, p. 107). This increasing urbanization once again led policy makers to the conclusion that education for assimilation was the best way to prepare Indians for this life, a position which in some ways echoed that of the late nineteenth century. Postwar land policies also began to echo those of the nineteenth century which encouraged individual rather than communal ownership of lands. Shortly after the war, Congress began aggressively pursuing a policy of termination whereby "the federal trust status of the reservation would be ended and the tribe's land and other assets would be divided up and distributed to tribal members" (Reyhner and Eder, 1989, p. 111). Under the policy of termination, states were to assume all financial responsibility for Indians in public schools, and education at federally controlled reservation and boarding schools became increasingly urban oriented (Szasz, 1974, p. 110). Advocates of termination after World War II argued

> that American Indian soldiers who had fought for their country should therein be given the opportunity to become totally assimilated in the mainstream culture... The nation's treatment of the Indian had come full circle. From the early twenties to the early forties the pendulum had

> swung toward recognition and encouragement of Indian culture; as the war ended it began to swing toward assimilation. (Szasz, p. 113)

Thus, in the years following the war, education once again focused less on incorporation of Indian culture and more on vocational training for urban jobs.

However, other cultural cross-currents of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, namely the civil rights movement and the activities of the American Indian Movement (AIM), helped raise national consciousness regarding minority issues. Beginning in the late 1960s, Indians struggled increasingly for the right to determine Indian policy for themselves. With regard to education, AIM fought for greater inclusion of Indian culture in school curriculums, including study of Indian languages along with English, and advocated increased Indian involvement in school administration. AIM led sit-ins and walk-outs at a number of government controlled high schools. In 1975 Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act which was designed to give Indians greater control over government and education. This led to a greater number of tribally controlled schools. According to Reyhner and Eder (1992) "By 1988 there were 65 tribally controlled contract schools. Matching the successful growth of tribally controlled elementary and secondary schools was the even more significant growth of tribally controlled colleges. The

first such college, Navajo Community College (NCC) was founded in 1968 under the leadership of Guy Gorman. By 1989, there were twenty-four such colleges located in ten states" (p. 56). These institutions often include instruction in Indian languages (which languages depends on the population served) as well as English.

Over the years, English has come to be looked upon by educators and Indians as an important language of wider communication, a language necessary for obtaining gainful employment, and for articulating Indian needs and beliefs to the white world. However, this recognition of the importance of English in Indian communities does not necessarily have to lead to extinction of indigenous languages. When Indian culture becomes increasingly valued by Indians and, ironically, non-Indians, at least in part through the efforts of Indian controlled schools, a place for Indian languages in oral and written forms is also made within indigenous communities. For instance, Daniel McLaughlin (1992), in his study of Navajo language literacy, observes that written Navajo is used by residents of Mesa Valley in traditionally white domains such as schools and Christian churches, while at the same time it is used at more intimate levels of Navajo life to write letters, lists, journals, notes, and to record Navajo religious ceremonial procedures (p. 151). Sally J. McBeth, in her study *Ethnic Identity and the Boarding School Experience of West-Central*

Oklahoma American Indians (1983) observes that "federal boarding schools designed their policy so that Native languages would be replaced by the use of English...But Indian languages and traditions have retained a certain cultural potency and status. Active language renewal and cultural retention programs are numerous in western Oklahoma" (pp. 132-133).

Yet, despite efforts to maintain or renew indigenous languages, a number of North American Indians name English as their primary language. Among them are the poet/novelists N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko. In 1983, the *National Adult Indian Education Needs Survey* determined that 75% of all American Indians spoke English in some form, and 44% of them had spoken only ancestral languages at home as children, and had learned English as a second language at school. The remaining 31% spoke English exclusively. (Brod and McQuiston, cited in Leap 1993, pp.17-18). This generation of essentially monolingual English speakers will be the focus of a later chapter which will discuss the theme of ancestral language loss and recovery in North American Indian autobiography.

A number of social, economic, and political forces have combined to produce the present day status of Indian languages in relation to English. As McBeth (1983) notes "Those Indian people of western Oklahoma who no longer speak their languages did not lose their ability by accident" (p.

132). The narrative above sketches out a small part of a more complex model of language shift wrought by colonialism. For the most part, it is the story of Anglo conquerors and the decisions they made about the languages of those they conquered.

Despite this narrow focus, the narrative does serve to illustrate several applied principles of language planning. It shows the deliberateness with which one group of people tried to influence another in regard to acquisition and use of language. The narrative also considers the political and economic power relationships between these groups, and shows them to be unbalanced ones characteristic of Clifton's "frontier" (see Chapter 1). It offers an opportunity to identify some of the actors, the policies, and the political and economic circumstances shaping the forces behind such massive language shift as that experienced by North America's indigenous people.

However, as will be seen in the following chapters, the autobiographies, the Indians' own narratives, offer another telling of the same story. It is through these narratives that the conditions and effects of language shift, of colonial language policies are most keenly rendered. And it is through the voices of those individuals most directly affected by such policies that we come to more fully understand their consequences.

Chapter Three

A New English-Speaking Generation Writes Back

I
a teacher taught me
more than she knew
patting me on the head
putting words in my hand
--"pretty little *Indian* girl!"
saving them--
going to give them
back to her one day...
show them around too
cousins and friends
laugh and say --"aye"

II
binding by sincerity
hating that kindness
eight years' worth
third graders heard her
putting words in my hand
--"we should bow our heads
in shame for what we did
to the American Indian"
saving them--
going to give them
back to her one day...
show them around too
cousins and friends
laugh and say--"aye"

from: Anna Lee Walters
"A Teacher Taught Me"

MATERIALS

Coleman (1993) has observed that post-colonial educational and economic systems did not demand that Indians become bilingual but rather that they replace their own languages with English as the primary means of communication with whites and within Indian and pan-Indian communities as

well. The response to this demand certainly varied with each individual. This chapter provides a forum for the voices of some of those individuals, American Indian autobiographers who have defined the English language learning process for themselves. The main issues this forum addresses are the autobiographers' perceptions of language identity and the roles of English and Indian languages in their communities; their perceptions of language pedagogy at Indian day and boarding schools; and their claims regarding motivations for learning English. In order to emphasize the autobiographers' perceptions, this discussion focuses on key quotations that illustrate the tension surrounding acquisition of a new language and native language loss. The excerpts are selections from autobiographies composed in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each work demonstrates some degree of ironic synchretic resistance to Western culture either by including content condemning colonialist education practices and/or by encouraging readers to question the conventional definition of autobiography through subversion of the Euro-American form.

The Texts

The autobiographies considered in this chapter were composed by authors with various native and educational backgrounds and were published anywhere from the early twentieth century to the 1990s, but all offer recollections

of learning and using English as a second language. Several of the texts published early in the twentieth century reflect educational experiences of the late nineteenth century, while the later autobiographies discussed here record experiences from the early to mid twentieth century.

The narratives I have chosen to discuss in this chapter were selected over other Indian autobiographies because of the attention the authors give to language learning experiences in each. As has been noted in Chapter 1, many published autobiographies represent collaborative attempts between an Indian and an anthropologist to depict traditional native practices in order to make some record of a rapidly disappearing way of life. However, the focus of this dissertation has led me away from these narratives of day to day native existence to those dealing more with the Anglo-oriented educational experiences of the authors; thus, the number of texts discussed here is considerably smaller than the total of published autobiographies. Another factor determining the selection of texts for this chapter has been the availability of the published narratives through academic libraries. The texts considered here are among the less obscure indigenous autobiographical writings and usually are available through university library services. Scholars have laid the groundwork for general discussion of these texts, though the focus on the depiction of language learning/language loss still bears sustained discussion.

Four of the book-length narratives discussed here date from the early twentieth century and were written by Northern plains Indians, namely, Francis LaFlesche, an Omaha, and Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa), Gertrude Bonin (Zitkala-Sa), and Luther Standing Bear, all three of whom were Sioux. The latest of these four autobiographies is Standing Bear's *My People the Sioux*, which first appeared in 1928. Eastman's *From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian*, dates from 1916. Zitkala-Sa's and LaFlesche's narratives appeared in 1900. LaFlesche's was originally titled *The Middle Five: Indian Boys at School*, and Zitkala Sa's work was published serially that same year in the *Atlantic Monthly* and was later reprinted as a book entitled *American Indian Stories* (1921). Most of the events recounted in the autobiographies occurred in the late nineteenth century. Substantial portions of these texts are focused on the authors' academic experiences, and it is in the recounting of school life that we find most of the information about language learning. All these individuals obtained high levels of education, and all four pursued professions requiring high degrees of literacy. All four autobiographies are written in idiomatic English, though the authors sometimes employ Sioux or Omaha words and phrases when characterizing certain individuals or when it seems an English translation alone would not be sufficient to convey the authors' impressions of a situation.

Another highly educated autobiographer who lived south of the Sioux and Omaha nations was Shawnee Thomas Wildcat Alford. His autobiography, *Civilization And the Story of the Absentee Shawnees* (1936, rpt. 1979), as told to Florence Drake, focuses a good deal on the issue of his nation's land rights but also offers some insight regarding language education practices at a Quaker mission and, later, at Hampton Institute. In addition, Alford went on to become a teacher and administrator at Indian boarding schools, and his autobiography describes his role there.

An additional autobiography reflecting late nineteenth and early twentieth century language education practices, this time in the Northwest, is Christine Quintasket's *Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography* (1990). As observed in Chapter 1, this posthumously published work by a member of the Colville Confederated Tribes of Eastern Washington State was shaped considerably by editor Jay Miller. Miller's sensitivity to and documentation of his role as collaborator in the book's introduction is unusually and helpfully detailed[1]. The book has particular relevance to

---

[1] In his introduction to the text Miller writes:

> Unsure about spelling and usage, she was never comfortable with English, and some of her phrasings can be difficult to understand unless one is familiar with Colville English idiom. The printed text therefore represents my sense of her work...
>
> I rewrote each sentence to achieve agreements of subject and verb, a uniform past tense, and appropriate use of pronouns. Since pronouns in Interior Salish do not recognize gender, "he" and

this discussion because, considering Quintasket's aspirations to professional authorship, which may have been undermined to some extent by her lack of English proficiency, it offers an interesting look at the question of motivation in language learning.

Polingaysi Qoyawayma's *No Turning Back: A True Account of a Hopi Indian Girl's Struggle to Bridge the Gap Between the World of Her People and The World of the White Man* (1964) offers an as-told-to story which the author and her collaborator, Vada Carlson, have cast into a third person narrative. This narrative distance and the involvement of a collaborator may have prompted David Brumble to remark that the book is more properly a biography, though he considers the text autobiographical enough to include it in his extensive and thorough bibliography of Indian autobiography. I include it in my study because it provides helpful information regarding the author's motivations for learning English. In addition, Qoyawayma eventually became a teacher in an Indian school and developed a successful English language pedagogy which incorporated Hopi culture into the

---

> "she" tend to be used interchangeably in Salish-influenced English...
>
> In rewriting I attempted to apply standard English conventions of syntax, spelling, and grammar while retaining Mourning Dove's words. Whenever possible I kept her paragraphing. Gaps in the master text were filled out with passages from the other versions. My editorial additions are enclosed in brackets. (pp. xxxiii-xxxiv)

lessons.

Four other book-length autobiographies, Kay Bennet's *Kaibah: Recollections of a Navajo Girlhood* (1964), Jane Willis's *Geniesh: An Indian Girlhood* (1973), Albert Yava's *Big Falling Snow: A Tewa-Hopi Indian's Life and Times and the History and Traditions of His People*, (1978. Rpt. 1982) and Ray Young Bear's *Black Eagle Child: The Facepaint Narratives* (1992) offer somewhat more contemporary accounts of language learning experiences. When read in conjunction with the early narratives, consistent themes regarding language, identity, and power relationships between educators and Indians emerge. Kay Bennet's *Navajo Girlhood* is written in 3rd person idiomatic English, in a simple style accessible to elementary school-aged children. Jane Willis's narrative of her Canadian Cree childhood is more sophisticated and often humorous in its portrayal of cultural and linguistic misunderstanding. Albert Yava's text is derived from a series of tape recorded interviews with editor Harold Courlander, who then compiled and shaped the transcripts into a narrative. According to Courlander, Yava retained substantial control of the final manuscript and met with the editor and an assistant on several occasions during the process of shaping and structuring the narrative. Ray Young Bear's recent autobiography is more of an experimental narrative comprised of poetry and "fictionalized" accounts of the author's life. In a note

appended to the main text, the Mesquakie poet claims that the text is indeed autobiographical, and the main character, Edgar Bearchild "mirrors in part my own laborious Journey of Words," while other characters are composites of people he has known. In addition to addressing issues of language loss and acquisition, this narrative, as a "fictionalized autobiography" calls into question conventional definitions of the genre.

Finally, three late twentieth century short narrative essays provide important observations for this chapter. These essays by Randy Fred (1988), Edna Manitowabi (1971) and Joseph Suina (1988) offer accounts of specific educational experiences involving native language loss. Fred's essay serves as an introduction to Haig-Brown's study of a Canadian residential school, and Manitowabi's narrative originally appeared in *This Magazine is About Schools* and was re-published in chapbook form as *An Indian Girl in the City,* which is the version cited here. Suina, himself an educator, published his essay in a collection entitled *Linguistic and Cultural Influences on Learning Mathematics* (1988).

It is important to note here that not all the narratives exclusively deal with the difficulties of living between two or more languages. Though there is a strong focus on the overall experience of education, the authors also make an attempt to portray aspects of traditional

lifestyles, describing them at times with the matter-of-factness of an anthropologist, and at other times with a sense of sadness and nostalgia for what the writers knew to be a passing way of life. In some cases, descriptions of traditional lifestyles may have been prompted by the anthropological interests of a collaborator or by the author's own impetus toward autoethnography. My approach to these texts has been to focus more on the accounts of language learning (or non-learning) and to organize the data thematically. The different voices create an interwoven narrative of English language learning as these authors experienced it in a variety of contexts.

INTRODUCING A NEW LANGUAGE

And your name is?

For North American Indians, learning English often began with learning a new name. When an Indian child entered a missionary or government school in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the indigenous language name by which that child's family had known her would be deemed unpronounceable, heathen, inappropriate by those who were to teach her how to be white. Thus, she would be given, or in some cases would be encouraged to choose for herself a new Anglo name. As O'Brien (1973), Wong (1992) and a number of Indian writers have observed, re-naming was and still is

practiced in some North American indigenous cultures; as an individual aged, he or she might be given new names by community members inspired by the individual's emerging character traits or deeds. For instance, Charles Eastman, the last of five children, had first been named Hakadah, meaning The Pitiful Last, because his mother died from complications resulting from her last child's birth. However, after Hakadah performed well in a lacrosse contest at age four, his band dubbed him Ohiyesa, The Winner, a name he retained into adulthood and used along with his English name.

In contrast to such a meaningful approach to naming, Anglo re-naming practices must have seemed arbitrary to many Indian students because the names did not necessarily correspond to deeds or personality traits. Despite this, students were probably aware of what the act of re-naming was supposed to mean, even if they could not connect these names to their emerging selves in a traditional way. A new Anglo name was the first step toward a new language identity. The problem was that the new name was an abstraction, and it was this abstraction that students had to read, write, pronounce, and answer to when called. The message was clear: along with a new language then, came a new name, a new self. For certain autobiographers this change was more welcome than for others. Exploring the significance of re-naming and the autobiographers' reactions

to it is a good starting place from which to explore the issues of language identity, for re-naming often began the process of language learning and language loss, and consequently, the struggle for identity.

On the subject of Indian and Anglo naming practices, Christine Quintasket (Mourning Dove) writes in her autobiography:

> In ancient times it was customary for a person to have many names, by inheritance and by outstanding deeds. A medicine man might take a name when a spirit requested him to do so in a dream or vision... Before the whites came, we had no surnames. They were given by Jesuits and pioneers for convenience, overcoming the difficulties of pronouncing native words. Some people were named for presidents and great men, others for descriptions of physical features. The sisters at Goodwin Mission also gave out names to students when they enrolled. Often they were given the first name of their father as a family name. In this way I once became Christine Joseph. Other families became known as Tom, Peter, Martin, and Alex. They did not have the opportunity to gain the name of someone famous. (p. 96)

Regarding this passage, Linda Karell (1995) notes that

> Colville [Indian] naming does not fix identity.

> Rather it implies a range of identities inferred and assumed, and it shows the interwoven spiritual and material power relations traditionally invoked in acts of naming, while Anglicized names inevitably uphold patriarchal ideologies. Mourning Dove makes clear that the "convenience" of naming is experienced by those who have the power to name. (p. 425)

Omaha Francis LaFlesche offers an example of how Indian boys were named after famous white warriors and biblical characters.

> All the boys in our school were given English names, because their names were difficult for the teachers to pronounce. Besides, the aboriginal names were considered by the missionaries as heathenish, and therefore should be obliterated. No less heathenish in their origin were the English substitutes, but the loss of their original meaning and the significance through long usage had rendered them fit to continue as appellations for civilized folk. And so, in the place of Tae-noo'-ga-we-she, came Philip Sheridan; in that of Wa-pah'-dae, Ulysses S. Grant; that of Koo'-we-he-ge-ra, Alexander, and so on. Our sponsors went even further back in history, and thus we had our David and Jonathan, Gideon and

> Isaac, and, with the flood of these new names, came Noah. It made little difference to us that we had to learn the significance of one more word as applied to ourselves, when the task before us was to make our way through an entire strange language. So we learned to call each other by our English names, and continued to do so even after we left school and had grown to manhood. (p.xvii-xviii)

Not only does the passage above illustrate the Anglo approach to re-naming; it demonstrates the insidious thoughtlessness of such a practice resulting in the sick irony of naming an Indian child Philip Sheridan after a U.S. General responsible for Indian genocide, a man to whom historians attribute the quotation "The only good Indians I ever saw were dead" (Ellis 1900, cited in Brown 1970 p.170). LaFlesche points out the additional irony of the "heathenish" origins of Anglo names, further emphasizing the absurd qualities of the re-naming practice.

At times, no doubt for the sake of an educator's "convenience," elements of a student's Indian name might be retained. For instance, an Indian name could be shortened to a phonologically similar Anglo name as in the case of Kay Bennet, a Navajo who began her education as Kaibah. But name selection could take on a more highly random quality. Luther Standing Bear, a member of the first class at

Carlisle, recounts picking his first name from a list on a blackboard. An interpreter explained to the students that they were going to be given white men's names but "none of the names were read or explained to us, so of course we did not know the sound or meaning of any of them" (p. 137). Nevertheless, as each child selected a name from the chalkboard at random with a wooden pointer, the teacher would write it on a piece of tape and sew it to the student's shirt. Standing Bear writes

> When my turn came, I took the pointer and acted as if I were about to touch an enemy. Soon we all had the names of white men sewed on our backs. When we went to school, we knew enough to take our proper places in the class, but that was all. When the teacher called the roll, no one answered his name. Then she would walk around and look at the back of the boys' shirts. When she had the right name located, she made the boy stand up and say 'Present.' She kept this up for about a week before we knew what the sound of our new names was (p. 137).

The bestowal of an Anglo name is also described by Hopi Polingaysi Qoyawayma who "came home [from day school] with a cardboard hung around her neck on a string. Lettered on it was her new name: Bessie. Her sister Duvangyamsi's new name was Anna" (Qoyawayma, p. 28).

Both Standing Bear and Qoyawayma recount their re-naming in rather dispassionate tones, and yet the images of a teacher sewing name labels onto students' shirts and of a small girl wearing a cardboard sign around her neck are uncomfortable ones to imagine. They are name/identity fixing images, and the very literal "putting on" of names, serves as a metaphor for the experience of "putting on" the oppressor's language. As depicted in these autobiographies the goal of the educators is that the students' Indian words and identities be *replaced by* English words and identities. But this is not necessarily what is accomplished by the name labels and the cardboard. Ironically, in a very literal sense, English words/identities, name labels, are merely *placed on top of* already existing Indian words/identities. The students literally wear their new names on the outside. This situation illustrates the tension between the goal of the educator (Indian words/identity replaced by English words/identity) and the outcome (English words/identity placed on top of Indian words/identity).

Students were not necessarily willing to trade in their Indian names and identities, but they consented to bear their new Anglo names when called upon by the white educator to do so while retaining use of their Indian names at home. This was certainly the case for Polingaysi Qoyawayma, who writes of the tension between her desire for education and her mother's wish for her to pursue a traditional Hopi

life.

> "You had your beginning as a true Hopi," Polingaysi's mother told her, fingering the cardboard. "You were named in the Hopi way. Your true name is Polingaysi. That will always be your true name."
>
> "I am Polingaysi," she declared. "I will always be Polingaysi. But when the Bahana [Anglo] calls me Bessie, I will pretend I have forgotten my own name." (pp. 28-29)

Qoyawayma is on the defensive on two fronts. At school her disempowered status as a Hopi child compels her to assume an Anglo name, while at home she must reassure her mother that her Hopi self is still intact and that "Bessie" is only a role she plays at school. However, "pretending" to forget her "own" Hopi name may be read as a sign of Qoyawayma's intended subversive resistance to Anglo attempts at replacing her language and identity, a resistance perhaps inspired by her mother's concerns. She believes she is fooling the white teacher by allowing him to believe she has traded in her traditional name/identity for an Anglo one. We could also argue that by allowing her teacher to believe he has replaced her old name with a new one, Polingaysi Qoyawayma is, in some sense, adding the new name to what Karell describes as a range of identity. The Hopi girl assures her mother that she "will always be Polingaysi,"

thus indicating she will perpetually retain her Hopi identity even when she answers to "Bessie" and pretends to "have forgotten my own [Hopi] name."

Luther Standing Bear, however, does not demonstrate the same kind of resistance. Unlike Qoyawayma, who first attended a day school against her parents' wishes (hence her mother's reprimand in the passage cited above), Standing Bear became a student at the Carlisle residential school with his father's support. In fact, thoughts of how he could better help his father once he received an education inspired Standing Bear's enthusiasm for English; this enthusiasm became apparent early on in his academic career.

> I was one of the "bright fellows" to learn my name quickly. How proud I was to answer when the teacher called the roll! I would put my blanket down and half raise myself in my seat, all ready to answer my new name. I had selected the name "Luther"...
>
> The first few times I wrote my new name, it was scratched so deeply into the slate that I was never able to erase it. But I copied my name all over both sides of the slate until there was no more room to write. Then I took my slate up to show it to the teacher, and she indicated, by the expression of her face, that it was very good. I soon learned to write it very well; then I took a

> piece of chalk downstairs and wrote "Luther" all over everything I could copy it on. (pp. 137-138)

A new name was often the first English word Indian students would learn to pronounce, read, and write. While it would be presumptuous to say that a student's attitude toward this learning reflected as a whole an attitude toward the new language, Qoyawayma's resistance and Standing Bear's acquiescence in regard to re-naming practices do illustrate differing degrees of initial willingness among students to assume the new identity implied by acceptance of a new name in a new language. And of course the role of a student's family in determining the degree of willingness to assume a new name should not be undervalued. In Qoyawayma's case, her mother's resistance seems to have encouraged the child's, while the fact that Standing Bear's father supported the son's educational pursuits may have influenced the boy's willingness to take on the trappings of Anglo culture. In any case, resistance to this colonial imposition also marks resistance to the lopsided power relationships established in part when Anglos bestowed their culture's names and language on Indians.

INSTITUTIONAL AND STUDENT-GENERATED LESSONS

Certainly, approaches to language instruction at Indian schools varied from teacher to teacher and school to school.

Nevertheless, it is possible to make some generalizations regarding language instruction based on the data presented in the autobiographical narratives considered here. One of the broadest of those generalizations is that the language pedagogy described by the autobiographers can be divided into two categories, institutional (formal) and student-generated (informal). As will be seen from autobiographical accounts provided below, formal or institutional pedagogy at Indian schools was a teacher/textbook centered model characterized by the students' complete immersion in English, memorization, rote learning, reprimands and physical punishments. The content of lessons was Anglo-centric and often abstract.

Informal or student generated pedagogy in which students took language instruction upon themselves developed as a survival skill and compensated for the failings of the more formal pedagogy. Autobiographers characterize this informal style of language learning as a means of establishing or developing friendships and protecting themselves and their friends from punishments administered by their teachers. The informal language lessons were probably conducted bi-lingually, with students switching back and forth between Indian languages and English. And rising as they did out of immediate needs to cope with specific situations such as avoiding punishment or ordering food in a restaurant, these informal lessons could be

considered context-based. Peer instruction and conversations in a native language out of ear-shot of authorities were also ways around the English-only instruction of the classroom.

Immersion

As noted in Chapter 2, while there were some exceptions to the English-only approach (in religious instruction, for example, or in cases where beginning students were provided with interpreters), complete immersion seems to have been the rule rather than the exception, due, in part, to the fact that many teachers were ignorant of Indian languages and made no attempt to learn them. Also, at larger boarding schools like the ones attended by Luther Standing Bear, Zitkala-Sa and Charles Eastman, the students in residence were from a variety of Indian nations, and while individuals could often find fellow Sioux or Omaha students, for the most part the larger student body spoke a variety of native languages. Hence, English had to become the lingua-franca among them. However, both of these rationales for use of English-only immersion techniques were actually symptoms of the larger ethnocentric agenda of colonizing forces discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

As can well be imagined, this immediate and total immersion in English resulted in difficulties for newly arrived students at both day and boarding schools. In

situations where students were not provided with translators they often found themselves simply mimicking the sounds or chalkboard markings the teachers made without attaching meaning to them. Albert Yava, for instance, says "Altogether, we felt pretty strange, getting education in a language we didn't understand...One of the things Mr. Spink taught us was how to count, 'One, two, three, four, five,' but we couldn't get it because we didn't know what he was talking about, and we just sat there dumb" (pp. 9-10). Polingaysi Qoyawayma recounts her first experience with English as follows:

> ...he [the teacher] took her by the arm and walked her rapidly to a desk where two other little girls were sitting. He shoved her in beside them and pushed a pencil and a piece of paper in front of her. He was a thin, sour-faced young man with cold, unsympathetic eyes. She could not understand what he said to her before he turned away.
>
> One of the other girls whispered to her, "Make marks like the ones he makes."
>
> The marks the teacher made on the blackboard spelled "cat," but Polingaysi did not know it. She copied them as best she could, filling her paper on both sides. (p. 25)

While the English-only method had its limitations, one

autobiographer, Jane Willis, describes what she perceived as one of its perverse benefits. Of one teacher she writes:

> Mrs. Holland's lack of knowledge of Cree was a great handicap for us during those first few months, but it also forced us to pay attention, since we could not depend on her for translation. (p. 34)

Willis is aware that such an approach might encourage attentiveness on the part of the students, but for most autobiographers, the English-only approach created a sense of fear. It caused humiliation, and it silenced students.

You Had Better Speak English, Or Else!

Linked to this complete immersion was the outright prohibition against speaking native languages. In some cases, as Coleman points out, it was a prohibition enforced by violence and threats. LaFlesche writes poignantly of this experience, contrasting the comfortable chatter engaged in at home with his Omaha family, where the only restriction regarding speech tended to be on volume, to the experience of being rendered practically mute at boarding school. He writes:

> [at home] we chattered incessantly of the things that occupied our minds, and we thought it a hardship when we were obliged to speak in low tones while older people were engaged in

> conversation. When we entered the Mission School, we experienced a greater hardship, for there we encountered a rule that prohibited the use of our own language, which rule was rigidly enforced with a hickory rod, so that the new-comer, however socially inclined was obliged to go about like a little dummy until he had learned to express himself in English. (Introduction)

Randy Fred too writes of the irony of being struck "dumb" as a result of prohibitions against speaking Tseshaht. However, in Fred's case it was his father's experience with language learning/loss and physical punishment that had a long-range impact on the author's own life.

> The elimination of language has always been a primary stage in the process of cultural genocide. This was the primary function of the residential school. My father, who attended Alberni Indian Residential School for four years in the twenties, was physically tortured by his teachers for speaking Tseshaht: They pushed sewing needles through his tongue, a routine punishment for language offenders. The needle torture suffered by my father affected all my family...My Dad's attitude became "why teach my children Indian if they are going to be punished for speaking it?" so

> he would not allow my mother to speak Indian to us in his presence. I never learned how to speak my own language. I am now, therefore, truly a 'dumb Indian.' (pp. 11-12)

Violence, of course, breeds fear, and being scared becomes a refrain for Ojibwa Edna Manitowabi's description of her schooling and language learning experience. She too recalls physical punishment associated with native language use.

> Besides, we were forbidden to speak our own languages and were punished for doing so, if we were caught...I was scared of being caught speaking Indian, scared because I didn't understand the English of the teachers and could not follow the lessons, scared that I would get punished for wetting my bed, scared that I would not wake up in time for the six o'clock mass. I also remember being beaten up for many of these things. (p. 2)

Jane Willis and her fellow students also learned English under the duress of threats, being told by a boarding school headmaster:

> 'You are here to learn English; so from now on, you will speak only English in or around the school. You will not speak Cree, and anyone caught speaking it will be severely punished...I don't want you to think there is anything wrong

> with the Cree language. For your grandparents and parents who have not been fortunate enough to go to school, there is no other choice, but for you children, there is a choice. So you will learn the English language and speak it.' (p.45)

The irony here is that, while the headmaster claimed the students had "a choice" regarding which language to speak, the choice had already been made for them.

Violence and silencing certainly took its toll on students' self esteem. Cochiti Indian Joseph Suina writes in his essay "And Then I Went To School":

> My language, too, was questionable from the beginning of my school career. "Leave your Indian (language) at home" was like a trademark of school. Speaking it accidentally or otherwise was a sure reprimand in the form of a dirty look or a whack with a ruler. This punishment was for speaking the language of my people which meant so much to me. It was the language of my grandmother and I spoke it well. With it, I sang beautiful songs and prayed from my heart. At that young and tender age, comprehending why I had to part with it was most difficult for me. (p. 200)

The violent silencing of Indian children is one of the more tragic motifs of many of the narratives considered in this study. However, the witness to the silencing provided by

these English-language narratives also demonstrates the ironic synchretic resistance of indigenous people to colonial forces. While these writers may have been silenced as children at school, they have reformed this experience through the conqueror's language into a critique of the force that silenced them.

Prohibitions against speaking an indigenous language were not restricted to students alone. Even teachers who were able to speak the native language of the children they were teaching might be forbidden to do so by school administrators. Such was the case when Polingaysi Qoyawayma, after obtaining English fluency by studying and working with missionaries in several different U.S. locations, returned to her native Hopi land to teach in a school at Hotevilla.

> She soon discovered that she was forbidden to speak Hopi to the children in the classroom.
>
> 'We want them to learn English,' the supervisors reminded her tartly. 'Here are the lessons. Teach them--in English.' (p 25)

Thus, Qoyawayma provides witness to the fact that it was not always a teacher's inability to speak an Indian language that prevented her from teaching children in their native language. Even in a case where the teacher could have communicated with her students in their native Hopi language, she was silenced by a prevailing English-only

policy she had not helped shape.

Circumventing the English-Only Rules

In order to cope with the prohibition against speaking their native languages many students engaged in subversive resistance through silence and evasion. Of the prohibition against speaking Cree, Willis writes "This was a rule we absolutely refused to follow. By refusing to speak either Cree or English when any of the staff were around, we were able to escape punishment" (p. 46). Kay Bennet records a similar sentiment:

> The first few weeks [after students returned from family visits], in order to force the children to resume speaking English as quickly as possible, extra duty was given those caught speaking in Navajo. Few were caught, as the children stayed some distance from those in authority, or whispered, covering their mouths, when they wished to use their native tongue.
>
> (p. 227)

These individuals present their silences and evasions as coping strategies or forms of resistance, but it should be remembered that, like many forms of evasive resistance, these strategies developed out of fear of punishment, in this case for speaking one's own language. The presence of educators, while not always enforcing the use of English,

did enforce an unnatural silence.

An Exception to English-Only

One exception to the prohibition against using native languages was in religious instruction. Charles Eastman, who attended a day school for a year before enrolling in the residential Santee Normal Training School, recalls Christian services conducted in Sioux.

> Our principal read aloud from a large book and offered prayer. Although he conducted devotional exercises in the Sioux language, the subject matter was still strange, and the names he used were unintelligible to me. "Jesus" and "Jehovah" fell upon my ears as mere meaningless sounds. (p. 40)

Religious reading materials in his native language were also available to Eastman. Following in the footsteps of Eleazar Wheelock, missionaries had constructed a Dakota syllabary and used it to translate the Bible into written Dakota. Eastman writes "Dr. Riggs gave me a little English primer to study, also one or two books in the Dakota language, which I had learned to read in the day-school. There was a translation of the Psalms, and of the Pilgrim's Progress" (p. 44). Eastman does not comment on the rendering of an oral language into a written form, nor does he indicate whether or not the Dakota translations of English Christian

texts helped in the language acquisition process. However, he notes that he received these books together with an English primer, and we might guess that Dr. Riggs hoped for his student to make a connection between the primer, the Dakota texts and their English originals.

Christine Quintasket also notes that she had received religious instruction in Salishan. "I worked hard on catechism, which Mother had taught me in the native language. When I passed, I made my first communion in the big church" (p. 30). So, though the content of religious instruction was essentially Anglo-Centric, the means of transmitting it, in keeping with long-standing missionary traditions established in colonial times, was through indigenous languages.

Fun With Dick and Jane

Another aspect of the formal Anglo-centric curriculum at the Indian schools these autobiographers attended was the use of "readers" to teach literacy. These were often the same readers used at all white schools and depicted a world with which Indian students were largely unfamiliar. Some students were enthusiastic about the materials and eager to learn all about the white world through these books. Others experienced an increasing sense of inadequacy and alienation from the white world they were being schooled to enter.

According David Baerreis (1963) in his forward to *The*

Middle Five, Francis LaFlesche and his fellow students relied on McGuffey readers. Baerreis writes "In this year [1861] the most advanced of the reading classes used McGuffey's Fourth Eclectic Reader, while in 1863 the Fifth Eclectic Reader was used as well..." Thomas Wildcat Alford also learned to read with McGuffey's and wrote

> We wanted to learn words that white children used in their play. We quickly learned words that were commonly used, such as game, deer, cat, dog, duck, bow, and arrow. After we had learned to spell and read, we used McGuffey's readers, and they opened to us many wonderful visions of the life of white people, especially white children. (p. 78)

In 1884, Luther Standing Bear began teaching at the Sioux Rosebud agency and used an illustrated reader in the classroom, though he does not specify which reader it was. Standing Bear's comments in regard to his activities there are telling, not only in regard to the Anglo-reader based curriculum, but in regard to the level of qualifications thought to be acceptable for reservation teachers. He writes:

> At that time, teaching amounted to very little. It did not require a well-educated person to teach on the reservation. The main thing was to teach the children to write their names in English, then came learning the alphabet and how to count. I

> liked this work very well, and the children were doing splendidly. The first reading books we used had a great many little pictures in them. I would have the children read a line of English, and if they did not understand all they had read, I would explain it to them in Sioux. This made the studies very interesting. (pp. 192-193).

While English-only had become an official BIA policy four years earlier, Standing Bear was either unaware of, or chose to ignore the rules. He did use Anglo readers, but adapted the materials to suit what he perceived as the student's level of English-language ability.

Jane Willis learned to read from the now infamous Dick and Jane series, but she regarded the books with less enthusiasm than Alford had for McGuffey. The myth of white suburbia depicted in these texts held little relevance for a Cree child growing up on a remote island in the Canadian wilderness. Despite the cultural distance, Willis did acquire a reading knowledge of English through these books.

> We received our Dick and Jane readers, and if it had not been for the pictures, I would never have know which end of the book was up. The words looked like mouse tracks to me. It seemed incredible that anyone could ever learn how to decipher them. (p. 33)

Willis persevered, however.

> Gradually I learned. The more I learned, the more enthusiastic I became. I learned to hop, skip, jump, and laugh with Dick, Jane, Baby, and funny, funny Spot. I learned to make my letters smaller and more uniform until I had no difficulty keeping them between the lines. I learned to add and subtract. I learned all about hell and damnation. I even began to understand Mrs. Holland's ranting and ravings. (p. 34)

The absurdity of a curriculum based on the Anglo suburban experience was not lost on Willis, who had never left her island in the Northern Canadian wilderness.

> One time she [Mrs. Holland] spent several weeks teaching us how to read traffic signals. Our small island was criss-crossed by narrow trails; there wasn't a single traffic signal for at least five hundred miles. There wasn't even a single lamp post on the island. We also learned how fast we should drive in a school zone, on the street, and on the highway--all of which were completely alien to us. We did understand what "drive" meant, however, since the summer's supply barge had brought two tractors, one for the Catholic mission and one for the Anglican. Our chances of learning to drive, though were very remote, since the Indians were not allowed to operate these

vehicles. (p. 35)

For Joseph Suina the Dick and Jane series was an introduction to discontent. The carefree suburban paradise in which the blond blue-eyed children lived was far removed from anything Suina had experienced in his Pueblo, and the books, in part, seem to have created a sense of resentment toward the demands of family chores he had to perform. He writes:

> Life-style values were dictated in various ways. The Dick and Jane reading series in the primary grades presented me with pictures of a home with a pitched roof, straight walls, and sidewalks. I could not identify with these from my Pueblo world. However, it was clear I did not have these things and what I did have did not measure up...In school books, all the child characters ever did was run around chasing their dog or a kite. They were always happy. As for me, all I seemed to do at home was go back and forth with buckets of water and cut up sticks for a lousy fire. (p. 201)

As a teacher later in life, Polingaysi Qoyawayma immediately recognized the inappropriateness of the materials she was given to teach her Hopi students.

> 'What do these white-man stories mean to a Hopi child? What is a 'choo-choo' to these little ones who have never seen a train? No! I will not

> begin with the outside world of which they have no knowledge. I shall begin with the familiar. The everyday things. The things of home and family.'
>
> Immediately, she began putting her theory into practice. Instead of cramming Little Red Riding Hood into the uncomprehending brains of her small students. She substituted familiar Hopi legends, songs, and stories.
>
> They all knew the song about the little squirrel that went out gathering pinyon nuts...Polingaysi taught the children English words to the old tune, then they sang it together. (p. 125)

Qoyawayma often used traditional Hopi stories and settings in her language lessons because she believed she "could not go amiss by teaching from the familiar to the unknown. There was a relation, for instance, between burro, horse, automobile, train, airplane. Also between fire sticks, trees, lumber, wooden houses" (p. 143)

This Hopi autobiographer developed her teaching methods in response to a frustrating Anglo-centric curriculum dictated by non-Indians. Though she was expected to rely on materials and methods created by whites for whites, she chose to resist administrative authorities and incorporate approaches she believed were more appropriate for a Hopi community. The later portions of her narrative describe her

many successes as an educator, and the methods developed in resistance to white authority were later cited as effective teaching models by white administrators. In fact, "it was Indian Commissioner John Collier who eventually gave her the greatest support. Overnight, and to the consternation of teachers confirmed in the old way of teaching Indian children, he changed the procedure" (Qoyawayma p. 151) to allow for the inclusion of indigenous materials in the language curriculum.

The Influence of Peers

Despite problems the autobiographers encountered in trying to learn English in these situations, these individuals were among those who succeeded in acquiring the language, as the autobiographies attest. Though none of the authors spends extensive amounts of time analyzing the factors contributing to their success, several do make observations about how students themselves informally took on the tasks of teaching English to each other, no doubt facilitating the learning process. LaFlesche recalls how his friendship with an older student named Brush revolved around language learning.

> I felt proud of his praise and worked all the harder. We had gone through the alphabet swimmingly, and once, when I said it without a break, he slapped me on the shoulder and

> exclaimed, "That's good!" When I was able to read short sentences, I felt quite sure that I should soon take my place among the advanced pupils.
>
> In and out of school Brush helped me along: in our play and when our work brought us together, he always managed to teach me something of the English language, and I was a willing student. (p. 13)

Empowered by this relationship and the language ability it helped him to achieve, LaFlesche himself took on the role of peer tutor later on.

> Brush and I soon became much attached to Lester and Warren, as the new-comers were named, and we lost no time in helping them along in their English. By our assistance and persistent use of the language with them, the two boys made rapid progress, and it was not long before they were chattering in broken English like the rest of us. (p. 22)

Students also relied on their more proficient peers to provide them with correct English language phrases in disciplinary situations. For example, Zitkala-Sa recounts an incident when she and several friends were disciplined for playing in the snow after they had been told not to do so. When it became apparent that the girls were in for a scolding, the more English-proficient of them coached the

others on how to respond to an interrogation they wouldn't understand. Zitkala-sa recounts her English version of the incident as follows:

> Judewin said: "now the paleface is angry with us. She is going to punish us for falling into the snow. If she looks straight into your eyes and talks loudly, you must wait until she stops. Then, after a tiny pause, say "No." The rest of the way we practiced upon the little word "no."
>
> (p. 58)

According to Zitkala-Sa, one of the children who understood no English was summoned for the first scolding. Unfortunately the matron did not ask the expected question "Are you going to fall into the snow again?" to which "no" would have been the appropriate reply. Rather the question was "Are you going to obey my word the next time?" Obviously not understanding the question and relying on her friend's advice, the child replied "no" and, according to Zitkala-Sa's report, received a spanking. "During the first two or three seasons misunderstandings as ridiculous as this one of the snow episode frequently took place, bringing unjustifiable frights and punishment into our little lives," she wrote (p. 59).

LaFlesche's autobiography contains an account of a similar incident. In this case, a student was mimicking a teamster swearing at his horses, but he had no knowledge of

what the words actually meant. When it became apparent that the child would be called into the principal's office for discipline, another student offered the following advice:

> When he asks you if you been swearing, say "no, sir, I don't know what swear is"...Then tell him you been saying what you hear Agency man say to horses; but you don't know what those words mean, maybe they're swear words, you don't know.
>
> (p. 70)

However, somewhat confused by his new surroundings the student forgot his peer's lesson and replied to the principal's inquiries as to whether on not he had been swearing with a simple "yes." In this case the punishment was to recite over and over the 3rd commandment "Thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain," which, since the student didn't understand the meaning of the words "lord" or "in vain," had about as much meaning for the boy as swearing did.

Though these incidents with LaFlesche and Zitkala-Sa document unsuccessful instances of peer involvement in second language learning, at least in terms of the desired outcome of avoiding punishment, they do illustrate how students resisted and attempted to compensate for Anglo-centric teaching methods and expectations. The two lessons cited above were designed to undermine white authority, and were presented by more English proficient students to those

who were less proficient. Also, white authority figures are depicted as arrogant, automatically assuming the worst of students rather than entertaining the possibility of cultural or linguistic misunderstandings. Avoiding their ignorant and arrogant wrath becomes a powerful motivating factor for Indians to learn English.

Ray Young Bear creates a fictionalized situation reflecting this kind of motivation in the character Claude Youthman who ends up in prison for throwing cantaloupes at a group of white politicians who had been acting disrespectfully toward his wife. The incident was the result of a misunderstanding caused by Youthman's lack of English proficiency, and while in prison "he pledged/to forever understand the English language/to avoid finding himself in dire circumstances/again" (p. 227-228).

Other Motivations

Certainly the threat of punishment was one coercive technique authorities used to motivate students, but it was not the only one institutions relied on. The coercion by white authorities and missionaries through offers of food, clothing, and an overall better material life certainly played a role in stimulating initial interest in education. For instance Polingaysi Qoyawayma's interest in day school was piqued by a peer's mention of a noon time meal.

> 'Tell me, do the Bahanas hurt you, down there in that big house?'
>
> 'No,' her friend said, with a shake of her head. 'They don't do anything to us. We sit on a seat and make marks. We play in the schoolyard. When Father Sun is overhead, they give us food.'
>
> 'Food? What kind?' Polingaysi asked, for this was one of her favorite subjects. 'Nu-qui-vi? Piki? Som-ev-i-ki?'
>
> The other girl shook her head. 'Bahana food,' she said. I don't know its name.' (pp. 23-24)

Zitkala-Sa also records an instance where food posed something of a temptation to attend boarding school in the East. Her description of the thoughts evoked by a visit from a missionary recruiting for an Indian boarding school carries overtly Edenic implications.

> Judewin had told me of the great tree with great red, red, apples; and how we could reach out our hands and pick all the red apples we could eat. I had never seen apple trees. I had never tasted more than a dozen red apples in my life; and when I heard of the orchards of the East, I was eager to roam among them. The missionaries smiled into my eyes and patted my head. (p. 42)

In another coercive tactic, missionaries and government officials regularly brought along "successful" Indian

students from their schools when they travelled Indian territories in search of more children to fill desks. The visiting children would appear well-dressed and well-fed, holding out the promise of a bright and wealthy future in the white world. For Indian communities aware of their own desperate material circumstances and the demise of their traditional life ways in the face of colonial power, pursuit of the white man's education seemed one of the few options for ensuring the survival of their children in the changing world.

This situation led Luther Standing Bear to an interesting rationale for attending school. When recruiting missionaries came to visit Standing Bear's family with several Santee Sioux boys dressed in white men's clothing and shown off as shining examples of success achieved through a boarding school education, Luther saw their offer of an education as a chance to prove his bravery. He reasoned that opportunities for a young Sioux to prove himself through traditional means of hunting and fighting had diminished with the incursions of white settlers to the west, so going east to boarding school served as a coming of age substitute by Standing Bear's way of thinking.

> I was thinking of my father, and how he had many times said to me, 'Son, be brave! Die on the battle-field if necessary away from home. It is better to die young than to get old and sick and

> then die.' When I thought of my father and how he had smoked the pipe of peace, and was not fighting any more, it occurred to me that this chance to go east would prove that I was brave if I were to accept it. (p.124)

Other than general motivations for attending school, many authors also recall having specific desires for simply learning or improving their English, and they describe various motivations for language study aside from fear of punishment for misunderstandings. Most of these motivations are linked to personal encounters such as the peer instruction described above. Family, friends, and community support played an important role in some authors' initial achievements, especially when those family members already spoke some English themselves. For instance, Jane Willis' grandfather spoke to her in a mixture of Cree and English he had learned in his work as a guide and interpreter for white traders. As noted in Chapter 1, Charles Eastman's father Many Lightnings, who had learned English while imprisoned after the Sioux uprising of 1862, encouraged his son to begin a white man's education.

Kay Bennet was also motivated by family members to attend school and learn English, though in this case it was her cousins and siblings who influenced her most. Of one relative recently returned from boarding school, Bennet writes "Glenbah seemed more grown up. Instead of being a

silent little girl, she was full of talk about what had happened at school. She spoke a few English words, and Kaibah felt very much left out when the other children talked in this new language" (p. 185).

Luther Standing Bear, who upon arrival at Carlisle Indian School became ambivalent about studying, was motivated to study English by thoughts of his father. After a school Christmas party during which he received gifts, Standing Bear became more enamored of the material possibilities of white culture and began to entertain notions of improving the status of his family.

> I now began to realize that I would have to learn the ways of the white man. With that idea in mind, the thought also came to me that I must please my father as well. So my little brain began to work hard. I thought that someday I might be able to become an interpreter for my father, as he could not speak English. Or I thought I might be able to keep books for him if he again started a store. So I worked very hard. (p. 147)

Standing Bear eventually describes an intense desire for proficiency in this language, expressing at the same time an intense desire to participate in white culture.

> When we really had settled down with a determination to master the white man's language,

> several of us had an idea that some morning we would awaken and discover that we could talk English as readily as we could our own. As for myself, I thought if I could only be permitted to sleep in a white man's home, I would wake up some morning with a full knowledge of the English language. (p. 155)

Christine Quintasket learned to speak and read English with the help of Jimmy Ryan, a white orphan boy her father had taken into foster care. According to Quintasket, while Jimmy understood Salishan, he spoke to his adopted family only in English. In addition

> Jimmy was a great reader of yellowback novels. It was from one of his books that I learned the alphabet. I could spell the word Kentucky before I ever had a primer because it occurred frequently in a novel Jimmy taught me from. One day Mother papered our cabin with Jimmy's novels. When he got home, he made no protests, but he got busy and continued to read from the wall, with me helping to find the next page. (p. 186)

While family members and school peers certainly influenced autobiographers' English language learning, for one writer, a romantic interest proves to be an important motivation. Ray Young Bear's alter ego Edgar Bearchild develops a love interest which inspires a deeper writerly

interest in English. Bearchild has a youthful and profound relationship with an older Mesquakie beauty, Dolores Fox King, who teaches the naive Bearchild more worldly ways and, in the process, writes him many love notes. In Bearchild's voice Young Bear writes "Obviously, I learned, and I am sure Dolores used me for 'experiments,' so to speak. But she was also more than that; her obsessive notewriting led to my first awkward interest in the English language" (p. 50).

Word Power: Authorial Aspirations

Spurred on by his written exchanges with Dolores, and later a diary kept by his uncle, Edgar Bearchild/Youngbear pursues his interest in English and eventually becomes an award-winning poet. Writerly inclinations came to play a fairly important role in the lives of at least two autobiographers considered in this chapter, Zitkala-Sa and Christine Quintasket. It is difficult to assess the degree to which an interest in writing encouraged further studies in the English language, but there can be no doubt that once these authors understood the workings of English literacy, they recognized the creative and political possibilities of authorship and did their best to use them to an advantage.

For example, the most prolific of the two, Zitkala-Sa, published short fiction, poetry, and autoethnographic writings frequently in *Harper's* and *Atlantic Monthly* early in her career. Later, as an active member and then

secretary of The Society of American Indians, she penned more overtly political tracts for *The American Indian Magazine*, calling attention to abusive land redistribution practices and advocating Indian U.S. Citizenship. She also campaigned for English literacy. In one such tract, "Letter to the Chiefs and Headmen of the Tribes" published in 1919, she encourages other Indians to learn English, writing

> ...isn't it even more worth our while to renew our efforts to speak English? No doubt there have been occasions when you wished you could have expressed your thought in English. Remembering this experience, will you now encourage other Indians to make the effort to learn this language?
>
> Very often I have wished that you could write to me in a language we both would understand perfectly. I could then profit by your advice in many things, and you would know you were not forgot. (p. 97)

Ever mindful of the realities of her audience's situation, the author sees to it that the letter is accompanied by a footnote encouraging the reader to "do a kind act by reading and explaining it to an Indian who cannot read or speak English."

Christine Quintasket was not as well educated as Zitkala-Sa, who had attended Earlham College, and thus the Salishan woman never quite achieved the same level of

English language proficiency. Quintasket was keenly aware that her command of standard English was nothing like a native user's proficiency, but she maintained her literary aspirations and is credited with being the first Native American woman to publish a novel, *Cogewa, the Half-Blood*, which appeared in 1927. The novel is actually the result of an intense and often intrusive collaboration between Quintasket and her editor, but its existence demonstrates the value Quintasket put on the written, published, English word.

RE-PLACING IDENTITY: LANGUAGE, SELF, COMMUNITY

Generally the autobiographers considered here claimed for themselves an early awareness that learning English would allow them to more fully participate in the activities of the dominant white culture, particularly in acquiring material gain for themselves, their families, and communities. Many of these writers recognized the inevitable linguistic and cultural conquest faced by their nations, and they acknowledged the ironic pairing of the forces of conquest and empowerment in one source, language. Charles Eastman was not the only writer to rely on the word/weapon metaphor which serves as an epigraph the first chapter of this dissertation. Alford also commented that

the Shawnees began to realize that civilization

> would be forced upon them as it had been on so many tribes in the East, and the more progressive ones accepted the fact. There was no way to evade it, so the best thing they could see to do was to get ready for it--to meet it. They sent their children to school so they might learn to fight the white man with his own weapons--words. (p. 79)

In English the writers describe their struggles with the language, showing how the results of learning or non-learning affected perceptions of self and their places in various communities. I would argue that while the identities established through Indian names and languages were never replaced by new English-speaking selves in the way educators intended, learning English did compel these autobiographers to resituate, literally re-place themselves in relation to both white and Indian communities. They were no longer just Cree, Sioux, Hopi, Navajo, etc., but had become, in one sweeping imperial generalization, Indians who had struggled to learn and then spoke English. But what that meant for the individual autobiographers and those they came in contact with was constantly called into question.

For example, Jane Willis depicts herself as a care-free, confident, talkative, and clever little girl prior to her school enrollment. However, initial encounters with English at school shook her confidence and caused her to question her intellectual abilities. Though she had had

some prior exposure to English through her grandfather, she was overwhelmed when she began day school. After describing her first encounter with Dick and Jane, Willis writes:

> My confidence and enthusiasm disappeared as the long day wore on. The teacher's patience was also wearing a little thin, which did not help any. As she jabbered away in what might as well have been Latin, I could not help but feel that I had made some terrible mistake. The English I had learned from my grandfather --"eat your food," "get a spoon," "go to bed"--was absolutely useless to me in a classroom. Besides, he gave me time to figure out what he was talking about. The teacher did not. The more uncertain I became, the more intelligent the teacher seemed to be. By the end of the long, exhausting day, I saw her as a god-like, super-human being.
>
> By the time my grandfather came to pick me up at four o-clock, I really felt like a dumb old Indian. I never wanted to see the school again. It was amazing how much seven hours of school had changed my outlook. (pp. 33-34)

This sense of inferiority to whites continued for Willis when she took up residence in the boarding school where she had previously been a day student. She links this feeling specifically to her difficulties with learning English and

offers a sample of the kind of conversation she and her schoolmates had regarding this issue.

> Of course, we all believed that the white race was a super-intelligent one. One of the facts that confirmed this belief was that they could speak English.
>
> "They are very, very smart because they speak English."
>
> "Well, we're starting to speak English."
>
> "Yes, but look how much trouble we have. They don't have any trouble at all."
>
> It never occurred to us that we had never met a white man who could carry on a conversation in Cree, or that we knew Indians who could converse quite well in English. (p. 49)

Yet later in her autobiography, Willis claims that after two years of school she "could read anything," and she recounts a humorous story, somewhat at the expense of an older Cree neighbor who could not read English well and had misunderstood a catalogue advertisement depicting a model in an evening gown. The neighbor asked Willis to clear the matter up for him.

> I read, translating as I went along: 'Delightfully feminine, exquisite lace over satin. Please state correct size. Misses' sizes: 10, 12, 14, 16. Also in half sizes. Red, black, or white.

> $17.99.'
>
> 'nimyigh-mawa-heewahwah in eesquosh?' he asked.
>
> 'nimwee,' I answered, hating to disappoint him. There was no mention of the girl.
>
> 'wasa,' he said sadly. It seems that he had ordered the girl and Eaton's had sent him an evening dress. He was incensed that Eaton's would send him a dress when they knew full well that he did not wear dresses and that what he really needed was the girl. He wondered why they had put the model's picture in the catalogue if she weren't for sale. 'nimoowee meen nigimsinheejan,' he announced disgustedly. (p.76)

While demonstrating her own proficiency in the linguistic currency of white culture, Willis also slyly pokes fun at marketing techniques and her neighbor's lack of worldliness. In addition, this passage demonstrates the role Willis has taken on in her community. She casts herself as a translator, a cultural broker for those who lacked English-language proficiency. Her bilingualism gives her a sense of superiority in the Cree community, in sharp contrast to her self-perception as a struggling student at school.

But pursuit of English literacy did not always yield such positive (and entertaining) results. This was especially true when family members were reluctant for the

children to pursue an Anglo education from the start. It was certainly the case with Zitkala-Sa's mother who "discouraged my curiosity about the lands beyond our eastern horizon" (p.41). Zitkala-Sa attended school against her mother's wishes and found that learning to read and write in English contributed to an increasing sense of alienation from her family. Upon returning home from boarding school for summer vacations, she experienced a great deal of anxiety over feeling not quite Indian and not quite white, and this anxiety is specifically linked to her education and abilities to read and write.

> My mother had never gone inside of a school house, and so she was not capable of comforting her daughter who could read and write. Even nature seemed to have no place for me. I was neither a wee girl nor a tall one; neither a wild Indian nor a tame one. This deplorable situation was the effect of my brief course in the East. (p. 69)

Her mother tries to comfort Zitkala-Sa and offers her daughter the only book in the house, demonstrating her understanding (if not her acceptance) that her daughter had come to appreciate such things, though she herself could not.

> My mother was troubled by my unhappiness. Coming to my side, she offered me the only printed matter we had in our home. It was an Indian Bible, given

> her some years ago by a missionary. She tried to console me. 'Here, my child, are the white man's papers. Read a little from them' she said most piously. (p. 73)

Though the text is an "Indian Bible" (probably a Dakota translation similar to the one mentioned by Eastman), Zitkala-Sa's mother recognizes the significance of "printed matter" in her daughter's new life. In this passage, Zitkala-Sa acknowledges that language and literacy have separated mother and daughter.

Likewise, for a bitter Edna Manitowabi knowledge of English set her at odds with her family.

> I remember when I went home the first summer. I would insist on speaking English at home, although I knew that my parents didn't understand it. I don't know exactly why I did it, but I have often felt guilty about it afterwards. Maybe it was that some of the values of the boarding school had rubbed off on me, and I felt somewhat superior to them because I spoke English and they didn't. I also think that I was still mad at them for having sent me away, and this was kind of a revenge. I never again felt close to my parents. I have often wondered what would have happened if they had refused to send me to school and taught me at home instead. I might have known them in an

> entirely different way, feeling more affectionate towards them and understanding them better. (p.4)

In addition to alienating the autobiographers from their families, Anglo-centric education in English also led students to perceive their traditional community lifestyles as inadequate. For example, education and knowledge of English also left Joseph Suina dissatisfied with his traditional Pueblo life.

> As weeks turned to months, I learned English more and more. It would appear comprehension would be easier. It got easier to understand all right. I understood that everything I had and was a part of was not nearly as good as the white man's. School was determined to undo me in everything from my sheepskin bedding to the dances and ceremonies that I learned to believe in and cherish. (p. 200).

While the theme of alienation figures largely in these passages, it was not the only aspect of the language learning experience which compelled the writers to re-place themselves. For many autobiographers, knowledge of English and their first language put them in positions of cultural brokers, a role developed specifically in colonial situations. They served as translators, teachers, and community spokespeople. Qoyawayma and Standing Bear, for instance, both relied on bilingual teaching techniques.

Manitowabi eventually became an Ojibwa language consultant at a university, and Zitkala-Sa became a political activist. But these individuals also became writers: poets, novelists, autobiographers and autoethnographers attempting to preserve something of their cultures for the generations to come, generations who would read and write in English and would need to be taught Indian languages as second languages. On the page, the autobiographers re-created themselves, re-placed themselves in Indian and non-Indian communities through ironic creative visions that critique the cultural hegemony of English monolingualism and Euro-American narrative practices.

Ray Young Bear's autobiography is a good example of this re-creative process. In this piece, the author has re-created himself as Edgar Bearchild, using this voice and the voice of many composite characters to tell his life story, a narrative which turns out to be very much the story of Young Bear's relationship with two languages, Mesquakie and English. The multiple voicings of the re-created Young Bear/Bearchild and composite characters in this autobiography are just one example of the author's resistance to the Euro-American convention of the narrating individual self. Young Bear also forgoes conventional linear chronology, blurs generic distinctions, and writes in a mixture of Mesquakie and English.

In describing the experimental design of the narrative,

Young Bear writes

> The creation of *Black Eagle Child* was equivalent to a collage done over a lifetime via the tedious layering upon layering of images by an artist who didn't believe in endings, for the sweeping visions he wanted to capture were constant and forever changing. (p. 255)

Certainly the paradox of visions as "constant and forever changing" indicates the author's sense of time as non-linear. Further subverting Euro-American paradigms, in this "collage" Young Bear creates an autobiographical narrative from "fictionalized" newspaper stories, personal letters written in non-standard English, memos, songs, poems, surreal visions, and depictions of religious ceremonies. The text is laced with Mesquakie sentences and phrases throughout. A mix of genres, voices, and languages indeed creates the sense of "collage" and places some extraordinary demands on a reader unaccustomed to multi-genre, non-linear, multi-lingual autobiographical narratives. In fact, Young Bear's resistance to more conventional English language narrative practices has created a dilemma for scholars and critics who refer to *Black Eagle Child* alternately as "the novel," "the poem," "the autobiography." Though "fictionalized," the book is more often found shelved in libraries' anthropology, Native American studies, or history collections than in the contemporary fiction, poetry, or

memoir sections.

Thematically the autobiography addresses aesthetic concerns typical of the Kunstlerroman[2], and in Young Bear's case, one of the foremost of these is his concern with how English, Mesquakie, and bilingualism function in an Indian community. For a work documenting the artistic growth of a writer, the question of language becomes also a question of aesthetics. According to Maureen Salzer (1995) in the Claude Youthman episode cited earlier in this chapter, Young Bear depicts a community where "Language, or lack of language in this case, is shown... to create realities in a very direct manner; non-Indian cultural hegemony is asserted by the non-Indian community, which requires Indians to understand and use English while others, the non-Indians, know no Mesquakie" (p. 309). The language Salzer refers to in this passage is English, but lack of English proficiency is not the only lack of language with which Young Bear is concerned. Through the characters of Claude Youthman, Lorna Bearcap, and Junior, Young Bear gives voice to the importance of retaining the threatened Mesquakie language in

---

[2]Kunstlerroman is a European term applied most often to essentially European or Euro-American narratives concerned with the growing aesthetic maturity of an artist or novelist (i.e., Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, or Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*). Therefore, its application to Young Bear's work could be construed as yet another colonial trespass, an attempt to force a the work of North American Indian into a paradigm the author had no hand in creating. That is not my intent; rather, I invoke the term simply to indicate my perception of *Black Eagle Child* as, in part, the story of an individual's life in art.

the face of non-Indian cultural hegemony, but he also acknowledges the ironic necessity of English, the primary language through which he has built a literary career. Young Bear recognizes that survival of the Mesquakie nation depends on both languages.

This knowledge is demonstrated in the autobiography by a memo written in the voice of teacher Lorna Bearcap, who, in criticizing an ineffective bilingual curriculum at a tribal school, writes

> There is something deeply
> disturbing about a child who cannot begin
> a conversation in our mother tongue,
> and even more if a proper sentence
> cannot be composed in English. (p. 236)

The phrase "even more" in the above quotation indicates that for Bearcap, while both languages are absolutely necessary, the inability to compose a "proper sentence" in English seems to have a greater consequence.

Certainly it is a consequence of which Claude Youthman has become keenly aware. This character makes good on his promise to master English, and by his fourth year in prison he is writing newspaper editorials "on the redundancy/of corporal punishment of American Indians." Adding another layer of irony to Youthman's situation, Young Bear has a newspaper editor pen an introduction to Youthman's work saying

> ...while Youthman
> is a convicted felon, his arguments on federal law vs. state law vs. tribal sovereignty issues deserve consideration. What is especially startling is the fact he is one person who benefited from the penal system. Without the ridiculous 'cantaloupe' crime for which he was unjustly indicted Youthman was destined to merely live out his life as a woodsman and illiterate dreamer. (p. 228)

What the editor fails to acknowledge is that "life as a woodsman and illiterate dreamer" would probably have been preferable to Youthman than life in a white man's prison. Yet, this passage also points out how subjection to a white institution, in this case the legal system, has given the Mesquakie man access to the tool he needs to critique that system, English.

But of course, communicating primarily in English puts Mesquakie at risk, and Young Bear's Junior feels the loss of this mother tongue.

> Junior wished he could learn more, NOW, instantaneously. Not knowing your people's language, in the harshest consequence, meant excommunication from God. 'Language is much like a body limb,' his grandfather had said, 'A physical facet that speaks for the soul, the all-important shadow in its privileged

journey.' Any decision made by the incomplete,
nonspeaking person to not learn the first
language was taken as unkindness to Being.
These were the words you were fed to give back
to the world. 'Without them,' Grandfather warned,
'you hobble and drag yourself about in the manner
of an invalid, propelling yourself on hands
and scraped knuckles, a half-person.
People will mistake you as a fallen log
on the road of linguistics, for your hollow
half-frame will fit perfectly over a tree stump.'
You are there for all the speaking people
to see, a symbol of Getting Nowhere. (p. 67)

The final warning of this passage, that without one's mother tongue one is destined to become a "symbol of Getting Nowhere," flies in the face of what second language learners are taught to believe about the necessity of English for "advancement." Instead, in this intensely imagistic passage, Young Bear demonstrates the spiritual need for Mesquakie, yet he communicates Junior's need in English, underscoring the consequence of the mother tongue's absence. Junior does embark on a spiritual quest for language.

It was a quest for identity,
a longing for origins, a desire to pry
myself from the stump on the road,
propelling myself northward on skinned

> knuckles toward the acquisition of beautiful language. (And I don't mean Her Majesty's.) (p. 214)

Sustaining Language

Young Bear himself has made sure not to abandon his mother tongue. His autobiography is filled with passages and phrases of the Mesquakie language, in some cases translated into English or accompanied by context clues and in some places not. Like Young Bear, Willis and other authors occasionally include phrases from their native languages in their writing, and for an English monolingual individual, the experience of reading this way offers a small taste of what these autobiographers must have experienced when learning English. There is a sense that something of importance is being related, but the message is always just out of reach.

The juxtaposition of the two languages with English dominating the texts also has metaphorical dimensions and illustrates one of the long range linguistic consequences of Anglo imperialism. It could be said that these autobiographies represent in particular what happened to indigenous languages across the North American continent in general in the face of an Anglo-centric language policy. The works demonstrate the dominance of English, but they are works of resistance as well. Certainly the inclusion of indigenous languages in the autobiographies is one mark of

resistance. And although they tell individual stories of assimilation mostly in the language of the dominant culture, the stories are critiques of that culture, it is ironically by virtue of their being composed primarily in English that the critique becomes accessible to the object of criticism.

Chapter Four

What the Grandchildren Learned: English and Ancestral Languages in the Autobiographical Writings of Leslie Marmon Silko and N. Scott Momaday

> At Laguna Pueblo, for example, many individual words have their own stories. So when one is telling a story and one is using words to tell the story, each word that one is speaking has a story of its own, too. Often the speakers, or tellers, will go into these word stories, creating an elaborate structure of stories within stories.
>
> --Leslie Marmon Silko
> "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective"

> They called themselves Kwuda and later Tepda, both of which mean "coming out." And later still they took the name Gaigwu, a name which can be taken to indicate something of which the two halves differ from each other in appearance. It was once a custom among Kiowa warriors that they cut their hair on the right side of the head only and on a line level with the lobe of the ear, while on the left they let the hair grow long and wore it in a thick braid wrapped in otter skin. "Kiowa" is indicated in sign language by holding the hand palm up and slightly cupped to the right side of the head and rotating it back and forth from the wrist. "Kiowa" is thought to derive from the softened Comanche form of Gaigwu.
>
> --N. Scott Momaday
> *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

WORD STORIES AND THE (GRAND)MOTHER TONGUE

In contrast to the autobiographers discussed in the preceding chapter, N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko grew up speaking English as a first language. They are the mixed-blood, Indian-Anglo grandchildren and great-grandchildren of men and women who, on at least one side of

the family, spoke Cherokee, Kiowa, or Laguna Keresan first and English second or not at all, and they are the children of literate, English-speaking parents. In their writings, Silko and Momaday explore the relationship between ancestral languages and English from the perspective of individuals who are more proficient in the latter and who use English as their primary artistic medium; as writers, the language is their living. Laguna Keresan and Kiowa are not "mother tongues" for Silko and Momaday as much as they are "grandmother tongues," for in these authors' life stories it is usually a grandparent or great-grandparent who speaks the Indian words, and the grandchild/writer who creates the written English language narrative about them. In telling word stories, the authors tell us what Indian words and names mean in English, what they can mean and why, who says them in which context and why. The word stories become part of Silko's and Momaday's larger autobiographical narratives, and through them the authors begin to define their relationships to Keresan and Kiowa, their grandmother tongues. In defining this relationship, often in terms of word stories, these authors also address issues of individual, family, and tribal identity.

In a larger sense Silko's and Momaday's autobiographies continue the narratives of conquest and ironic synchretic resistance begun by the autobiographers discussed in the preceding chapter. However, to regard

their autobiographies as simply a continuance of these essentially second language narratives would be to ignore the importance of the fact that for Silko and Momaday English is their first language. Certainly, as is the case with Eastman, Zitkala-Sa, and the others, the fact that Silko and Momaday write in English can be said to demonstrate the dominance of a colonialist language policy which still seeks to make English the primary means of communication among indigenous people of North America. And like the autobiographers discussed in Chapter 3, who learned English as a foreign language, Silko and Momaday both use written English to critique, explicitly and implicitly, colonial power structures. But there are some important differences between how these two late twentieth century autobiographers and their boarding school educated predecessors approach the relationship between English and indigenous languages. For instance, because Silko and Momaday are not compelled to deal with the grammatical and idiomatic idiosyncracies of English on the same terms as second language learners, and because these two authors were not subjected to the same kinds of abusive second language learning pedagogies, these matters do not end up as focal points in their discussions of English and ancestral languages. In addition, Silko and Momaday do not contend with English language/Indian language versions of self to the same extent as the autobiographers who learned English

as a second language, nor do their autobiographical writings offer the same expressions of anomie found in writings by, for example, Joseph Suina or Edna Manitowabi. What this means for the scholar interested in examining Silko's and Momaday's depiction of the relationship between languages is that, obviously, she must look at other ways in which these authors make meaning out of that relationship. Therefore, keeping in mind the authors' first language proficiency in English, in this chapter I will attempt to show how the authors' perceptions of a felt presence of ancestral languages profoundly influences autobiographical vision, not only in terms of each authors' accounts of ironic synchretic resistance to colonial power, but in terms of the how the authors address issues of language and identity in a colonial context. In approaching this task, I will rely, in part, on an article by Thomas King (1990), a Native critic who refuses what he sees as the limiting vocabulary and critical stance of post-colonial theory as it has been applied to works by North American Indian writers. He believes that post-colonial theory can encourage a perception which "supposes that contemporary Native writing is largely a construct of oppression" (p. 12). Such a supposition, King suggests, would be detrimental to informed readings of contemporary Native texts. He goes on to say

> If we are to use terms to describe the various stages or changes in Native literature as it has

> become written, while at the same time remaining oral, and as it has expanded from a specific language base to a multiple language base, we need to find descriptors which do not invoke the cant of progress and which are not joined at the hip with nationalism. Post-colonial might be an excellent term to use to describe Canadian literature, but it will not do to describe Native literature (p. 12).

As an alternative King offers the terms "tribal, interfusional, polemical, and associational to describe the range of Native writing" (p. 12) Tribal literature, according to King "exists primarily within a tribe or a community...is shared almost exclusively by members of that community...and is presented and retained in a Native language" (pp. 12-13). Polemical, in King's sense of the word, "refers to that literature either in a Native language or in English, French, etc. that concerns itself with the clash of Native and non-Native cultures or with the championing of Native values over non-Native values" (p. 13). Interfusional describes "a blending of oral and written literature" (p. 13), while associational literature "describes a Native community... [and] avoids centering the story on the non-Native community or on a conflict between the two cultures, concentrating instead on the daily activities and intricacies of Native life...(p. 13).

King, then, offers a number of useful vantage points from which to view Native literature, and I will attempt to apply all of them to some degree, though "interfusional" and "polemical" will be emphasized for reasons that will become apparent as the discussion continues. At this point, it will suffice to say that an "associational" reading of the depiction of the relationship between languages in works by Silko and Momaday poses some difficulty here, since an examination of this relationship requires some focus on non-Native culture and acknowledges the possibility of conflict between indigenous and Euro-American cultures. Likewise, a "tribal" reading of these texts is difficult given their composition in English and their availability to others outside the Native community.

MATERIALS

Autobiographical Writings

Like the Mesquakie poet Ray Young Bear, Silko and Momaday break out of conventional Euro-American definitions of autobiography. Young Bear's *Black Eagle Child: The Facepaint Narratives*, has been called alternately a "fictionalized autobiography," "narrative poem" and a "novel" (Salzer 1995). Multiple labels have also been assigned to individual works by Silko and Momaday, though "autobiographical" seems to be the term of consensus found

in most discussions of the texts I will focus on here. Still the difficulty scholars have had with designating genre demonstrates that the vocabulary of literary academic scholarship as practiced in Euro-American culture is inadequate for discussion of works such as Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain* and *The Names*, and Silko's *Storyteller*. The works are essentially autobiographies in the sense that we may take the narrating "I" to be the author in many cases, but the texts do not offer us the clearly chronological narratives of self many Western readers expect from autobiographical texts. Instead, these books tell stories of parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins. They contain poems, short fiction, re-tellings of written and oral histories, traditional Laguna and Kiowa tales, word stories, photographs, and drawings. The books are made of stories within stories within stories intertwined with visual images. Thus, the surface features of these books offer the first indications of ironic synchretic resistance to Euro-American autobiographical narrative conventions.

The first of these three books to be published was *The Way To Rainy Mountain* (1969). The chapters are composed of a total of twenty four parts, each part containing three sections of texts distinguished from each other by spacing and type-faces. The first piece of text in any given part is the retelling of a traditional Kiowa story. This is

followed by an ethnographic or historical account of the Kiowa nation. Each part concludes with a more personal passage, either Momaday's remembrance of an ancestor, an account of an event in the author's life, or an impressionistic description of a place or an artifact. "Word stories" like this chapter's epigraphs are scattered throughout the text, often explaining the meaning or origin of a Kiowa word or expression.

The Names: A Memoir, which appeared in 1976, makes extensive use of captioned family photographs. Here, too, Momaday combines re-tellings of Kiowa stories with a family history, giving the text a recursive quality. The work is more explicitly autobiographical than *The Way To Rainy Mountain*, but the author moves back and forth in time from childhood to adulthood, from the present to the ancestral past and back again in an attempt to imagine the world as his Kiowa ancestors saw it. In his introduction to *The Names*, Momaday writes:

> In general my narrative is an autobiographical account. Specifically it is an act of the imagination. When I turn my mind to my early life, it is the imaginative part of it that comes first and irresistibly into reach, and of that part I take hold. This is one way to tell a story. In this instance it is my way, and it is the way of my people. When Pohd-lohk told a story

> he began by being quiet. Then he said Ah-keah-de, "They were camping," and he said it every time. I have tried to write in the same way, in the same spirit. Imagine: They were camping.
>
> (Introduction)

The book also includes a glossary of Kiowa, Navajo, and Jemez words, mostly personal and place names Momaday learned living among the people of these three nations. This apparatus, along with the title, underscores the significance of "word stories" as a vital narrative component for a writer who acknowledges the present force of an ancestral language.

I will also consider selections from a collection of Momaday's autobiographical essays, *The Man Made of Words*, which appeared in 1997 and takes its title from an often quoted address of the same name that Momaday gave at the First Convocation of American Indian Scholars, the proceedings of which were published in 1970. This 1997 compilation of Momaday's previously published articles, selections from the two autobiographies named above, and newspaper columns for *Viva: Northern New Mexico's Sunday Magazine* offers additional perspectives on language, literacy, and orality.

Like Momaday's *The Names*, Silko's *Storyteller*, published in 1981, includes family photographs which serve as a source of inspiration for portions of the text. Indeed

even the physical dimensions of the book are more like those of a photo album or scrapbook. In addition to resisting conventional book formats Silko refuses to rely on the usual Euro-American conventions of autobiography or boundaries of literary genre. Many of the familial/personal history sections of the text are written in lyrical lines, as are the traditional Pueblo stories included here. The photos, combined with the lyrical lines spreading across the page call attention to the text as a graphic creation as well as a literary one. *Storyteller* also contains blocks of prose history (personal, familial, and Laguna Pueblo) and fiction (referred to as contes by Krumholz, 1994) thematically linked to the lyrical and visual presentations. "Word stories" abound as Silko captures the voices of her elders telling traditional stories in a mixture of the Pueblo and English languages. Like Momaday's work, certain sections of Silko's *Storyteller* are more explicitly autobiographical than others, but it is important to consider the depiction of the relationship between English and ancestral languages in the work as a whole, whether the sections are explicitly autobiographical or not, because as Bernard Hircsh (1988) observes,

> In *Storyteller*, the reader learns by accretion. Successive narrative episodes cast long shadows both forward and back lending different or complimentary shades of meaning to those preceding

> them and offering perspectives from which to consider those that follow. Such perspectives are then themselves often expanded or in some way altered as the new material reflects back upon them. (p. 3)

Also, as Krupat (1989) notes, "traditional Native American literary forms were not--and, in their contemporary manifestations usually are not--as concerned about keeping fiction and fact or poetry and prose distinct from one another. It is the distinction between truth and error rather than that between fact and fiction that seems more interesting to native expression..." (p. 59).

Silko writes about the relationship between English and indigenous languages in the explicitly autobiographical sections, but takes up the theme in the book's short stories and verse as well. The stories "Lullaby" and "Storyteller" feature Navajo and Yupik characters respectively, and both pieces deal with the relationship between indigenous languages and English. The verse sections of *Storyteller* feature narrative voices speaking in English and Laguna Keresan. The speakers (Silko's Aunt Susie and other elders) related the narratives in English but also use Keresan words and then pause to redefine them in English. These passages are important expressions of Silko's relationship to her ancestral language, demonstrating its tenacious presence in narratives of Laguna life.

In addition to *Storyteller*, I will consider another group of prose autobiographical reflections Silko has collected into a book entitled *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today*. Most of the writings here were previously published in periodicals or presented at conferences, and several pieces offer important observations regarding the relationship between indigenous languages and English. In particular, the essay "Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective" addresses the contribution Native American languages and stories have made to the aesthetics and political concerns of Silko's writings in English.

Interviews

Unlike the autobiographers considered in the last chapters, whose works are often known today only to academics with specialized interests, writings by Silko and Momaday are widely known and read. Certainly these prize-winning authors have gained the attention of the academic and literary establishments, but they enjoy an extensive readership outside both of these groups. As highly active and visible writers and educators, both authors have participated in a number of interviews and addressed numerous conference audiences. I will consider these sources in this dissertation to the extent that they inform the writers' views on language as expressed in the other

autobiographical materials. Selections from them should provide some depth and color to the discussion of the depiction of language in the other autobiographical materials.

A study of the interviews does raise some of the same issues regarding authorial autonomy presented in the first chapters. As professional authors, Silko and Momaday maintain considerable control over their own creative texts. In many of the interviews considered here, the interviewer/compiler goes through some effort to describe the circumstances of the interview, the degree to which the final piece was edited, and the amount of input the author had on the final product. For instance, *Ancestral Voice: Conversations with N. Scott Momaday* (1989) is a book length work compiled by Charles L. Woodard with the text derived from a series of interviews Woodard conducted with Momaday in 1986 and 1987. Of the work, Woodard writes in his introduction

> The conversations are lightly edited, for grammatical consistency, and I have added some transitions. The task was not difficult, because Momaday's careful responses are often almost textually complete. He was not involved in the editing process, but he has reviewed the completed text to verify its factual particulars. (p. xi)

Winged Word: American Indian Writers Speak is a book

length compilation of interviews with numerous writers conducted by Laura Coltelli and published in 1990. N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko are among the writers interviewed. Coltelli describes her method as follows:

> It was my wish to interview all the writers in one single period and literary climate so that a common cultural milieu could be seen. Fortunately I was successful in doing this, thanks to the writers' cooperation.
>
> The interviews took place in houses, restaurants, gardens, motel rooms. I followed no precise format, but I did have two sets of questions, all of which were asked in one continuous meeting. One set of questions was specific for each writer; the other dwelt on issues of interest to the whole group. With the latter set I hoped to form a sort of writers' panel to discuss matters of a general nature. (pp. 7-8)

Coltelli's interview with Momaday took place at his Tucson home in September of 1985. Coltelli also interviewed Silko in Tucson that same month. At the time, Silko was in the midst of writing *Almanac of The Dead* and was reluctant to give interviews. In fact, Silko was unhappy with the transcript of the interview, so much so that an explanatory note from Silko has been included with the interview in

which she expresses her dissatisfaction with her responses. She also attempts to explain her reasons for the response. Silko writes:

> When my friend Professor Laura Coltelli sent the transcription of our interview I was horrified at how crude and convoluted and wild my answers and comments about time-space and particle physics looked on the page. I made attempts to edit the transcription of the interview so that I would sound slightly more coherent. But the longer I looked at the interview, the more awkward and unsatisfactory my responses seemed.
>
> Now, months later, suddenly I understand the source of my resistance to this interview: in the process of writing my novel, *Almanac of the Dead*, my subconscious had cannibalized this interview to create an important character, the Mexican Indian woman I call Angelita. I realize now I could not edit or salvage this interview because the character called Angelita had already taken possession of all my notions and ideas about particle physics, space-time, and European thought. (pp. 136-137)

I cite these explanatory excerpts not so much to clarify the interviewers' methodologies as to demonstrate the degree to which the authors are able to control the output of

information about themselves. While commentaries such as the ones above are not attached to all the published interviews I will cite in this chapter, the samples quoted certainly indicate that these celebrated writers have held greater autonomy in the creative autobiographical process than did many of their earlier counterparts considered in Chapter 3.

THEMES

When studying books by Indian writers who are not native speakers of their ancestral languages, it is tempting for me as a Euro-American academic to read primarily for expressions of loss and alienation. This is especially true with regard to the authors' depiction of the colonial relationship between indigenous languages and English, a relationship that can be perceived to demonstrate the latter's dominance over the former. In resisting this focus I must remind myself that the predisposition toward it arises, in part, from the colonial mindset still pervasive in Euro-American culture that chooses to see indigenous people as permanently on the verge of extinction, a view Ward Churchill so succinctly identifies with the title of his 1992 book on images of Indians in film and literature, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians*. Certainly this issue of

indigenous language loss is *one* theme addressed in Silko's and Momaday's writings, and witness to loss is *one* manifestation of ironic synchretic resistance to colonization. However, while these authors do address native losses exacted by Anglo attempts at cultural genocide of Indian people, Silko's and Momaday's depictions of the role of English and Indian languages also encourage their readers to acknowledge and explore the broader cultural connections between the aged and the young (and thus, the past and present), the oral and the written, and the privileged and the disenfranchised. These connections are defined in part by language and its relationship to power. As I will attempt to show in the remainder of this chapter, the autobiographers' depictions of these connections are ultimately as much about the recognition, celebration, and retention of cultural inheritance as they are about loss. I am aware that in setting up my discussion with a focus on contrasts, there is a risk that my analysis will fall into the simplistic and critically damaging dichotomies Krupat (1992) warns against, the "West/Rest, Us/Them, anthropological/biological, historical/mythical" (p. 15) polarities that set Euro-American thought against other modes in what King (1990) would identify as a solely polemical critical apparatus. Certainly one of the things I am after by organizing my discussion along the contrasting themes is also to acknowledge the texts themselves as

frontiers, in Clifton's sense of the word and as applied by Krupat and discussed in Chapter 1. As frontier texts, Silko's and Momaday's autobiographical writings are sites of cultural exchange, places where two cultures of differing material powers meet. Viewing the texts in this light obviously encourages the reader to acknowledge the power dynamics of colonization and resistance in the depiction of language in these texts, but it also asks the reader to recognize the complexity of issues surrounding language use at the frontier, issues which go beyond simply identifying indigenous languages as those extinguished by the dominance of English.

Asking who speaks, reads, or writes which language in which situations and why, as depicted by Silko and Momaday, ultimately questions the nature of the forces structuring the relationship between English and indigenous languages in North America. While Chapter 3 looked at more immediate, front-line interactions and power relationships between English and non-English speaking people, this chapter seeks to examine longer-range results of this confrontation as manifested in the writings of later generations, a situation made more complex by the fact that the autobiographers themselves can only recount the experiences of elders and others with English as a second language and find themselves compelled to explain their own lack fluency in indigenous languages. Given these complications, it is probably safe

to say that a polemical reading alone would offer an insufficient interpretation of these texts.

Additionally, the concerns addressed in this chapter ultimately lead to a discussion of language identity as expressed in the autobiographical writings of Silko and Momaday. Along with a consideration of how these authors depict the relationship between English and indigenous languages in the contexts outlined above, I will discuss how they have defined their individual relationships to these languages in the autobiographies and published interviews. In doing so, I will attempt to show how the autobiographers can move their readers beyond a colonial world view identifying Indian languages and narratives as remnants of extinct cultures. Instead, these texts offer a view which, while it acknowledges the destructive nature of the colonial enterprise, recognizes the ability of these autobiographers to create English-speaking textual selves and English language narratives from distinctly unextinct and undeniably Indian communities and the cultural inheritance, including ancestral languages, such communities still offer. Therefore, it will be important to read beyond the polemical and to acknowledge the role of the tribal, interfusional, and associational in the creation of English-language North American Indian autobiography.

The Role of Elders' Voices

For a grandchild, memories of older relatives speaking the grandmother tongue are connections to cultural inheritance. Though not fluent in Laguna Keresan or Kiowa themselves, Silko and Momaday recognize their elders' use of indigenous languages as significant in the formulation of their own ideas about language, and this has influenced content and form in their autobiographies. In applying the critical framework outlined above in this chapter, I am not surprised to find that the authors write about their elders and their ancestral languages with a mixture of celebration and sadness. For example, in his introduction to *The Way To Rainy Mountain*, Momaday writes of his grandmother, Aho, at prayer:

> I do not speak Kiowa, and I never understood her prayers, but there was something inherently sad in the sound, some merest hesitation upon the syllables of sorrow. She began in a high and descending pitch, exhausting her breath to silence; then again and again--and always the same intensity of effort, of something that is, and is not, like urgency in the human voice. Transported so in the dancing light among the shadows of her room, she seemed beyond the reach of time (p. 10).

Momaday renders Aho and her language as at once sorrowful and timeless while he is a spell-bound spectator who must

imagine meanings of Kiowa words according to his intuition. This is a moment the author returns to again and again throughout his writings and interviews. In his interview with Woodard, Momaday gives the following account of this experience:

> She would pray aloud in Kiowa, and I didn't understand what she was saying. But the quality of that language and the force that lay behind it, the great conviction and the profound belief in what she was doing, the belief in the efficacy of language implicit in her prayer, could not be doubted. I could not even as a child fail to understand that something important was happening. I couldn't say what it was in terms of meaning, but it was not lost upon me. (pp. 105-106)

This emphatic restatement of the moment described in his autobiography, using heavily connotative words like "force," "conviction," and the phrases "profound belief," and "efficacy of language," demonstrates Momaday's perception of the experience of observing his grandmother at prayer as significant in terms of his perception of language; Kiowa words belong to the sacred; they are words of power, and their meaning remains in the realm of what King would call tribal. Continuing in this vein in *The Way To Rainy Mountain*, Momaday writes

> When Aho saw or heard or thought of something bad,

> she said the word zei-dl-bei, "frightful." It was the one word with which she confronted evil and the incomprehensible. I liked her to say it, for she screwed up her face in a wonderful look of displeasure and clicked her tongue. It was not an exclamation so much, I think, as it was a warding off, an exertion of language upon ignorance and disorder (p.33).

Aho's language, according to Momaday, has the power to keep evil at bay. His account of the way she would say "zei-dl-bei" shows more than a grandchild's simple appreciation for Aho's facial expression; the definitive, matter-of-fact tone of the last sentence from the above quote demonstrates Momaday's fundamental belief in the ability of language to control and create reality, a philosophy which permeates his work and is studied at length by Schubnell (1985), who observes that the author's "considerations are rooted in the belief that man's existence and reality find their fullest manifestation in language" (p. 40).

In *The Names*, Momaday explicitly connects his sense of his own cultural inheritance to the fact that his elders speak Kiowa, even though he does not. A portion of the book's third chapter contains a stream-of-consciousness narration. The narrator's voice is child-like and represents Momaday as a child reacting to a white outsider's questions regarding his heritage.

> I'm Kiowa yes ma'am I'm sure it's not Keeowa no ma'am I can't say the Lord's Prayer in Kiowa I can't say much of anything really my dad can...
>
> Oh I feel so dumb I can't answer all those questions I don't know how to be a Kiowa Indian my grandmother lives in a house it's like your house Miss Marshall or Billy Don's house only it doesn't have lights and light switches and the toilet is outside and you have to carry wood in from the wood pile and water from the well but that isn't what makes it Indian it's my grandma the way she is the way she looks her hair in braids the clothes somehow yes the way she talks she doesn't speak English so well Scotty you goot boy she says...everyone there acts like an Indian everyone even me and my dad when we're there we eat meat and everyone talks Kiowa (p. 101).

Momaday's child narrator struggles to explain what it means to be Kiowa and finally shows that his relationship to his Kiowa-speaking grandmother is one of the more salient aspects of his Indian identity. At the outset of the meditation he claims he doesn't "know how to be a Kiowa Indian," but eventually includes himself in his definition of Kiowa as "everyone there acts like an Indian everyone even me. " And acting like an Indian means "everyone talks Kiowa." We are left to wonder, however, if "everyone" really

includes a young boy whose first language is English. Though the narrator himself is probably not fluent Kiowa, acknowledging the role language plays in his relationship with Aho and other elders is not only necessary to Momaday's truthful depiction of those relationships; it also serves as an important marker of his identity. He is Kiowa because his elders speak Kiowa.

Naming is also the duty of elders and another means by which the lexicon of ancestral languages are inherited by descendants. In Momaday's case, his surname is an abbreviated form of his Kiowa grandfather's name Mammedaty, but he bears another important Kiowa name as well, Tsoai-talee. Soon after his birth, Momaday's parents took him to visit Kiowa elders, and in *The Names*, Momaday gives an imaginative account of how one of these elders, Pohd-lohk, gave the baby Navarro Scott Momaday a name based on a character from Kiowa legend. The story itself, key events of which are narrated in translation, originates in Kiowa, and it is in this form that the narrative is essentially tribal; thus, when Momaday connects himself with his Kiowa name, he is connecting himself to a tribal identity.

> Pohd-lohk spoke, as if telling a story, of the coming-out people, of their long journey. He spoke of how it was that everything began, of Tsoai, and of the stars falling or holding fast in strange patterns on the sky. And in this, at last

> Pohd-lohk affirmed the whole of the child in a
> name, saying: Now you are, Tsoai-talee.
> I am (p. 57).

This ritual Kiowa naming as depicted here by Momaday offers a sharp contrast to the English-language naming of children at boarding schools described in Chapter 3. Momaday sees his very existence, "I am," as established through traditional naming by an elder; self is created through a Kiowa name, the words uttered by an elder certain that the child will have this fundamental inheritance. Past and present merge for Momaday in his Kiowa name and in his elders' voices. He tells Charles Woodard "I...imagine that I am my ancestors. That as I write I am speaking what my ancestors spoke or would speak through me....I think sometimes that my voice is the reincarnation of a voice from my ancestral past" (p. 112).

Leslie Silko, too, links her attitudes about language, narrative, and identity to the voices of older generations. In the early pages of *Storyteller*, Silko writes

> This is the way Aunt Susie told the story.
> She had certain phrases, certain distinctive words
> she used in her telling.
> I write when I still hear
> her voice as she tells the story.
> People are sometimes surprised
> at her vocabulary, but she was

> a brilliant woman, a scholar
> of her own making
> who has cherished the Laguna stories
> all her life. (p. 7)

Laguna elders' attitudes toward language have influenced Silko in ways similar to how the Kiowa elders' sense of language has influenced Momaday. In her autobiographical writings Silko explicitly and implicitly indicates that her identity as an Indian is determined, in part, by the fact that her elders speak Laguna Keresan. However, in contrast to Momaday's grandmother, who spoke very limited English, the two elders most significant in Silko's stories, her great grandmother "A'mooh" and her Aunt Susie, were bilingual Carlisle alumnae. Silko's great grandmother "spoke and wrote English beautifully" (*Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, p. 61) and Aunt Susie was "one of the first generation of people at Laguna who began experimenting with English--who began working to make English speak for us, that is to speak from the heart" (*Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, p. 50). Despite their boarding school education, both women had retained their ability to speak Laguna Keresan and did not hesitate to use it with younger generations. For instance, Great-grandmother "A'mooh" is called such by Silko because this Keresan word, a term of affection Laguna elders use to address young children, was the one Silko first associated with her. In *Storyteller*,

Silko writes:

> It was a long time before
> I learned that my Grandma A'mooh's
> real name was Marie Anaya Marmon.
> I thought her name really was "A'mooh."
> I realize now it had happened when I was a baby
> and she cared for me while my mother worked.
> I had been hearing her say
> "a'moo'ooh"
> which is the Laguna expression of endearment
> for a young child
> spoken with great feeling and love. (pp. 33-34)

Silko returns to this point again in *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. "I called her Grandma A'mooh because that's what I heard her say whenever she saw me. *A'mooh* means "granddaughter" in the Laguna language. I remember this word because her love and her acceptance of me as a small child were so important" (p. 61). Though her name for her great-grandmother was, in part, the result of Silko's childhood misinterpretation of the word's correct use, for Silko the Laguna word ultimately represents the security offered by an elder's love. The naming story here is not unlike childhood naming stories many families tell, the stories in which a child's misunderstanding or inability to pronounce a name correctly results in a life long pet name for another member of the family. Silko depicts just

such a situation in her naming of A'mooh, and in her repetitions of the story in other autobiographical writing, she emphasizes that it is a *Laguna* word she associates with the intimacy of familial love. In fact Silko stresses in her second version of the story that it is *because* her Laguna elder's love and acceptance were so important that she remembers this word "a'mooh."

Elders' voices play a vital role in Silko's renderings of traditional stories which appear on the page in a mixture of Laguna Keresan and English. In her introduction to one story, Silko announces her intention to recall Aunt Susie's voice, writing "This is the way I remember/she told this one story/about the little girl who ran away" (1981, p. 7). As the story proceeds, the main narrative in English is interrupted by italicized explanations of Laguna vocabulary, and we can guess that the explanations for the Laguna words are the sort that Aunt Susie would have given.

> Waithea was a little girl living in Acoma and
> one day she said
>
> Mother, I would like to have
> some yashtoah to eat."
>
> *"Yashtoah" is the hardened crust on corn meal mush*
> *that curls up.*
> *The very name "yashtoah" means*
> *it's sort of curled-up, you know, dried,*
> *just as mush dries on top.* (p. 8)

Later in the story, the girl arrives home after fetching some wood for her mother.

She said

"Nayah, deeni!

mother, upstairs!"

The pueblo people always called "upstairs"

because long ago their homes were two, three stories high

and that was their entrance

from the top." (p. 9)

Aunt Susie uses storytelling opportunities to educate her audience about traditional Laguna life ways (food, housing) in addition to relating the meaning of Laguna words. She is both cultural historian and language giver. The narrator's explanations of the words call attention to the fact that her audience (presumably Silko or other primarily English-speaking members of the Pueblo community, and, of course Silko's subsequent English monolingual readers) may not know the meaning of the Keresan words (community language loss). However, the explanations also give Silko the creative opportunity to include these Laguna lexical items in her writing, to make them familiar and vital again in the context of her autobiography. Silko uses this narrative technique often in *Storyteller*. For instance, the narrator begins one story by commenting

The Laguna people

always begin their stories

with "humma-hah":

that means "long ago."

And the ones who are listening

say "aaaa-eh" (p. 38)

Here, not only does Silko's narrator give us word meanings; she illustrates a Laguna oral narrative convention as well, a kind of call and response taught by a member of an older generation (Aunt Susie) to the younger (Silko). In another section the narrator explains the English meaning of proper names such as that of the traditional character Estoy-eh-muut. *"'Muut' means 'youth.'/ 'Estoyeh' means that he was a great hunter"* (p. 110) illustrating the significance of meaningful naming practices in Laguna culture. The narrator also uses her explanations to describe the location of Pueblo lands, the traditional settings for Keresan stories.

Hani-a was supposed to be

traditionally, Cienega,

you know where Cienega is

the place between Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

They called it 'Hania'

that means, interpreted,

'the East Country.'

It is east from here.

It means the 'East Country,' yes. (p. 100)

By calling a place by its Pueblo name, the narrator claims the place and the Pueblo word that names it for the next

generation.

In her interviews and writings, Silko depicts Aunt Susie as a cultural broker and autoethnographer who, through bilingualism, is able to pass down important aspects of Laguna culture and narrative traditions. However, it is not only Laguna culture Aunt Susie wants her young relations to know. In an interview with Donna Perry (1993), Silko recalls having a clear sense that her older relatives advocated education in white culture as well, despite the fact that educational institutions were often harsh on Indian students. But gaining knowledge about white culture and white perceptions of Indian culture is seen by Silko as a form of resistance.

> Q: I know that for a time you went to Indian school. What was that like?
>
> A: It was a completely hideous traumatic experience. The Laguna Day School was a stone's throw from my house. The irony was that my great-grandfather had helped facilitate the federal government building it there. It was when I started there, at five years old, that I first learned about these invisible borderlines that authoritarian figures use. When you crossed the line and stepped onto the school grounds, you weren't to use the Laguna language anymore. If you were caught using it, you got in a whole bunch

> of trouble.
>
> Q: So your experience was pretty bad?
>
> A: It was just full of anxiety. And I could sense the horror of what was being done to the other kids, especially the kids who didn't speak English. At the same time, I had had all of this reinforcement about education from my great-grandmother and from old Aunt Susie, who were Carlisle Indian School graduates. Of course, the reason the Pueblo people have survived as long as they have and as intact is because they were real thoughtful about how to outlast people who come along and hassle you and push you around. There was the sense that if you learned enough about the whole wide word, especially the western European way, you might be able to survive. They've outlasted a lot of people--the Spaniards, the Mexicans. (pp. 316-317)

And as Silko observes in her introduction to *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, Aunt Susie's linguistic abilities allow her to help her community survive by joining in legal battles regarding Laguna lands. To prepare for one such battle, Aunt Susie worked as a translator and collected testimony from other Laguna elders.

> For months the old folks and Aunt Susie met twice a week after supper at our house to go over

> testimony....She interpreted English for the old folks because she knew them very well; in her own studies of Laguna history she had talked with them many times. Now she helped them prepare their testimony, that from time immemorial the Kawakemeh, the people of the Pueblo of Laguna, had been sustained from hunting and planting on this land stolen by the state of New Mexico. It was explained to me that the old folks testified with stories--stories of childhood outings with adults to gather pinons or to haul wood, stories they had heard as children. The old folks were going up against the state of New Mexico with only the stories. (1996, p. 18)

Silko depicts her elder's efforts as heroic. They are confronting a colonial power, the state of New Mexico, "with *only* the stories" (italics mine). The weapons in the fight to preserve Laguna lands may seem puny to those who fail to recognize the power of these stories, but given the fact that here and elsewhere in her work Silko has repeatedly stressed the truth value Laguna people place on stories, it becomes apparent that Aunt Susie and Silko both believe these weapons to be anything but puny. The tacit belief in the ability of language, of narrative to control and alter reality is not unlike that expressed by Momaday. However, in the situation described by Silko, it is only through Aunt

Susie's efforts as translator and cultural broker that the power of these stories can gain influence over the state. The stories the elders tell are both tribal and associational in their focus on the Native community in the Laguna language, but these are not aspects understood by the state. Instead, the stories must be cast in terms of the polemical, structured as one side of a conflict with non-Natives and translated. In the face of a colonial power Laguna stories may be effective in saving Laguna lands, but the stories must be expressed in the colonizers' language.

The Spoken and the Written

Aunt Susie becomes a central figure in Silko's discussions of English language literacy and the importance of books. This is interesting when considering the fact that Aunt Susie is also the voice of the storyteller, the keeper and transmitter of an oral tradition. Most scholarship on *Storyteller* takes notice of Silko's rendering of performative, oral qualities of narrative in her texts, i.e., the narrator's explanatory interruptions, recursiveness, repetitions, etc. (Lucero 1981; Vangen 1984; Danielson 1989; Krupat 1989; Jaskoski 1992; Browdy de Hernandez 1994a, 1994b; Krumholz 1994). King (1990) identifies this distinctive narrative technique as "interfusional." This narrative quality heightens the sense of the presence of a listening audience rather than simply a

reading one, though both kinds of audiences are invited into the stories. In this world, the oral and the literary are not mutually exclusive. They coexist in such a way as to prevent scholars from adhering to an ideology giving one form precedence over the other, thus demonstrating another aspect of Silko's ironic synchretic resistance to Euro-American discourse privileging text over speech, a discourse which perceives text as a means to preserve narratives derived from oral tradition. The following exchange from an interview with Kim Barnes (1986) illustrates this point.

> KB: Why are you writing these stories? Are you trying to put the oral tradition in a more stable or lasting form? Do you think anything is lost in the writing down of these stories?
>
> Silko: Well, no, I'm not trying to save them, I'm not trying to put them in a stable or lasting form. I write them down because I like seeing how I can translate this sort of feeling or flavor or sense of a story that's told and heard onto the page. Obviously, something will be lost because you're going from one medium to another. And I use *translate* in the broadest sense. I don't mean translate from the Laguna Pueblo language to English; I mean the feeling or the sense that language is being used orally (p. 87).

Barnes defines text as a "more stable and lasting form,"

something which would benefit the story by creating a sense of permanence, but this quality of text as a preservative in and of itself is not what interests Silko. She is more concerned with the artistic challenges and possibilities offered by the process of translating oral to written, and she sees the written as benefitted by the oral, not the other way around. In fact, Silko is unsympathetic with most attempts to "preserve" Laguna stories, whatever form that preservation might take. She tells Barnes

> People outside the community are often horrified to hear some old timer say, "No, I won't tell my stories to the tape recorder. No, I won't put them on video tape. If these younger folks don't listen and remember from me, then maybe these stories are meant to end with me." It's very tough minded. It flies in the face of all the anthropologists and people who get moist-eyed over what a good turn they're doing for the Native American communities by getting down these stories. I tend to align myself with the tougher-minded people....It passes and it's gone, you know? You could feel sad about it, but that's the way it is. (pp. 89-90).

In *Storyteller*, Silko recounts an instance in which she acknowledges that even though she is writing from a rich oral tradition, it cannot be completely duplicated in print.

In this episode a neighbor mentions that her grandchildren recently have read one of Silko's Coyote poems. The neighbor tells her

> "We all enjoyed it so much,
> but I was telling the children
> the way my grandpa used to tell it
> is longer."
> "Yes, that's the trouble with writing," I said,
> "You can't go on and on the way we do
> when we tell stories around here.
> People who aren't used to it get tired." (p. 110)

The "people who aren't used to it" lack experience in the oral tradition; they may be non-Laguna, but they also may be Indian people educated and raised away from their homes and families. Silko's shorter version of a Coyote story is an accommodation to this text-dependent audience suffering from a short attention span. The result is that a portion of the story remains in the tribal realm, inaccessible to the non-Laguna. The story is not "preserved" or rescued from extinction by writing; in fact it is preserved by the elder who will tell her grandchildren the longer version.

While Silko sees important distinctions between written and oral traditions, she does not conceive of writing as separate from Indian life, and thus refuses stereotypical images of indigenous people as essentially non-literate. She points to pre-conquest Mixtec and Mayan screenfold

manuscripts, now stored and catalogued as codices in European libraries, as evidence that indigenous people had conceived a writing system without the help of the conquering Spaniards. The title of her 1991 novel, *Almanac of the Dead*, is inspired by these texts. In her essay "Books: Notes on Mixtec and Maya Screenfolds" which appears in *Yellow Woman and A Beauty of the Spirit* she writes:

> Ideographs conveyed qualities and categories associated with the object presented. Phonetic symbols, which were still few, indicate names of places, people, or dates. The written language functions as a sort of rebus. *Cuetzalli* (red quetzal feathers) and *tlantli* (tooth) equals place name Cuetzalan, written as four feathers over a tooth. (p. 156)

Silko perceives the existence of this writing system as a mark of a powerful culture and believes the conquerors of these early Central American nations understood this as well. She continues

> In 1540, the great libraries of the Americas were burned by the European invaders, most of whom were illiterate but not stupid. They burned the great libraries because they wished to foster the notion that the New World was populated by savages. Savages could be slaughtered and enslaved; savages were no better than wild beasts and thus had no

> property rights. (p. 157)

So, although the oral is a much esteemed means of transmitting stories, written texts are an equally legitimate claim to cultural inheritance for Silko. Her discussion of these ancient Mixtec and Maya texts becomes a prelude to recollections of her own literate childhood in this same essay.

> My great-grandmother's house had a tall bookcase full of my great-grandfather's books. My grandparents' house also had rooms with shelves of books. We had books. My parents kept books at their bedsides. My father used to read at the table at lunchtime, and we did too. It was years before I realized it is considered impolite to read at the table. I remember waiting until I was alone in the house, and then I'd go find *Lolita* or *Lady Chatterley's Lover* half hidden under my dad's side of the bed. (1991, p. 158)

Silko recounts a childhood full of books, classics of English language literature. But this in no way indicates these books diminished the importance of oral storytelling. Later in the essay she observes a confluence of the two different mediums.

> People told stories constantly, but Grandma A'mooh made a point of reading to us from a book too, perhaps because she feared we'd prefer listening

> to reading (who wouldn't?). But when I got to school and there were no beloved grandmas or aunts to tell me stories, I remembered that books tell stories too, and whenever I felt alienated and lonely in school, I would begin to read a story, and immediately I felt that happy secure feeling come over me as it did whenever Grandma A'mooh began telling me a story. (p. 160)

Here the oral and the written merge in Grandma A'mooh's reading aloud "from a book," and in the sense of security Silko gains from reading at school, an act which recreates in some way the feelings she had "whenever Grandma A'mooh began telling me a story."

Throughout her work Silko often mentions being encouraged by elders to read, but in this essay she also explicitly connects their influence on her literacy to preservation of Laguna lands.

> The laws were in books. The king of Spain had granted the Laguna Pueblo people their land. The Laguna Pueblo people knew their land was protected by a land grant document from the king of Spain. The Anglo-Americans who swarmed into the New Mexico Territory after 1848 carried with them no such documents. The Pueblo people fared better than other tribes simply because of these documents. The land grant documents alerted the

> Pueblo people to the value of the written word; the old books of international law favored the holders of royal land grants. So, very early, the Pueblo people realized the power of written words and books to secure legitimate title to tribal land. No wonder the older folks used to tell us kids to study: learn to read and to write for your own protection. (p. 160)

This passage is especially interesting in that Silko demonstrates that the written texts of one conquering nation, Spain, are used by the Pueblo people to fend off another would-be imperialist, the United States. Thus, according to Silko, the Pueblo people are early acquainted with the ironic uses of text as a means to resist land theft.

Silko further demonstrates her family's practice of text-based resistance in the concluding story of this essay. She tells us that when Indian boarding school policy makers discovered that the graduates who returned home often returned to traditional life styles as well, they decided an extension program was necessary to encourage these former students to retain the cultural practices of Anglo society. A white Carlisle teacher and dormitory matron, Marion Bergess authored a book entitled *Stiya, The Story of an Indian Girl*. According to Silko, the book was published by the U.S. War Department in 1881 under the assumed Indian

name Tonka[1] and was given to boarding school graduates in hopes that an unfavorable depiction of traditional Pueblo life would prevent former students from returning to this way of life. It told the story of a Pueblo Indian girl's return home and described her struggles to retain her white identity in the face of what Bergess depicted as repulsive, savage, pagan Pueblo cultural practices. Silko writes "Stiya is right and good; all others are wrong, bad, and dirty--very, very dirty. Bergess could not emphasize too much the filth and odors she imagined in Stiya's village" (p. 162). Silko's Grandma A'mooh received a copy of the book, and when her daughter-in-law, Silko's Aunt Susie, tried to engage her in discussion about the book, she "told Aunt Susie the only place for this book was in the fire, and she lifted the lid on her cook-stove to drop in the book" (p. 164). Aunt Susie, however, had other ideas about what should become of such a libelous work. "Aunt Susie was a scholar and a storyteller; she believed the *Stiya* book was important evidence of the lies and the racism and bad faith of the U.S. government with the Pueblo people" (p. 164). Aunt Susie convinced Grandma A'mooh to give her the book, which she retained for posterity.

---

[1]I have not been able to locate a citation for this book which matches Silko's information exactly. However, the following, perhaps a reprint of the work Silko mentions, is listed in University of Pennsylvania holdings: Burgess, Marianna. (1891). *Stiya, a Carlisle Indian Girl At Home, Founded on the Author's Actual Observations, by Embe* (psued.). Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press.

Silko depicts Aunt Susie not only as someone who understands the power of the written word to perpetuate propagandistic lies, but someone who anticipates the power of future writers to turn the lies back onto those who wrote them down in the first place. Silko reminds her readers that "Books have been the focus of the struggle for the control of the Americas from the start" (p. 165). Texts are sites of resistance and struggle for Silko. As such, they are not weapons of oppression exclusively. As Silko demonstrates in her account of Aunt Susie's belief about the historical importance of *Stiya*, even a text which is clearly an attack on indigenous people becomes a means to criticize the colonial enterprise; read polemically, it becomes evidence in the case built by indigenous writers against conquest.

Momaday seems less interested than Silko in the political possibilities of written language and more concerned with a sense of the sacred conveyed in both written and oral traditions. This is not to say, of course, that the political and the sacred can necessarily be separated, but Momaday's approach to the relationship between the oral and the written examines the connection between the word and the expression of spiritual imagination more than it considers the power relationships between cultures as represented by the Euro-American perception of the pre-eminence of one tradition (written English) over

another (spoken Kiowa). He is also more likely to establish clearer hierarchical relationships between the written and the oral, to see the oral as more explicitly Indian and the written as Euro-American. Like Silko, Momaday grew up in a highly literate family; both his parents taught in reservation schools. His father, born in a tipi on Kiowa land, was bilingual, while his mother grew up speaking English as her first language. In addition, as noted earlier, significant among his childhood memories are those of relatives speaking Kiowa and telling stories. This experience puts Momaday in a good position to consider the relationship between oral and written traditions, a theme to which he returns often in his work. In "The Native Voice in American Literature," from *The Man Made of Words*, he observes that

> Writing engenders in us certain attitudes toward language. It encourages us to take words for granted. Writing has enabled us to store vast quantities of words indefinitely....The result is that we have developed a kind of false security where language is concerned, and our sensitivity to language has deteriorated....
>
> But in the oral tradition one stands in a different relation to language. Words are rare and therefore dear. They are jealously preserved in the ear and in the mind. Words are spoken with

> great care, and they are heard. They matter, and they must not be taken for granted; they must be taken seriously and they must be remembered. (pp. 15-16)

Similar sentiments are voiced in a 1975 interview with William T. Morgan which appeared in *Sequoia* and is quoted here from a reprint appearing in a 1997 interview collection entitled *Conversations with N. Scott Momaday*, edited by Matthias Schubnell. When asked about the influence of Kiowa oral traditions in his work, Momaday observes

> ...that there were real differences between oral tradition and the written tradition. The man who exists within an oral tradition, who doesn't have writing, tends, I think to take language more seriously. He can't afford to take it for granted. He doesn't have the kind of security that writing represents. He has in some ways a better understanding of language and its possibilities. (p. 47)

In these excerpts, oral tradition is associated with reverence for language while writing tempts language users into forgetful carelessness. These passages echo the divisions between the written and the oral established in Euro-American traditions through Platonic dialogues and as addressed by Ong (1982) and many others; they establish a hierarchy. Oral traditions are "powerful," "magical,"

"words are spoken with great care," but writing has created a sense of "false security;" "our sensitivity to language has deteriorated." Written language is fallen language.

Momaday applies this hierarchical model giving oral tradition precedence when, in an interview with Laura Coltelli (1990), he describes his perception of contemporary indigenous writing as *proceeding from* the oral. He tells Coltelli that "Oral tradition is at the root of modern American Indian literature, and everybody, every Indian who is writing out of his Indianess, I think, has that in mind, whether consciously or not, but he is working with precedents that go back into oral tradition" (pp. 94-95). In his interview with Morgan (1975 Rpt. 1997), Momaday says

> I have been, I suppose all of my life, aware of the oral tradition of the Indian people and I think that my awareness of it has been a very positive thing in my life as a writer. It's good to understand that nature of the oral tradition. One can understand that to the benefit of his expression, written and otherwise. (p. 47)

As with Silko, Momaday's primary form of artistic expression, writing, is informed by oral tradition. And, like Silko, Momaday perceives points at which the written and the oral work in consonance to create what he perceives to be a more profound sense of language. Awareness of oral traditions supports the written, but the reverse is also

true. In his address to the First Convocation of American Indian Scholars (1970), Momaday described *The Way to Rainy Mountain* as an attempt to recreate Kiowa stories which had previously existed only in oral tradition. He observed that in addition to these written retellings, he included Euro-American historical writing and his own personal commentaries in the book, and he told the audience

> Together, they serve, hopefully, to validate the oral tradition to an extent that might not otherwise be possible. The commentaries are meant to provide a context in which the elements of oral tradition might transcend the categorical limits of prehistory, anonymity, and archaeology in the narrow sense...I believe there is a way (first) in which the elements of oral tradition can be shown, dramatically, to exist within the framework of a literary continuance, a deeper and more vital context of language and meaning than that which is generally taken into account; and (secondly) in which those elements can be located, with some precision on an evolutionary scale. (p. 59)

If written tradition is an evolutionary use of language, it is a mutation suited to a particular environment. In the "framework of literary continuance," oral tradition precedes written, and is a "deeper and more vital context of language and meaning," but it is through works relying on both the

oral and the written (published conference proceedings, interviews, creative autobiographies such as *The Way to Rainy Mountain*) that Momaday schools his audience in the value of the spoken word.

English as the Language of Loss in *Storyteller*

American academic and political culture privileges the written document over oral performance and the English language over any other. Throughout this dissertation I have argued that through writing in English, North American Indian authors have gained access to the language of privilege and that this allows them to address lack of privilege and the disenfranchising power of the written English word. This is an essentially polemical reading of the texts and, therefore, perhaps a limiting one, but such a reading is, nevertheless, valid with the regard to the authors I focus on in this chapter. Silko certainly recognizes that those without the abilities to speak or to write English proficiently can be placed in jeopardy when confronted with the demands of an English-speaking, text-dependent culture. Her "Lullaby," from *Storyteller* centers around a character who suffers one of her greatest losses because of a misunderstanding about the power of written language. Though not an explicitly autobiographical section of the book, the story does illustrate Silko's concerns with the power of the written word and the possibilities for its

abuse.

In the story Ayah, a Navajo woman who does not speak or read English, is confronted by a group of government officials who are attempting to take her children to a tuberculosis hospital.

> They were wearing khaki uniforms and they waved papers at her and a black ball-point pen, trying to make her understand their English words. She was frightened by the way they looked at the children, like the lizard watches the fly...Ayah could see they wanted her to sign the papers, and Chato had taught her to sign her name. It was something she was proud of. She only wanted them to go, and to take their eyes away from her children.
>
> She took the pen from the man without looking at his face and she signed the papers in three different places he pointed to (p. 45).

The fact that Ayah has unwittingly signed away her right to care for her children is made more cruel by the fact that she has attempted to use the written language of her oppressors to assure the children's safety, and yet this action results in their loss. But she does not blame the white authorities for what has happened; she blames a Navajo man, her husband, for teaching her to write her name.

She hated Chato, not because he let the policeman

> and doctors put the screaming children in the government car, but because he had taught her to sign her name. Because it was like the old ones always told her about learning their language or any of their ways: it endangered you (p. 47).

Despite Silko's elders' own advocacy of her English literacy, despite their clear message to her that learning English could help in the fight to preserve Laguna lands and lifeways, here Silko depicts the written language as a destructive force. As in her discussion of *Stiya*, Silko once again addresses the point that a colonial language can cut both ways; in one direction it offers the indigenous writer a voice with which to witness and implicate those who have tried to destroy cultures. Yet sometimes those who wish to use its force for protection of that culture and its people learn that the colonial language is ironically more destructive, as Ayah discovers when her attempt to protect her children results in the destruction of her family. Government officials bring the children home for occasional visits, but eventually Ayah loses the ability to communicate with them. "She smiled at her [daughter] instead and spoke cheerfully to Danny. When he tried to answer her, he could not seem to remember and he spoke English words with the Navajo" (p. 49). Silko's description of the children's visits echoes the descriptions of homecomings written by the autobiographers discussed in Chapter 3. While the

description is not explicitly autobiographical, it certainly reflects Silko's perception of the domination of English in a community of indigenous people. Language has become the wedge driving the family apart.

In another short piece of fiction from the collection which carries the same title as the autobiography "Storyteller," a character's refusal to communicate in English is specifically an act of resistance. The character is an unnamed Yupik Eskimo, and her refusal to use English results in physical punishment. For instance, when this character was a girl at boarding school "the dormitory matron pulled down her underpants and whipped her with a leather belt because she refused to speak English" (p. 19). Certainly this short work of fiction recounts a scene too often a reality in the lives of students at Indian boarding schools throughout North America.

When we meet the character, she has been jailed for the vengeful murder of a white storekeeper. As the story proceeds, we learn this man had sold her parents poisonous liquor, which killed them. The woman knew the storekeeper was attracted to her, and she lured him out onto cracking ice, knowing he would freeze to death as he tried to catch her. While in jail, she is forced by an Eskimo guard to use English, but she refuses to do so properly.

> She yelled again, this time some English words which came randomly into her mouth, probably swear

> words she'd heard from the oil drilling crews last winter. The jailer was an Eskimo, but he would not speak Yupik to her. She had watched people in other cells, when they spoke to him in Yupik he ignored them until they spoke English (p. 18).

English is the language of the authorities, and the language of the law which will punish her. English belongs to those who would manipulate her, but she will have none of the language or the laws built upon it. Even when a white lawyer tells her through a translator she can go free if she will just say the storekeeper's death was an accident, she refuses to acquiesce. She wants the credit for the man's death and wants people to know why she intended that he die. She also finds satisfaction in the fact that the lawyer "motioned for the jailer to stay to translate for him. She laughed when she saw how the jailer would be forced by this Gussuck to speak Yupik to her. She liked the Gussuck attorney for that..." (p. 31). In the face of her imprisonment and Anglo attempts to get her to do things the white way, the woman remains a powerful figure in her refusal to cooperate. Of this character Helen Jaskowski (1992) writes "The protagonist's unyielding insistence on her truth as the only truth about these events corresponds with her equally rigid insistence on her own language; maintaining impermeable boundaries of language protects her sense of self in a world of imminent annihilation" (p. 78).

Choosing English

In interviews, Silko and Momaday often reiterate that they are native English speakers, that this language is their chosen medium of artistic expression. But they also acknowledge that the decision to use English as a main means of communication was one made for them most immediately by their elders. Of course in a much larger sense it might be argued that the decision was not really a true choice at all; it was a U.S. government colonial imperative delivered generations earlier in an attempt at cultural genocide of Indian people. And yet, it must be said that the writers still *choose* English, for to say otherwise would indicate an ultimate lack of power over colonialist enterprise, and such lack does not, in fact, exist. Silko and Momaday locate their creative power in the English language, but they also recognize that this power is derived in a larger sense from the languages which came before and from the oral traditions originating in those languages. In *The Names* Momaday writes

> When I was three years old my head must have been full of Indian as well as English words. The sounds of both Kiowa and Navajo are quite natural and familiar to me, and even now I can make these sounds easily and accurately with my voice, so well established are they in my ear. I lived very close to these "foreign" languages, poised at a

> crucial time in the learning process to enter into either or both of them wholly. But my mother was concerned that I should learn English as my "native" language, and so English is first and foremost in my possession. My mother's love of books, and of English literature in particular, is intense, and naturally she wanted me to share in it. I have seen Grendel's shadow on the walls of Canyon de Chelly, and once, having led the sun around Hoskinini Mesa, I saw Copperfield at Oljeto Trading Post (p. 60).

Momaday's use of quotation marks around the words "foreign" and "native" seems to indicate a refusal of the hierarchical attitude toward multiple languages that these terms imply. His visions of characters from English literature in the setting of the American Southwest further demonstrate Momaday's interfusional sensibilities when it comes to defining the relationship between Euro-American and Indian cultures. Both are integral to his creative vision.

Despite this apparent synthesis, Momaday voiced some concerns about the disappearance of the Kiowa language in his address to The First Convocation of American Indian Scholars (1970). He told his audience

> I would repeat that I think there is a certain urgency to our consideration of preserving American Indian literature. I know for a fact

> that very few young Kiowas, to name but one tribe, are learning to speak Kiowa. It is a language that is dying very quickly. And it's very sad to contemplate that, because so much will be lost in terms of human imagination, as it is brought to bear upon a long history, and a very rich experience. (p. 65)

Nevertheless, Momaday himself does not speak the language and relied on his father's translating abilities to communicate with relatives and learn stories of Kiowa oral tradition. Momaday is called upon to confront the fact that he does not speak the language of his ancestors in his interview with Charles Woodard.

> CLW: You are fairly quick to tell audiences in question-and-answer situations that you do not speak Kiowa, and you say it in a way which implies that you've not thought it a matter of much consequence. You obviously could learn to speak Kiowa. Why haven't you?
>
> M: It would take a great effort. And though I would like to be able to speak Kiowa, it isn't something that I think I have to do. I couldn't write better than I do if I spoke Kiowa. I'm firmly convinced of that. There is no point in trying to write in Kiowa, because I wouldn't be understood. But I've run across that question so

> many times in so many places. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could write in your native language?" The answer is clearly no, it wouldn't be wonderful at all. It would be a great mistake. What if I had written *The Way To Rainy Mountain* in Kiowa?
>
> CLW: A small but appreciative audience?
>
> M: There are maybe two people in the world who can read Kiowa, and one is a Swedish linguist and one is a Norwegian (p. 115).

The two passages cited above indicate Momaday's perception of the Kiowa language's marginalization. He sees the language as existing on the cusp of extinction, but his task is not to preserve the language; rather, Momaday's aim is to retain and transmit Kiowa *stories* and the world they imagine to a broader audience, and this necessitates writing in English. Yet because his ancestors spoke a language other than English, scholars call upon Momaday to choose and justify his choice of English as a medium for communication of Kiowa traditions, despite the fact that he considers English "first and foremost in my possession" as he writes in *The Names*. How Momaday uses or does not use his ancestors' language then becomes, in a larger sense, an issue scholars see as related to his identity as a writer of Kiowa descent. What identifies him as a writer of indigenous heritage in the eyes of the academic

establishment is that Momaday can be asked to explain his choice to write in English; as much as it is a question of what Momaday says in his work, for scholars his identity is also a question of in what language he writes it.

Scholars and interviewers place Silko in a similar position of having to explain her relationship to Laguna Keresan and her choice to write in English. For instance, in an interview published in 1980, Dexter Fisher asked Silko if she knew the Laguna language. Silko responded "Very little. I know very little because we're mix-blooded. I know as much as Grandma knows to get along at the store, but there was an absolute value placed on speaking English. I grew up with my great-grandmother, so I understood a lot more when I was small" (p. 19). And of her 1981 discussion with Silko, Elaine Jahner observes "Because in some tribes English is still a second language, the question of the adequacy of the English language to express the consciousness of people whose primary language is not English arises frequently" (p. 385). Silko's response to this issue in the interview says a great deal about her perception of English. Though it can be viewed as a language of conquest, it is, for Silko, also a language of inclusion. She tells Jahner "English is a bastard language, inherently open and expansive. I love its expansiveness and inclusiveness. The nature of English is to defy academies. Look at the many people who have created a form of English

that is their own, the Jamaicans for example. You can arrange and rearrange the language."

As a writer, Silko has been able to turn a potentially oppressive tongue into a source of creative power. She too has "arranged and rearranged the language," expanded it with Laguna vocabulary and word stories, defied academic conventions of genre with her work. In her interview with Laura Coltelli, Silko further addresses the concerns of colonized people writing in English.

> Silko: I think that many of the models that were constructed in the late fifties and early sixties by so-called social scientists, ethnologists, ethnographers, about acculturation, social changes, how humans learn language, how language affects the way you think, and so on, were so incomplete that those models have to be overturned. Not just for Indian people in New Mexico or Arizona, but African tribal people, all of the people who have gone through this period of colonialism. That is, in a sense, what I am concerned with writing about, what I'm working with right now. It goes on.
>
> LC: You said once that we should make English speak for us.
>
> Silko: At that time it hadn't really occurred to me that people who are born English speakers are

> trying to make English speak for them too. What I was saying was a little naive. The great struggle is to make whatever language you have really speak for you. But I won't back down from it, in the sense that I like to take something that is a given, a given medium or a given mode, and then treat it as if it were a fantastical contest or trick. Here are the givens: you only have this and this; this is what you are trying to describe, these are the persons you are trying to describe this to; we don't want them to just see it and hear it; we want them to be it and know it. This is language and you deal in it...We have to use language in order to define language. I'm getting more and more humbled, to the point where I think it's a wonder we can express the most simple desire in our given tongue, clearly (p.144).

So for Silko, the issue that takes greater precedence is not which language an author chooses, but the fact that written expression is chosen at all. In some sense Silko is not unlike the character Betonie, a mixed-blood Mexican Navajo medicine man who appears in her 1977 novel *Ceremony*. Betonie is performing a healing ritual for the World War II veteran Tayo, who is suffering from war trauma. The ritual is not what Tayo expects, and Betonie explains:

> At one time, the ceremonies as they had been

> performed were enough for the way the world was then. But after the white people came, elements in the world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies. I have made changes in the rituals. The people mistrust this greatly, but only this growth keeps the ceremonies strong...She (his grandmother) taught me this above all else; things which don't shift and grow are dead things. (p. 126)

While Silko's storytelling methods and language may differ from those of traditional Pueblo narrative (her stories are written as opposed to oral and in English as opposed to Laguna), her alteration of traditional storytelling keeps the tradition itself alive and strong.

Silko and Momaday both recognize that English can present the potential for destruction of Indian cultures and languages. Momaday's larger concern is with the demise of indigenous oral traditions that can come with the extinction of North American Indian languages, and Silko recognizes the power of those who rely on the written English word to destroy families, abuse laws, and steal land. Both writers document the hegemonic English literacy practices that have caused dramatic losses for indigenous people in terms of privilege and identity. And yet, in the face of this, the authors reaffirm their individual choices to pursue writing in English; they are using the language to recover and

preserve privilege and identity, to tell the word stories of the first people.

Chapter Five

Reinvention

Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity--I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself.

--Gloria Anzaldua
from "How to Tame A Wild Tongue" in
Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture

In defining herself as a "new Mestiza," Gloria Anzaldua, an essayist and poet who writes about contemporary Chicana/Mestiza identity, declares language a key element of that identity. For her, this language must be a synchresis of many languages and dialects: English, Spanish, Spanglish, Tex-Mex. The self she defines is both shaped by and a reflection of this language. The struggle for self is a struggle for language in the midst of an external compulsion to use one language to the exclusion of others. "Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate" (p. 207). As a "new Mestiza," Anzaldua stakes her claim on a new language of juxtaposition and synchresis to construct a narrating self that is multilingual/multidialectal, to create a language that is somehow representative of an "ethnic" self. Creating this

language is an act of self-empowerment, an achievement of an authentic narrative voice. "I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish, white," writes Anzaldua. "I will have my serpent's tongue--my woman's voice, my sexual voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence" (p. 207). For authors like Anzaldua and the autobiographers I discussed in earlier chapters, writing from an experience of linguistic diversity in the midst of a larger culture which discourages such diversity, achieving a voice and a distinct narrative identity is a creative act of will. This final chapter re-examines issues of language identity, voice, and creative power in North American Indian autobiography, and it also addresses potential problems created by a critical discourse which can overlook the autobiographers' acts of self-empowerment achieved through shaping narrative identities in English.

As Michael Fischer (1994) sees it, cross-cultural struggle offers a rather unique opportunity for ethnic autobiographers. He writes:

> perhaps the most important use of life histories, increasingly so in the contemporary world, is the strategic use of a life frame that straddles major social and cultural transformation. This is, for instance, one of the richest veins of contemporary writing in English, drawing on interlinguistic and intercultural differences to remake culturally

fuller individuals and social actors (p. 82).

With regard to North American Indian autobiographies, I find Fischer's views troubling. It can certainly be argued that North American Indian autobiographies can document lives which "straddle major social and cultural transformations," but it remains to be asked if these autobiographers perceive themselves as "culturally fuller" by virtue of their experience of "interlinguistic and intercultural differences." The implication of a view such as Fischer's is that without a struggle created by difference, autobiographers writing from a culture which has not been in conflict with, say, a primarily white, English-speaking one might be somehow culturally less full. How one might measure the degree to which an individual is more or less culturally full escapes me, but how an Indian autobiographer creates a narrative self from diverse linguistic and narrative traditions is well-documented by the autobiographers themselves, and these narrative selves are not merely the result of the writers being compelled to negotiate difference. This is not to say that questions of cultural and linguistic differences are unimportant to the works of these writers; indeed, such questions are central in many cases. They certainly are, have been, and will continue to be concerns for many writers. However, to see the depiction of language relationships in these autobiographies as determined solely by cultural conflict

created by colonization is reductive[1], even disempowering in that it runs the risk of placing credit for the narrating selves the writers have created in the hands of those who initiated the conflict, European colonizers.

I must grant that much of the discussion in this dissertation has indeed focused on the cultural and linguistic differences these writers have negotiated, and in doing so has addressed questions of power, cultural hegemony, and subversion with regard to imperial language policies. I have attempted to show how the autobiographers' depictions of English language learning and the relationships between English and indigenous languages are shaped, in part, by colonial power relationships and attempts to alter them through ironic synchretic resistance. I intend to continue that discussion here. However, it must be kept in mind that the autobiographers bring to their work much which transcends questions of colonial power relationships. They bring creativity, a narrative impulse,

---

[1]Arjuna Parakrama (1995) even argues that a critical agenda simply portraying "language as the site of struggle becomes a pious credo that has been emptied of theoretical bite as well as political agenda" (p. 1). Such a position, Parakrama argues in the first chapter of *De-Hegemonizing Language Standards: Learning from (Post)Colonial Englishes about 'English'*, tempts scholars to regard language-as-a-site-of-struggle as a maxim without working to alter a world view that accepts the maxim as status quo. Accepting the maxim as such implicitly suggests that it is the natural order of things for certain languages to always dominate and marginalize others. That such a position appears to be greeted with tacit acceptance among linguistics scholars is something Parakrama finds disturbing.

and a sense of personal and community history determined as much by each writer's connection to Indian life as by Eurocentric colonial systems which attempt to make that life impossible.

That the autobiographers in many instances bring their abilities, gifts, and inheritances to bear in addressing colonial language practices is likewise important and, indeed, central to my project. This is the facet of their work upon which I have chosen to focus, but in this chapter, by way of conclusion, I intend to re-theorize my earlier discussion of ironic synchretic resistance to better reflect North American Indian writers' active and conscious roles in decolonizing English. My aim is to shape a more inclusive critical perspective that, while considering aspects of Indian writing about language as responses to oppression, also regards writing in English as willful, creative action. In doing so, I hope to incorporate views which consciously acknowledge the autobiographers' self-empowerment and self-determined narrative identities they create by writing in English. A critical focus attending primarily to the relationship between oppressed and oppressor can encourage a focus on victimization, and this is something I wish to minimize in my discussion here; thus, my approach de-emphasizes the perception that an Indian narrative of language experience is necessarily a narrative of victimization. I do not say this in order to absolve Euro-

Americans of their complicity in acts of oppression or to minimize the extent to which North America's First Nations people have suffered and do suffer under colonial rule. Rather, I seek to broaden my focus in order to emphasize that throughout the relatively short history of Native Americans writing in English there flows a constant vein of creative achievement that is not solely dependent upon terms set by colonists or their non-Indian descendants, despite their attempts to circumscribe the linguistic choices and power of indigenous people. My thinking here has been influenced especially by the writings of Achebe (1975), Cook-Lynn (1993a, 1993b), Deloria (1969) and King (1990), all of whom strive to develop critical perspectives acknowledging the intellectual autonomy of native peoples.

For many of the writers discussed in this dissertation, the creation of their narratives has involved recreating traditional stories, recreating elders' voices, and revising the Eurocentric fantasies of the happily assimilated or the vanishing Indian. But perhaps nowhere has the prefix "re" been better applied than in the title of a 1997 anthology of Indian women's writing edited by Joy Harjo (Muscogee) and Gloria Bird (Spokane), with Patricia Blanco, Beth Cuthand, and Victoria Martinez, *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writing of North America*. In giving the collection this title, the editors have emphasized the perception of an Indian writer as one who

acts rather than one who is acted upon, one who reinvents rather than one who is reinvented by an "enemy's language." To assume this role as actor is to become self-empowered. In the anthology's introduction, Joy Harjo writes "Many of us at the end of the century are using the 'enemy language' with which to tell our truths, to sing, to remember ourselves" (p. 21). Earlier in this dissertation, I discussed how English could be regarded by indigenous people as the language of deception, of miscommunication, of oppression, but Harjo holds out the possibility for English as reinvented by the Indian writer to become a means to truth, a path to memory, a way rather than a wall. The perspective she and her co-editor provide is helpful in shaping a more inclusive paradigm for a discussion of the relationship between Indian languages and English as depicted by Indian autobiographers.

Harjo and Bird celebrate the achievement of Indian women writing in English and the potential for transformation of an enemy tongue into a language which represents native identity, but both editors recall the historical circumstances leading to the necessity of this transformation. For instance, Bird observes:

> Often our ancestors were successfully conditioned to perceive native languages as inferior or defective in comparison to the English. A direct response, as it often happened, was that the

> previous generation did not teach tribal languages to our generation....English is the only language I have ever spoken. (p. 24).

Harjo writes:

> Some of us speak our native languages as well as English, and/or Spanish or French. Some speak only English, Spanish, or French because the use of our tribal languages was prohibited in schools and in adoptive homes, or these languages were suppressed to near extinction by some other casualty of culture and selfhood. Shame outlines the losses.
>
> But to speak, at whatever the cost, is to become empowered rather than victimized by destruction. In our tribal cultures the power of language to heal, to regenerate, and to create is understood. These colonizers' languages, which often usurped our own tribal languages or diminished them, now hand back emblems of our cultures, our own designs: beadwork, quills if you will. We've transformed these enemy languages. (pp. 21-22)

The works included in the anthology are a testament to this transformation. The emblems the writers hand back to the enemy are poems and stories of Indian survival and cultural continuance. They include narratives of childbirth, poems

and chants based on Indian spirituality, autobiographical artists' statements, family stories. In some pieces writers rely on English and Indian languages, code-switching, sometimes translating and sometimes not, and thus, by Anzaldua's standards, legitimating these languages alongside European ones. The writers' and editors' commitment to telling stories of Indian lives in a reinvented English is made clear. The editorial position of this collection can be likened to one expressed by Nigerian novelist and critic Chinua Achebe, a native African who writes against the cultural hegemony of Anglo imperialism in colonial Africa. In "Colonialist Criticism" (1975 rpt. in H. Adams 1992) he observes:

> Most African writers write out of an African experience and of commitment to an African destiny. For them, that destiny does not include a future European identity for which the present is but an apprenticeship. And let no one be fooled by the fact that we may write in English, for we intend to do unheard of things with it. Already some people are getting worried. (pp. 1193)

Bird and Harjo's "reinventing" of an imperial tongue articulates a critical position quite similar to Achebe's native African intentions "to do unheard of things with it." One of those things is for indigenous people to

empower themselves by choosing to write in the enemy's language in order to alter a world view regarding them as conquered, marginal, extinct. Assertion of an English speaking Indian self in an autobiography is one means by which native people demonstrate the vitality of the indigenous voice. Bird writes:

> 'reinventing' can occur to undo some of the damage that colonization has wrought. In becoming attentive to the nuances of the English language and its ability to 'capture' us, we can eliminate from our vocabulary terms of domination such as speaking of ourselves as a 'minority' in relationship to a 'dominant' culture, which will only serve to keep the power structure in place, unchallenged and unchanged. (pp. 24-25)

Thus "reinvention" works on the semantic level, with writers making word choices that will move them away from the discourse of colonization, of oppressed and oppressor. Bird continues:

> It is possible to recognize other forms of mental bondage that reflect themselves in literary production as well--for instance, the way in which we have internalized the stereotypes and romanticism of 'Indian,' stereotypes such as the drunken Indian, the inferiority of native languages and religion, and the speaking of 'red

> English'.... In addition, the focus on what is being 'lost' reinforces what we are told about ourselves, that we are dying, that our cultures are dying. Yet all around me I see evidence of the opposite. (p. 25)

That evidence is found in the collection Bird has helped to edit and it is found most certainly in the autobiographies discussed in this dissertation, most especially in Chapter 4. In Chapter 3 I focused on autobiographies by writers who learned English as a second language, and in Chapter 4 I turned to work by individuals who are native speakers of English. Despite this important difference in the autobiographers' relationship to English (second language versus native language), the writers discussed in Chapter 4 do not depict themselves as somehow less Indian than the writers discussed in Chapter 3 who actually spoke tribal languages, and in some cases, had lived traditional indigenous lifestyles up to a certain point. In fact, it could be argued that this later generation of autobiographers moves beyond what Bird decries as "the focus on what is being lost," the "vocabulary terms of domination," by clearly asserting Indian identity, retelling traditional stories, consciously incorporating Indian modes of narrative in their work. Thus these stories are not lost, though they are transformed by and transforming of English. In this way Silko's and Momaday's narratives are

not primarily narratives of loss, but rather, a means of affirming their connections to Laguna and Kiowa culture. This is not to say that the writers are somehow reconciled to the cultural losses experienced by native people, or that losses still being exacted upon Indian nations go unnoticed by contemporary autobiographers. Rather, my aim is to address Bird's belief that a writer's over-reliance on terms of domination can limit perspectives on the achievement of Indian narrative identity. I believe the same must be said with regard to all writing about Indian life, including scholarship on Indian texts, scholarship prepared by both Indian and non-Indian academics, a point addressed earlier by my incorporation of King's (1990) views in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 3 to some degree my argument depends upon the vocabulary of domination because I focus extensively on accounts of specific oppressive acts and the writers' reactions to them, what I perceive as ironic synchretic resistance to language policies at Anglo-operated Indian schools. It would have been much more difficult, if not impossible, for me to discuss these accounts without this vocabulary. Aside, then, from the essentially chronological divisions established by the way Chapters 3 and 4 have been arranged (Chapter 3 being, with the exclusion of my discussion of Young Bear, focused on earlier works), there also seems to be a division in terms of how I am able to perceive the texts in each section. Why, in Chapter 3, is

the critical discourse more given to the vocabulary of domination and oppression, narratives of cultural confusion and anomie, while in Chapter 4 this is, I believe, less the case? Though there is no one simple answer to this question, a case can be made for the fact that the earlier generation of autobiographers had their identities more directly called into question when required to reshape them in a new language, while Silko and Momaday did not experience this to the same extent. Instead of working to negotiate new English-speaking identities, Silko and Momaday have been able to assert Indian identities through writing fairly comfortably in English. Their earlier counterparts, however, had other linguistic issues with which to contend. Thus, it is probably not surprising that the language I use to discuss the works by Eastman, Zitkala-Sa, Qoyawayma, and others would have more confrontational associations while the critical vocabulary applied to works by Silko and Momaday would have fewer indications of colonial struggle.

I also have to wonder about the extent to which, through reading accounts of linguistic colonization in the older works, I fall prey to the vocabulary of domination and oppression by trying to identify with the plight of the autobiographers, which, given the nature of my native-English speaking academic position of privilege, would be not only inappropriate, but impossible. However, in regard to the work of native English speakers, a native English

speaking academic may be more likely to situate linguistic peers at the site of privilege and thus more apt to discuss their work using a less oppressive critical perspective. This is something I had not thought to take into account at the outset of this project.

The work of Silko and Momaday, and many other Indian writers publishing in recent decades, (Anna Lee Walters, Sherman Alexie, Louise Erdrich, Ward Churchill, Jimmie Durham, Wendy Rose, Betty Louise Bell, Simon Ortiz, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Gerald Vizenor, Paula Gunn Allen, Susan Power, Diane Glancy, Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird and numerous others) who write in English and identify themselves as Indian, does provide evidence as to the survival of indigenous cultures and the power of individual members to create narratives of Indian identity in English. The fact that these narratives are identified by the writers themselves as distinctly Indian and are, nonetheless, written in English demonstrates the possibilities for transformation of English into a language representative of non-Anglo identity. To be able to trace the existence of such narratives through several generations of writers also attests to the fact that the English language and expressions of Indian identity are not necessarily incompatible. Still, the influence of one upon the other should be studied carefully, keeping in mind that the exercise of linguistic power can shift sites of privilege,

and that power is not the province of Anglo-academics or colonial governments alone.

Some of the narratives studied here and others included in Harjo and Bird's collection include code-switching between English and in some cases untranslated, unglossed indigenous languages or tribal English dialects, a feature which also demonstrates the transformative power of the writers' creative visions. In situations where the writers code-switch, the proximity of the two languages or dialects can create a sense of legitimacy for each; each tongue creates a context for the other; the act of code-switching in itself creates meaning and is, therefore, a transformative use of language. The fact that the meaning of one code may be difficult or impossible for a reader to comprehend without assistance can redefine the terms of linguistic privilege by putting that privilege within the grasp of audience members able to understand both codes.

This altered definition of privilege is applied in other contexts as well. In her book *Other People's Children* (1995) Lisa Delpit recounts the story of a Native Alaskan teacher of Athabaskan students, Martha Demientieff, who encourages her students to speak and write in their local dialect, what linguists call "Village English." In her classroom, Demientieff then posts the children's writing on a bulletin board under the caption "Our Heritage Language." The teacher praises the children's work saying "That's the

way we say things. Doesn't it feel good? Isn't it the absolute best way of getting that idea across?" (Delpit p. 41). Next to these examples, she places "Standard English" equivalents of the children's statements under the caption "Formal English." Then according to Delpit, the teacher tells the students the following:

> We listen to the way people talk, not to judge them, but to tell what part of the river they come from. These other people [Anglos] are not like that. They think everybody needs to talk like them. Unlike us, they have a hard time hearing what people say if they don't talk exactly like them. Their way of talking and writing is called "Formal English."
>
> We have to feel a little sorry for them because they have only one way to talk. We're going to learn two ways to say things. Isn't that better? One way will be our Heritage way. The other will be Formal English. (qtd. in Delpit p. 41)

In encouraging her students to become multi-dialectal, the teacher also encourages the children to see their possession of a Heritage Language as a distinct advantage over the speakers of Formal English. The Athabaskan children are the ones with privilege and should "feel a little sorry" for those who lack the ability to communicate in two different

ways. Such teaching, in contrast to the accounts of language pedagogy in Chapter 3, consciously works to alter the hegemony of Standard English, to restructure power through inclusiveness and a broadening definition of linguistic ability. Demientieff's approach to language recognizes the ability of Athabaskan people to choose their narrative identities, and while it acknowledges difference, it does not depict difference as necessarily oppressive to the Athabaskan.

Parakrama (1995) pushes even harder on definitions of linguistic privilege, advocating outright dismantling of "Standard English." Though Parakrama is more concerned with Sri Lankan uses of English, many of the arguments in *De-hegemonizing Language Standards* can be applied to questions of English transformation in North America. As a kind of object lesson in the possibilities for "non-standard" academic discourse, the author provides an introduction written in "non-standard" English outlining the book's fundamental argument.

> The lastma final word, then, is to go like crazy for the broadest standard and to be psyched up to steady talk in it, teach your head off in it, write like mad in it, despite of its sometime 'oddness' to our ears, refusing of the uncomfortable laughter, inspite the difficulty, paying no mind to some non-standard users and

> their liberal advocates having an attitude bout it. The ideal, then, is for what is standard now to become contaminated with what is non-standard now, and arse backwards, so much so that everyone will have to know more about what everyone else speaks/writes, and so that not knowing, say, 'black English' will be as much a disqualification as not knowing 'general american.' There should even be room for a certain amount of self-inconsistency as well. Complete intelligibility is a cheap hoax anyway, so it's necessary, yar, to bring this to the up front level, nehi? (p. xi)

Parakrama's writing is an attempt at a transformational use of language, but transformed language is not an end in itself. Rather, transformation of language becomes equated with a redistribution of power, a broadening of privilege. If code switching were expected of all individuals, and not just groups of lesser social and economic status, no one group would have substantial linguistic power over another. This situation is, of course, an ideal, but its possibility must be recognized in order to consider the extent to which North American indigenous writers have transformed and continue to transform English into a language more representative of native experience and identity. While Bird embraces this project, she also observes:

> I do not believe that English is a new native

> language in spite of its predominant use as a vehicle for native literary production. What we have is a native literature produced in English that is written for an English-speaking audience and that incorporates a native perception of the world in limited ways. (p. 25)

Bird mentions with a tone of regret the scarcity of books written in indigenous languages. While she sees the possibilities for the transformation of English to better suit the expression of native identity, she ultimately perceives its use, at least in its present form, as limited. For Bird, Indian literature written in English can transform the language, but this transformation is only part of a larger movement towards a more fully realized form of indigenous writing, a national literature of First Nations which includes indigenous languages. She writes:

> In many ways, we still have a long way to go. Other nationalist literary movements from other colonized peoples have recognized the need for a literature to be produced in native language for native language speakers. Along the way, there is hope that in 'reinventing' the English language we will turn the process of colonization around, and that our literature will be viewed and read as a process of *de*colonization. (p. 25)

So while writing in English does not always fulfill the

demand for the expression of Indian identity, it can become a means to reverse the process of colonization intent on doing away with that identity.

In suggesting that the texts be read "as a process of decolonization" Bird is asking us to recognize Indian writers' efforts to transform the language. Reading Indian autobiographies in this way requires an acknowledgement of them as sites of struggle (i.e., the writings of Zitkala-Sa, Eastman, LaFlesche, etc.), but reading "as a process of decolonization" should also encourage a broader perspective which emphasizes the writers' role in redefining power relationships and defining Indian narrative identity. Reading the depictions of language in the autobiographies as sites of struggle may be the first step in recognizing the on-going process of decolonization these texts undertake, but to focus on this alone can blind us to the fact that the process continues, that sites of struggle, power, and privilege shift, and that the writers themselves are doing some of the shifting. In recognizing this and in writing critically about these texts, scholarship on North American Indian autobiography must strive toward decolonized critical language as well. Thus decolonization enacted by Indian autobiographers is actually working on more than one level. As Indian writers create new forms of English language expression, the language used in response to their texts is also transformed, reinvented.

REFERENCES

Autobiographies and Interviews

Alford, T. W. (1936/1979). *Civilization and the story of the absentee Shawnees*. [As told to Florence Drake]. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Barnes, K. (1986). A Leslie Marmon Silko interview. *The Journal of Ethnic Studies, 13*, (4), 83-105.

Black Elk. (1932/1961/1979). *Black Elk speaks: Being the life story of a holy man of the Oglala Sioux*. John G. Niehardt (Ed). Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Bennett, K. (1964). *Kaibah: Recollections of a Navajo girlhood*. Los Angeles: Westernlore.

Brave Bird, M. [with R. Erdoes] (1993). *Ohitika woman*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Coltelli, L. (1990). *Winged words: American Indian writers speak*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Crow Dog, M. [with R. Erdoes]. (1990). *Lakota woman*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Eastman, C. (Ohiyesa). (1916/ 1977). *From the deep woods to civilization: Chapters in the autobiography of an Indian*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Fisher, D. (1980). Stories and their tellers--A conversation with Leslie Marmon Silko. In D. Fisher (Ed.), *The third woman: Minority women writers of the United States* (pp. 18-23). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Fred, R. (1988). Foreword. In C. Haig-Brown, *Resistance and renewal: Surviving the Indian residential school* (pp.11-20). Vancouver, Canada: Tillacum Library.

Jahner, E. (1981). The novel and oral tradition: An interview with Leslie Marmon Silko. In *Book Forum: An International Transdisciplinary Quarterly 5*, 383-388.

LaFlesche, F. (1963). *The middle five: Indian schoolboys of the Omaha Tribe*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Manitowabi, E. (1971) *An Indian girl in the city*. Buffalo, NY: Friends of Malatesta.

Momaday, N. S. (1969). *The way to rainy mountain*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Momaday, N. S. (1970). The man made of words. *Indian voices: The first convocation of American Indian scholars*. (pp. 49-83). San Francisco: Indian Historian Press.

Momaday, N. S. (1976). *The names: A memoir*. Tucson, AZ: Sun Tracks/University of Arizona Press.

Momaday, N. S. (1989). *Ancestral voice: Conversations with N. Scott Momaday*. [Interviews with Charles L. Woodard]. Lincoln & London University of Nebraska Press.

Momaday, N.S. (1990). N. Scott Momaday. [Interview with Laura Coltelli]. *Winged words: American Indian writers speak*. (pp. 89-100). Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Momaday, N. S. (1997a). *Conversations with N. Scott Momaday*. M. Schubnell (Ed.). Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press.

Momaday, N. S. (1997b). Landscapes: N. Scott Momaday. [Interview with William T. Morgan]. In M. Schubnell (Ed.), *Conversations with N. Scott Momaday* (pp. 45-56). Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press. (Rpt. from *Sequoia 19* (2), 39-49, 1975).

Momaday, N. S. (1997c). *The man made of words: Essays, stories, passages*. New York: St. Martins.

Morgan, W. T. (1997). Landscapes: N. Scott Momaday. In M. Schubnell (Ed.), *Conversations with N. Scott Momaday* (pp. 45-56). Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press. (Rpt. from *Sequoia 19* (2), 39-49, 1975)

Mourning Dove. (Humishuma, Christine Quintasket) (1990). *Mourning Dove: A Salishan autobiography*. J. Miller (Ed.). Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Perry, D. (1993). Leslie Marmon Silko. In D. Perry (Ed.), *Backtalk: Women writers speak out* (pp. 313-340). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Qoyawayma, P. (Elizabeth Q. White). (1964). *No turning back: A true account of a Hopi Indian girl's struggle to bridge the gap between the world of her people and the world of the white man.* [As told to Vada F. Carlson]. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Silko, L. M. (1977). *Ceremony*. New York: Viking/Penguin.

Silko, L. M. (1980). Stories and their tellers--A conversation with Leslie Marmon Silko. [Interview with Dexter Fisher] In D. Fisher (Ed.), *The third woman: Minority women writers of the United States* (pp. 18-23). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Silko, L. M. (1981). The novel and oral tradition: An interview with Leslie Marmon Silko. [Interview with Elaine Jahner] *Book Forum: An International Transdisciplinary Quarterly 5*, 383-388.

Silko, L. M. (1981). *Storyteller*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

Silko, L. M. (1986). A Leslie Marmon Silko interview. [Interview with Kim Barnes] *The Journal of Ethnic Studies, 13*, (4), 83-105.

Silko, L. M. (1990). Leslie Marmon Silko. [Interview with Laura Coltelli]. *Winged words: American Indian writers speak*. (pp. 135-153). Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Silko, L. M. (1991). *Almanac of the dead*. New York: Penguin Books.

Silko, L. M. (1993). Leslie Marmon Silko [Interview with Donna Perry]. In Donna Perry (Ed.), *Backtalk: Women writers speak out*. (pp. 313-340). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Silko, L. M. (1996). *Yellow Woman and a beauty of the spirit: Essays on Native American life today*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Standing Bear, L. (1928/1975). *My people the Sioux*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Rpt. 1975 Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Stewart, I. (1980). *A voice in her tribe: A Navajo woman's own story*. D. O. Dawdy (Ed.). Socorro, NM: Ballena Press.

Suina, J. (1988). And then I went to school. In R. Cocking and J. Mestre (Eds.). *Linguistic and cultural influences on learning mathematics*. (pp. 295-299). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Woodard, C. L. (1989). *Ancestral voice: Conversations with N. Scott Momaday*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Willis, J. (1973). *Geniesh: An Indian girlhood*. Toronto: New Press.

Yava, A. (1982). *Big falling snow: A Tewa-Hopi Indian's life and times and the history and traditions of his people*. Harold Courlander (Ed.). Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Young Bear, R. A. (1992). *Black eagle child: The Facepaint narratives*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press.

Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonin). (1976). *American Indian Stories*. Glorieta, N.M.: Rio Grande Press.

Critical Sources

Achebe, C. (1975/1992). Colonialist criticism. In H. Adams (Ed.), *Critical theory since Plato*. (pp. 1191-1198). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Adams, D. W. (1988). From bullets to boarding schools: The educational assault on the American Indian identity. In P. Weeks (Ed.), *The American Indian experience: A profile*. (pp. 218-239). Wheeling, IL: Forum Press.

Adams, D. W. (1995). *Education for extinction: American Indians and the boarding school experience, 1875-1928*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Adams, E. C. (1946). *American Indian education: Government schools and economic progress*. NY: Morningside Heights.

Adams, T. D. (1990). *Telling lies in modern American autobiography*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior. (1887). U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C.

Anzaldua, G. (1987). *Borderland/LaFrontera: The new Mestiza* San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H.. (1989). *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in Post-Colonial literatures*. London & New York: Routledge.

Baerreis, D. (1963). Foreward. In F. LaFlesche. *The Middle Five: Indians schoolboys of the Omaha Tribe*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Bataille, G. and Sands, K. M. (1984). *American Indian women telling their lives*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Beatty, W. (1953). Language unlocks the intellect. In W. Beatty (Ed.), *Education for cultural change: Selected articles from Indian Education, 1944-55*. (pp. 398-402). U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Blaeser, K. (1992). Dear Christopher. In D. Wilson & B. Joyce (Eds.), *Dear Christopher: Letters to Christopher Columbus by contemporary Native Americans*. (pp. 5-11). Riverside, CA: Native American Studies, University of California.

Brod, R. & McQuiston, J.M. (1983). American Indian adult education and literacy: The first national survey. In *Journal of American Indian Education 22*(2): 1-16.

Browdy de Hernandez, J. (1994a). Laughing, crying, surviving: The pragmatic politics of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller*. In *Auto/Biography Studies* 9 (1), 19-42.

Browdy de Hernandez, J. (1994b). Writing (for) survival: Continuity and change in four contemporary Native American women's autobiographies. In *Wicazo Sa Review 10* (2), 40-62.

Brown, D. (1970). *Bury my heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian history of the American west*. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston.

Brumble, H. D., III. (1981). *An annotated bibliography of American Indian and Eskimo autobiographies*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Brumble, H. D. III. (1982) A supplement to *An annotated bibliography of American Indian and Eskimo autobiographies*. In *Western American Literature*, 17, 243-60.

Brumble, H. D. III. (1988). *American Indian autobiography*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bruss, E. (1976). *Autobiographical acts. The changing situation of a literary genre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Burgess, Marianna. (Embe, pseud.). (1891). *Stiya, a Carlisle Indian girl at home, founded on the author's actual observations*. Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press.

Castro, M. (1983). *Interpreting the Indian: Twentieth-century poets and the Native American*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Churchill, W. (1992). *Fantasies of the master race: Literature, cinema and the colonization of American Indians*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Churchill, W. (1994). *Indians are us? Culture and genocide in Native North America*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Clifton, J. A., (Ed). (1989). *Being and becoming Indian*. Chicago: The Dorsey Press.

Coleman, M. C. (1993). *American Indian children at school, 1850-1930*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Cooper, R. L. (1989). *Language planning and social change*. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press.

Couser, G. T. (1988). Black Elk speaks with forked tongue. In Olney, J. (Ed.), *Studies in autobiography*. (pp. 73-78). New York: Oxford University Press.

Danielson, L. (1989). The storytellers in *Storyteller*. In *Studies in American Indian Literatures: Newsletter of the Association for Study of American Indian Literatures 1* (2), 21-31.

Deloria, V. (1969). *Custer died for your sins: An Indian manifesto*. New York: Macmillan

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.

Eakin, P. J. (Ed). (1991). *American autobiography: retrospect and prospect*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Eastman, C. (1983). *Language planning: An introduction*. San Francisco: Chandler and Sharp.

Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners for the year 1879. (1880). U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C.

Ellis, E. S. (1900). *The history of our country*. Vol. 6. Indianapolis.

Ellis, C. (1996). *To change them forever: Indian education at the Rainy Mountain Boarding School, 1893-1920*. Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press.

Ferguson, C. A. & Heath, S. B. (Eds.). (1981). *Language in the U.S.A*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Fischer, M. M. J. (1994) Autobiographical voices (1,2,3) and mosaic memory: Experimental sondages in the (post)modern world. In K. Ashley, L. Gilmore, and G. Peters (Eds.), *Autobiography and Postmodernism* (pp. 79-129). Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Fishman, Joshua. (1981). Language policy: past, present, future. In C. A. Ferguson & S. B. Heath (Eds.). *Language in the U.S.A*. (pp. 516-526). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Franklin, B. (1783/1987). Remarks concerning the savages of North America. In J. A. L. Lamay (Ed.) *Writings*. (pp. 969-974) New York: Library of America.

Fuchs, E. and R. J. Havinghurst. (1972). *To live on this earth: American Indian education*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co.

Gardner, S. (1995). 'And here I am, telling in Winnebago how I lived my life': Teaching Mountain Wolf Woman. In K. Myrsiades and J. McGuire (Eds.), *Order and partialities: theory, pedagogy, and the post colonial* (pp. 359-376). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Gusdorf, G. (1980). Conditions and limits of autobiography. In J. Olney (Ed.), *Autobiography: Essays theoretical and critical* (pp. 28-48). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Haig-Brown, C. (1988). *Resistance and renewal: Surviving the Indian residential school*. Vancouver, Canada: Tillacum Library.

Harjo, J. & Bird, G. (1997). Introduction. J. Harjo, G. Bird, P. Blanco, B. Cuthand & V. Martinez (Eds.), *Reinventing the enemy's language: Contemporary Native women's writings of North American*. (pp. 19-31). New York & London: W.W. Norton and Company.

Harjo, J., Bird, G., Blanco, P., Cuthand, B., & Martinez, V. (Eds.). (1997). *Reinventing the enemy's language: Contemporary Native women's writings of North America*. New York & London: W. W. Norton and Company.

Hirsch, B. A. (1988). "The telling which continues": Oral Tradition and the written word in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller*. In *American Indian Quarterly* 11(1) 1-26.

Hoxie, F. E. (1984). *A final promise: The campaign to assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Jaskoski, H. (1992). Words like bones. In *CEA Critic: An Official Journal of the College English Association 55* (1), 70-84.

Karell, L. (1995). 'This story I am telling you is true': Collaboration and literary authority in Mourning Dove's *Cogewa*. *American Indian Quarterly 19* (4) 451-465.

Kidwell, C. S. (1987). Choctaws and missionaries in Mississippi before 1830. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal 11* (2), 51-72.

King, T. (1990). Godzilla vs. the post-colonial. *World Literature Written in English 30* (2), 10-16.

Krumholz, L. J. (1994). 'To understand this world differently': Reading and subversion in Leslie Marmon Silko's 'Storyteller.' In *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature 25* (1), 89-113.

Krupat, A. (1985). *For those who come after: A study of Native American autobiography*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Krupat, A. (1989a). The dialogic of Silko's Storyteller. In G. Vizenor (Ed.), *Narrative chance: Postmodern discourse on Native American Indian literatures*. (pp. 55-68) Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Krupat, A. (1989b). *The voice in the margin: Native American literature and the canon*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Krupat, A. (1991). Native American autobiography and the synecdochic self. In P. J. Eakin (Ed.), *American autobiography: retrospect and prospect*. (pp. 171-194). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Krupat, A. (1992). *Ethnocriticism: Ethnography, history, literature*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Krupat, A. (1994). Introduction. In A. Krupat (Ed.), *Native American autobiography: An anthology*. (pp. 1-9). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Krupat, A. & Swann, B. (1987). *Recovering the word: Essays on Native American literature*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Langness, L. L. & Frank, G. (1981). *Lives: An anthropological approach to biography*. Novato, CA: Chandler and Sharp Publishers.

Leap, W. L. (1981). American Indian languages. In C. A. Ferguson and S. B. Heath (Eds.), *Language in the U.S.A.* (pp. 116-144). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Leap, W. L. (1993). *American Indian English*. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press.

Lejeune, P. (1989). *On autobiography*. [Foreward by P. J. Eakin]. (K. Leary, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Lindsey, D. F. (1995). *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Lomawaima, K. T. (1994). *They called it prairie light: The story of Chilocco Indian School*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Lucero, A. (1981). For the people: Leslie Silko's *Storyteller*. In *Minority Voices* 5 (1), 1-10.

McBeth, S. J. (1983). *Ethnic identity and the boarding school experience of West-Central Oklahoma American Indians*. New York: Lanham.

McCluskey, S. (1972). *Black Elk Speaks*, and so does John Neihardt. *Western American Literature* 6, (pp. 231-242).

McKay, S. L. (1992). *Teaching English overseas: An introduction*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

McLaughlin, D. (1992). *When literacy empowers: Navajo language in print*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

McLoughlin, W. G. (1984). *Cherokees & Missionaries 1789-1839*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Merriam, L., et. al. (1928). *The problem of Indian administration*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Mihesuah, D. A. (1993). *Cultivating the rosebuds: The education of women at the Cherokee Female Seminary, 1851-1909*. Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Mihesuah, D.A. (1996). Voices, interpretations, and the 'New Indian History': Comments on the *American Indian Quarterly's* special issue on writing about American Indians. *In American Indian Quarterly 20*(1), 91-108.

Mourning Dove. (Humishuma, Christine Quintasket) (1927/1981). *Cogewa, the half-blood*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

O'Brien, L. W. (1973). *Plains Indian autobiography*. Boise: Boise State College.

Olney, J. (Ed.). (1980). *Autobiography: Essays theoretical and critical*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ong, W. J. (1982). *Orality and literacy: The technologizing of the word*. London & New York: Methuen.

Parakrama, A. (1995). *De-hegemonizing language standards: Learning from (post)colonial Englishes about 'English'*. New York: St. Martins.

Peet, I. L. (1875). *Language lesson designed to introduce young learners, deaf mutes and foreigners to a correct understanding and use of the English language on the principles of object teaching*. New York: Baker and Taylor Company.

Peyer, B.C. (1997). *The tutor'd mind: Indian missionary-writers in Antebellum America*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Pratt, M. L. (1994). Transculturation and autoethnography: Peru, 1615/1980. In F. Barker, P. Hulme & M. Iversen (Eds.), *Colonial discourse/postcolonial theory*. (pp. 24-26). Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

Prucha, F. P. (1973). (Ed.), *Americanizing the American Indian: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880-1900*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reyhner, J. (1992). (Ed.). *Teaching American Indian students*. Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press.

Reyhner, J. & Eder, J. (1992). A history of Indian education. In J. Reyhner (Ed.), *Teaching American Indian students*. (pp. 33-58). Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press.

Reyhner, J. & Eder, J. (1989). *A history of Indian education*. Billings: Eastern Montana College.

Rushdie, S. (1982, July 3). The empire writes back with a vengeance. *The Times of London*, 8.

Salzer, M. (1995). Ray Young Bear's cantaloupe terrorist: Storytelling as a site of resistance. *American Indian Quarterly* 19(3), 301-317.

Schubnell, M. (1985). *N. Scott Momaday: The cultural and literary background*. Norman & London. University of Oklahoma Press.

Stein, W. J. (1992). *Tribally controlled colleges: Making good medicine*. New York: Peter Lang.

Stone, A. (1981). Introduction. In Albert Stone (Ed.), *The American autobiography: A collection of essays*. (pp. 1-7). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Swann, B. & Krupat, A. (1987). *I tell you now: Autobiographical essays by Native American writers*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Swisher, K. G. (1996). Why Indian people should be the ones to write about Indian education. *American Indian Quarterly* 20 (1), 83-90.

Szasz, M. (1974). *Education and the American Indian: The road to self determination*, 1928-1973. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Thompson, H. (1953a). Teaching English. In W. Beatty (Ed.), *Education for cultural change: Selected articles from Indian Education, 1944-55*. (pp. 257-270). U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Thompson, H. (1953b). Why learn a foreign language? In W. Beatty (Ed.), *Education for cultural change: Selected articles from Indian Education, 1944-55*. (pp. 395-398). U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Trennert, R. A., Jr. (1988). *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced assimilation in Arizona, 1891-1935*. Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press.

Vangen, K. S. (1984). The devil's domain: Leslie Silko's 'Storyteller.' In B. Scholer (Ed.), *Coyote was here: Essays on Contemporary Native American Literary and political mobilization*. (pp. 116-123). Aarhus, Denmark: SEKLOS, University of Aarhus.

Vizenor, G. (1993). *Manifest manners: Postindian warriors of survivance*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press: University Press of New England.

Walters, A. L. (1980). A teacher taught me. In D. Fisher (Ed.), *The third woman: Minority women writers of the United States*. (pp. 109-110). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Wong, H. D. (1992). *Sending my heart back across the years: Tradition and innovation in Native American autobiography*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Young, R. (1953). To read and write native languages. In W. Beatty (Ed.), *Education for cultural change: Selected articles from Indian Education, 1944-55*. (pp. 408-414). U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonin). (1919). Letter to the chiefs and headmen of the tribes. *American Indian Magazine 6*, 196-197.

Vita

Leslie LaChance was born in upstate New York, where she graduated from Saugerties High School in 1981. She received a B.A. in English from the State University of New York College at New Paltz in 1985 and earned her M.A. in English from the same institution in 1989. She entered the doctoral program in English at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in 1991 and received her Ph.D. in 1998. Dr. LaChance has taught English, ESL, and Developmental Studies at SUNY New Paltz, Volunteer State Community College, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, and The Webb School of Knoxville. She has also taught English conversation in Osaka, Japan. Dr. LaChance worked as a Visiting Writer/Poet in Residence with Knox County Public Schools in 1998 and is currently an English Instructor at Pellissippi State Technical Community College.