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OTHER NARRATIVES: REPRESENTATIONS OF HISTORY IN FOUR POSTCOLONIAL NATIVE AMERICAN NOVELS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * *

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ABSTRACT

Ever since its emergence as a mode of critical and cultural analysis, postcolonial theory has been generally marked, as many have indicated, by its avoidance of American culture. This avoidance has been justified by reference to the United States’s early independence from England compared with other British colonies, or to its development into an imperialist power, or both. This line of reasoning, however, ignores the fact that the founding of the United States has been made possible through the subjugation and dispossession of the original inhabitants of North America.

Given Native Americans’ condition of internal colonization in the United States, Native American novels, as a major tributary to Native American literature, are worthy of consideration in postcolonial culture studies. This study proposes to demonstrate the postcolonialism of the Native American novel by analyzing representations of history in four novels: Denton R. Bedford’s Tsali (1972), James Welch’s Fools Crow (1986), Louise Erdrich’s Tracks (1988), and Linda Hogan’s Mean Spirit (1990).
Chapter 1 reviews the definitions of postcolonialism formulated by some of the prominent postcolonial theorists and critics. It synthesizes a working definition for the purpose of this study, and explains the analytic approach adopted in this study. Chapter 2 analyzes Bedford's writing of the story of the Cherokee hero, Tsali. Chapter 3 deals with the historical and cultural recovery in Welch's Fools Crow. Chapter 4 analyzes the depiction of the collapse of the Chippewa society in Erdrich's Tracks. Chapter 5 examines the portrayal of the effects of the U.S. policy on the Osages in Hogan's Mean Spirit. Chapter 6 sums up the points raised in each of the four novels, and concludes that Native American literature must not be overlooked in postcolonial studies.
To my parents, my wife Huda,
and my children.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial theory or Postcolonialism has recently made its appearance on the cultural scene as a discourse focused on the literatures of the societies that were colonized by European imperial powers. In The Empire Writes Back (1989), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin explain that they are using the term "postcolonial" to refer to "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (2). They point out further that their book is about the colonial world during and after European colonialism and the effects it still has on contemporary literature (2). The list of countries whose literatures these authors study includes India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka. The focus on these national literatures has been determined, they indicate, by their emergence out of the experience of colonization, their affirming themselves by giving prominence to "the tension with the imperial power, and their opposition to the imperial
assumptions"(2). Elsewhere, they state that the friction and confrontation between the colonized and colonizers represent the origin of postcolonial literatures (The Post-Colonial Studies Reader 1).

The insistence on European imperial domination as a determinant of a literature's, or a culture's, postcoloniality is also reiterated by Helen Tiffin in her introduction to Post The Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism (1990). Tiffin describes postcolonialism as being composed of two archives: (1) all of the literatures originating in the societies that were subject to European imperial centers; (2) the set of discursive practices which are recognized and marked by their resistance to colonialism and the ideologies informing and supporting it, and to all of its neo-imperialist forms and manifestations (viii).

The notion of resistance to colonialism and its contemporary modes and practices is also at the core of Elleke Boehmer's conceptualization of postcoloniality. Boehmer defines postcoloniality as the "condition in which colonized peoples seek to take their place, forcibly or otherwise, as historical subjects" (3). Boehmer suggests that instead of narrowly defining postcolonial literature as the writing that came in the wake of empire, we ought to see it as the writing that resists and opposes the imperialist perspectives and which does form an integral
part of the process of decolonization (3). Postcolonial literature, Boehmer explains, contributes to the project of “symbolic overhaul” (3) which decolonization requires by undermining “thematistically and formally the discourse which supported colonization—the myth of power, the race classification, the imagery of subordination” (3). Like the other postcolonial theorists reviewed above, Boehmer holds the “post” of the term in abeyance and stresses that independence from colonial rule is not necessarily the only defining feature of postcoloniality. On this point, she is in agreement with Stephen Slemon who believes that the term “postcolonial” is “most useful...when it locates a specifically anti-or post-colonial discursive purchase in culture” (3). For Slemon, as it is for the others, the hallmark of postcolonial literatures is the oppositional attitude they take toward colonization and its latest neocolonialist forms (3).

It is quite obvious from the preceding theoretical enunciations that postcoloniality is a condition that is not necessarily and exclusively contingent on decolonization or independence, nor does the prefix “post,” in all cases, mean “after” colonialism; for even after independence, some, if not most, of the formerly colonized countries are still enmeshed, in varying degrees, in nets of unequal power relationships in the present era of neocolonialism/imperialism. In fine, postcolonialism is
employed to study (1) colonialism and its discursive, economic, and political practices; (2) the effects of colonization on colonized peoples and their cultures; and (3) the cultural and political resistance to colonialism and its legacies either by formerly colonized communities or by those who are still subject to Western imperial control.

In light of these theoretical characterizations of postcoloniality, I would like to argue that the Native American novels, as a facet of Native American culture, are postcolonial, considering their emergence from the ongoing tension between the dominant white culture and the diverse cultures of Native Americans, who live in a condition of internal colonization in the United States. I should note in this respect that Native Americans in the United State are not the only indigenous peoples who are subject to foreign domination in their original homeland: "Indigenous peoples from Burma to Brazil, from the Arctic to Australia, continue to be denied the right to control their affairs in any effective and meaningful manner" (Glenn T. Morris 56). In those regions, indigenous peoples suffer from marginalization and oppression and exist in life conditions marked by the lowest incomes, the lowest life expectancy, the highest rate of malnutrition, and the highest rate of infant mortality.

In the United States, Native Americans share with the third-world societies, as well, the experience of subjection to Western colonial rule (Blauner 52; Kaplan 17; Keenan 45).
Native Americans, along with African and Mexican Americans, are internally colonized because the United States' development and growth to its present size has depended on a series of conquests of Indians, enslavement of Africans, and usurpation of Mexican territories (Blauner 12). These oppressed racial minorities form a third world within the U.S. that is historically connected to the greater third world. As Blauner suggests, in order to better understand how oppression operates in the United States, we should place it in the context of European control and hegemony across the world (12). Such contextualization is very important because racial stratification and division in the United States owe their existence to Western colonialism. As far as Native Americans are concerned, I surely underwrite Blauner's view that the conquest, decimation, and colonization of indigenous peoples in North America are typical examples of classical colonialism because they are not different in essential features from Europe's colonial domination over Asia, Africa, and Australia (54). The colonization of Native Americans provided a model that would later be emulated and followed particularly by European colonial settlers in Australia, a point I will clarify when I come to discuss the policy of assimilation of indigenous peoples as a major link between the colonial situations in the United States and Australia.
Yet, despite its conspicuousness, the colonization of Native Americans seems to have mostly eluded postcolonial theorists and critics in the same way that it did a large segment of the population in the United States. The failure of the majority of Americans to recognize the continued internal colonization of Native Americans is partially attributable to the frequent use of the term "colonial America" to describe the status of America under British rule. This practice seems to have eclipsed the "connections between the American racial experience and the imperialism of Western societies" (Blauner 12).

The former status of the United States as a British colony has cast a dense shadow over the colonialist nature of the white settler society in the continent. By not recognizing the relationship between the United States' imperial hegemony abroad and the domination of Native Americans, postcolonial critics participate in reproducing what Amy Kaplan calls "American exceptionalism from without" (17). Specifically, Kaplan is talking here about the exclusion of the United States cultures in postcolonial culture studies. Kaplan maintains that the dismissal of United States cultures is a result of a failure to see the interconnection between the expansion of the white society in North America and European colonialism. This failure is a consequence of the narrow understanding of imperialism as
always being about control and domination abroad, to the neglect of the internal side of it. Kaplan explains:

Not only about foreign diplomacy or international relations, imperialism is also about consolidating domestic cultures and negotiating international relations. To foreground cultures is not only to understand how they abet subjugation of others or foster their insistence, but also to ask how international relations reciprocally shape a dominant culture at home, enacted and contested within the nation. (14)

Kaplan’s explanation that imperialism is also about the subjugation of local cultures and challenging imperial relations inside the nation echoes Blauner’s view that, by and large, the occurrence and continuity of colonization demand the deployment of an array of practices, chief among which is the destruction of colonized cultures (Blauner 67).

The destruction of a colonized people’s culture is crucial to the colonizer’s scheme of repression and subjugation because with the colonized culture remaining whole and intact, it would be difficult for the colonizing power to gain full control, let alone to maintain it, without ever being challenged and resisted by the colonized indigenous peoples. It might be clear enough by now that both Blauner’s elucidation of the way in which the internal colonization of Native Americans has been historically connected to European imperialism and Kaplan’s clarification of the reciprocity between the United States’ internal and external imperialism do lend support to my argument that
Native Americans' situation fits the definition of postcoloniality and that their literature is entitled for recognition by the practitioners of postcolonial culture studies. The idea that Native American literature deserves to be addressed by postcolonial culture studies has also been expressly articulated by Sally Keenan and by the Native American critic/novelist Louis Owens.

At the beginning of her article on Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, Keenan points out that the absence of Native and African American literatures in the postcolonial cultural studies comes to one as a great surprise, considering that colonialist domination has "marked their respective histories: genocide and slavery at the hands of European imperialist powers" (45). Significantly, Keenan locates the reason for this absence or omission in the complex and dual nature of the United States. During the period that witnessed its rise as a nation, the United States was both a colonized entity struggling to free itself from European control and a "colonizer of an indigenous population and of African slaves" (45). There is no doubt that the United States is post-colonial given the fact of its independence from England, yet what seems to be unreasonable and unjustifiable is to allow its independence to conceal the fact that it is a colonizing power both internally and externally--but that's another story.
Similarly, Louis Owens criticizes Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin for omitting "any mention at all of American Indian writing" (7). In fact, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin state that the literature of the United States deserves to be placed under the rubric "postcolonial"; but they quickly dismiss it on account of the United States' becoming a neo-imperialist power after its independence from Britain: "The literature of the USA should also be placed in this category. Perhaps because of its current position of power, and the neo-colonizing role it has played, its post-colonial nature has not been generally recognized" (The Empire Writes Back 2).

Besides the exclusion of the United States' literature, two things are happening here: a reproduction of what Kaplan calls "American exceptionalism from without" and a glossing over the multi-ethnicity of the U.S. population and the multicultural background of its literature. Such a pronouncement tends to homogenize what in reality is hierarchized and gives the illusion that the social, economic, and political space in the United States is level and unstratified and that the diverse ethnic segments of its population co-exist within a framework of equal and balanced power relationships. It is this homogenizing and undifferentiating perception of the status quo in the United States that has generally led to the easy omission of African American and Native American literatures in postcolonial
studies. Moreover, even this general exclusion of American literature for the sole reason that the United States is an imperialist power seems to be difficult to justify, when we recall that the transformation of both Australia and South Africa into colonizing states after independence has not prevented them from being categorized as postcolonial.

As far as Australia is concerned, there seems to be a great similarity between the trajectory of its development and that of the United States:

Australia is still thoroughly marked by its role as an agent of imperialism. Not only did Australia become in its own small way a colonizing power in the Pacific region, where its behaviour was modelled exactly on current classic British practices, but more structurally in its formation it adopted the classic attitudes of imperialism in its treatment of the Aboriginal people of Australia. (Hodge and Mishra xiii)

Not so different in this respect as well is South Africa, which was holding Namibia under its colonial sway until 1990, a year after the publication of The Empire Writes Back, the first full-book introduction to postcolonialism, theory, and practice. "Just as the U.S. claims to hold indigenous lands in trust for the benefit of the various indigenous nations," Morris says, "so too did South Africa hold Namibia in what it called a 'sacred trust'" (69). Namibia gained independence in 1990 after the international community pressured the white ruling minority in South Africa to lift its trusteeship off the indigenous Namibian people. Nevertheless, these facts do
not seem to have made postcolonial theorists and critics reexamine and question their recognition of the postcolonialism of the literature of these countries and their omission of the United States' literature.

Owing to this inconsistency and contradiction in the theorization of postcolonialism, it is not easy to accept the neglect of American literature unless one unquestioningly accepts the justification Boehmer offers for its exclusion: "The United States is excluded because it won independence long before the other colonial places, and its literature has therefore followed a very different trajectory" (Colonial & Post-Colonial Literature 4). Regardless of her failure to explain what this different trajectory is, Boehmer's argument for omitting American literature because of the United States' early independence is fairly convincing when read in isolation from what she says immediately before it: "[T]he term postcolonial still draws support for its usefulness as an umbrella term, a way of bracketing together the literatures written in those countries which were once colonies of Britain" (4). It is evident that this definition does not make any distinction between those countries in terms of when they became independent.

The use of independence as a criterion for determining which country is to be excluded or included goes counter to the definitions I have reviewed at the beginning, which locate the origins of postcolonial literature in the tension
and conflict that arose at the moment of contact between colonizer and colonized. The exclusion of the United States based on its early independence also implies a re-instatement of, a return to, the already suspended meaning of "coming after colonialism" denoted by the prefix "post." This omission occurs at the expense of Native American literature and obscures the internal colonization of indigenous peoples. The exclusion of the United States seems to be a subjective matter, and at times, as in Boehmer's book, it appears to have rendered unproblematic and convenient the presentation of white settler colonies in Australia and South Africa as prototypes for white settler colonies in other regions. Consequently, indigenous peoples in these two countries are presented as representing the internally and doubly colonized peoples:

In postcolonial studies, native colonial self-determination, the testimony of the colonized, is usually and justifiably taken as the more typical of marginalized experience. Why this is so can be easily demonstrated. In the white colonies, such as the prototypical Australia or South Africa, a system of internal colonization rigidly separated settler society from the native population. In the face of a threatening, too-proximate black presence, such separations were enforced not only geographically, as in native reserves, but legally and economically also. Seen in the context of the Empire as a whole, indigenous peoples were, in this sense, doubly colonized or marginalized. (112)
It is no doubt clear that Boehmer's description of the colonial situations in Australia and South Africa also applies to the white settler colony under British dominion over North America and, thus, during the same period, indigenous peoples were doubly colonized.

The existence of these correspondences is no coincidence since all of the European colonies which were established across the world shared many structural features, as the American historian Louis Hartz suggests (ctd. in Hodge and Mishra xii). These common features have stemmed from the conditions of their establishment. Each of these colonies was a piece of the whole metropolitan structure or complex, which explains why these different and vastly separated colonies have followed almost the same pattern of development. But given the fact that the British intrusion into North America antedated by two centuries the British encroachment in South Africa and the invasion of Australia, it can be assumed that the white colony in North America was the prototype for its counterparts in Australia and South Africa and that the colonization of Native Americans in North America served as a model for the domination of indigenous peoples in the said regions. "[T]he policy of the United States toward indigenous nations," Morris says, "has frequently been emulated by other states" (57). Among those other states, as I have just noted, are Australia and South Africa.
Evidence to support this suggestion can be located in the strategies European colonialists used to legitimize their usurpation of these territories and in the policies of racial domination they adopted toward indigenous peoples. In North America as well as in Australia and Africa, Europeans had sought to justify their invasion by invoking the Roman doctrine of the *terra nullius/vacuum domicilium*, the "empty land," that grants explorers the right to have control over, and own, "discovered" regions (Boehmer 195; Morris 58; Reynolds viii). Yet in North America the same doctrine had been used under a different name: the "virgin land." It is a trope that weds the conqueror to the "new" land (Zantzop 270). As signifiers, both the "empty land" and the "virgin land" converge on the same idea, or signified, of the empty, uncultivated land, the land being used for the first time as one of the lexical meanings that the word "virgin" indicates. A case in point is the name "Virginia" which was given to the "enormous stretch of coastline from Newfoundland to Florida" (Hulme 159). Boehmer says, "To name a foreign land, to make of that land and its ways a textual artefact, was to exercise mastery" (19). Hence, the name "Virginia," which was a tribute to Queen Elizabeth (the virgin), simultaneously served to nullify the original inhabitant's right to it by stamping it with the royal seal/name and to feminize it, whereby it appeared like a virgin "awaiting its English suitors" (159). The idea of Virginia as a woman waiting for
her suitors had once been expressed by Reverend Samuel Purchas, who perceived Virginia as a reward from God for Christians who would bring religion and civilization to the "savages":

All the rich endowments of Virginia, her Virgin-portion from the creation nothing lessened, are wages for all this worke: God in wisedome having enriched the Savage Countries, that those riches might be attractives for Christian suiters, which there may sowe spirituals and reapet temporals. (qtd. in Roy Harvey Pearce, The Savages of America 8)

It is worth noting, however, the feminization of lands and continents and the equation of land with women are old practices in the history of European conquests. Names such as America, Africa, and Australia offer expressive examples of these practices. As Zantop explains, "From the very first accounts of discovery onward, conquerors and explorers saw their task in term of "penetrating" virgin territory and taking possession, while colonists either praised the bounty of "Mother" nature or placed their seeds in her fertile soils, hoping for rich returns" ("Domesticating the Other" 272).

I am going to show how the strategies of the domination of indigenous peoples in the United States have migrated to other white settler colonies by elucidating the links/similarities between the policies of assimilation in
Australia and the United States. My argument here that the Australian assimilation policy has been patterned on the American policy draws on the fact that the Australian policy was formulated in the 1930s (Nyoongah 7), that is, more than forty years after the introduction of its American counterpart, which was inaugurated by the passage of the General Allotment Act of 1887. The reason I am focusing on this policy in particular is that the illumination of the U.S. assimilation policy's damaging effect on Native Americans is a major theme in two of the post-colonial Native American novels I discuss in this study, Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* (1988) and Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit* (1990).

The primary objective of assimilation policy in each country is to absorb the indigenous peoples into the dominant white society, where they would be subjected to the white man's laws. Since this goal would not be easy to achieve as long as indigenous cultures and social structures remain whole, the success of assimilation requires that they be destroyed. Assimilation is a process of racial domination that is an articulation of two opposed and contradictory structures of feeling: xenophobia and xenophilia (Angelika Bammer 49-51). During their encounters with the "others," Europeans typically evaluate cultures of the "others" using Western cultures as a frame of reference; thus any culture that does not fit their definition of culture will be marginalized if not totally eradicated. At encountering the
"others," Europeans face the dilemma of how to respond to
them: to repress them, which is the course of action the
xenophobe takes, or to deny repression, which is the
expression of xenophilia. Repression and its denial are the
cores of xenophobia and xenophilia, respectively.

Assimilation is the incarnation of these two opposed
emotions. For the xenophobe, the "other," because of his/her
difference and alterity, is a threat to the self that has to
be eliminated, whereas for the xenophiliac, the "other" is a
wellspring of curiosity and attraction. Thus, assimilation
is a viable pragmatic strategy for at once repressing and
embracing the native "other" till nothing is left of him/her
(Bammer 47). Seen from this perspective, assimilation is a
policy of unleashing violence on indigenous peoples: it seeks
to thwart the threat the colonized "other" poses to the self
and to absorb the elements of his/her culture which the
colonizer admires or lacks. As I have pointed out above, the
success and fulfillment of assimilation demands the
eradication of the cultures and social structures of
colonized peoples to ensure and sustain colonial control.
Therefore, a variety of strategies, legislations, and
institutions has to be devised in order for assimilation to
take place.

In the United States, the nineteenth century witnessed
the dislocation of Native Americans from their homelands and
subsequently their confinement to reservations intended as
buffer zones between them and the European American society. Publicized as being for the protection of indigenous peoples from the unrelentingly encroaching white society with which they were deemed unable to cope, reservations proved to be propitious sites for missionary conversion activities, exposing Indians to white culture through compulsory education, and pulverizing the tribal land base by parceling it out to individuals under the General Allotment Act. The motive behind this act was to inculcate in Native Americans the notions of private property and competition. The fragmentation of the collectively or communally-owned land was planned to facilitate and accelerate the elimination of native tribal structure and cultures. For the colonizer in the United States or anywhere else, the integrity and continuity of colonized social formations and ways of life constitute an impediment to full and sustainable control. The devastating impact of the U.S. assimilation policy is depicted and dramatized in Erdrich's *Tracks* and Hogan's *Mean Spirit* and foreshadowed or prophesied in James Welch's novel *Fools Crow* (1986), another novel I examine in this study.

Forced integration into the dominant white society is an experience which Native Americans share with Aboriginal Australians, along with dispossession, decimation, and the use of blood quantum policy to divide indigenous peoples in both countries into full-bloods and mixed-bloods. After their resistance had been crushed, Aboriginal Australians
were rounded up and confined to missions and government stations, where they were subjected to the cruelest forms of exploitation (Narogin 9). In *Writing from the Fringe*, Narogin points out,

"Assimilation was seen as the policy of division, of seeking to alienate individual Aborigines from their communities and pushing them into European society. These individuals, it was hoped, would be completely estranged from their families and become like Europeans. Children were forcibly removed from their parents and placed in institutions. (13)

I have examined assimilation as one of the major experiential links between Native Americans and Aboriginal Australians for the purpose of augmenting further the historical basis for this study. Further, I believe that Native America's situation of internal colonization is similar in many ways to the colonial situation described by Albert Memmi in *Colonizer and The Colonized* (1965). Memmi explains that colonial rule has ruthlessly denied the colonized even the semblance of self-government, subjected them to laws that harm them physically and psychologically, and imposed upon them a colonial education that cuts them off from their cultural heritage (102-3). One of the ultimate results of this cultural disconnection is that "[t]he colonized seems condemned to lose his memory" (102). Without losing sight of the particularity of the condition of Native Americans, I think that Memmi's characterization of
the colonial situation applies, to a great extent, to their situation.

It is against the loss of memory that postcolonial Native American novelists devote their energies and creative skills to rewriting the history of Indian-white contact to recuperate their history and keep alive their cultural legacy. Postcolonial Native American novels emerge out of the tension between indigenous cultures and the dominant European American culture to take part in native peoples' struggle for survival, justice, and equality. Therefore, given the historical fact of the internal colonization of Native Americans and because of its emphasis both on literature as a means of exercising power in culture and on the inseparability of text from context, the postcolonial analytical model is most adequate for studying and understanding Native American literature. Postcolonialism defies notions such as the universality of history and addresses the text in the context of, or in relation to, the historical and discursive struggle that has affected and determined it in the first place (Singh 5). This emphasis on relating text to context emanates from the awareness that culture is a crucial arena where resistance against imperial cultural hegemony is to be carried out. Culture is a battlefield on which Native American writers fight the battle of decolonizing the mind.
Moreover, the postcolonial perception of literature as a weapon to be wielded in the battle for mental and cultural decolonization informs and guides my investigation and discussion of representations of history in the Native American novels selected for this study: Denton R. Bedford's *Tsali* (1972), Welch's *Fools Crow* (1986), Erdrich's *Tracks* (1988), and Hogan's *Mean Spirit* (1990). I selected these novels for both thematic and formal/technical considerations. Thematically, as this study proposes to demonstrate, these novels offer a vivid picture of the concerns and motives fueling the endeavor of historical retrieval undertaken by Native American novelists: (1) recovery of stories of indigenous heroes and leaders, and celebration of indigenous peoples' resistance to their invaders so as to instill a sense of native pride in Native Americans and to offer role models; (2) restoration and depiction of Native Americans' pre-colonial rich existence and culture to challenge the Eurocentric claims that indigenous peoples in North America were living in a state of savagery before their encounter with Europeans; (3) portrayal of the elements and forces that have brought about the collapse of indigenous societies and cultures; (4) exposition of the destructive impact of the U.S. government's policies toward Native Americans and the role of these policies in perpetuating the dispossession and domination of Indians. These novels represent good sites to explore the effects of internal colonization on Native
American literature and the role this literature plays in the overall Native American resistance against the practices of marginalization and cultural denigration.

From a formal or narrative standpoint, these novels allow us insights into the variety of narrative techniques postcolonial Native American novelists use in writing and reclaiming parts of the history of indigenous people's experience of colonization in the United States. When analyzing each text, I will shed some light on the narrative strategies and technique used by its author and explain what I think are the reasons that have determined their choice. In paying some attention to the technique employed in the actualization of content in each text, I want to explore how it has functioned not only to give form to the subject matter but also to express and encode the text's relation to ideology. By ideology, I simply mean the interests and concerns that motivated and structured the narrative representations in these novels and determined "'what we are allowed to see'" (Susan Sniader Lanser 18). As Mark Schorer theorizes, "[T]echnique is the only means [a writer] has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying meaning, and finally, of evaluating it" (Schorer 66). Hence, it can be said that the significance of the historical narratives these novels offer is partly determined by their contents and partly by the act of narration, that is, by point of view. Like other postcolonial novelists, Bedford,
Welch, Erdrich, and Hogan have taken advantage of the form-giving capacity of narrative to exercise control over history and recast it in manners that place indigenous peoples at its center.

In rewriting the history of colonization in the United States, postcolonial Native American writers aim at constructing an alternative historical discourse that counters and challenges the official and dominant history that is complicit in the domination and oppression of indigenous peoples. These novels emerge from the recognition that the conquest and the continued colonization of Native Americans does not only involve the use of the military machine and economic exploitation; it also relies on the machine of cultural control and domination. Colonialism, as Said, Young, and others demonstrate, depends on an assortment of epistemological and discursive strategies whose job it is to turn the "other," the colonized, into an object of knowledge, representation, and fantasizing. In Orientalism (1978), Said shows that Orientalism is a set of discursive strategies which European colonialists deployed to construct and dominate the Orient, the "other":

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (3)
The result is that the Orient as "other" is divested of the freedom of action and thought, silenced, and represented as a source of either pleasure or repulsion. Interestingly, Young elucidates culture's implication in colonialism and colonization by reference to culture's etymology, revealing that colonization is a concept that is rooted in culture (31). Colonization is at the core of culture because the "culture of land has always been, in fact, the primary form of colonization; the focus on soil emphasizes the physicality of the territory that is coveted, occupied, cultivated, turned into plantations and made unsuitable for indigenous nomadic tribes" (Young 31).

The recognition of the white man's culture's complicity and participation in the capture and subjugation of indigenous peoples in North America motivates the post-colonial Native American writers to rewrite the history of Indian-white encounter to contribute to the rehabilitation and healing of the indigenous selves that are weighed down by the burden of centuries of subjection, marginalization, and denigration. Written from the perspective of the colonizer, the dominant history in the United States suppresses and mutes the voice of the Native American. Until recently, American history was written by European American historians from points of view influenced and colored by their social, political, and racial backgrounds. This is so because history is an ideological enunciation that inevitably expresses the
special interest of the historian. As Hayden White explains, historical representations of "real" events are not neutral and disinterested as historians would have us believe they are, because representing "what happened" in times past "entails ontological and epistemic choices with distinct ideological and even specifically political implication" (The Content ix). The choices a historian makes also involve ranking and organizing events as well as suppressing and excluding those whose presence would be a cause of disruption or against the interest of the historian.

The fact that the dominant historical discourse in the United States marginalizes and silences Native Americans does not mean that Native Americans are always absent or entirely left out of the dominant historical text; rather, they are present but only as objects of representation. They are present so as to mean, to signify the different "other," the "ignoble savage," or the "noble savage," the "cultureless nomad" who is "unable" to put the land to good and lucrative use. The presence of Indians is nothing but an absence; they are present but devoid of voice and agency. The stereotyping of Indians in the dominant culture's texts erases their agency and silence their voices. Indians are depicted as either a source of repulsion and fear, or as objects of romantic fantasizing. In either case, their presence causes a crisis of legitimization respecting the expropriation of their lands. So from the perspective of the
colonizer, the viable solution is either to annihilate them, or assimilate/embrace them until nothing is left of them. Put differently, by portraying Indians as nothing but a "bunch of negatives," European American historical representations lend legitimacy to stripping them of their lands and to destroying their cultures. European Americans call indigenous "others" by derogatory and dehumanizing names in order to justify their domination and dispossession. "Everything," Anthony Fothergill suggests, "depends on who is doing the looking. What is the relative power status of the representer? Who determines the way of looking, the terms of representing?" (55).

As I will show in the course of this study, Bedford's Tsali, Welch's Fools Crow, Erdrich's Tracks, and Hogan's Mean Spirit are acts of intervention in history, attempts to restore to indigenous people their voice and agency by offering alternative recountings of what happened during the contact between Native Americans and their colonizers. They are rewritings, revisions, that seek to dismantle the negative images and representations of Native Americans by portraying them as "human subjects of their history" (Boehmer 195). Moreover, these alternative narratives challenge the official historical narrative that vaunts the expansion of white settler society in North America as signifying the victory of civilization and culture over "primitiveness" and "unculturedness" by showing that from the
Native American perspective, this expansion means dispossession and genocide culturally, socially, and economically.

I must explain that by saying that these novels are alternative narratives I do not at all mean that they provide neutral and objective representations of what happened during the encounter between Indians and whites; rather, they are just different tellings of what happened. The message these novels convey is that there is always more than one way to tell a story. Their significance derives from their subversion of the dominant historical text, from the political and psychological effects they exert on readers, and most importantly from their affirmation of Native Americans' right to narrate the past and, thereby, to end the dominant white society's monopoly on history. For Native American novelists to tell the past is to act, to claim authority over history, to authorize the indigenous knowledge of what happened. Their rewritings of history represent what Foucault calls the "resurrection of subjugated knowledges" (81). The purpose of these revisions of history is tellingly articulated by Welch in answer to a question about his purpose in writing Fools Crow:

There are some things that we should never allow our people to forget. There were true efforts made to exterminate a lot of Indian people. We should never forget that kind of thing. I hope my writing keeps reminding people that there
Welch does not only seem to speak on behalf of the other Native American novelists to be discussed here, but also seems to imply what I have said above about both the text's relation to context which postcolonialism underscores and the role that literature plays in the decolonization of the mind. Hence, it is the Indian "subjugated knowledges" of the "true efforts made to exterminate a lot of Indian people," and the "Indian situation" which Bedford, Welch, Erdrich, and Hogan are resurrecting in their novels. They move toward the future through the past; they "use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope" (Fanon 232).

In this study, I am generally interested in examining these four novels' presentations of native peoples' views on white domination and policies of removal, cultural annihilation, their depictions of the impact of these policies on indigenous peoples, their recuperation of native cultures, and their celebration of Native Americans' struggle for survival.

Chapter 2 analyzes Bedford's *Tsali*. The significance of this novel for this study rests on its dealing with a theme that one finds in other postcolonial novels: rewriting of stories of colonized indigenous peoples' resistance to
invasion, which is systematically minimized or totally omitted from the history written under the auspices of the colonizer. Bedford’s novel is based on Tsali’s killing of a white soldier during the Cherokees’ forced march to the stockades in which they would be gathered before their relocation to the west of the Mississippi River. The removal was publicized by the Andrew Jackson government as being for the protection of Indians from the advancing white settler society with which Indians were claimed to be unable to cope. In this novel, Bedford counteracts this claim by offering the view that the reason for the expulsion of the Cherokees is the discovery of gold in their lands.

Chapter 3 discusses Welch’s Fools Crow. Through its portrayal of the growth and development of its hero Fools Crow, this novel captures the traditional world of the Lone Eaters clan of the Blackfeet tribe on the brink of collapse before the encroaching white society and culture. The historical events it deals with are those that occurred before and after the massacre of the Marias by the United States Cavalry on January 23, 1870.

In this novel, Welch attempts a restoration of the Blackfeet’s ways of life, rituals, and myths. In post-colonial novels, depictions of pre-colonial indigenous cultures are intended to cancel the colonial representational constructions of indigenous peoples as cultureless savages.
Fools Crow is a culture hero who will preserve the culture and history of his people by passing them on to Blackfeet children.

Chapter 4 examines Erdrich’s *Tracks*. *Tracks* portrays the diverse agents that contributed to the disintegration of the Chippewa society: dislocation, dispossession, disease epidemics, and compulsory acculturation. While *Fools Crow* depicts an indigenous world on the course of collision with the white world, *Tracks* presents a native one in the aftermath of destruction. Besides portraying these historical events, *Tracks* dramatizes storytelling as an act of self-empowerment and shows how stories/histories compete with each other. Through the juxtaposition of Nanapush’s and Pauline’s stories, the novel imparts the idea that the stories that people narrate are inevitably influenced by their personal interests.

Chapter 5 discusses Hogan’s *Mean Spirit*. Hogan problematizes the traditional distinction between the real, the realm of history, and the imaginary, the realm of fiction by basing her novel on documented crimes against the Osage tribe in Oklahoma in the 1920s and weaving strands of her family history in the narrative. *Mean Spirit* depicts the Osages’ struggle to survive against the dire consequences of the U.S. assimilation policy. Hogan documents the crimes and all types of exploitation that the Osages underwent at the hands of greedy white wealth seekers. Moreover, just as
Fools Crow and Tracks feature heroes associated with storytelling, Mean Spirit presents Michael Horse as the keeper of tradition and a historian who writes for future generations of Indians.

This study aspires to contribute to the scholarly and critical literature concerned with studying U.S. cultures in relation to issues of colonization, slavery, interventionism, and imperialism. In this respect, it owes its inspiration to the collection of essays edited and published by Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease under the title: Cultures of United States Imperialism (1993). Specifically, it posits itself as a contribution to the currently growing interest on the cultural and scholarly domain in the United States in the application of the postcolonial critical and analytic methods in addressing the literary works of Native and African American writers.
Set in 1838, Denton R. Bedford's *Tsali* (1972) depicts one of the most crucial episodes in the history of internal colonization of indigenous peoples in the United States from a Native American perspective: the U.S. government's removal of the Cherokee tribe to the west of the Mississippi River. The inclusion of Bedford's novel in this study is inspired by one of the often-dealt-with themes in postcolonial fictions: the reviving of stories of indigenous peoples' heroic acts and resistance to the colonizing practices of eradication and subjugation. The motive behind these restorative projects is the desire to negate claims about the colonized's passivity toward their oppressors in order to counter demeaning stereotypes of indigenous peoples by providing positive images with which their descendants identify. The revival of native heroism is part of the "symbolic overhaul" that Native American novelists are undertaking to do their share of the psychological rehabilitation of the indigenous psyche.
that has been hurt by systematic disparagement and oppression.

Bedford's Tsali offers an example of how different the history of America appears when written from a Native American perspective. Tsali portrays Tsali's individual rebellion prior to the Cherokees' mass expulsion from their ancient lands. The narrative's subversive power emanates from its depiction of Tsali's killing of the white soldier who harasses his wife during the roundup of the Cherokees as a major historic event that has great psychological consequences and implications for the whole tribe. Tsali's heroism expresses itself most admirably in his act of self-sacrifice for the sake of his people. He surrenders to the federal troops in charge of rounding up the Cherokees, so that the Cherokee refugees in the mountains can be allowed to live in their sacred lands. In Bedford's novel, Tsali is "elevated...to rightfully deserved heroic stature" (Charles Larson 97) in contrast to his representation as a minor figure in the historical narratives of the Cherokee removal. An example of the minimization of Tsali's story can be seen in John Ehle's Trail of Tears (1988), where his heroic acts and the psychological and symbolic implications that one expects they must have had in the context of the removal seem to have been deemed unworthy of more than the least amount of consideration:
Two soldiers were killed in the North Carolina mountains. They were bringing in the last remnants of those Indians who were living within the Cherokee nation. The soldiers were on their way home, having finished the roundup, Smith reported, when they heard of this old man and his wife and their family, an illiterate full-blood named Tsali, or Charlie. They apprehended them. On the way to the compound two soldiers were struck down with an ax and the Indians fled. (Ehle 345)

By authoring a novel that rescues Tsali from the footnote-like status to which he is relegated in the historical recountsings of the Cherokee removal, Bedford asserts the legitimacy of the native oral memory as a storehouse, so to speak, of alternative Native American narratives of "what happened" after the invasion of North America.

The affinity of Bedford's novel to the other novels analyzed in this study is not only the result of its reclamation of Tsali as a hero but also its primary concern with the collective survival over the individual. Despite their different themes, the novels of Bedford, Welch, Erdrich, and Hogan feature central characters who are devotedly concerned about the survival and felicity of their communities.

In Tsali, a great deal of historical information about U.S. government policy toward the Cherokees is offered through the narrator's elaborate commentaries and explanations. This aspect of Bedford's novel has prevented it from being exclusively focused on Tsali and his family.
The placement of Tsali's sacrifice "at the spiritual center of his people" (Larson 129), comments on the Indian-white relations in the dialogues between the Cherokee characters, the narrator's presentation of information about the condition of the entire tribe—all combine to minimize the egocentrism that exclusive focus on Tsali might have produced in the narrative. Bedford presents a central character whose life is intimately related to that of his tribe, just as Welch, Erdrich, and Hogan do in their novels.

My analysis of the novel is divided into two parts. The first part is an examination of the extratextual information, the information that precedes the text. The purpose of this examination is to construct the authorial voice in the narrative. As Susan Sniader Lanser suggests, besides the narrator there exists in a fictional text an "'extrafictional voice,' an authorial presence" that often goes unrecognized by theorists of narrative (124). The reader constructs this voice from information about the author, the publisher, and from information given in prefaces or introductions or forewords. Lanser theorizes that the authorial voice is responsible for the organization, titling, chapter division and headings, and production of the text. The authorial voice functions to set up expectations about point of view and affects the reader's reception of the text. Lanser argues that there are cases where the authorial voice is so
prominent and powerful that we feel justified enough in associating it with the narrator or vice versa.

I have noticed while reading *Tsali* that there is much correspondence between the image of the authorial voice that I have constructed from the extratextual information in the book and that of the narrator. Moreover, I believe that the information offered extratextually constitutes something akin to what Owens describes as an aspect of Native American traditional storytelling (95). Owens explains that in a typical traditional storytelling setting or situation, the listener would “know the outcome of the story at the beginning, a fact that should shift [his or her] attention to the performance itself, to the way a story is told” (Owens 95). In *Tsali*, after reading the editor’s note and the writer’s foreword, the reader comes to the text with some prior knowledge of what the story is generally about.

The second part is focused on elucidating the way Bedford portrays Tsali as a hero. As I will show throughout the analysis of the narrative, Bedford’s concern with reclaiming the reputation of Tsali seems to have been a major factor in the emphasis given to the mimetic dimension of his character. The mimetic dimension is one of three components of which a fictional character is created. “A dimension,” James Phelan says, “is any attribute a character may be said to possess when that character is considered in isolation from the work in which he or she appears” (*Reading People* 9).
The other two components are the thematic and the synthetic (3). The thematic component is constructed by endowing characters with attributes either to make them represent certain classes or types of people like "the individual in modern society" (3); or to symbolize certain tendencies such as the "lust for power" (9). The synthetic component is the set of elements and signs that draw attention to their artificiality, to their being constructs (2). Works of fiction, as Phelan demonstrates, vary in terms of which one of these components is foregrounded.

Using Phelan's narrative terms, I will analyze the way Bedford goes about presenting Tsali as a hero, showing the significance of emphasizing his mimetic dimension in the narrative. Tsali is constructed as a possible person with positive and praiseworthy qualities and traits capable of arousing the potential reader's sympathy and identification as a requisite for producing the narrative's rhetorical and political effects. Although Bedford states in the foreword that Tsali is an ordinary man or "a common man's" hero (x), it is his mimetic dimension that seems to be most important for the movement and progression of the narrative. Specifically, although Tsali represents the ordinary Cherokee person, he is distinguished from the others by certain qualities he has, that is, the attributes that make him appear as an image of a possible person. Tsali's most abiding qualities or attributes are his selflessness, his
strong compassion and care, not only for his family but for his people at large. It is these attributes that make him kill the white soldier who, during the Cherokee's march to the stockades, keeps poking and harassing his sickly wife Agiya. These are the same attributes that expand to include all the Cherokees when they ask him to surrender to the federal government troops in return for the government's allowing the Cherokee refugees to remain in their ancestral lands. Simply, Tsali chooses to sacrifice his life in the hope that some of his tribespeople can continue to live in the land he so dearly loves. Altruistic caring, compassion, and love for his people and country—these are Tsali's attributes that we see translate into functions in the course of the narrative; they are the qualities that set him apart from the others. A "function" refers to the application of an attribute which a character has during the progression of the narrative (Phelan 9). The application of Tsali's attributes is the essence, the basis, the perceptible embodiment of his heroism. It is the controlling idea around which the narrative is constructed and is aimed at reviving. Tsali's above-mentioned characteristics are applied through his killing the soldier and his self-sacrifice. In other words, these two heroic actions are the effects of his altruistic caring and love for his wife and people. As I have noted above, the narrative seems to privilege the mimetic dimension of Tsali, because it is designed first and
foremost to restore his reputation and status as a hero. For a narrative as communication between the author and readers to work, we have to join the narrative audience by suspending our disbelief and accepting the character as a possible person (Phelan 5).

Having said this, I will go on to look into the "extrafictional information" in Tsali, beginning with the title page. Since we already know that Tsali is the central character, I suggest that we let our eyes slip fast down to the bottom of the title page, where we come to learn that the novel was published by The Indian Historian Press in San Francisco. This is significant, because we might infer that for a novel to be published by a publishing house specializing in printing works related to Indian history is to be acknowledged as having a historical value of some sort.

On the copyright page, we discover that the year of publication is 1972. This locates the novel in a decade that witnessed an emergence of interest in Indian history. According to Donald A. Grinde, Jr., beginning with the 1970s, Indian history "became a component of 'minority' history as Native American historians came to assume the responsibility for restoring "a viable Native American history...for Native Americans" (Grinde 212 ). The page has one more bit of information to offer about the publisher, as our eyes move down to see featured the full title of the publishing house: The Indian Historian Press, an all-Indian educational
publishing house. Here, we might also surmise that we are in the presence of a novel that was written and published for the purpose of educating its potential readers about American Indians and their histories.

On the dedication page, we read Bedford dedicating his novel “to all of the Indian ‘Tsalis’ who suffered the agonies of foreign conquest across the breadth of this fair land” (vii). So this novel is not only about Tsali but about all of the native people who fell victim to the foreign conquest. “Foreign conquest” is a key phrase here, for Bedford means it to challenge the myth of discovery to which European explorers would resort to disguise and legitimize their invasions of lands of the “others.”

During European imperialist expansions, the usurpation of “discovered” regions was justified by the old Roman doctrine of the terra nullius, the uninhabited lands which were ready and waiting to be occupied and exploited (Morris 58). Under this law, European discoverers and explorers have the legal right to possess the “discovered” territories. In the United States, the Supreme Court had resurrected the dictum of discovery to legitimize European Americans’ expropriation of native tribal territories. Thus, in dedicating his novels to all of the Indian “Tsalis,” Bedford strongly affirms that what happened to the Indians was a thorough colonization.
In her note, editor Jeanette Henry declares that Tsali is a true story, adding that popular and historical writings on the Cherokee removal are deplorably contaminated by much misrepresentation and falsehood. Furthermore, Indian life has been generally ignored by non-Indians. Henry believes that Bedford is presenting an image of an ordinary, a common Cherokee man, one whose noble acts qualify him for inclusion in the pantheon of the world heroic figures. It is a multidimensional image that starkly contrasts with the images of Indians one repeatedly finds in works by writers like James Fenimore Cooper, whom Henry criticizes for essentializing the Indian as a romantic image. Quite the contrary, Bedford offers “an Indian life and truth, in agony, and in historic perspective” (Henry viii). Henry concludes her note with an emphasis on Tsali’s significance and authoritativeness by referring to the author’s identity and the circumstances and process of the novel’s production: “We take delight in publishing TSALI, written by an Indian author, published by an Indian publishing house, illustrated by an Indian artist” (viii). Implicitly, this declaration seems to invite the reader to take the text as offering the truest and most definitive recounting of Tsali’s story. Being an all-Indian work, this declaration suggests, it has full authority compared to the other versions of the story.

I would like to review Bedford’s foreword at some
length, considering its importance for both the analysis of
the narrative I propose to do and my argument about its
relation to postcolonial novels. One of the most crucial
things Bedford addresses in the foreword is the issue of the
white society's deliberate distortion and cover-up of the
brutality of the conquest of Native Americans. Bedford
maintains that history—American history, that is—is
markedly biased against Indians. It is evidently
paradoxical, he comments, that while indigenous people are
required to act responsibly as American citizens, they are at
the same time bombarded with disparaging images of their
ancestors on the screen as well as being forced to study from
lopsided "accounts which glorify the white man and demean the
Indian" (ix). In those accounts, great Native Americans like
Tsali are invariably presented as "primitive savages" and
prominent historical native figures are denied recognition
for no other reason than their valiant resistance to the
white man's aggressions and covetousness.

Importantly, Bedford affirms that the memory of Tsali
has endured despite unrelenting attempts to erase it. Tsali
has survived because he is an emblem of courage and self-
sacrifice, of the ordinary man who is capable of rising to
great heights when put to the test. This is what seems to
constitute, as I have said above, the thematic/representative
aspect to Tsali's character which both Henry and Bedford are
much concerned to underscore. Yet, apart from his
representative ordinariness, in a sense, Tsali had a quality in him, according to Bedford, that would not allow him to give in to abuse by the white police force nor to resign himself to the "inevitability of exile from his home" (x).

Bedford asserts that in killing the white soldier, Tsali acted instinctively and unconsciously and that constitutes his greatness as a "common man's" hero. Bedford turns then to attack the proliferating contradictory and confused versions of Tsali's story, stating that they "all show the deft hand of the white man, still seeking to mold opinion in his favor" (x). Bedford closes his foreword with the declaration that Tsali is a story that embodies what it means to love and to be loyal to one's country. For Bedford, Tsali is indisputably equal to all the national heroes, one whose story still torments "the white man's conscience by reminding him of his perfidy" (xi). In short, in writing Tsali, Bedford is particularly seeking to establish pride in Tsali as a native hero.

The novel opens with a narrative statement describing a scene, a situation, at a trading store owned by Little Will: "Strange people were seated beneath the lean-to porch before Little Will's log trading store" (1). The tone of this narrative statement conveys a sense of surprise on the part of the anonymous perceiver. Nevertheless, we might gather that he or she has not been expecting to see strange people or that he or she is loath to see them for reasons we might
expect to see disclosed as the narrative progresses. But as we press on in our reading to the next sentence, we realize retroactively that the perceiver is none other than Tsali, of whom we have already constructed a rudimentary image from the extratextual information: "This Tsali knew to be true because he could not recognize their lean Cherokee ponies tethered at a hitching rail" (1).

It is quite evident that the implied author is keen on establishing the centrality of Tsali’s position in the narrative right from the start. This he has done by restricting us to Tsali’s vision and by having the narrator explain the reason why Tsali could not recognize the men. The narrator then moves on to make clear the causes of Tsali’s discomfort and surprise at seeing the strangers: "The presence of any newcomer in the valley of the Cheoa that spring of 1838 could spell trouble for the mountain Indians of the Snowbirds" (1). Besides the information it imparts about the clan to which Tsali belongs, the preceding statement carries a hint of something ominous about to occur. However, given the knowledge we have obtained from the extrafictional information and the reference to the year 1838, there is a basis for our inferring that the trouble hinted at above is the Cherokee removal: in 1838 the Jackson government rounded up the Cherokees in stockades—the antecedents of the Japanese American internment and the Nazi
concentration camps—and then moved them to the prairies west of the Mississippi River.

In the next paragraph, the narrator gives even a deeper insight into the causes of Tsali’s fears by telling us that the trouble currently besetting the Cherokee nation dates back to 1835. That year witnessed the conclusion of the New Echota Treaty between the United States government and what would come to be known in history as the Cherokee Treaty Party (Remini 294). According to Remini, Andrew Jackson’s biographer, the President and the state of Georgia exerted enormous pressure on the Cherokees to sign the treaty in the summer of 1835. Through chicanery and intimidation, Jackson’s emissary John F. Schermerhorn succeeded in creating divisions among the Cherokees. On realizing Jackson’s inflexibility, a small group of chiefs decided to sign the treaty thinking they were cutting the best deal possible for the people. After hearing the news of the bogus treaty, the majority of Cherokees rallied in New Echota, the Cherokee nation capital, to express their rejection of it. Despite Schermerhorn’s threats of reprisal, the Cherokees, headed by Chief John Ross, continued valiantly to resist the implementation of the treaty. For his part, Chief Ross—he will be mentioned in the narrative later—tried every means possible to block the execution of the treaty. After gathering the signatures of fourteen thousand Cherokees, he went to Washington in an attempt to abort it. To his
chagrin, even his request to see the President was rebuffed, and he was informed by the Chief Magistrate that the President "did not recognize any existing government among the eastern Cherokees" (Remini 300). Ross's all-summer stay in the capital came to naught.

To emphasize the effect of the tribulations the Cherokees are now experiencing, the narrator reports that Tsali is so weighed down by this trouble that by comparison he finds light the bags of maize and ginseng root he is carrying on his back. He is so burdened with it that he seems reluctant to continue this journey to the trading post for fear of hearing the bad news which the presence of the strange people signifies. Nevertheless, Tsali eventually manages to overcome his fears and continues his trip under the pressure of the task he set out to fulfill in the first place—a decision the narrator allows us to witness Tsali make by directly reporting his direct speech: "'But this trip has to be,' he reminded himself, 'My eldest son's wife draws near her time. A piece of cloth will make the medicine woman give a strong prayer to encourage the small one to jump down quickly'" (1). Now we know the purpose of Tsali's trip to the shop: he wants to barter the bags of maize and ginseng root for a piece of cloth which he will give to a medicine woman for her prayer for an easy and speedy birth of his new grandson or daughter.
This bit of directly reported speech is very significant because through it we can see the implied author continuing his work of establishing the mimetic dimension of Tsali which he has already started in the opening sentence. Tsali is now an image of a possible person endowed with vision, voice, and a will of his own. More importantly, in his directly reported speech, we can detect a certain quality in him that works to reinforce his image as a possible person. We can tell from his determination to continue his walk to the shop, despite his apparent fears of what might be lying in store for him, that he is the kind of person who puts the well-being of his family before his own fears or interest. We will come to find out later on that Tsali’s compassion and concern for his family are the most abiding and important of his qualities. It is probably because of these attributes’ significance for the development and progression of the narrative that the implied author allows us to see them translated into functions. It is more convincing and effective mimetically to see a character’s attributes embodied through his actions than reading or hearing them reported by a narrator. As Phelan suggests, characters are not presented as attributes which then translate into functions; rather, “they come to us already in the process of being shaped into functions, or (especially within the mimetic sphere) as already functioning” (Reading People 10). I think Phelan’s suggestion applies to the case of Tsali.
whose concern for his people pressures him to resume his trip in spite of his fears and worries. I should mention however that Tsali is accompanied on this trip by his second and third sons Tahlee and Chalee, respectively. Through the dialogue that takes place between Tsali and his sons, more information about the purpose of Tsali's trip is revealed.

As we continue our reading, we come upon a mention of Tsali's age and a description of his physique. The narrator reports that Tsali is fifty years old and is "somewhat stooped" (2). It is important to remark in this respect that the stoop in Tsali's back seems to establish what I consider a kind of a thematic dimension to his character. Explaining why Tsali is "somewhat stooped," the narrator states: "[B]ut this was a new physical characteristic seen of late among many Cherokee men because they had been forced to adopt farming as their main source of livelihood, to prove to the Unegas (white men) that they were 'civilized'" (2). The narrator's observation that the Cherokees had taken up farming to appease white men highlights the unbalanced power relations characterizing the encounter of Indians and whites. As part of their so-called mission to bring "civilization" to the savages, white people had coerced the natives into taking up farming, which is claimed to constitute the demarcation line between savagery and civility. In a message on Indian Removal to Congress in December 1829, President Jackson says, "It has long been the policy of the Government to introduce
among them the art of civilization, in the hope of gradually reclaiming them from a wandering life" (Prucha 47). As Robert J. C. Young says, the cultivation of the land is considered by westerners as the difference between the civil and the savage, and to be civil means to be a denizen of the city as opposed to the savage outside (31). Hence, cultivation is a major component of the ideological opposition between the country and the city. The culture of the land, Young suggests, is the primary mode of colonization, in that "the focus on soil emphasizes the physicality of the territory that is coveted, occupied, cultivated, turned into plantation and made unsuitable for indigenous nomadic tribes" (31).

What is believed to be the cornerstone of civility turns out to be physically damaging to the people on whom it has been imposed. Further, the Cherokees are not only physically hurt by the encroaching white culture, but psychologically as well. Continuing his commentary on the impact of the whites' oppression of the Cherokees, the narrator reports that the melancholy and gloom pervading the Cherokees' world are a consequence of the whites', or Unegas' as he calls them, disruption of and intervention in the native way of life, adding that the Unegas pose a great threat to the Cherokees' independence:

Harsh reality would not let the Cherokees ignore the tyranny of the Unegas. Their way of life and independence were at
risk.... Like all suppressed people who understand their own weakness before a superior power, the tribe had turned in part to mysticism. (2)

A commentary like the preceding one indicates what I believe is a correspondence or equivalence between the implied author/narrator and the authorial voice which we the readers have constructed from the extrafictional information. During the narrative, we come across numerous commentaries through which the implied author introduces historical background information into the story. It is through such intrusions that the authorial voice makes its presence or ideology most felt and manifest.

It is clearly recognizable that we have been introduced so far to a couple of instabilities plaguing Tsali’s life: one is global, the other is personal or local. The global instability is represented by the state of unrest and melancholy the Cherokees have been experiencing since the New Echota Treaty of 1835 and which will culminate in the removal of the Cherokees. The local instability is caused by Tsali’s daughter-in-law’s approaching birthing. In addition, I would suggest that the narrative has been progressing till now by both tension and complication. That is, although Tsali has initially started from home to fulfill his trading task, his sighting of the strange men at the store has piqued his curiosity to know the reason why they are gathered there. Interestingly, his trip seems to
determine the trajectory and rhythm of narration until Tsali reaches the trading store.

As Tsali and his sons forge ahead toward the trading store, the narrator reports in a flash forward that Tsali is preoccupied with the men in front of the store because they are destined to “have a great influence upon the future course of his life” (3). I think this flash forward is intended to intensify one’s sense of suspense as well as to underscore the gravity of the matter that brought the men to that place. Upon drawing near the store, Tsali recognizes that one of the tethered ponies belongs to Chief Situakee of Valley Town.

Following Tsali’s recognition of the pony, something of great importance for the progression and complication in the narrative is revealed. From a dialogue that takes place between Tsali and his sons, we learn that Tsali’s wife has been ill for quite a while. In reply to his sons who think that bad luck has brought the strange men to the porch, Tsali says that the illness of his wife is enough bad luck:

“Having your mother ill is enough bad luck,” Tsali told the boys. “Another reason I came down here was to purchase a piece of bright trade cloth to make Wauhatchee’s heart good so that he will drive out the evil spirit harming her.” (4)

Building on the disclosure of his wife’s illness, we can conclude then that Tsali is actually suffering two personal/local instabilities: a momentary instability caused
by his son’s wife’s imminent labor and a long-standing one caused by the illness of his wife. The revelation of Tsali’s pursuit of a cure for his wife’s illness works to enhance his image as a compassionate and caring husband, father and grandfather to ensure our sympathy for and identification with him.

On reaching the store, Tsali is able to identify the other two of the three men he has previously been so anxious to know and thus what remains for him, and perhaps for us, to know is the cause of their gathering. The two men are Chief Yonaguska and Chief Euchela. From the dialogue that resumes after having been momentarily interrupted by Tsali and his son’s arrival at the store, we learn many things which are important for our understanding and expectation of the future development and complication in the narrative. Of particular significance is the revelation of the reason for the Chiefs’ coming to the store: the Blue-coats, the Indian name for white soldiers/troopers, of General Sketsi (Winfield Scott) have launched their invasion of the Cherokee lands and are now cutting down trees to build stockades where the Cherokees will be gathered before their deportation to the prairies west of the Mississippi River. When Tsali asks why the whites are infiltrating their country, Chief Situakee retorts indignantly:

“Because they mean to steal our country and exile us.... They intend to herd us like cattle onto their steamboats at
Ross's landing and send us into the Far West. There they shall abandon us on the prairies. They do this to give our property and lands to those shiftless white frontiersmen who always hover about our farms to steal everything of value. They want our lands because gold has been discovered. It is an easy way for lazy white people to come into the possession of great wealth. So Sketsi and his Blue-coats have been sent to make sure we don't defend that which is ours."

I have fully quoted the Chief's rejoinder to Tsali because it seems to encapsulate the Cherokee public or collective opinion on the motivations for the imminent eviction of the natives by the whites. The discovery of gold and other minerals in Cherokee lands caused a dramatic change in the attitude of the state of Georgia towards the Cherokees. According to Grace Steel Woodward, Georgia passed on June 1, 1830, a set of laws nullifying contracts between Indians and whites and barring Indians from testifying against whites in Georgian courts. Beyond that, the Cherokees were forbidden to dig for gold in the "newly discovered gold fields near and in present-day Dahlonega and Dalton Georgia" (Woodward 159). Therefore, I think that Situakee's exposition of the true motives behind the government's decision to relocate the natives serves to belie the official allegations that relocation would be to the advantage of the natives.

It was officially announced that the removal of the Cherokees would be implemented for the protection of Indians
from what would amount to extinction because they would never be able to survive in the midst of the white community. In the words of President Jackson, "Surrounded by the whites with their arts of civilization, which by destroying the resources of the savage doom him to weakness and decay, the fate of the Mohegan...is fast overtaking...the Cherokee and the Creek. That this fate surely awaits them if they remain within the limits of the States does not admit of a doubt" (Prucha 48). But what is also important about the Chief's answer is the contribution it seems to make to the narrative's whole purpose of rectifying the distorted mainstream histories of the event.

I would say that not only in the narratorial commentaries and interpretations do we discern the presence of the authorial voice, but even in dialogues among characters such as the previous one which echoes and resonates with it. The following statement by Little Will is another example illustrating how the authorial voice pervades even the characters' voices: "Yet I am a Unega and know how ruthless white men can be. They covet Cherokee farms and land" (8). According to the narrator, Little Will is the white adopted son of Chief Yonaguska. What Little Will says seems to be designed to lend weight to the native characters' view about the real motive for the removal. Everything or rather every twist and turn in the narrative is apparently determined and structured by the authorial
perspective, by the overall motive behind the writing of the narrative. More importantly, like other post-colonial novels, Tsali performs a reversal in perspective where the colonizing European Americans are made the object of scrutiny and representation and the natives are the representers. It is this act of reversal, of enabling the native stories and voices to be heard and read, that constitutes a defining feature of postcolonial writings.

As the dialogue proceeds, we have revealed to us more and more information and native opinions in relation to the forthcoming removal. One of the significant things we come to learn by eavesdropping on their talk is that the Cherokees have been following a policy of passive resistance since 1835. They have tacitly and quietly continued to live in their lands despite the expiration of the two-year grace period stated in the New Echota Treaty. This they have done on the advice of Chief John Ross so as not to provoke a violent reaction from white people. Nevertheless, with the removal drawing near, this policy seems to be coming under attack and skepticism as to its usefulness and practicality especially from the young Cherokee men. At the head of these doubting and dissenting voices is Utanah, a young man noted for his strong aversion to white "civilized" ways and a staunch advocate of everything Indian. Because of his rebelliousness and outspokenness he is becoming more and more popular with young men like Soquah, Tsali's oldest son. It
is worth noting that even some old men have begun to express their disapproval of passive resistance; notable among them is Chief Euchela who will later play a very important role in Tsali’s life.

While the men are engrossed in their conversation on the unpleasant things ahead, Soquah arrives on the scene. Soquah has just returned from the town of his wife’s clan where he took her to stay until after she has given birth. On being asked about anything of significance he might have seen during his trip, Soquah tells them that he chanced to see Utanah busy exhorting and encouraging the people to rise up in arms against the Unegas. Shortly after Soquah’s arrival, the men are interrupted, significantly enough, by the coming of some Blue-coats. The soldiers have come to nail handbills from Sketsi. One of the handbills will particularly have calamitous consequences for the Indians because it carries an order from the General to the effect that they must start evacuating by the end of the month—May, 1838. Since none of the men present can read, Little Will reads it to them aloud.

From this moment onward, the narrative moves by complicating the global instability till the moment that Tsali kills the white soldier; then it shifts to progress by tension when Tsali and Soquah start out on a trip to find out what happened to the latter’s wife and finally it returns to moving by complicating the global instability. The introduction of the global instability underscores the
connectedness of Tsali's fate to that of his community. The immediate effect of the latest development in the whole Cherokee situation—the global instability—is the delay of the resolution of the initial local instabilities, because the matter at hand eclipses or exceeds in its enormity and seriousness both his wife's illness and his daughter in law's delivery. The first chapter ends with Tsali in possession of the two pieces of cloth, about to start his journey home.

In the second chapter, we see the implied author trying to set the narrative in the direction leading to the two major events in Tsali's life. But while the first chapter begins with Tsali outside, in the second we are taken inside his home. Just prior to their joining the forced march of the Cherokee to the stockades, Tsali's home gets invaded by a bunch of white marauders. Shocked by this flagrant trespass, Tsali is quick to voice his protest: "This is my home...I do not invite you inside" (43). But noticing that he is unarmed, the looters continue their pilfering the place, heedless of his protest. Although Tsali's protest does not seem to have had any deterrent effect on the looters, it gives a glimpse of what Bedford describes as the quality in him that does not allow him to yield to abuse. This suggestion is echoed in Tsali's second declaration of protest in the same setting. When one of the looters gets hold of the red cloth which Tsali wants to give to the medicine man, the latter gives voice to a more vigorous protest: "No!...You
must not steal that" (43). This exhibition of strong protest is preceded by an expressive comment from the narrator:

Fear that these thieves were now removing the last chance of his wife's recovery forced Tsali to register a second protest. The cloth was the medicine man's fee. Where his wife was concerned, Tsali always became most protective. (43)

Needless to say, Tsali's second protest has been as much in vain and useless as his first in terms of the final outcome. However, it is obvious that the previous scene is designed to prepare us for the moment when Tsali takes the life of the white soldier who harasses his wife during the march. Equally important in this scene, Tsali appears to fit Bedford's description of him as a reluctant hero. But it is not until chapter three that we see the implied author going to great lengths to elaborate and augment the image of the reluctant hero as the Cherokee march gets underway.

When the march begins, Tsali, his wife Agiya, his three sons, his brother Teetlunuchee and his wife are forced to join it. Unable to keep pace with the others because of her illness and a hip injury she sustained in the past fall, Agiya soon becomes an easy and inviting target for one of the three soldiers assigned to watch over the family. This soldier, described as yellow-haired, immediately falls to poking and pricking her by his bayonet for no apparent reason other than to instigate the men to fight. The narrator discloses that Tsali is trying hard to keep a grip on himself
because he is aware of the yellow-haired soldier's intention. Perhaps it is Bedford's idea about Tsali as a reluctant hero that seems at work here. Yet, his tolerance or avoidance of trouble does not receive the approval of the other male members of the family, especially his oldest son Soquah. Soquah is quick to taunt and criticize his father for what he conceives of as timidity and an unmanly conduct. He bluntly says: "I have a wife...But I would allow nobody to abuse her! What became of that look in your eye? Or is it that true warrior blood doesn't run in our veins?" (68).

But as the yellow-haired soldier's pokes and pricks become more frequent, in addition to Soquah's taunting and ridiculing, we begin to wonder how much longer Tsali can hold steadfastly to his tolerance and patience. Interestingly, we do not have to wait too long to see his patience vanish in proportion to the increase in the jabs at his wife's body. It so happens that after one more jab from the soldier at Agiya, Tsali waves a command to Soquah to wait. Thereupon, the outraged Soquah retorts immediately, excoriating his father: "We always wait...For two winters we waited because the Chiefs told to. Now we wait while the Unegas kill my mother!" (68). What has happened is that after the soldier has poked his mother one more time, Soquah is positioned to "leap upon his mother's tormentor" (68).

From this moment onward, we see a dramatic change in Tsali's attitude and stance on this matter. This is the
point where the "deep structure" of Tsali's character begins to take over, urging him to act in conformity with the native traditional mores and norms: to act as a man must in such a situation. As Lanser defines it, the "deep structure" of character is composed of the beliefs, values and norms that determine and guide his or her behavior (Lanser 230). In what amounts to a declaration of his rejection of the Chiefs' warning against resistance, Tsali defiantly says: "The Chiefs have said we must not resist...[but] Man has the right to defend his family" (69). Just before Tsali revolts against the Chiefs' advice, the narrator comments that the soldier's "vicious aggression had destroyed his self-respect. Even death seemed preferable to such self-contempt" (69). After affirming his right to defend his family, Tsali promptly starts to think up his attack plan. Briefly, he tells the men that when they reach the next shady spot on the road, he will leap on the yellow-haired soldier and wrest his rifle, and that they should take care of the other two soldiers.

On reaching the designated shady spot, Tsali swiftly jumps on the soldier after his last jab at Agiya. With evident gleefulness, the narrator relates:

Like a fury, Tsali hurled himself upon the towhead taking the callow young man completely by surprise and utterly demoralized him. The youth could scarcely believe his eyes as he gave voice to an awful wall of terror, cringing abjectly before the fierce Indian who had seized him. (72)
Thrilled by this act of long-missed Indian warrior behavior, Soquah, Teetlunuchee, and Tahlee join in giving voice to "their Cherokee war whoops drowning out the frantic screams of the towhead" (72). In the fight that ensues and in which the two women take part, Tsali kills his wife's abuser. The other two soldiers simply take flight after showing a semblance of a fight.

Tsali's killing of the soldier has resolved the momentary instability caused by the soldier's tormenting of his wife—an instability which is an off-shoot of the global one. But it is a resolution that would lead to a greater instability because after the killing incident Tsali and his family have no recourse but to go into hiding. The new instability now hounding Tsali's life consists in his alienation from his homeland, in which he is reduced to being a fugitive on the run from the invaders. Interestingly, while Tsali and his companions are in hiding, his reputation travels far and wide, and thus, what was an individual act of revenge and self-defense, as it were, comes to assume collective signification especially for Utanah who will use the incident to incite the Cherokee refugees to follow the example set by Tsali.

Characteristically consistent with his behavior so far, Tsali decides to look for his daughter in law despite the great risk to his life that such an adventure potentially involves. After failing to get any information from the many
refugees he meets about the woman’s whereabouts or what might have befallen her, Tsali and Soquah get started on a trip to her hometown. Hence, for the duration of their journey, the narrative moves by both tension and instability. Similarly, we the readers are in the dark about her. When the two men reach their destination, they find the town deserted and burnt up after being sacked. Considering the unavailability of any knowledge to the contrary, we may gather that the tension that has arisen from the lack of information about the woman has been resolved by death. In fact, after the fruitless trip, Soquah and the rest of the family seem to have given her up as dead. This conviction comes to play a crucial role in Soquah’s life as we later see. Subsequently, Tsali remains with just one of the two local instabilities initially introduced in the narrative: his wife’s illness, not to forget the greater one engendered by the killing.

While still miserably in hiding, Tsali is paid a surprise visit, so to speak, by Chief Euchela. After a long introduction including the traditional pipe smoking and much insinuation intended to set Tsali in the mood for receiving the news he is carrying, Euchela manages to bring himself to disclose the purpose of his visit:

Sketsi sent Little Will to tell me that he will allow us refugees to remain in the hills if we will surrender you and your family to be sacrificed in revenge
The narrator reports that Tsali has received the “terrible news with amazing fortitude” (203). Yet in the dialogue that follows Euchela’s breaking the news to Tsali and the latter’s acceptance of it, we hear Tsali express his distrust of the white man and his law, reminding the Chief that in Georgia white people can steal anything from the Indian with impunity because Indians are not permitted to speak in court. To this, Eucheló responds by telling Tsali that he has not come to exert any pressure on him and that the decision is up to him. Eventually, Tsali decides to surrender. I would like to suggest that Tsali’s decision is a function of the deep structure of his character. His acceptance to immolate himself for the sake of his people is in conformity with the old Cherokee way of sharing and giving.

Before Euchela’s visit, Tsali has once run into Euchela and his family who were, then, starved and had nothing to hunt or cut wood with. And although Tsali and his people were in no better condition, they shared their meager supply of food with their kinspeople. In addition, before their departure, Tsali gave them a bayonet, an axe and seed corn, saying:

“We will divide with you whatever we have...This has always been the Cherokee way. Part of our maize, both flint and flour, we give to you in your kettle, so that Old Woman’s grandchildren will always be with us. One rifle you may
also have--Tahlee's--but we can spare only four charges of gun food. This broken axe is also yours. The bayonet can serve as a knife. We have no more to give." (128)

Importantly, during this meeting, Tsali expresses his regret at seeing the Cherokee tormented on his own account. Addressing his brother Teetlunuchee, Tsali says: "I do not like to be the reason for the Cherokee suffering" (125). So, even if the General does not keep his promise to allow the refugees to remain in the land after Tsali's surrender, Tsali's decision is in part dictated by his desire to relieve the people of the torture they are undergoing at the hand of the white soldiers. Ever since Tsali's escape, the troopers have been harassing the Cherokees to get information about his hideout. Here we see evidence of his abiding qualities--care, compassion and love--at work as they now extend and widen to encompass the whole tribe. It is because of his awareness of these qualities in Tsali that Chief Euchela ventured to ask him to surrender. It should be mentioned that before he sprang the news on Tsali, Euchela reminded him of what he said at the end of their last meeting. Trying both to summon his courage to disclose the purpose of his visit and to prepare Tsali for it, Euchela set to remind Tsali of his generosity to them. On hearing this, Tsali wonders: "Is it not our way to give that people may live?" (201). As if waiting for this answer, Euchela responds promptly: "This is why my heart lies dead. I am forced to
come again to ask you to give, that the people may live” (201). After giving Euchela his agreement, Tsali takes his leave of the Chief to go consult the other men because, as he has told Euchela, he cannot speak for them.

As might be expected in a situation of such magnitude and fatality, Tsali comes to find that breaking the news not as easy as he first thought. To overcome this difficulty, he resorts to telling heroic stories of Indian warriors who risked their lives so that their people might survive. Besides preparing them for the news, it is unmistakably clear that Tsali has meant those narratives to act on the men, to produce the effect he desires. In another way, he wanted to sway them to agree to surrender.

Tsali’s storytelling seems to succeed in producing the desired effect on his audience, in that after he tells them what the real story is, Soquah breaks the silence to announce his agreement: “With my wife gone, I am dead anyhow. I always talk big, but in the end I always do what my father wants. I know you have decided we must die for the good of the Cherokee refugees. I am now ready to perish beside you” (208). Soquah’s positive response helps break the resistance of the other two males. Only the youngest son will be spared death as his father has demanded.

On the day appointed for their surrender, Chief Euchela arrives with twelve Cherokee men to accompany them to where Sketsi and his men are. On the way, the men see many people
who have come to give them a hero's sendoff with "the Brave heart song" which the Cherokee women used to sing "to encourage the warriors to fight hard" (224). Accidentally, Tsali sees the old medicine man Wauhatchie. From their talk, we learn that the old man has come to apologize to Tsali for not coming to heal his wife, because he was held up by the Unegas. On hearing this, Tsali assures him that his services are still needed and insists on keeping his side of the bargain. By way of paying the medicine man's fee in advance, Tsali exchanges his fairly good leggings and moccasins for the old man's frayed ones. Further, Tsali asks the old man to tell his wife that she has been good. Here we see a move intended to enhance the image of Tsali as the loving and caring husband. Even in the face of death, Tsali remains concerned over the health of his wife. We can argue that by closing this deal with the old medicine man, Tsali has set in motion what could be a resolution of the second of the initial local instabilities with which the narrative opened. Finally, the men reach the place where General Sketsi and his men have been waiting.

To their mortification, the men are told by Little Will who acts as mediator and interpreter that the Captain, the General's deputy, has decided that they will be killed by their tribesmen. Little Will tries hard to dissuade the Captain from his decision, but to no avail. So Tsali and the three men are tied to the saplings and are shot dead and
buried by their own kinsmen. The killing of Tsali by his people is intended first to humiliate Euchela and the other Cherokees and second and more importantly, to strip Tsali of any connotations and implications of heroism and martyrdom, as Little Will has told Tsali himself: "I argued with the Captain to no avail. It seems the army is beginning to suspect if it fires the bullets, you will become martyrs.... So it was decided you would not become martyrs if your own people were forced to shoot you" (246).

Further, to ensure a total elimination of Tsali's memory, the Captain orders his horsemen to ride upon the graves to erase every sign of them. But unbeknown to the Captain, Euchela has dropped some kernels of Indian maize over the graves, saying: "You gave me maize in the Snowbirds that I might live...You always said maize was our life. This is the very maize you gave me, but really it is you who have become our life. Now I have blended the Old Woman's maize with you, so that next spring we will know exactly where you lie buried" (252). The erasure and distortion of the history of colonized peoples' resistance to their oppressors is a procedure aggressively followed by European colonizers in every region to fall victim to their colonialist rule.

It is clear that death has resolved the instabilities that have arisen for Tsali from his eviction from his home and which got complicated by his killing the white soldier. But the global instability, that is, the Cherokee removal,
continues to date. The continuity of the global instability can be felt and witnessed through its detrimental effects embodied in the identity and self-image crisis suffered by Cherokees and their descendants since the beginning of their alienation from their homeland. For the uprooting of a people from their land goes beyond the mere physical severance of their ties to it, as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin suggest, to the erosion of their sense of self and the destruction of their language “by the imposition of the language of a colonizing power” (The Empire Writes Back 10).

Bedford has made a great effort to write a novel designed to perpetuate and eternalize the memory of Tsali and his matchless self sacrifice to his people. His individual revolt and self immolation which are commonly relegated to the margin and treated as minor events, as Charles Larson indicates, are transformed and expanded by Bedford into historical events of great heroic dimensions and implications. In Bedford’s novel, Tsali appears not as the same nondescript person one comes across in other accounts of the Cherokee removal, but as a person worthy of the reader’s admiration and sympathy. Bedford makes sure to achieve these effects by meticulously portraying him as a character possessed of a set of commendable qualities that translate into functions as the narrative progresses.

Equally important, Bedford has done very well in picturing the Cherokees, to use Boehmer’s terms, as subjects
of their history. Boehmer theorizes that as part of their endeavor to cancel the negative images of colonized peoples in the histories and literatures of the colonizers, postcolonial writers are concerned, more often than not, with depicting colonized peoples "as subjects of their history: fighting amongst themselves, plotting, making mistakes, failing or succeeding" (Boehmer 195). In postcolonial novels, colonized peoples are not presented as passive victims of European colonization but as historical actors responding to invasion and oppression in a variety of ways. In Bedford’s novel, the Cherokee opposition expresses itself in their continuing to live in their country despite the expiration of the two-year grace period stipulated in the treaty, in Utanah’s call for armed resistance, in Tsali’s revolt and self sacrifice, and in many Cherokees’ fleeing the roundup to take refuge in the mountains.
CHAPTER 3
THE RETRIEVAL OF THE NATIVE VOICE AND VISION
IN JAMES WELCH’S FOOLS CROW

The colonization of North America was a multi-faceted and complex operation that involved more than just military power and economic control; it also entailed the textual capture of indigenous peoples by representing them as morally, culturally, and mentally inferior to their European colonizers. "To assume control over a territory or a nation," Boehmer states, "was not only to exert political or economic power; it was also to have imaginative command" (5). The imaginative command to which Boehmer refers has made possible whites' depiction of native peoples as degenerate and cultureless savages. In North America, European settlers resorted to the old European practice of dividing the world into two opposed parts: the civilized, represented by Europe, and the uncivilized, which includes every other region in the world. The division of the world is usually based, among other things, on the presence or absence of writing, which is "kept as much as possible as the defining characteristic of western culture" (Hulme 56). The treatment
of writing as a marker or signifier of culture results in the
denigration of any human achievements that are not
accompanied by or represented in or by written texts (56).
In North America, European colonists had used the written
word as one of the criteria, or indicators, of their
superiority over indigenous peoples. As Chief Standing Bear
once observed: "The man who could write his name on a piece
of paper...was by some miraculous formula a more highly
developed and sensitized person than the one who had never
had a pen in hand" (Standing Bear 201).

European Americans' views of indigenous peoples as
cultureless savages developed in three directions (Green 8).
For some, Native Americans could move from their state of
animality to a state of civilization and culture if placed
under the tutelage of an educator or guardian. Another
development saw the Indian as a blood-thirsty savage that
kills, rapes, and steals for the sheer joy of destruction.
The third development figured the Indian as a noble savage.
The last attitude emerged in the aftermath of the
diminishment of Native Americans' threat to white society and
its culture. In the encounter between Native Americans and
white colonialist settlers, however, two different systems of
meaning have been pitted against each other, resulting in
antithetical perceptions of things. Given the imbalance of
power typifying the relationships between the indigenous
peoples and their invaders, the former have become the tabula
rasa on which whites inscribe meaning and identities. As constructions, the meanings and shifting identity imposed on Native Americans express the psychological and political demands of European Americans rather than an understanding of the Indians themselves. Indigenous peoples in the United States have been systematically judged as inferior and devoid of the capacity to establish their own judicial and political institutions. These views have subsequently necessitated, or worked to justify, the placement of the native peoples under the tutelage of their conquerors who deemed it incumbent on them to see to the indigenes' education and conversion. Typical of articulations of the belief that Indians are incapable of "development" out of their "savagery" is what historian Francis Parkman says in his writing on the Iroquois:

Would the Iroquois, left undisturbed to work out their own destiny, ever have emerged from the savage state? Advanced as they were beyond most other American tribes, there is no indication whatever of a tendency to overpass the confines of a wild hunter and warrior life. They were inveterately attached to it, impracticable conservatists of barbarism, and in ferocity and cruelty they matched the worse of their race. (lxxv)

Still more, the claim that Native American gathering and hunting economies were dissipatory of land productivity was also used to vindicate the so-called "just war" against the natives (Green 16).
This is in brief the tradition of misrepresentation and cultural denigration of indigenous peoples in North America that James Welch’s novel *Fools Crow* is intended to subvert, by showing that the pre-colonial existence of the Blackfeet was not dominated by the darkness of savagery and the absence of culture, nor was it devoid of human achievement. Set in the late 1860s, Welch’s novel depicts the life and world of the Blackfeet at the crucial moment in which they are being threatened by collapse in the face of the ever-intensifying encroachment of white settlers.

As I will show in this chapter, the contribution of *Fools Crow* to the project of postcolonial historical reclamation carried out by Native American writers consists in representing the Blackfeet as a people who possess a culture of their own and in affirming indigenous voice and agency, which are systematically erased by white-biased representations of Native Americans. This cultural and historical retrieval is part of the symbolic overhaul, the “process through which damaged [indigenous] selves could be remade” (Boehmer 194). In this novel, the Blackfeet appear as historical actors seeking control over their destiny and not as passive victims of their invaders. With the escalation of white colonial intrusion, the Blackfeet negotiate, wrangle, and differ over the best approach to pursue in dealing with European American settlers.
Welch's attempt to perform a somewhat full and minutely detailed recovery of Blackfeet culture and post-contact history seems to have resulted in his choosing the Bildungsroman form for his novel. Fools Crow is a Bildungsroman that portrays the protagonist Fools Crow's maturation and development into a culture hero. The employment of this genre seems to be most suited to Welch's project, in that it has enabled him both to have good control over the presentation of the abundant cultural material he wants to restore and to reveal Blackfeet culture and history as affective and shaping processes rather than as abstract concepts and isolated events. As indicated by the German word Bildung "Gestaltung, formatio, process" (Kontje 1), the Bildungsroman is not only about the development or appearance of the character depicted, but is also a process of giving form to the cultural and historical factors that co-determined the character's development (Kontje 1).

Thus, the depiction of Fools Crow's development seems to be a means to an end: the reclamation of the Blackfeet culture and part of their history. Welch is more interested in capturing those cultural and historical factors that influence Fools Crow's life and the lives of the other Blackfeet characters than in writing a novel that only celebrates the protagonist's individual achievement and self-fulfillment. The fulfillment that we see Fools Crow achieve is of the other-centered type described by the Nigerian
n AFLUMLMENT is other-centered, a

giving or subduing of the self, perhaps to somebody, perhaps
to a cause; in any event something external to it" (Achebe,
"The Writer" 53). That the representation of Fools Crow’s
development is not the novel’s reason for being can be seen
through Welch’s attempt to minimize the egocentrism of the
Bildungsroman genre by including the stories of other
characters to broaden the narrative’s historical scope, in
his invocation of Blackfeet tradition, and, above all, in his
presentation of a hero whose life is not only connected to
that of his community but is also modeled on the life of a
Blackfeet mythic figure.

As the narrative unfolds, we see how Blackfeet values
and the confrontation between Indians and whites dramatically
influence Fools Crow’s growth from an unlucky and unpromising
young man at the beginning of the novel into a culture hero
who assumes the responsibility of preserving his people’s
culture and history and of preparing them for the hardships
to come. In the Native American tradition, culture heroes
“travel to the underworld or to the heavens in search for a
father, light, fire, or some other boon or deliverance for
the people” (Leeming and Page 13).

Several critics point out that Fools Crow’s story has
some similarities to the Blackfeet myth of Scarface who
brought to the Blackfeet the Medicine Lodge that would be
erected during the Sundance ceremony every summer (Ballard

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254; Barry 3; Owens 158). Welch reinforces the relationship of Fools Crow's story to the myth of culture hero by sending the protagonist on a vision quest to Feather Woman's lodge on the Great Plains. Moreover, Fools Crow is initiated in traditional medicine by the "many-faces" old man Mik-api, whose name is derived from a Blackfeet legend. Mik-api, meaning the Old Red Man, was a warrior who waged a one-man raid to avenge the killing of a man from his tribe (Grinnell 61-69).

Given the importance of the myth of Scarface to the analysis of the narrative, I would like to summarize it before proceeding to discuss the novel. In Grinnell's version of the myth, Scarface is an unpromising and poor young man whose face is disfigured by a scar on one of his cheeks. He has no lodge of his own, nor a wife to mend his moccasins and wash his old clothes. Scarface sets forth on a journey to Sun Chief to seek his permission to marry the beautiful girl who keeps turning down all her young suitors because, as she discloses to her parents, she belongs to the Above Person, Sun Chief, who asked her not to marry. During his journey to Sun Chief's lodge in the east, Scarface is helped and given the direction to the Sun's dwelling by several animal helpers: a wolf, a bear, a badger, a wolverine, and two swans that carry him across the big water and let him off near the Sun's lodge. From there, Scarface sets out on the trail leading to the Above Person's place and
comes upon some beautiful objects. He sees a war shirt, a shield, a bow and arrows, but he does not touch them. Not very far from these things, Scarface runs into Morning Star, the son of Sun Chief and his wife Night Red Light (the moon). As the two young men reach the lodge, Morning Star tells his mother that Scarface is a good and honest man because he has not touched his things which he found on the trail. Scarface is warmly welcomed and called "son" by the Moon and has his wish fulfilled after he kills the great terrible birds that have killed the Sun's many sons except Morning Star. Morning Star has survived because his parents have prevented him from hunting near the big water (the ocean), where the ferocious birds roam and roost. In the end, the Sun rewards Scarface by giving him his consent to marry the beautiful young girl as well as removing the scar from his face. Sun Chief also gives the young man two raven feathers as a sign for the girl; these feathers should be worn by the husband of the woman who builds a Medicine Lodge for the Sundance ceremony.

Like other postcolonial Native American novelists, Welch has imposed on the historical novel genre mythic material from his culture (Owens 10) and in so doing, he has authored a historical mythic novel. "Welch develops his novel," Barry says, "as prose epic when he presents a hero who must survive for his people, retells and extends traditional Blackfeet myths, and connects his hero to these myths and to historical
events" (3). Welch's employment of myth reinforces its legitimacy as a medium, a form, of conveying knowledge and interpretation of life and the universe, of binding members of clans and tribes together, of relating historical events and of providing role models (Jay 3). In modern times, myth has been conventionally associated with irrationality and viewed as a creation/product of the primitive mind. Thus, Welch's evocation of myth is a major part of his project of cultural recovery, which is meant to challenge the dominant representations of Native Americans' past as "one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them" (Achebe, "The Novelist" 45).

Moreover, by grafting the culture hero myth on the Western novel genre, Welch does not only modify or hybridize the historical narrative, but also lessens, as I have mentioned above, the egocentrism characterizing the Bildungsroman subgenre. Fools Crow is a Bildungsroman with a difference: the life and destiny of its hero are strongly bound to those of the community. That a person's survival is related to and dependent on the survival of the community is a theme Fools Crow shares with the novels of Erdrich and Hogan. Nanapush (in Tracks) Belle Graycloud, Michael Horse, and Stace Red Hawk (in Mean Spirit) all put the survival and well-being of their communities before their personal interests and desires. These characters are unfailingly committed to helping ensure the survival of their peoples.
and the continuity of their histories and cultures. In Bedford's novel, we even see the survival of the tribe privileged over the individual's; Tsali sacrifices his life in the hope that the fugitive Cherokees would be allowed to remain in their ancestral homeland.

Furthermore, as I have pointed out above, the egocentrism of the Bildungsgroman is impaired further by Welch's inclusion of the stories of several characters. Welch has used these subplots as a means to both present a diversity of native viewpoints on the relations between Indians and whites and to incorporate the largest possible amount of historical information and cultural material whose inclusion would not have been possible if he had restricted himself to only telling the narrative of Fools Crow. It is to this end that he keeps shifting the narrative point of view among various Pikuni characters to communicate their differing views regarding the proper and useful way or ways to deal with the white intruders. The presentation of the Pikunis' contradictory attitudes toward whites seems to have served what I think is the writer's purpose of depicting them as historical subjects, not as victims passively crouching at the receiving end.

Hence, just as the invocation of indigenous myths has resulted in modifying or hybridizing the historical novel, Welch's concern with imaginatively reclaiming the Pikunis' life and culture, portraying the effects of white invasion
on the Pikunis and the manner in which they reacted to it, has led to what he describes as his getting around historical facts:

When you write a historical book, there are certain historical facts that have to be included. I mean, they are just there, sticking up like big old snags in the forest. You have to write your way around them. What you try to do is create fictional stories that coincide with historical fact. It’s important for me to know what all the facts were of that particular time so I can tell my fictional story and not abuse the facts too much. It’s a tricky process. I was more concerned with the characters and how they related to each other, how they related to the encroaching settlers, soldiers, and what the dialogue was like than with the straight historical facts of that particular time. ("A Conversation with James Welch" 109)

By writing his way around historical facts, Welch probably refers to his avoidance of mentioning the dates of historical events narrated in the novel. This is most apparent in the omission of the documentary names and dates of events such as the Lame Bull’s Treaty which the Blackfeet signed with the U.S. government on October 17, 1855, the U.S. Cavalry massacre on the Marias on January 23, 1870, and the names of the fur companies that came to the Blackfeet territory at different and successive historical moments. What is more, although there are at least four real-life persons in the novel, they seem to blend finely into the huge cast of fictional characters Welch has created in the novel.
To re-write a history of a people, Welch seems to imply, does not always or exclusively mean to present different facts or new truths about it; it also means offering alternative or new interpretations and understanding of it, as well as portraying the material, psychological, and social effects that this history has had on the people concerned and their responses and reactions to it. As the narrative progresses, we see this idea embodied through the spectrum of the Blackfeet's attitudes toward white invasion: Owl Child and his group's armed resistance, Fast Horse's self-alienation, Little Dog's counseling of making peace with whites, the majority of chiefs' advocacy of negotiating with white settlers, and Fools Crow's shifting from initially entertaining the idea of fighting them to finally and conclusively embracing the option of compromise with whites.

Welch's desire to embed his novel in the Blackfeet culture and history, to begin with, reveals itself in his working to establish the hero's story as similar to that of Scarface right from the beginning. At the inception of the narrative, we see White Man's Dog (Fools Crow) lamenting his bad luck; for although he is eighteen, he has not so far accomplished anything significant compared to his father, who owns many horses and is married to three wives:

Not so lucky was White Man's Dog. He had little to show for his eighteen winters. His father, Rides-at-the door, had many horses and three wives. He himself had three horses and no wives.
His animals were puny, not a blackhorn runner among them. He owned a musket and no powder and his animal helper was weak. (3)

To a reader without a minimum of knowledge of the Blackfeet culture, White Man's Dog's self-pitying and self-deprecation may seem exaggerated if not entirely meaningless, considering that he is still young and has a full life ahead of him. But when considered within the context of his own culture, his lamentation would appear to be well-grounded and justified. In Blackfeet society, Grinnell explains, a young man could not marry unless he had proved his bravery by participating in successful raids against the enemy and capturing a number of horses and other property (211). Bravery in war and the acquisition of horses are the standards by which a Blackfeet male youth's social standing and prestige are measured and evaluated. Hence, it is not at all surprising that White Man's Dog perceives himself as unlucky compared to his father. Without any knowledge about the cultural value of the things lacking in his life, our understanding of his plight especially at this early stage of our reading will be shallow and deficient. That the implied author seems to have anticipated this is evident from the comparison he has introduced between White Man's Dog and his father. This comparison enables us both to form an initial image of White Man's Dog and to comprehend and feel the depth of his distressing situation. Moreover, in what seems an effort to
fully reveal the social dimensions and implications of White Man’s Dog’s plight, the narrator reports that even bad girls disdain him for his failure to distinguish himself among the other young men: “Even the bad girls who hung around the forts wanted nothing to do with him. Because he did not own a fine gun and a strong horse they ignored him" (4).

Besides stemming from his lack of material success, White Man’s Dog’s feelings of self-pity and self-deprecation are aggravated by his belief that he is inferior to his brother Running Fisher, who at the age of sixteen has managed to prove his mettle by seizing two horses from the Cutthroats. Worse still, while White Man’s Dog is even sneered at by bad girls, Running Fisher is the object of competition by women, each trying to get him as husband for her daughter: “He was tall and wiry and the girls pointed him out. Men teased him but not too far, while the women made sure their daughters crossed his path as often as possible” (9). By depicting White Man’s Dog as a young man who is down on his luck, Welch establishes the first parallel between the hero’s life and development and the myth of Scarface. White Man’s Dog appears to be as unpromising as Scarface is at the beginning of the myth.

In addition to introducing White Man’s Dog and encapsulating the cultural context in which he lives, the first two chapters prepare our expectations about his potential emergence as a hero, which is foreshadowed in the
revelation of his ambition and determination to make a turnabout in his life. Underneath his self-pitying, White Man's Dog harbors an ambition and a determination to become rich by acquiring a many-shots gun that would enable him to hunt many blackhorns: "[B]ut White Man's Dog was determined to have one. Then he could bring about his own luck. He would have plenty of wives, children, horses, meat" (4).

As it soon turns out, the opportunity that will launch him on the road to self-fulfillment will not be slow in offering itself to him. In the second chapter, we see White Man's Dog receive, through his friend Fast Horse, an invitation from Yellow Kidney to join them on a horse-taking raid on the Crow camps. Yellow Kidney is one of the tested and experienced Pikuni braves and warriors.

During the raid party's journey to the Crow camp, the narrative shifts to become focalized through Yellow Kidney, in line with Welch's overall plan to present and picture the various aspects of the Pikuni life and culture. As I shall illustrate, the disclosure of Yellow Kidney's stream of thought, reminiscences, and planning of the raid allows us to learn a significant amount of information particularly about the Blackfeet warring and raiding techniques and tactics, as well as their conceptions of bravery and heroism. For instance, it was an established Blackfeet tradition that a war or raid party should always be led by an experienced warrior (Grinnell 250). Such knowledge would

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have been difficult to include, and to convey definitely, if the narration had remained focused on White Man's Dog, who is going on his first raid.

When the party starts out on its journey, we come to learn by reading Yellow Kidney's thoughts that he has allowed the "unlucky" White Man's Dog to join his party because of his father's status and reputation: "He did not like to have an unlucky man on this trip. Bad luck, like the white-scabs disease, can infect others. He had only agreed to take White Man's Dog along because he respected his father" (12). However, Yellow Kidney's attitude toward the young man will dramatically change once he discerns, in the course of their trip, White Man's Dog's potential for change. Comparing White Man's Dog, once, to his friend Fast Horse, who is a head taller and of an erect body, Yellow Kidney recognizes that White Man's Dog looks like a wolverine: "He is like the wolverine, thought Yellow Kidney, low and powerful. If he has the heart to match, we will make these Crows pay" (20). So, in spite of White Man's Dog's reputation as an unlucky young man, Yellow Kidney begins to like the young man because of his steadiness and calmness, "rare qualities in a young man on his first adventure" (21). Upon this recognition, Yellow Kidney utters what amounts to a prophecy: "He can be trusted, .... He will do well" (21). In addition to building expectations about the performance of White Man's Dog during the raid, the exposition of Yellow Kidney's view of him makes
known the qualities that the people deem important for a warrior. As I have said above, the orientation of narration to Yellow Kidney's perspective has allowed the implied author to bring into the narrative historical and cultural information, whose inclusion may not seem possible without interrupting the narrative flow by direct authorial commentaries and interpretations.

When the party reaches the head of the Big River on the fifth day of the journey, the narrator reports that Yellow Kidney has told the young men that a short distance to the southwest are the properties of a Malcolm Clark. Malcolm Clark is a Napikwan (white man) who was a trader who later turned to ranching. Yellow Kidney has cautioned his party against running into Malcolm, not because he is afraid of him but because he wants to be away from the Napikwan town at Many-sharp-points-ground, where the white chiefs hate and fear the Pikunis and intend to wipe them out. To further explain Yellow Kidney's motive in skirting the town, the narrator discloses that the white chiefs want the blue-coated seizers, the cavalry, to exterminate "all the Pikunis so that they could graze their whitehorns" (15). Later in the narrative, we come across the same idea when the narrator filters Rides-at-the-door's opinion on Heavy Runner with his suggestion that the Pikunis make peace with whites:

Rides-at-the-door looked ahead at the back of Heavy Runner.... He was a good-hearted man who wanted peace for his
people, and Rides-at-the-door respected him for that.... But this very desire had led him to believe that the Napikwans too wanted what was best for the Indians. He could not see that they only wanted the land, the blackhorn ranges on which to graze their whitehorns, and the Pikunis were the obstacles to the fulfillment of this goal. (269)

Such revelations of the historical circumstance through the characters' thought and their interpretations of it are in line with Welch’s plan to focus on depicting the people’s reactions to and views on white intrusion.

According to the narrator, the Pikunis had already signed away a great portion of their territory and Yellow Kidney himself had attended the treaty-signing meeting. The Pikunis were happy and thrilled about the treaty because of the goods they received in return for the portion of land they gave up in the treaty:

Cut beads, iron kettles, knives, bells, the ice-that-looks-back, carrot and twist tobacco, a few blankets. All the chiefs got Napikwan saddles to go with their medallions. Then the Napikwans gave the people some of their strange food: the white sand that makes things sweet, the white powder, the bitter black drink. The people were happy, for they knew these white men would come often to hand out their goods. Even Yellow Kidney had been happy.... But their agreement had made the white chiefs happy, for now the Napikwans could move onto the Pikuni lands. Everyone was happy. (16)

The above passage is an illuminating example of how the change of focalization from White Man’s Dog to Yellow Kidney has enabled the implied author to incorporate information
about extradiegetical past events from the history of the contact between the Pikunis and the Napikwans. The treaty to which Yellow Kidney refers is the Lame Bull’s Treaty which was signed on October 17, 1855 and ratified by the Senate on April 15, 1856 (Ewers 221-2). Indians gave the treaty this name because it was signed by Lame Bull, the head chief of the Pikuni tribe and the first Pikuni to sign the treaty. In this treaty, the Blackfeet agreed to allow whites to live and pass through their country. They also agreed to permit the construction of roads, military posts, agencies, missions, schools, farms, shops, and mills. In return, the Blackfeet would receive annually twenty-thousand dollars’ worth of goods and provision for ten years in addition to fifteen thousand dollars that would be spent on agricultural and mechanical enterprises for the tribe. It seems that this treaty was part of the U.S. government’s plan to solve the so-called “Indian Problem” by eradicating the Blackfeet social and cultural formations through transforming them from hunters into farmers.

As the narrator continues to describe the relations between Indians and whites by filtering Yellow Kidney’s thought and memories, we learn that things are currently deteriorating as a result of Owl Child and his gang’s activities. Owl Child is a Pikuni renegade waging a war against whites. What is more, Owl Child is both feared and hated by many of his people. Except for Mountain Chief who
is adamantly opposed to trading with white people and provides protection for the Pikuni outcast and his band, all of the other chiefs consider Owl Child’s raiding and killing of whites a threat to their own security and well-being because in time, they think, his actions will provoke a violent retaliation from the Napikwans. For his part, Owl Child believes that the Pikunis are no more than a bunch of losers, because white people are stealing more and more of their land for trinkets and baubles.

Significantly, the differences in opinion dividing the Pikunis and their negotiations concerning the best course to take in dealing with whites show them as historical subjects in a manner that fits Boehmer’s description of post-colonial writers’ depictions of colonized peoples. In other words, the Pikunis, as Welch portrays them, are not mere passive victims of the encroaching white society. The majority of them have opted to trade with whites for the sake of protecting their children and women. For them, it is better to lose segments of their region than to run the risk of getting entangled in a war which they think they are certain to lose, given the overwhelming power of whites.

As Yellow Kidney and the men approach the Crow camp, they decide to wait for nightfall. Meanwhile, Yellow Kidney calls Eagle Ribs, their scout throughout the journey, to give him an account of the locations of the Crow lodges and horse herds for the second time. After listening to the scout’s
detailed report, Yellow Kidney assigns them their tasks. He chooses White Man's Dog to head a group of three that will cut loose the horses and drive them out of the village. It is quite obvious that his assigning White Man's Dog to lead the other three young men in taking the horses is based on his previous recognition of the young man's steadiness and calmness. The plan Yellow Kidney has laid down is that White Man's Dog and his group are to go first into the enemy camp, while he, Fast Horse, and Eagle Ribs remain in their hiding place until the moon is well into its journey down. Yellow Kidney has planned their raid as such, because he also wants to kill the Crow Chief Bull Shield, who, we are told, had killed many Pikunis in previous raids.

Following Yellow Kidney's revelation of his plan, the narrative perspective shifts back to White Man's Dog. This change in focalization is obviously designed to foreground White Man's Dog's first raiding experience due to its importance for his character development and the construction of his personal identity. Beyond this, the focus on his performance during the raid allows the implied author to keep us in the dark about what might happen to Yellow Kidney, Fast Horse, and Eagle Ribs.

On entering the Crow village, White Man's Dog begins carrying out his mission to untie and lead the horses assisted by his companions. Were it not for a colt that has broken away from the herds thereby attracting the attention
of one of the night riders watching over the camp, their mission would have gone smoothly. Sensing the risk of being discovered, White Man's Dog instantly presses the horse he is now riding into a gallop after the rider who is determined to intercept the colt. Ultimately, he overtakes the rider and stabs him twice in the back before he falls from the horse. On looking down at the dead body now lying on the ground, White Man's Dog recognizes, to his dismay, that he has only killed a youth. Promptly, he is swept by a wave of a stinging guilt which he tries to subdue by reasoning that the "youth was an enemy and would surely have warned the others" (32). I think White Man's Dog's remorse over killing the young Crow rider partly stems from his sense of violating the rules governing the horse-taking raids. Those raids were not carried out for the sake of killing enemies and taking scalps; rather, they were inspired by the ambition to gain economic security and good social standing that the possession of horses would guarantee (Ewers 126). The exposition of White Man's Dog's sense of guilt for violating the norms of this kind of raid is supposedly meant to give an initial impression of White Man's Dog as a person who would live in accordance with his tribe's values and conduct codes.

On the next day, the men are shocked at seeing Eagle Ribs arrive without Yellow Kidney or Fast Horse. First, they attribute their not coming to the weather, because it started
snowing shortly after they slipped out of the Crow camp. So, they decide to wait another night for the two men who are probably hiding to wait out the snowstorm. But to their horror, only Fast Horse arrives late that night. Early the next day, Eagle Ribs, the oldest among them, takes charge of dividing the horses.

What has happened is that Yellow Kidney was captured when he snuck into the camp to locate and kill Bull Shield. This we learn from Yellow Kidney himself, when he returns to the Lone Eaters who have already given him up as dead. The capture of Yellow Kidney has been brought about by Fast Horse’s loud boasting in the Crow camp. Narrating the story to the chiefs, Yellow Kidney says:

But we had not gone a hundred steps before I began to hear a loud noise at the edge of the camp.... My ears turned as big as the wags-his-tail’s and soon I heard the words, and when I could make them out they were fierce words indeed—'Oh, you Crows are puny, your horses are puny and your women make me sick! If I had the time I would ride among you and cut off your puny woman heads, you cowardly Crows'—said in the tongue of our people as clear that night as I tell you now. (73)

Yellow Kidney returns with all his fingers missing: they were chopped off by the Crow Chief Bull Shield in front of all his people. After the Crow release him, Yellow Kidney wanders into a camp of the Spotted Horse People (Cheyennes) which was inhabited by elderly people recuperating from the white-scabs disease (small pox). It should be mentioned that Yellow
Kidney himself has contracted the disease while hiding in a sickness lodge in the Crow camp. Fortunately, the elderly Cheyennes have nursed the mutilated and sick warrior back to health.

The horse-taking raid has proved to be a vital turning point in the lives of Yellow Kidney, Fast Horse, and White Man's Dog. Yellow Kidney's return, to begin with, is embarrassing because the loss of his fingers has rendered him disabled and useless. As for Fast Horse, the raid has caused an equally severe damage to his life and the prospect of his becoming a warrior. Fast Horse's accountability for the capture of Yellow Kidney and the ensuing loss of his fingers has given rise to his alienation from his people. Consequently, he leaves the Lone Eaters to join Owl Child even before the chiefs announce their decision to banish him in punishment for the tragedy that has befallen Yellow Kidney. But more than just being forced to leave as a result of having caused this tragic event, Fast Horse chooses self-exile because of his loss of faith in the old ways and his disappointment in the chiefs and his people who he thinks are helpless and powerless vis-a-vis the ever-multiplying whites who are resolved to drive them off their lands:

And then he grew bitter and he hated his people and all they believed in. They had no power. They were pitiful, afraid of everything, including the Napikwans, who were taking their land even as the Pikunis stood on it. Only Owl Child has the power and courage. He took what he
wanted; he defied the Napikwans and killed them. He laughed at their seizers and chiefs when they threatened revenge. And he laughed at his own people for their weak hearts. (71)

However, it does not take long for his exaltation of and admiration for Owl Child to wear off, for soon he starts to lose confidence and faith in his role model and hero. In the end, Fast Horse breaks away from the group to head north to Canada: “He was alone now, but he knew he would be welcome at the whiskey forts in the north. There were many men alone up there” (331).

Charles G. Ballard suggests that Fast Horse has rejected Fools Crow’s (White Man’s Dog) pleas that he rejoin the people and cling to the traditional ways because “he has seen too much and understood too much to ever return to what he once was” (253). Fast Horse has probably decided not to return to the tribe out of the recognition that sooner or later the whole tribe will be forcefully exiled by the Napikwans. Ballard argues that Fast Horse symbolically represents a future of permanent tragic escape. Yet much textual evidence shows that even those who advocate trading with whites to ensure the survival of their children and women are not too certain that such a scheme will succeed in fending off white aggression forever. A case in point is the massacre of chief Heavy Runner and his band and the devastation of their village by the U.S. Cavalry which occur toward the end of the narrative. Massacres and village
razings are indubitably more tragic than individual escapes. Thematically, Fast Horse stands for those Indians who are driven into a life of intoxication by their perception of the inevitability of the disappearance of the old ways of life. Read differently, Fast Horse’s pursuit of a separate fate is an expression of his agency and self-assertion--tragic though it may be.

Contrary to his friend Fast Horse, who early on appears as a promising warrior and a future keeper of the Beaver Medicine Bundle currently kept by his father, the “unlucky” and unpromising White Man’s Dog emerges from the raid victorious and heroic—a success that ushers in the change of the course of his life. Critic Nora Barry suggests that White Man’s Dog’s successful performance either on the horse-taking raid or on his later adventures is a result of his observance of and living “within the restraints of the Pikuni values in his roles as warrior, husband, and hunter” (Barry 6). During the raid, White Man’s Dog strictly acts according to Yellow Kidney’s plan out of his sense of responsibility. After overcoming his fears, he turns to implement his task in step with the instructions of his future father-in-law. His humility and down-to-earth assessment of his abilities sharply contrast with Fast Horse’s overestimation of his abilities, arrogance, and inordinate pride, definitely the cause of his boasting in the enemy camp. Conversely, White Man’s Dog’s good execution
of the horse-taking mission is the working of the qualities we have earlier seen Yellow Kidney admire in him.

It is worth noting, however, that just as Fast Horse has functioned as a foil for White Man's Dog during the horse-taking raid, the hero's brother Running Fisher plays the same role during the Lone Eaters' raid on the Crows to revenge the mutilation of Yellow Kidney. While Fast Horse fails to control his arrogance and pride and thus causes the capture of Yellow Kidney, Running Fisher does not enter the Crow camp because of the strong feeling of fear the sun's eclipse has aroused in him on the day of the raid as he tells his father later on:

"I-I lost my courage that day. I trembled like the quaking-leaf tree. I prayed to Sun Chief to give me back my courage, to make me fierce against the Crows, to make my people proud of me. It didn't happen. When we charged down on the Crow village, I shot my gun in the air, I shouted threats and I rode hard. But I didn't enter the village. (344)

Contrary to his brother, White Man's Dog manages to control his fear and as a result, succeeds in penetrating to the center of the enemy camp where he kills the Crow Chief Bull Shield, who has cut off the fingers of Yellow Kidney. Importantly, White Man's Dog kills the Crow Chief in compliance with his band's decision that he kill or, to use the Pikuni expression, to count coup on their enemy. After the war raid, the Lone Eaters confer on the protagonist the new name "Fools Crow" because they think the novel's hero has
fooled Bull Shield into believing that he was dead and then jumped to shoot the Crow dead. The truth of the matter is that Fools Crow has not fooled Bull Shield; he has simply fallen after being shot. The reason Fools Crow does not disclose the true story is that the legend of his fooling their enemy seems to make his people feel good about themselves and to boost their morale as we learn from the conversation that takes place between the hero and the trickster Raven:

Raven reached down and picked at the silver bracelet. It jingled on the rock, the tiny sound echoing around the basin. "I don't think you fooled him, do you? The one you got your name for?"

Fools Crow felt his face grow hot with shame. "I fell," he said weakly. "I thought I had been shot. I had been shot, but..."

Raven laughed at the young man's discomfort. "Ah, but you see how it turns out? The people don't know that, and so they speak your name with admiration. It makes them feel good that one so brave walks among them. It increases the Pikuni power. I'll never tell." (162)

Thus the protagonist's new name not only indicates his tribe's recognition of his becoming a warrior, but also fulfills a psychological need for them. It acts as a reminder for them that a young man from their midst has fooled and killed one of their seasoned and brave their enemies.

The changes of the hero's name go to show, Barry suggests, that his development is intimately related to his
rich cultural tradition. "In Indian cultures a name is earned," Louis Owens points out, "and most crucially a name comes from the community to both confer an identity and confirm one's place in the community" (55). The name-giving practice prevalent in Native American cultures both indicates the communality of identity and emphasizes the primacy of family and community over the individual. Therefore, it may be said that coupled with the host of minor stories interspersing the major one, as I have indicated above, the emphasis on the communal signified by the changes of the hero's name seems to make of Welch's novel what I would venture to call a "characteristically Native American Bildungsroman," one in which the hero's life is regulated by his tribe's values and whose identity and sense of self-worth are dependent on its recognition.

It is quite obvious that what happens throughout the two raids forms a contrast between Fast Horse and Running Fisher on one side and White Man's Dog on the other. The unpromising White Man's Dog at the start of the novel is now a warrior, whereas the other two have failed to live up to their expectations. Furthermore, Fools Crow is contrasted to his brother through the revelation of their responses to the temptation of their father's youngest wife Kills-close-to-the-lake. Running Fisher fails to overcome his sexual desire and commits adultery with his father's wife: "He is an insect, and now he commits a great offense against his
father. And he dishonors Kills-close-to-the-lake" (345). For this great offense, Running Fisher meets the same fate Fast Horse has met—he is banished by his father to another Blackfeet tribe. Although Fools Crow is similarly tempted to Kills-close-to-the-lake, he manages to subdue his sexual urges toward her and feels disgusted with himself: "He was sick to death of being the puny wretch who desired the touch of his father's wife, his own near-mother. And he was sick of himself for thinking these thoughts while he had a duty to perform" (92). Fools Crow's deep sense of responsibility for his people and his adherence to the tribal values prevent him from acting the way his younger brother does. Fools Crow is the kind of hero who does not defy his community, nor does he breach the social decorum to satisfy his whims and desires.

In fact, the young man's adherence to traditional values manifests itself in his every act and in all of his relationships with the members of his clan. Shortly after he returns to camp from the horse raid, we see Fools Crow carry out the pledge he has previously made to give five of his horses to the old medicine man Mik-api, whose prayers "in the sweat lodge for him had been answered" (39). It was a custom among the Blackfeet that before a war or raid party set forth, its members would go into a sweat lodge accompanied by an old medicine-pipe man, who would sing and pray that they may have good luck (Grinnell 25). This the young man has
done before he took to the raid trail. Mik-api is also designed to play an important role in Fools Crow's life and character development. After the raid, the old medicine man undertakes to educate Fools Crow in the ways of the sacred medicine in hopes that he will succeed him as the medicine man for the tribe. By the end of the novel, the narrator tells that Mik-api thinks that "[p]erhaps Fools Crow will smoke this tobacco next thunder" (388). We learn this while Mik-api is filling the Thunder Pipe with tobacco in order to smoke to the four directions prior to leading the clan in a ceremonial dance to celebrate the coming of spring heralded by the first thunder. The medicine pipe bundle which Mik-api intends to pass on to Fools Crow is one of the respectable and important medicine bundles of the Blackfeet. Myth has it that the medicine pipe was given to the people by thunder (Ewers 170).

Besides educating the young man in the spiritual and healing powers of traditional medicine, Mik-api is one of the characters who give us some significant knowledge of the history and development of the relations between the Pikunis and the white intruders. During one of their several meetings after the raid, the old medicine man narrates his life story to Fools Crow. Although his narrative is part of the hero's education and initiation, it serves as a vehicle for revealing some of the realities of the Pikuni-white contact. Mik-api relates that he was young when the first
white men appeared in their country. First, white men tried to deal and get along with the people but later they tried to kill them. According to Mik-api, the people were so scared of the white men's guns (sticks-that-speak-from-afar) that they took to their heels. However, this first wave of Napikwans did not stay long and left to be followed by another one, five years later.

The second batch of whites was comprised of hunters who stayed in the mountains to hunt fine-furred animals like beavers, minks, and otters. Mik-api tells Fools Crow that a few Pikuni girls went to live with them and never returned. The white hunters went away gradually after amassing a lot of fur. Mik-api observes that his people could have co-existed with those whites, had they remained in the country; they were different from the Napikwans presently occupying the Pikuni territory: "These were not like these Napikwans today who live in the plains and raise their whitehorns. We could live with those first ones" (66).

Mik-api's telling about the development and stages of whites' encroachment on their territory seems to match Ewers's account of those events. Mik-api's description of the first wave of whites to appear in their country corresponds to what Ewers says about the advent of the Missouri Fur Company to the Montana region in 1811 (51). The Blackfeet had managed to force the company's trappers out of their lands but they paid a heavy price for that. Ewers
says, "Many good men had fallen victim to the trappers’ guns. But the Blackfeet remained in possession of the field" (51).

The second wave consisted, according to Ewers, of several companies that came after the departure of the Missouri Fur Company to compete for getting the lion’s share of the Blackfeet trade. Moreover, what Mik-api says about those hunters and trappers seems to be close to Ewers’s description of the American Fur Company’s peaceful contact with the Blackfeet. This company started its operations in the Blackfeet territory in 1828 and continued well into the 1850s. It was headed by Kenneth McKenzie who was tactful in luring “the border tribes away from [the Canadian] Hudson’s Bay Company” (56). McKenzie had sought to establish peaceful relations with the Pikunis in order to have access to their country which was richer in fur than the lands of the other tribes (56-57).

The omission of names of the fur companies and the dates of their advent in Blackfeet territory does explain what Welch calls “getting round historical fact,” for what is important is not the identification of those companies, but rather the depiction of how the Blackfeet responded to these stages of white intrusion. So, the significance of Mik-api-storytelling derives from its allowing the Blackfeet’s views on the intruders and their conduct to be heard, and which are likely to have some effect on Fools Crow. It may be said that Mik-api’s reference to the impossibility of the co-existence
of the Blackfeet and whites who are currently occupying the plains seems to have prepared Fools Crow to accept the option of trading with white settlers which is counseled by the leaders of the tribe and his father Rides-at-the-door.

Fools Crow's historical knowledge about the arrival of white people is complemented by his father. But while Mik-api specifies the nature and characteristics of each wave of whites, Rides-at-the-door is interested in informing his son about what he believes is the most appropriate approach for dealing with whites. For instance, to warn his son about the great risk involved in Fast Horse's affiliation with Owl Child's band, Rides-at-the-door explains that Owl Child and his group will ultimately provoke whites to exterminate the people:

I'm afraid he will be a bigger problem than ever if he joins Owl Child's gang. They are no good. They think that by killing Napikwans they gain honor. All they will do is bring the blue-coated seizing down on all of us. These seizing will rub us out like the green grass bugs. (89)

Rides-at-the-door holds that signing treaties with whites is far better than plunging headlong into a desperate war which they are bound to lose. The war option will lead to nothing other than the decimation of the Pikunis, because the balance of power is markedly in favor of whites.

To underscore the magnitude and enormity of the danger involved in armed struggle against whites, Rides-at-the-door
tells his son that white people have already exterminated many tribes in the east: "It is said that already many tribes in the east have been wiped away. These Napikwans are different from us. They would not stop till all the Pikunis had been killed off" (89). The Pikunis have no choice but to give up part of their territory to the whites. In this way, the Pikunis, Rides-at-the door thinks, will be able to guarantee their survival: "For this reason we must leave them alone, even allow them some of our hunting grounds to raise their whitehorns. If we treat wisely with them, we will be able to save enough for ourselves and our children" (89). Although Rides-at-the door is not a tribal chief, he has much influence with the Pikuni chiefs and his opinion is shared by the majority of them.

Rides-at-the door’s compromising stance is opposed by two groups of dissenting voices among the Pikunis. Yet these two groups are unable to form a viable and strong opposition party due to their diametrically opposed views regarding the manner of dealing with whites. One group, headed by Little Dog, stridently calls for making peace with whites and adopting their ways. The other is presided over by Mountain Chief who rejects any form of dealing with whites except that of armed resistance. This explains his offering protection for Owl Child and the other Pikuni renegades.

Although he recognizes the wisdom of his father’s advocacy of compromising with whites, Fools Crow has
initially found it hard not to subject his father’s position and views to much questioning and reflection. With the white people unrelentingly penetrating deeper and deeper into their territories, Fools Crow starts to think that a compromise may work to avert the white threat momentarily, but that one day this arrangement is sure to collapse:

His father was right and wise to attempt to treat with the Napikwans. But one day these blue-coated warriors would come, and White Man’s Dog and the other young men would be forced to fight to the death. It would be better to die than to end up standing around the fort, waiting for handouts that never came. Some bands, like the Grease Melters, had already begun to depend too much on the Napikwans. Ever since the Big Treaty they had journeyed to the agent’s house for the commodities that were promised to them. Most of the time they returned empty-handed. And more and more of the Napikwans moved onto Pikuni lands. (93)

Fools Crow’s suspicion of the practicality of his father’s position proves transient and short-lived as we see him give it his full endorsement and support by the end of the novel. While on a hunting trip at the end of the narrative, Fools Crow runs into some survivors from the United States Cavalry’s massacre of Heavy Runner and his band. Contrary to any expectation that he might come to realize the futility of his father’s accommodationist position and thus renounce it, Fools Crow appears to have decidedly aligned himself with the compromise-oriented party. After seeing the devastation that the blue-coated seizers have wreaked on the
village, Fools Crow tries to inspire the survivors to live, instead of encouraging them to take revenge. Addressing a surviving Curlew Woman, Fools Crow says:

It is good that you are alive. You will have much to teach they young ones about the Napikwans. Many of them will come into this world and grow up thinking that the Napikwans are their friends because they will be given a blanket or a tin of the white man’s water. But here, you see, this is the Napikwan’s real gift. (389)

Fools Crow’s meeting with the survivors of the massacre and the horrible sights of the dead and the wrecked village seem to have opened up Fools Crow’s eyes to, and given him a foretaste of, the deadly outcome of an all-out war with whites. He is now firmly assured that his father has been right all along to say that the Pikunis are “no match for the seizers and their weapons” (389). Moreover, the massacre comes to indicate that even peace agreements with whites, or the assumption of their ways, as Little Dog has done by adopting farming, will not guarantee the Blackfeet protection and security. Heavy Runner gets killed by the Cavalry despite the separate peace agreement he has made with whites: “...Heavy Runner was among the first to fall. He had a piece of paper that was signed by a seizer chief. It said that he and his people were friends to the Napikwans. But they shot him many times” (384).

Besides the crucial role the massacre is meant to play in Fools Crow’s development by enlightening him on the
futility of peace with whites, the inclusion of the massacre in the narrative is intended to highlight one of the ugly and horrible features of the process by which the Great Plains, or the entire continent, had been "settled." This massacre and others such as the ones at the Washita River, Sand Creek, Blue River, Sappa Creek, and Bear River (Jaimes 5) challenge whites' romanticization of the settlement of the frontier through the creation and propagation of the myth of "Winning of the West."

American historians of the westward movement in the frontier tend to glorify the expansion of white settlement by depicting it as signifying the progress of civilization. Distorted by the Eurocentric assumptions about whites' cultural superiority, their histories gloss over the destructive impact of this expansion on Native Americans and their environment by justifying it either as a price for civilizing the Indians who are pictured as an obstacle to civilization or by depicting them as beneficiaries of European American civilization (Jacobs 23).

Examples of such distortion and mystification can be found in the writings of, among others, Frederick Jackson Turner. In his essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893), Turner explains the influence of the frontier on the American character and American civilization, arguing that the frontier played a great role in consolidating American institutions and in establishing
the differences of the New World from the Old World: "Thus the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines" (4). In another essay, Turner sings the praises of the pioneer who was symbolized by the rifle and the axe. The pioneer, he says, "was finder as well as fighter-trailmaker for civilization, the inventor of new ways" ("Pioneer Ideals" 270). But Turner has neglected to mention that "westering," the westward expansion of white society, has resulted in the decimation and dispossession of Native Americans and that the notion that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" is a frontier notion (Babcock 8). Indians had to be eliminated and their lands taken over because God gave North America to whites who are capable of putting it to good use as Horaces Greeley says: "These people must die out... There is no help for them. God has given this earth to those who will subdue and cultivate it, and it's vain to struggle against this righteous decree" (qtd. in Babcock 8).

Writing on the role of Indian trade in civilizing Indians, Turner says:

...the Indian trade pioneered the way for civilization... the trails widened into roads, and the roads into turnpikes, and these in turn were transformed into railroads.... In this progress from savage conditions lie topics for the evolutionist. (qtd. in Jacobs 20)
The glorification of this progress did not only entail its justification by representing Indians as savage, but also obscured the destruction of the subsistence economy of the Plains Indians as a result of the decimation of the buffalo herds and the great number of Indians who had fallen to the shotguns of white traders and soldiers alike. The massacre of the Marias and the killing of the Blackfeet narrated in Mik-api’s story serve as testimony to the cruelty that accompanied the settlement of the frontiers.

Quite tellingly, Fools Crow’s advice to the Curlew Woman that she teach the children about white people and the gruesome atrocities they visited upon their people seems to indirectly describe what Welch himself is really doing in or through his novel: narrating from a native perspective what happened to the Blackfeet during their fatally dangerous relations with whites. In a speech he delivered at the University of Minnesota in the spring of 1984, Welch explains that his consciousness toward his country, Montana, was formed by the intense continuing conflict between Indians and whites. He goes on to spell out that his decision to write Fools Crow arose from his desire to “make [his country] interesting and significant” (qtd. in Dexter Westrum 49).

In his role as a Blackfeet novelist restoring the history of his people, Welch parallels the fictional Curlew Woman who, by the stories she would supposedly tell, would shape the consciousness of the Pikuni children about the
complexities and reality of Indian-white relationships. In fact, the consciousness of Welch himself was partly formed by such stories while growing up in Montana. He heard some of these stories from his father who heard them from his grandmother. Welch says that his great grandmother was one of the survivors of the Massacre on the Marias and that she told his father many stories of the events that took place during the 1860s and 1870s ("A Conversation with James Welch" 108). He also states that a "lot of these stories form the basis for parts of the book" (108).

The significance of stories and storytelling as educational and consciousness-shaping modes is a theme that discernibly runs throughout the narrative. Fools Crow's life and development are much influenced by his association with stories and storytellers. As a nine-year old child, the hero has had his birth name Sinopa changed to White Man's Dog. This occurs after he starts following an old storyteller called Victory White Man. Filtering the thought of his mother Double Speak Woman when reflecting on how much her son has changed, the narrator says:

He was nine winters, and he had taken to following an old storyteller around—Victory Robe White Man. One day one of the men saw the storyteller alone and said, "Where is White Man's Dog?" and the name stuck. (218)
Victory Robe White Man is replaced by the old medicine man Mik-api, whose stories, as we have seen, enlightened the teen-ager White Man's Dog about the Napikwans.

Significantly, in his last move to ground the hero in his cultural, social milieu and simultaneously bring to light another important feature of it, Welch sends Fools Crow on a dream/vision quest journey just before his meeting with the survivors of the massacre. Fools Crow starts out to the lodge of the mythic Feather Woman (So-ay-sa-ki) who was the wife of Morning Star and was then expelled from the skyworld by the Above Ones for violating a taboo against digging out turnips. But the vision quest depicted in Welch's novel departs from the traditional culture hero's journey in several respects.

In the same way that Welch has defamiliarized the traditional historical narrative and toned down the egocentrism characteristic of the Bildungsroman, he has also re-written the myth of the culture hero by working some changes and differences into Fools Crow's journey. The first of these changes is that Fools Crow does not travel to the underworld, nor to the heavens, but to Feather Woman's lodge in a meadow on the Great Plains. So the source of the knowledge that Fools Crow brings is a human being, one who had been cruelly punished by the Above One as Fools Crow himself comes to think, when he hears from her the story of her expulsion from the skyworld: "And for the first time, he
came to think of them, the Above Ones, as cruel spirits to allow Feather Women to suffer so. And to allow what he had seen" (359). Feather Woman had been punished for digging out the forbidden turnip and for looking through the hole the turnip left to see her people on earth. She was expelled from the heavens because she had felt nostalgic for her people: "I saw my village, and the people were busy and happy. Women were working on hides, children were playing in the river, men were making arrows and racing their horses. It was so lovely and peaceful that I became homesick" (351).

Fools Crow's accusation of the deities' cruelty for causing Feather Woman to suffer and for allowing the tribulations of the Blackfeet establishes the second difference of Welch's survival myth from the traditional one. The blasphemy Fools Crow commits sharply contrasts with Scarface's bringing of the Medicine Lodge that has to be set up during the Sundance ceremony held every summer to worship and glorify the Above Persons. Unlike Scarface who travels in order to get the Sun Chief's permission to marry the beautiful girl, Fools Crow's journey is motivated by the pressing need to seek some guidance, light, and knowledge that may help his people survive and maintain the integrity of their society and culture. Explaining the reason for his journey to his wife Red Paint, Fools Crow says:

I intend to come back as the man I am.
For now, I must do as Nitsokan says. I myself do not understand, but if my
journey is successful, perhaps it will help the Lone Eaters find a direction. (316)

Fools Crow makes his journey with the intensification of whites’ intrusion into the Blackfeet territory and the outbreak of a small pox epidemic that threatens to decimate the people. The night before he starts out on the trail, he has a dream in which his dream helper Nitsokan tells him to go in quest of a vision: “I had a dream...Nitsokan instructs me to make a journey” (315).

The fourth change Welch has made in the survival myth is his making Fools Crow have his power dream in a Napikwan cabin. Traditionally, a Blackfeet man in pursuit of a vision travels to a place where there will be some danger such as “mountain peaks; or narrow ledge on cut cliffs, where a careless movement might cause a man to fall to his death...or islands in lakes...where there [is] danger that a person might be seized and carried off by the...Under Water People” (Grinnell 192). So the implication of the last change is that the danger the Blackfeet are facing is the encroachment of the white world. Furthermore, the existence of the Napikwan cabin in the middle of the Blackfeet country foreshadows the collapse of their world. This cabin is “the home of the future for the Blackfeet” (Barry 14).

Fools Crow goes on his journey as a beggar and fasts according to the instructions of his dream helper Nitsokan.
During his journey, he has a helper in the buffalo runner he seized from the Crows. Nitsokan has given the horse the acute sight to see where they are going as well as the direction to their destination. On the third day, Fools Crow comes upon the Napikwan cabin which he enters and in it falls asleep, against his wish not to sleep in this strange place. In his dream, he is hindered from reaching Feather Woman’s lodge by an impassable canyon which is blocked by a huge boulder. But just as Scarface is helped by the two swans that carry him across the big water to near the Sun’s lodge, Fools Crow is helped by a freckle-faced dog and a wolverine that show him a crevice through which he emerges into the mythic world of Feather Woman:

Fools Crow ran to the ground juniper and dropped to his knees. He pushed aside the branch and saw a low narrow crevice barely large enough for a man. He gathered his courage and sang his power song that Wolverine had given him; he dropped to his stomach and began to wiggle through the crevice. (325)

In the pictures Feather Woman has painted on the yellow skin, Fools Crow sees the end of the Pikuni world. He sees that the “white-scabs disease has reached” the Pikunis (354), the blue-coated seizers traveling “north toward the country of the Pikunis” (355), the decimation of the buffalo, and a group of Pikuni children humbly and fearfully standing near a white building (school):

They were dark-skinned, and they watched the other children. The two-dark boys
wore clothing like the other boys and their hair was cut short. The three girls wore cloth dresses and they stood timidly a short distance from a large white woman who held a brass bell. (358)

When Fools Crow expresses his concern and fears for the Pikuni children “who will not know the life their people once lived” (359), Feather Woman reassures him, saying: “But they will know the way it was. The stories will be handed down, and they will see that their people were proud and lived in accordance with the Below Ones, the Underwater People—and the Above Ones” (360). Feather Woman’s speech echoes Franz Fanon: Welch delves into the past to find out “that there was nothing to be ashamed of..., but rather dignity, glory, and solemnity” (210).

Fools Crow returns from his journey to find the smallpox raging among the people and to learn that the seizures he saw riding toward the country of the Pikunis have massacred Heavy Runner’s clan of the Marias. Fools Crow’s vision which textually functions as a flashfoward (prolepsis) offers further evidence for what I have said above about the implication of his life in storytelling or, more appropriately, in “telling” either about the past as narrated by Mik-api or about the future through the dream as medium of predicting what will happen to the people. It is no doubt clear that in telling the Curlew Woman to teach the children about white people, Fools Crow is acting on Feather Woman’s
advice that the story should be passed on. Fools Crow is a survival hero who "will bear the burden of the future by helping his people to prepare for its difficulties" and who "will live out his life in the Pikuni way even though his world will change drastically" (Barry 4).

The novel ends with Fools Crow watching his people led by Mik-api in a kind of a thanks-giving dance, as it were, to Thunder Chief for coming once more to the country of the Pikunis. When the procession gets underway and passes by his tipi, Fools Crow glimpses in the old man "a glint of almost youthful eyes, a bright flame of pride that made the younger man smile" (389). A contrast between Fools Crow's mood and condition at the onset of the narrative will vividly show the extent and profundity of the change he has undergone: the self-pitying Fools Crow who is weighed down by his own personal plight is now burdened, yet optimistic, with the knowledge of the collective communal plight the future holds for him and his people. The notion of Fools Crow as a survival hero shines through as the narrator relays his thoughts while watching the dancers: "For even though he was, like Feather Woman, burdened with knowledge of his peoples, their lives and the lives of the children, he knew they would survive" (390).

Welch's Fools Crow represents what I think is a model postcolonial cultural restoration. It plunges the reader into the Blackfeet's mythology, traditional ways of life, and
rituals that give order and significance to their life and existence. Right from the start, the reader is immersed in the mythical past through the conjuring of the survival myth, based on which Fools Crow's life and development are constructed. Fools Crow is a hero whose life gains value and order from his adherence to his tribal values and conduct codes rather than from revolting against them. And like his mythic precursors, he is deeply and seriously concerned about the survival of his people.

Boehmer's description of postcolonial writers' commitment to depicting the rich and diverse precolonial existence of colonized peoples does express what Welch is doing in Fools Crow. More than this, Welch not only pictures the Blackfeet history and culture but also gives voice to their determination and ontological choice of survival. Diegetically, the Pikuni world is threatened by collapse, internally by their differences over the best way to deal with whites and externally by the intensifying white infiltration. Nevertheless, these troubles do not weaken their belief that life should go on, as evinced in their end-of-the-novel celebration of the cycle and continuity of life represented by the return of Thunder Chief, the bringer of rain. To synchronize the novel's ending with the return of rain is to underscore the idea of survival and rebirth. Needless to say, the internal tribal conflict over
how whites should be dealt with best illustrates the Pikunis' being subjects of their history. The majority have chosen the policy of entering treaties with whites over either assimilation or an all-out war in the hope of guaranteeing the survival of their children and their culture. This turns out to have disastrous consequences and fails to stave off a complete white invasion, but their decision to negotiate and enter treaties with whites from a position of strength exhibits their determination to have control over their life and destiny.
Louise Erdrich's novel *Tracks* (1988) is set in the Turtle Mountain Reservation of the Chippewa tribe in North Dakota and spans the period from 1912 to 1924. In this novel, Erdrich presents a fictional representation of the breakup of the Chippewa/Anishinabe society and honors the people's struggle to keep their land and cultural tradition. The inclusion of Erdrich's *Tracks* in this study is based on its differences from the other novels in terms of thematic content and narrative technique. Thematically, *Tracks* deals with almost all of the factors that had led to the disintegration of the native societies in North America: disease epidemics, dispossession, dislocation, demolition of indigenous subsistence economies, and cultural genocide.

A brief comparison between *Tracks* and Welch's and Hogan's novels may help make clear the breadth of the thematic scope in Erdrich's novel. In *Fools Crow*, to begin with, James Welch presents the diverse factors and circumstances that caused the collapse of the Blackfeet
tribal society, but in a form of prophecy revealed by the mythic figure Feather Woman to Fools Crow during his vision/dream quest. On the yellow skin, Fools Crow sees the pandemic outbreak of smallpox, the decimation of the buffalo herds, and the Blackfeet children at a boarding school. However, this is just a foretelling, a short, proleptic prophetic revelation compared to their depiction in Nanapush's narrative. Moreover, Tracks provides a panoramic portrayal of historical events that occurred over a long span of time, while Linda Hogan's Mean Spirit contains a spatially panoramic representation of the disastrous consequences of the U.S. assimilation policy for the whole Osage tribe.

The spatial panoramic characteristic of Hogan's novel is an effect of the frequent shifting of the narrative focus among numerous places, which is, in turn, determined by what seems to be Hogan's project to capture the comprehensiveness of the damage done the whole Osage community as evidenced by the huge cast of characters in the novel. Yet despite the difference in the thematic scope between Tracks and Mean Spirit, these two texts converge in underscoring the continuity of colonization through their depictions of the dispossession of Native Americans and the destruction of their cultures in the first quarter of the twentieth century under the United States' policy of
assimilation. Such depictions expose the falsity and hypocrisy at the core of this policy by showing that the policy that was purportedly designed to civilize Indians has not guaranteed them justice, freedom, or equal opportunity. Contrarily, it has turned out to be nothing but a subterfuge to further dispossess the native peoples and bring about the dissolution of their identity.

Tracks’s other difference from the previous two novels discussed here is established by the dual narrative technique Erdrich has used in rewriting the Chippewa’s experience of colonization. Tracks is composed of two narratives: one narrated by Nanapush, the other by Pauline Puyat. Erdrich uses the dual narrative technique to offer two opposed historical narratives of whites’ colonization of Native Americans. The juxtaposition of these stories is intended to dramatize storytelling as an act of empowerment and to illustrate that stories/histories can never be objective and neutral insofar as they are unavoidably shaped and over-determined by narrators’ or historians’ personal interests and their social and political positions. I will elucidate this point by looking into the manner in which Nanapush’s oral historical narrative works toward subverting the historical narrative of the dominating culture and how his representations of the Chippewa’s colonization and Fleur Pillager differ from those in the other narrator’s, Pauline Puyat’s, monologic story. But, first, I will examine the
characterizations of the two narrators to draw a picture of each one.

The image I intend to form of each narrator is meant to help in showing how the conflict and differences between their narratives are engendered by their different social and political positions and their opposed views of the colonialist expansion of European American society in North America. Second, I will analyze Pauline’s narrative, then Nanapush’s, locating the historical events narrated in each narrative in the overall, historical framework of Native Americans’ experience of internal colonization.

The first narrator, Nanapush, is an old Chippewa, a healer, a hunter, a holdout steadfastly resisting assimilation, a storyteller with an unswerving belief in the power of language/stories to effect change and make things happen, and a tribal chairman toward the end of the novel. Several critics have indicated that Nanapush’s versatility and multiple roles have to do with his character’s being built on the Chippewa trickster tradition of Naanabozho (Peterson 990; Smith 71; Towery 104). The trickster is an interpreter, a storyteller, a transformer, one who defies stultification, stratification, and prescription (Smith xiii). Smith explains that in “Erdrich’s works, tricksters are central to the formulation of identity, the creation of community, and the preservation of culture” (72). Smith’s
observation seems to epitomize the motives behind the story Nanapush narrates in *Tracks*. Moreover, Erdrich’s invocation of the Chippewa trickster figure answers to Louis Owens’s description of the Native American novelist’s practice of imposing on the Western novel genre themes and structures derived from her or his culture:

> [T]he Native American novelist works in a medium for which no close Indian prototype exists. The novelist must therefore rely upon story and myth but graft the thematic and structural principles found therein upon the “foreign” (though infinitely flexible) and intensely egocentric genre of the written prose narrative, or the novel. (10)

In fact, Erdrich not only grafts the myth of Naanabozho on the novel, but also opens it up for the native oral memory as a depository of alternative historical narratives which are excluded and marginalized by the dominant cultural discourse.

The character of Nanapush’s relation to the Chippewa trickster tradition is made clear in the novel by none other than Nanapush himself. Nanapush tells Lulu, his daughter in naming:

> I had a Jesuit education in the halls of Saint John before I ran back to the woods and forgot all my prayers.

> My father said, “Nanapush. That’s what you’ll be called. Because it’s got to do with trickery and living in the bush. Because it’s got to do with something a girl can’t resist. The first Nanapush stole fire. You will steal hearts.” (33)
In the version of the myth recorded by Basil Johnson (17-22), Nanapush/Naanabozho is born of a human mother who was impregnated by the spirit Epingishmook (The West). Nanapush's mother dies shortly after his birth. As he grows into manhood, he begins to realize that he has powers that are not possessed by others. Soon after learning from his grandmother that his mother's death was caused by his father, the spirit Epingishmook, he sets out on a search journey for his father to avenge his mother's murder. During his journey to the West, he is warned by an animal helper—a woodpecker—of his father's great powers. The woodpecker tells him to go to the place of flint and gather and sharpen some pieces because his father fears the fire they contain. Besides, the woodpecker informs Nanapush that the flint will only injure Epingishmook without killing him. In a long and exhausting fight, Nanapush manages to wound his father in the head, thereupon Epingishmook suggests that they make peace, telling Nanapush that he can never kill him because they are equal in power. Epingishmook asks his son to go back to the Anishinabe to teach them until they become strong. In addition, he gives his son the Pipe of Peace as a token of reconciliation and harmony. He also teaches Nanapush the holistic concept underlying the Chippewa worldview that all parts of the world exist in harmony and interdependence and that each part derives its meaning from, and performs its function within, the context of its relationships with the
other parts. It seems to me that Nanapush is the Chippewa equivalent of Prometheus, the stealer of fire who taught the first mortals to cultivate the land, and to tame horses among other things.

In *Tracks*, then, Nanapush is a trickster culture hero who brings to his people the knowledge of how to survive and preserve their culture. But unlike his mythic namesake, Nanapush is not mediating between the spirit or skyworld and his people; rather, the knowledge he brings has its source and origin in the Chippewa's experience of internal colonization in the United States. In the Native American trickster tradition, trickster culture heroes "travel to the underworld or to the heavens in search for a father, light, fire, or some other boon or deliverance for their people" (Leeming and Page 13). Erdrich seems to be revising the culture hero tradition by situating the knowledge Nanapush transmits in what happened to the Chippewa during their encounter with the colonial European settlers. Although Nanapush retains the markings of the trickster, he is, one could say, a modern version of the Native American culture hero.

Erdrich's rewriting of the tradition goes steps farther than its revision in Welch's *Fools Crow*. Welch rewrites the culture hero tradition by making Fools Crow travel neither to the underworld nor to the heavens but to the lodge of Feather Woman in a meadow in the Great Plains. Nevertheless,
the source of the knowledge he brings is a woman associated with the divine, with the Above Ones. Interestingly, it is in Hogan’s *Mean Spirit* that we see the rewriting of the culture hero tradition reach an extreme, as it were. The character Michael Horse has the characteristics of the culture hero and performs his functions with the difference that his relation to the tradition is totally obscured. Horse shares with Nanapush the element of knowledge that is derived from the internal colonial situation in the United States; yet unlike Nanapush, the name Michael Horse does not seem to have any connection to the tradition. Horse’s relation to the tradition is established by his execution of functions and services traditionally associated with the culture hero.

In *Tracks*, Nanapush strikes us as being cognizant of the powers associated with, or involved in, his name, and of its connection to his culture. Therefore, in what looks like an effort to maintain its powers, he is keen on not allowing it to be recorded in the government files. As he tells Lulu, “My girl, listen well. Nanapush is a name that loses power every time it is written and stored in a government file. That is why I only gave it out once in all these years” (22). All the time, Nanapush uses a white man’s name. Nanapush’s protectiveness of his name, the signifier of his rootedness in the Anishinabe cultural tradition, goes hand in hand with
his unremitting struggle to keep the land: "Land is the only thing that lasts life to life. Money burns like tinder, flows off like water. And as for government promises, the wind is steadier. I am a holdout" (33).

The other narrator, Pauline Puyat, is a mixed-blood Chippewa. Pauline is obviously set up to be a foil (Towery 106) for Nanapush in the same way that her narrative is the antithesis of his. While Nanapush narrates to Lulu the history of their people, Pauline recounts a story that is absolutely personal and has detrimental effects on the community. Pauline is of the Puyats who "were mixed-bloods, skinners in the clan for which the name was lost" (Tracks 14). Being a mixed-blood, Pauline is probably meant to stand for "all the pain, rage, and frustration of a person forced to live in two different cultures while being rejected to a large degree by both" (Sinder Larson 10). At age fifteen, Pauline badgers her father into sending her to stay with her aunt Regina in Argus, the white town south of the reservation. When her father warns her that she will risk losing her Indian identity, she is quick to retort:

Then maybe I won't come back.... I wanted to be like my mother, who showed her half-white.... That was because even as a child I saw that to hang back was to perish.... I would not speak our language. In English, I told my father we should build an outhouse with a door that swung open and shut. (14)
For Pauline, holding onto her Anishinabe culture spells death, a death she thinks she can only stave off by voluntarily assimilating into the white culture. She even attributes the diminishment of the Indian world to the moral and intellectual superiority that God has conferred on whites. Pauline's view of the white invasion of the Chippewa as progress is entirely opposed to Nanapush's, who portrays this progress as nothing but a Pandora's Box, the source and cause of all the plights and tribulations that have befallen the Indians.

Pauline's assimilationist attitude seems to fit what Albert Memmi characterizes as one of two answers to colonization on the part of the colonized: disappearance into the colonizer (120), revolt being the other response (127). Pauline represents a typical case of a colonized person identifying with the oppressor. She is unaware that by internalizing the oppressors and espousing their values she separates herself from her true self, thereby inviting her condemnation. She is a pariah rejected by both sides. In truth, Pauline has gone far beyond merely adopting the whites' values and cultural codes to justifying the dispossession of the Anishinabe and participating in alienating the Indian children from their culture. She has come to believe that the whites' usurpation of the Anishinabe lands is God-ordained, indicating the triumph of Christianity over paganism. This conviction reveals itself most lucidly
in her description or imagining of the foreclosure on Fleur’s timber-rich land near Matchimanito Lake:

For it is said that a surveyor’s crew arrived at the turnoff to Matchimanito in a rattling truck, and set measuring. Surely that was the work of Christ’s hand. I see farther, anticipate more than I’ve heard. The land will be sold and divided. Fleur’s cabin will tumble into the ground and be covered by leaves. The place will be haunted I suppose, but not one will have ears sharp enough to hear the Pillager’s low voices, or the vision clear to see their still shadows. The trembling old fools with their conjuring tricks will die off and the young, like Lulu and Nector, return from the government schools blinded and deafened. (204-5)

Pauline’s perception of the foreclosure on Fleur’s land as being “the work of Christ’s hand” echoes the philosophy of Manifest Destiny, according to which European Americans had a God-given right to occupy North America. As Senator Thomas Hart Benton once declared (1846), European Americans “had alone received the divine command to subdue and replenish the earth” (qtd. in Morris 67). As to the blinding and deafening of Indian children like Lulu and Nector Kashpaw, Pauline herself takes part in this scheme when she joins St. Catherine’s school:

I am assigned to teach arithmetic at St. Catherine’s school in Argus...I have vowed to use my influence to guide them, to purify their minds, to mold them in my image...I will add their souls to those I have numbered. For Christ’s purpose is not for us to fathom. (205)
Pauline consummates her assimilation by renaming herself Leopolda. Her assumption of this name symbolizes her total and decisive rejection of anything related to her past and to anything Indian.

Besides picturing the predicament of the mixed-bloods who live in or between two worlds, Pauline's narrative illustrates how stories are used toward evil and hurtful ends. For instance, she uses her story about Fleur's rape by the three butchermen in Argus to ingratiate herself with Margaret Kashpaw in what seems an effort to break out of the confines of her alienation, or just to attract attention according to Nanapush: "Because she was unnoticeable, homely if it must be said, Pauline schemed to gain attention by telling odd tales that created damage" (39). Pauline tells the rape story to Margaret so that the latter uses it as support in trying to talk her son, Eli, out of marrying Fleur. It goes without saying that one's prompt and initial reaction to Nanapush's statement is to take it with a grain of salt, in that his opinion of her may not be free of distortion. Yet Pauline's evil and ruinous acts, which she, herself, describes in her monologic narrative, seem to lend much credibility to Nanapush's representation of her. To cite an example: Pauline solicits a love medicine from Moses Pillager and instructs Sophie Morrissey in mixing it into Eli's food to make him fall in love with her (Sophie), even though he is already married to Fleur. Further, Pauline
kills Napoleon Morrissey, the father of her out-of-wedlock daughter Maria, whom she abandons to Bernadette Morrissey. After receiving or having a vision, she throttles Napoleon, thinking that he is the devil. Pauline strikes us as being aware that the rape story she is spreading around is causing damage and that other people are changing and using it for their own purposes:

The girl is bold, smiling in her sleep, as if she knows what people wonder as if she hears the old men talk, turning the story over.

It comes up different every time, and has no ending, no beginning. They get the middle wrong too. They only know they don't know anything. (13)

The girl Pauline is talking about here is Fleur's first child, Lulu, whose father is unknown. He might be one of the three men Pauline claims raped Fleur in Argus, or Eli Kashpaw who marries Fleur right after her coming back to the reservation, thus muddying the waters as Nanapush says (39).

Pauline's narrative is structured by an assimilationist perspective and unmistakably converges with the dominant historical narrative in giving sanction to the dispossession and subordination of the Anishinaabe. It plainly figures some of the psychological effects and outcomes of the cultural genocide perpetrated against Native Americans (Duran and Duran 24). Pauline's case illustrates the damaging effects of the imposition of foreign culture on the colonized. Her internalization of the oppressor and oppression has generated
in her feelings of intense and extreme self-hatred and denigration, which she would in turn project and displace on the others. Among Native Americans, internalization of oppression often translates into violence toward the self or the community (Duran and Duran 29). As for Pauline, her externalization of oppression is most evident in her using her storytelling gift "toward negative and often self-destructive ends as she struggles to become assimilated into so-called mainstream America" (Castillo 14). Instead of employing her talents in creating community and preserving the Anishinabe culture as does the trickster figure Nanapush, Pauline, blinded and deafened by her wholesale adoption of white values, participates in the destruction of the native culture and in justifying the appropriation of their land. Her tendency to violence and destruction is plainly expressed in her pledge to forge the Anishinabe children in her own assimilationist image as well as in her lying to the nuns at St. Catherine's school that she does not have a single drop of Indian blood in her (Towery 106).

All things considered, Pauline is the direct opposite of Nanapush who employs his capabilities toward constructive ends. Nanapush relates his story to Lulu so as to convince her not to marry into the Morrissey Family:

Don't stop your ears! Lulu, it is time, now, before you marry your no-good Morrissey and toss your life away, for you to listen to the reason Fleur put you on the wagon with Nector, whom Margaret
Nanapush is up to something other than just advising Lulu not to marry a Morrissey. He is also trying to reconcile Lulu to her mother Fleur by explaining the reasons Fleur has sent her away to the boarding school. It could be inferred from the ears-stopping gesture that Lulu harbors some resentment toward her mother; there seems to be a kind of estrangement of daughter from mother due to Lulu’s belief that her mother has gotten rid of her by sending her to the school. The existence of alienation can also be felt in Nanapush’s remark to Lulu at the beginning of the novel, “I saved the last Pillager. Fleur, the one you will not call mother” (2).

As Nanapush tells us, Fleur has sent Lulu to the boarding school in Argus after losing her land to the lumber company:

She sent you to the government school, it is true, but you must understand there were reasons: there would be no place for you, no safety on this reservation, no hiding place from government paper, or from Morrissey who shaved heads or the Turcot Company, leveler of a whole forest. There was no predicting what would happen to Fleur herself. (219)

We can see here the illuminating evidence of Nanapush, the trickster, the creator of communities, attempting to unite a family that has been ripped apart by the loss of the land. In addition, by narrating the history of their people to
Lulu, Nanapush seeks to undo the alienating education she has received at St. Catherine's (Smith 80) and to thwart the probability of her going to white towns:

We lose our children in different ways. They turn their faces to the white towns, like Nector as he grew or they become so full of what they see in the mirror there is no reasoning with them anymore, like you. (170)

Throughout his narration, Nanapush figures as a firm believer in language as a powerful medium of change. Quite relevantly, he also believes that identity is not biologically determined; it is only by speaking the language spoken by their parents/people that children acquire the same identity: “They do not come from us. They just appear, as if they broke through a net of vines. Once they live in our lives and speak our language, they slowly seem to become like us” (169). So, Nanapush’s narrative performs a multi-leveled restoration, cultural, historical, communal, and familial. Yet it would be an error of judgment to think that there is no personal motive in it. Nanapush has a vested interest in the narrative but the personal is not allowed to clash with the communal, nor is it given priority. The obvious motive he has is to make Lulu persuade Fleur and Eli to visit him:

If you wanted to make an old man’s last days happy, Lulu, you would convince your mother and father to visit me. I’d bring old times back, force them to reckon, make them look into one another’s eyes again. (210)
However, even here the personal is not clearly separate and
distinguishable from the communal. Although Nanapush wants
Fleur and Eli to visit him as they used to do, his speech
implies that there is something wrong between the couple,
which he wants to mend. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that
there has occurred a kind of estrangement between Fleur and
Nanapush following his becoming a government bureaucrat and
his assumption of the tribal chairman position. Fleur's
opposition to his working with the government represented by
the Bureau of Indian Affairs (or the Indian Agent) springs
from her unshakable trust in their tradition and her distrust
of paper which she thinks has no "bearing or sense" (174).
To her, his latest acts are a sellout, an abandonment of his
decades-long recalcitrance to assimilation.

Nanapush's former refusal to get entangled in any
dealings with the government has three reasons behind it.
First, he wants to protect his name which he thinks would
lose its power once registered in government files. Second,
he is loath to become a government Indian like Bernadette
Morrissey. Third, for Nanapush, the dispossession and
oppression of the Indians occurred through paper and pen, and
it will follow that by becoming a bureaucrat he will be
complicitous in the impoverishment of his people:

[B]ut once the bureaucrats sink their
barbed pens into the lives of Indians,
the paper starts flying, a blizzard of
legal forms.... That's when I began to
see what we were becoming, and the years

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have borne me out: a tribe of cabinet and
triplicates, a tribe of single-space
documents, directives, policy. (225)

Nanapush’s last trickstery transformation into a
government bureaucrat is inspired by his desire to make use
of the power of pen and paper, to add it to the powers he
already possesses: “He [Father Damien] was right in that I
should have tried to grasp this new way of wielding
influence, this method of leading others with a pen and piece
of paper” (209). Nanapush is encouraged by Father Damien to
take up a leadership position so that he uses his authority
to keep whiskey traders off the reservation. With the coming
of the lumber company after Fleur’s loss of her land,
profit seekers and whiskey traders start coming in droves.
Nanapush’s sincere and unwavering concern for the health and
felicity of the Anishinabe has forced him to accept the job,
even though he is aware of the concessions it entails: “But I
saw the snare right then, the invisible loop hidden in the
priest’s well-meaning words. Unlike the Pukwans, who were
government Indians, I saw the deadfall beneath my feet before
I stepped” (185).

Significantly, it is by wielding the power of the
written word to obtain a birth certificate for Lulu that he
succeeds in bringing her back home from the boarding school:
“To become a bureaucrat myself was the only way that I could
wade through the letters, the reports, the only place where I
could find a ledge to kneel on, to reach through the loophole
and draw you home" (225). By having a birth certificate issued for Lulu with him registered as her father, Nanapush establishes or claims fatherhood toward her for the second time. The first time occurs when he tells Father Damien that they have named the baby girl Lulu Nanapush. Margaret Kashpaw and Nanapush have wanted to oblige their friend Father Damien by letting him baptize the girl. Moreover, Nanapush considers Lulu his granddaughter because he has been acting as a father figure for Fleur ever since he nursed her through her bout with tuberculosis. But just as Nanapush has established a father-daughter relationship with Lulu, Lulu herself has done what could function as another tie between them: resisting assimilation by trying to escape from boarding school.

But unlike Nanapush’s, Lulu’s escape attempt is aborted and she is punished by being forced to wear a tattered, orange dress that makes her stick out like a sore thumb, and to do excruciating cleaning work. Describing her appearance upon getting off the bus that brought her home, Nanapush says,

[And your dress was a shabby and smoldering orange, a shameful color like a half-doused flame, visible for miles, that any child who tried to run away from the boarding school was forced to wear.... Your knees were scabbed from the punishment from scrubbing long sidewalks, and knobbed from kneeling hours on broomsticks. (226)
Operating under the motto "Kill the Indian and save the man," Indian boarding schools have been like jail houses for Indian children. The cultural, social, physical and psychological damage those schools have caused to Native Americans has been enormous. It is no wonder that three out of the four novels this study deals with try to picture the monstrous and horrifying devastation that forced education has inflicted on the native psyche and culture. The suggestion that these schools are only prisons is supported by reference to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the first boarding school to be established in the United States for Indian children. This school was officially opened in 1879 in a deserted military base in Pennsylvania. Carlisle's first director was an army officer called Richard Henry Pratt, "who had experience in running an Indian prisoner-of-war-camp in St. Augustine, Florida" (Merrell 101). Carlisle was opened after Pratt himself convinced government officials that education is the best way to solve the "Indian Problem" (101). Not surprisingly, the motto I have mentioned above was formulated or coined by Pratt himself.

In order for the government to solve the "Indian Problem" by killing the Indian and saving the man, the Indian children have had to be taken forcibly from their families and committed to these prison-like educational institutions. In these schools, they were subjected to severe brainwashing through an alienating educational regime, beginning with the
imposition of English as the medium of teaching along with the strict banning of native languages, and leading to the employment of the Indian graduates away from their home reservations. Even during the summer months, Indian students were not allowed to return to their families; instead, they were placed with white families to work as farmers or servants. This measure was designed to guarantee that they would not be able to re-establish their ties to their respective tribes (Merrell 101). The fact that those schools are planned to destroy native tribes was categorically expressed by Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan in December 1, 1889: "Education should seek the disintegration of the tribes, and not their segregation.... In short, ...school should do for them what it is so successfully doing for all the other races in this country, assimilate them" (Prucha 180).

Interestingly, the idea that these schools are merely prisons for the Indian children is also evoked in Erdrich's poem, "Indian Boarding School: The Runaways." One of the expressive images Erdrich uses is of a sheriff who is always ready to catch any escapee:

We know the sheriff's waiting at midrun to take us back. His car is dumb and warm. The highway doesn't rock, it only hums like a wing of long insults. The worn-down welts of ancient punishments lead back and forth. (Native American Literature 287)
The images of the road as a “wing of long insults” and “welts of ancient punishments” put us in mind of the Trail of Tears and all the roads the Indians were forced to walk from their tribal homelands to west of the Mississippi River. In a few lines, Erdrich links here the punishment meted out to the Indian children in the near past or at present to that suffered by their forbears. Furthermore, in this poem, Erdrich depicts all the forms of punishment Nanapush describes at the end of *Tracks*, the only difference being the orange dress replaced with green ones: “All runaways wore dresses, long green ones, the color you would think shame was” (287).

“There is a story to it the way there is a story to all, never visible while it is happening. Only after, when an old man sits dreaming and talking in his chair, the design springs clear,” says Nanapush (33-34). And “the story to it” he is telling Lulu is partly about those “welts of ancient punishments,” and mostly about the loss of the land and their resolute efforts to preclude the loss. It is a story calculated to undercut and neutralize the dominant historical narrative, in which the dispossession and subjection of Native Americans is blazoned as a victory of civilization over primitiveness. By presenting Nanapush narrating with Lulu as listener/narratee, Erdrich creates a typical storytelling situation in the native tradition, where the stories told are aimed at teaching a lesson to the
listener(s). In the native oral tradition, stories are didactic and intended for a certain purpose. Anthropologist Keith Basso explains that for the Apache, for instance, stories are a vehicle for teaching listeners about history:

In addition to everything else—places, events, moral standards, conceptions of cultural identity—every historical tale is also about the person at whom it is directed. This is because the telling of a historical tale is always prompted by an individual having committed one or more social offenses to which the act of narration, together with the tale itself, is intended as a critical and remedial response. (qtd in Carew-Miller 43-44)

Nanapush's narrative is initially intended to convince Lulu not to marry a "no-good Morrissey." By marrying a Morrissey, Lulu will commit an offense, which Nanapush tries to prevent by telling her what the Morrisseys are and what they represent in the history of her people. Moreover, the story is also intended to purge her of the emotions of resentment toward her mother through the elucidation of the reasons she has been sent to the boarding school. Nanapush's story is then an act, a story narrated so as to change Lulu's attitude toward her mother. "To tell a story is an act," explains Ross Chambers, "an event, one that has the power to produce change, and first and foremost to change the relationship between narrator and narratee" (74). Hence, in Nanapush's story we come across an example of narrative as an act; someone telling a story to someone else for a certain purpose (Chambers 4; Hanne 9; Phelan, Narrative 3).
Nanapush begins his narrative with a portrayal of what is usually minimized in the historical narrative of the dominating culture: decimation of indigenous peoples by diseases to which they have had no acquired immunity (Stiffarm and Lane 32):

We started dying before the snow, and like the snow, we continued to fall. It was surprising there were so many of us left to die. For those who survived the spotted sickness from the south, our long fight west of the Nadouissioux land where we signed the treaty, and then a wind from the east, bringing exile in a storm of government papers, what descended from the north in 1912 seemed impossible. (1)

Nancy J. Peterson suggests that Nanapush’s opening narrative statement is “revisionist because it defamiliarizes the popular narrative of American history as progress by showing the costs of that ‘progress’ to native peoples” (985). I would add that the subversive force of his articulation also emerges from its foregrounding the decimation of indigenous peoples by disease, which is often slighted by traditional anthropologists and historians (Stiffarm and Lane 31-32). Those anthropologists and historians have established the pattern of dealing with the decimation of native peoples by disease epidemics as “natural disaster” (32). Nevertheless, there have been cases that indicate that disease was sometimes deliberately spread among the Indians by European colonial settlers. During King Philip’s war (1675-6) between the British settlers and the Wamanoag and Narragansett
peoples, disease was intentionally spread among the Indians by the colonials (32). Moreover, the U.S. army at Fort Clark in what is now called South Dakota distributed smallpox-infected blankets to the Madans; consequently the Madans suffered a smallpox epidemic from 1836 to 1840 (32). As regards the Chippewa, they were "afflicted with outbreaks of smallpox from 1869 to 1870 and of tuberculosis from 1891 to 1901 (Peterson 985). These are probably the same epidemics to which Nanapush refers.

Besides describing the havoc which disease epidemics wreaked on the Anishinabe, this opening narrative segment is equally significant for its revelation of the way in which Nanapush goes about authorizing himself as narrator. By using the first-person plural pronoun "we," Nanapush seems to be doing two things at the same time: establishing himself as the voice of, or spokesperson for, his people and drawing attention to his being an eyewitness-participant narrator. By aligning himself with the group/tribe, Nanapush establishes one of the differences that distinguish him from Pauline, who uses the "I" throughout her narrative, and is being denied a listener/narrator, which emphasizes her alienation (Peterson 989).

Peterson argues that Nanapush further defamiliarizes the traditional historical narrative by using oral tribal names such as Nadouissioux and Anishinabe, and by speaking of "'storm of government papers' instead of naming specific
documents affecting the tribe" (985). I believe that Nanapush is interested in more than just defamiliarizing the traditional historical narrative; he is using the oral tribal names to purify Lulu’s mind of the anglicized tribal names, as part of his overall project to foil what she has been taught at school. What is more, his style does not remain consistent during the narrative. There are several points where he shifts to documenting by giving dates of events such as his mentions of 1912, the year that witnessed the Anishinabe exile, and 1924, the year during which Lulu is brought back to the reservation. Whether he means to refer to it or not, in 1924 Native Americans were made U.S. citizens with the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act, which allowed them to vote in national elections (Nies 328). The treaty Nanapush refers to in his opening narrative statement is later mentioned by its documentary name: the Beauchamp treaty (Tracks 100). As for the phrase “a storm of government papers,” I think Nanapush has seized on it as an objective correlative, in a sense, capable of evoking the ruinous force of those documents. This metaphor conveys the ravaging impact of those documents more effectively and expressively than their specific names can. Storms uproot and topple down trees, destroy homes, and cause human casualties, just as the “storm of government papers” has dislocated/uprooted the Anishinabe and brought about their
exile to the reservation, where they are left to starve and vulnerable to diseases:

On the reservation, where we were forced close together, the clans dwindled. Our tribe unraveled like a coarse rope, frayed at either end as the old and new among us were taken. My own family was wiped out one by one, leaving only Nanapush. (2)

Historically, forced relocation and concentration in camps and reservations were immensely deadly to the native peoples due to malnutrition and exposure to disease.

Nanapush survived the tuberculosis epidemic that claimed all his family by telling a story to himself:

During the sickness, when I was the last one left, I saved myself by starting a story... But I did continue and recovered. I got well by talking. Death could not get a word in edgewise, grew discouraged, and traveled on. (46)

With Nanapush, stories seem to work wonders and miracles; they not only give lessons and bring mother and daughter back together but hold off death as well. If we, by analogy, consider this experience of near death as functionally equivalent to a vision/dream quest, then Nanapush's talent for storytelling is his helper. Nanapush survives this journey through sickness and dislocation aided by his story to bring the knowledge he is now narrating to Lulu. So just as he had kept himself alive by starting a story, he is now trying to keep his culture alive by passing it on to Lulu (Dehay 37).
After authorizing himself as narrator by identifying with his tribe, Nanapush goes on to complete this self-authorization based on his own old age, personal experience, and the magnitude of the change he has witnessed. This shift is marked by his use of the first person singular pronoun "I":

Although I had lived no more than fifty winters, I was considered an old man. I'd seen enough to be one. In the years I'd passed, I saw more change than in a hundred upon a hundred years before.

My girl, I saw the passing of times you will never know.

I guided the last buffalo hunt. I saw the last bear shot. I trapped the last beaver with a pelt more than two year's growth. I spoke aloud the words of the government treaty, and refused to sign the settlement papers that would take away our woods and lake. I axed the last birch that was older than I, and I saved the last Pillager.

Fleur, the one you will not call mother. (2)

Nanapush is presenting his narrative as one that is predicated on direct involvement in the events he narrates; it is told from the perspective of "one who witnessed and participated in the memories he is narrating" (Dehay 37). In stressing the emanation of his narrative from direct experience rather than derived from second-hand reports or sources, Nanapush seems to be aware of the existence of other narratives about the same events he is narrating. This recognition on his part reveals itself in one of the several remarks he directs to Lulu during his narration: "Perhaps
you've heard it on the lips of others and never from one who witnesses" (214). Beyond this, Nanapush projects himself as a narrator who does not distort facts in comparison to Pauline: "For while I was careful with my known facts, she was given to improving truth" (39).

In addition to showing Nanapush working to affirm the authoritativeness and veracity of his story, the above-quoted long speech brings to light one of the factors that crucially precipitated the destruction of the native tribal structure and subsistence hunting and farming economies—the fur trade, that is. The fur trade is one of the links that connects the expansion of the white settler society in North America to European imperialism. The fur trade "brought conflict between Indians and the whites who encroached on tribal territory, between national states vying for colonial supremacy, and among tribes that sought to expand their hunting grounds" (Hurtado and Iverson 138). The British, French, and Anglo-Americans were involved in heated competition for the hunting grounds and exploitation of Indians.

Before it started in North America, the fur trade was practiced for a long time in Europe and Asia. It was not an exclusively North American phenomenon, but an international one that connected the Old and the New World (Wolf 159). The advent of the fur trade to North America dramatically changed indigenous social relations and forced those who got involved
in it to modify and restructure their lifestyle around the European goods. Worse still, the increasing European demands for fur—beaver fur in the beginning and then buffalo—plunged native groups into fierce competition for new hunting grounds and concomitantly for access to the European goods (161). The decline of the fur trade after the depletion of the buffalo hunting grounds had rendered native nations even more dependent on the European manufactured goods such as guns, metal tools, textiles, and food (Champagne 59). The Ojibwa (Chippewa/Anishinabe) is one of the northern tribes that suffered immeasurably from the disappearance of the buffalo herds. Ultimately, the pressing need for food forced the impoverished native tribes to sell their lands (59).

Starved and sickness-enervated, the Anishinabe, in Tracks, reluctantly resort to food rations and money from the government: “We stumbled toward the government bait, never looking down, never noticing how the land was snatched from under us at every step” (4). The Anishinabe’s “stumbling toward the government bait” is suggestive of their resistance to forgo their allotted land parcels for money (Larson 6). But there are other Anishinabe who would strive to hold onto their land tracts. Nanapush’s narrative is mostly focused on the people’s strife to save their lands, particularly Fleur’s.
Nanapush’s almost exclusive concern with Fleur and her unrelenting efforts to keep her land is dictated, I think, by a number of factors. The first may have to do with his narrating the story to her daughter Lulu. The second is related to his assumption of the role of the father-figure for Fleur after he rescues her from death by tuberculosis. The third is her being the only survivor of the Pillager, an Anishinabe clan known for their inexorable resistance to assimilation and for their powers, although their powers deserted them, apparently in the face of the overwhelming force of the white colonial settlers. Nanapush narrates, “The water there was surrounded by the highest oaks, by woods inhabited by ghosts and roamed by Pillagers, who knew the secret ways to cure and kill, until their art deserted them” (2).

Fleur’s survival turns out to be of great benefit and importance to Nanapush, in that he has in her a strong ally and comrade in the battle for keeping the land and their cultural tradition. For him, she is the funnel of their history (178). Moreover, her survival has enabled Nanapush to keep his memory alive and vital by talking to her during her recovery period: “With her memory, mine came back, only too sharp. I wasn’t prepared to think of the people I had lost” (5). Thus, it could be suggested that Lulu’s return from school has provided Nanapush another chance to revitalize his memory by telling her the Anishinabe’s
history. Presumably, this is one more personal motive for his narration.

In an effort to save her land by paying the taxes on it, Fleur slips out of the reservation to search for work. She winds up in Argus and lands a job at the same butcher's shop where Pauline helps her aunt Regina in cleaning and scrubbing the place. Significantly, it is from Pauline's story that we learn about the three butchermen raping Fleur. According to Pauline, in what seems an attempt to make extra money, Fleur starts playing poker with her would-be rapists. Fleur has followed a strategy of winning a dollar per night. One night, she fools the men into betting all their money, whereupon the men rape her in revenge.

Besides spreading around the story of Fleur's rape, Pauline paints in her narrative an image of Fleur that is in complete contradistinction to Nanapush's portrayal. She depicts Fleur as a person in possession of destructive and deadly, evil powers. After she is raped, Pauline relates, Fleur calls upon a tornado to strike Argus and kill the three rapists: "[W]hen Fleur lived a few miles south in Argus, things happened. She almost destroyed the town" (12). In Pauline's story, Fleur not only uses her prodigious powers against whoever does her any harm, but also against whoever tries to help or rescue her, except Nanapush. Pauline says that before Nanapush rescues her from tuberculosis, Fleur has drowned twice and the men who saved her met their death

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shortly afterward: "It went to show, the people said. It figured to them all right. By saving Fleur Pillager, those two had lost themselves" (11). Strangely enough, George Many Women—whom Fleur wished would take her place following her second drowning—tries to fend off his death by abstaining from swimming in the lake. He continues to do so until his son brings him a bathtub. But "the first time he used it he slipped, got knocked out, and breathed water while his wife stood in the other room frying breakfast" (11).

It is worth noting that Nanapush mentions Fleur’s two drowning incidents but in passing, without dropping the slightest hint about those deaths. Therefore, it is impossible to tell who is telling the truth from who is distorting or obscuring it. While Nanapush represents Fleur favorably, Pauline presents her as no less than demonic. By working these noticeable differences into their stories, Erdrich demonstrates that stories are necessarily constructed and limited by the particular perspectives from which they are told or written.

Fleur returns to the reservation, but the money she brings is not enough to save the land, given the accumulation of taxes and the poverty besetting the tribe at large. The Anishinabe are forced to pay fees on their allotment, although they are not legally required to do so. According to the General Allotment Act of 1887, the allotted land parcel is held in trust for twenty-five years without any
taxes and fees to be levied from the allotees, a fact Nanapush tells Lulu he once brought to the attention of Father Damien: "As you know, I was taught by the Jesuits... I know about law. I know that 'trust' means they can't tax our parcels" (174).

The Allotment Act was the cornerstone of the assimilation policy; its purpose was to transform the native peoples from hunters and gatherers into farmers, thereby demolishing the native tribal social structure. Beyond this, it was planned to drive a wedge into this structure by dividing the people into full-bloods and mixed-bloods by the application and manipulation of the blood quantum theory (Stiffarm and Lane 41). As I have said above, under this policy, all full-bloods were allotted small tracts which would be held in trust for twenty-five years because they were deemed "incompetent" to exploit their tracts properly. In other words, full-bloods were denied control over their land parcel. In contrast, mixed-bloods were allotted large parcels in better areas and were allowed full control over them.

As a last-ditch effort to save their lands from foreclosure, Nanapush, Fleur, and the Kashpaws (Margaret, Eli, and Nector) try every means available and possible to raise money to pay the accumulated taxes on their tracts. Eli Kashpaws uses the hunting skills he learned from Nanapush to hunt and sell hides, while the others gather and sell
cranberry bark. After earning the amount of money they think is enough to save their lands, Margaret and Nector go to pay the taxes. To their disappointment, they find out that money they have made is only enough to pay the fees on the Kashpaws's tract. The levying of taxes on Indian allotments violates the Allotment Act itself, according to which these allotments are to be held in trust for twenty-five years without Indians having to pay fees. The imposition of taxes on allotments is just another means by which Indians are divested of their lands.

Meantime, the mixed-bloods, like the Morrisseys and Lamartines, are doing their best to convince those in arrears to sell their land parcel. Nanapush narrates:

> They even came to people's houses to beg and argue that this was our chance, our good chance, that the officials would drop offer. But wherever Margaret was, she slapped down their words like mosquitoes. (111)

The mixed-bloods do not stop at just talking the other Anishinabe into giving up their tracts for money but also participate in the dispossession of the people. A case in point is Bernadette Morrissey, the Morrissey matriarch, who has cashed in on the people's losses. In Pauline's story, the Morrisseys are described as "well-off people, mixed-bloods who profited from acquiring allotments that many old Chippewa did not know how to keep" (63). Further, Nanapush relates that Bernadette has "kept house for the Agent,
reorganized his property records, and mailed debt announcements to every Indian in arrears” (179). No doubt, it is because of the Morrisseys’s complicity in the dispossession and impoverishment of the Anishinabe that Nanapush is trying to dissuade Lulu from marrying a “no-good Morrissey” (218).

As I have tried to show through this analysis, Erdrich’s Tracks is a postcolonial Native American novel that depicts nearly all the agents and historical circumstances that have brought about the breakup of the Chippewa society and culture. Erdrich taps the oral memory to offer an alternative historical narrative that movingly illuminates the disastrous effects of the invasion and internal colonization of Native Americans. Tracks subverts the history of the dominating society in several ways. It undercuts the dominant historical text by foregrounding the decimation of indigenous people by disease, which has often been attributed to natural causes by conventional anthropologists and historians despite the fact that there were cases where diseases were intentionally spread among Native Americans. Moreover, part of the novel’s subversiveness comes from its dramatization of the role of compulsory education in the deterioration of the Chippewa culture, by showing that the boarding schools established for Indian children are the sites where cultural genocide is carried out against native cultures. Indian children are
subjected to educational programs planned to alienate them from their cultural tradition and consequently from their people, for children's acquisition of their people's language/culture is, as Nanapush says, what makes identify with their people.

In her narrative, Pauline figures as the quintessence of the alienated Native American. The conflict between her and Nanapush over the representation of Fleur is one between two differing and opposed cultural positions or views, between one who sees her as the incarnation or depository of their culture and another who sees her through alienated eyes. For Nanapush, Fleur is the funnel of their history; whereas in Pauline's eyes she is the personification of everything backward, dead, and deadly. This cultural clash between their depictions of her would not occur if Pauline had not internalized the Eurocentric assumptions about the racial superiority of whites over indigenous people. Pauline's full adoption of the oppressor's values has made her perceive the Chippewa as primitive pagans vainly trying to stop the march of progress.

In *Tracks*, Erdrich poignantly depicts the loss of land and the psychological ramifications of the U.S. assimilation policy toward the Chippewa and all native societies. The Allotment Act legitimized the expropriation of the Chippewa lands and caused an antagonism between full-bloods and mixed-
bloods. The Morrisseys degenerate into opportunists thriving on the misery and pauperization of their kin.

But what I consider the source of most of the novel’s subversive power is its restoration of the native voice and agency, and its celebration and honoring of the Chippewa’s will and struggle to survive. Nanapush and the others determinedly rise up to the challenge of preventing the loss of their lands; they lose their tracts but win the honor of resistance. Life should go on, implies Nanapush’s last trickstery transformation, after long rejection, into a tribal chairman to protect the community from whiskey traders and profiteers. Nanapush is a modern Native American culture hero who assumes the responsibility of preserving his people’s history and culture by passing it through Lulu to future Chippewa generations just as his counterparts do in Welch’s *Fools Crow* and Hogan’s *Mean Spirit*. Like the other Native American novelists, Erdrich goes to the future through the past. She goes to the past to find out that “there was nothing to be ashamed of... but rather dignity, glory, and solemnity” (Fanon 210). In doing so, she joins the other novelists to participate in what Boehmer calls the “symbolic overhaul,” the decolonization of the mind by representing the colonized as subjects of their own past” (Boehmer 194), by liberating them of feelings of self-hatred and inferiority.
LINDA HOGAN'S MEAN SPIRIT: "WE HAVE TO CONTINUE. STEP ON...SISTER"

Linda Hogan's novel *Mean Spirit* is set in the 1920s in Watona, a fictionalized town of the Osage Indian tribe in Oklahoma. During the 1920s, oil and gas were discovered on the dried-up and barren lands allotted to the Osages and thus "the Osages became widely heralded as 'the richest group of people in the world' because of tribal revenues stemming from oil and natural-gas royalties" (Wilson 450). But this wealth turned into a source of pervasive misery as droves of profiteers and wealth seekers began to invade the Osage towns to strip the people of their money. Further, the misery of the Osages was aggravated by the increasing growth of the class of dispossessed people as a result of the government's denial of land allotment to Osages born after 1907 (Wilson 450). In *Mean Spirit*, Hogan meticulously historicizes and documents the exploitation and oppression of the Osage tribe during that period. Specifically, Hogan portrays the devastating impact of the cultural, economic, and
social genocide waged against the Indians under the banner of assimilation and the civilizing mission.

Therefore, it can be said that, like Erdrich's *Tracks*, Hogan's *Mean Spirit* is a historical novel that gives voice to the continued internal colonization of Native Americans and shows the U.S. assimilation policy for what it is: a policy of cultural, economic, and social genocide. Yet in Hogan's novel, based on documented crimes against the Osages, the exploitation and victimization of the Osages exceed in intensity and extent those depicted in Erdrich's novel. This goes to show that although Native Americans generally live in a condition of internal colonization, the experience of each tribe seems to be different from those of the others. In Hogan's novel, the Osages are shot, poisoned, blasted, and swindled out of their lands and money, rich Indian women are greedily pursued by wealth-seeking white suitors, Indian graves are dug out and bodies are disinterred, sold, and displayed at museums and roadside zoos. Hogan's representation of the Osages's exploitation seems to imply that the Native American concept of the unity of humans and the ecological system has been embraced by European Americans not in order to maintain balance and harmony in nature, but to exploit Indians as an extension of their land. As Alix Casteel points out, European Americans conceive of Indians as a natural resource to be mined and exploited (51).
This is the picture that Hogan draws in her novel to expose the underside of the General Allotment Act of 1887, the bedrock of the assimilation policy. Passed to speed up the absorption of Native Americans into the dominant white society, the Allotment Act was intended to reduce the native land holdings by opening Indian Territory for land ownership and settlement by whites.

But to say that Hogan exposes the atrocities perpetrated against the Osages does not mean that she is simply depicting them as hapless passive victims of loss and exploitation. To the contrary, Hogan’s Mean Spirit is a novel that honors the Osages’s will to survive and their striving against all the odds and adversities threatening their existence. The resistance put up by the Osage characters can be divided into two types: (1) physical/material and spiritual resistance and (2) textual resistance. At the center of the first type loom large Belle Graycloud, and, to a lesser degree, Stace Red Hawk, while the textual resistance is carried out by Michael Horse. Although Hogan’s novel is community-centered, the prominence of these characters is not related to questions of personal value and individual gains and successes; their centrality in the narrative is dictated by the care and services they render to the community. Through her celebratory representation of the Osages’s struggle against the exploitation and oppression to which they are subjected, Hogan modifies the concept of
community (Carew-Miller 37-48) and radically rewrites the culture hero tradition.

Besides its portrayal of an experience that is distinct from the experiences depicted in the other three novels and its demonstration that the colonization of Native America is still going on, Hogan’s *Mean Spirit* is included in this study because it features another narrative technique for reclaiming Native American history. Hogan’s concern to depict the far-reaching devastating impact of whites’ exploitation and victimization of the whole Osage tribe seems to have been a deciding factor in the selection of the narrative technique she employs in the novel. Throughout *Mean Spirit*, Hogan consistently uses the external focalization technique, what Rimmon-Kenan defines as the “narrator-focalizer” (74). Given the huge cast of characters she has created, this narrative device enables her to avoid all the potential limitations another technique would impose on the process of narration. Compared to the internal focalizer, for instance, the external narrator-focalizer enjoys the elements of unrestricted knowledge and freedom to move from one place to another and among a wide spectrum of characters. This technique has served well Hogan’s purpose of capturing the extensiveness of the harm and damage white people inflicted on the Osage community.

In *Mean Spirit*, the narrator moves back and forth among different locales such as the Osage town of Watona,
the bluffs above Watona where the Hill Indians live, the Grayclouds’s house in the middle between the bluffs and Watona, Michael Horse’s tipi on the outskirts of Watona, the town of Guthrie, and Washington D. C. The narrator has the liberty of reporting simultaneously, as it were, events and happenings occurring in different places and unlimited access to the thoughts of all the community members as the following passages illustrate:

Insanity was no stranger to boom towns, and that’s what went through the minds of the Watona people when they heard that Grace Blanket had been killed, or had killed herself, and why her death didn’t strike a new chord of fear with most of the citizens. They’d witnessed those recent years of violence, when roughnecks and swindlers had arrived to seek their fortunes in Watona. There were newer kinds of thieves that had been visible before, and these thieves wore fine suits, diamond stickpins, and buffed their fingernails.

Belle [Graycloud] was one of the danger dreamers, but like everyone, she reminded herself that the new, greedy people were crazy in the face of money, and even though she had looked for a pattern to the earlier deaths, she’d finally been convinced that they were random murders, part of the madness cropping up like Johnson grass in dry, barren towns that grew rich overnight, part of what happened in poor old places where some gambler struck paydirt. In these places, everyone knew, the worst citizens of the underworld rose up to stake claims.

Horse himself hardly dreamed at all those days. The dynamite blast at the drill sites had made him restless and weary. Second sight, it was a known fact, was easy to lose when shiny cars
honked on the dirt roads, and fine china plates were being thrown up in the air and shot down like clay pigeons. He was coming unstrung, losing both his vision and his feelings, and because of this he agreed with Moses [Graycloud] that Grace Blanket was a woman who catted around. That was the only plot that existed, he told himself.

The Indian people wanted, with all their hearts, nothing more than to be left alone and in peace. They wanted it so much that they turned their minds away from the truth and looked in the other direction, and even Horse, who was known for his divinations, saw it coming only a little at a time. (40)

The preceding passages clearly reveal the unlimited freedom and knowledge the narrator enjoys as well as the great extent of the authority with which she is endowed. They also make clear that Hogan's choice of this technique has made it possible for her to translate the community as content, or on the level of content, into multivocalism on the discursive level. In the last paragraph, we even see the narrator shift from filtering the community's thoughts and feelings to relaying the character Horse's thoughts.

Rimmon-Kenan theorizes that the external narrator-focalizer yields "'objective' neutral, uninvolved" focalization as opposed to the internal focalizer who renders subjective and involved focalization (80). I think the narrator's behavior in Mean Spirit, as evident in the above narrative statements, problematizes the distinction Rimmon-Kenan makes between these two forms of focalization. The
image of the narrator we structure here is of one who is emotionally and ideologically involved in what she is narrating. I am referring to the narrator as "she" because the novelist is a woman; besides, in the text, there are no signs indicating that the narrator is male. So, we are in the presence of an external narrator-focalizer, whose filtering of the community's thoughts and feelings is noticeably colored and structured by her emotive and ideological attitudes toward the community. Phrases and modifiers such as "no stranger to boom towns," "newer kinds of thieves," "with all their hearts," "so much that," "finally," "hardly," all offer a clue to discerning her emotive and ideological slants as well as the kind of response she is seeking to elicit from the reader, that is, the kind of position toward the object of narration she wants her or him to take. Point of view, Wayne Booth theorizes, is not only about how the story is transmitted, but also the articulation of values and attitudes by author/s to readers. "Every stroke," Booth says, "implying his second self [the author] will help to mold the reader into the kind of person suited to appreciate such a character and the book he is writing" (89). The idea of neutral focalization or narration is questionable, for narrativization involves a process of exclusion, inclusion, and hierarchization and all this is governed by point of view. Once "point of view" is remembered or mentioned, neutral narrators slip out of the house of fiction through

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the back door. Point of view involves relation to, or an attitude toward, what is narrated, and it is the establisher of the text's relation to ideology (Lanser 8).

Hogan's novel is a text that does not shy away from revealing its relation to ideology. For Hogan, and other post-colonial writers, the textual is always political. Explaining her motive in re-writing the historical events on which her novel is based, Hogan says, "I think a lot of people would not pay attention to those events, were they not in a kind of gripping story. It would be 'only' history, without the power to deeply affect" ("An Interview" 117). Mean Spirit is written to intervene in the social and cultural text by acting emotionally and ideologically on its readers. The idea of "the power to deeply affect" (117), to act, to effect change in readers is the impetus for all the post-colonial Native American novels discussed in this study. Thus, the narrator's behavior in Hogan's novel is an effect of the politics of "the power to deeply affect." Hogan's text is an act of self-empowerment, an act to liberate the native voice from repression. By liberating the native voice and affirming the native subjectivity, Hogan contributes to the efforts made by the other Native American writers to end the silencing and marginalization of indigenous people in the dominant culture's texts.

By creating a fictional Indian community in the novel, Hogan has performed a decentering of the individual
protagonist and in so doing she lessens, if not totally eliminates, the egocentrism of conventional novels. Emphasis on the community in Mean Spirit as well as in other postcolonial novels is related to a notion of the individual that is markedly different from the Western concept of the individual. Postcolonial writers' concerns with the community puts them face to face with the issues and problems plaguing the community (Mukherjee 16). "The tradition of the alienated artist defying his or her community found in modern Western cultures," says Carew-Miller, "has little to do with the creativity of tribal people. Art happens for the community; stories are told to and for the people" (43).

Another feature that distinguishes Mean Spirit from the other novels discussed in this study is its emulation of the documentary style of the traditional historical narrative as evidenced by mention of dates of events and commentaries on certain historical occurrences and legislations passed by the U.S. government concerning Native Americans. Hogan seems to be interested in keeping readers always aware that what they are reading is a fictional rewriting of what happened to the Osages. The acknowledgment at the end of the book in which she lists the sources of the material for the novel serves as a reminder to readers that it is anchored in the real. In this respect, Mean Spirit is considerably different from James Welch's Fools Crow, in which defamiliarization of the
traditional historical narrative has its full expression, relatively speaking. Hogan's novel resembles Denton R. Bedford's *Tsali*, which is markedly characterized by its heavy documentary quality, with the difference that Bedford has not gone as far as to append to his text whatever sources he relied on in writing his novel. The following passage may bring home the point I am making about the documentary aspect to Hogan's novel here:

There also were more important reasons why they remained; in the early 1900s each Indian had been given their choice of any parcel of land not already claimed by the white Americans. Those pieces of land were called allotment. They consisted of 160 acres a person to farm, sell, or use in any way they desired. The act that offered allotment to the Indians, the Dawes Act [Allotment Act of 1887] seemed generous at the first glance so only a very few people realized how much they were being tricked, since numerous tracts of unclaimed land became open property for white settlers, homesteaders, and ranchers. (8)

Interestingly, the narrator's commentary and explanatory statement seems to be a fairly elaborate articulation of what Hogan herself says about the Allotment Act: "The more traditional people did not agree because it was a move toward breaking up tribal sovereignty as well as land holding. It also opened up more land for whites. Indian people ended up with less land" ("An Interview" 116). Hence, *Mean Spirit* is a novel that is both documented and documentary.
Having said this, I shall proceed to analyze Hogan’s depiction of and historical commentary on the impact of assimilation on the Osage Indians then look into her representation of their acts of resistance, her conceptualization of community, and her revision of the culture hero tradition. I will deal with the last three elements in the context of my discussions of the characters Belle Graycloud, Stace Red Hawk, and Michael Horse, who occupy central positions in this project.

Assimilation is an articulation of two contradictory emotions: xenophobia, fear of the “other”; and xenophilia, attraction and desire for the “others,” a covetousness of what they have (Bammer 49-51). Assimilation entails repressing and embracing the “others” at the same time to defuse the threat they pose to the self and to lay hand on what they have. The emotional duality in the deep structure translates on the surface structure of assimilation into different attitudes or sides; one is pretty, though deceptive; the other is ugly and repugnant. Without forgetting the Eurocentric assumptions about European Americans’s cultural superiority undergirding it, on the face of it, the U.S assimilation policy sounds benign and humane, while, at bottom, it is just a subterfuge to strip Native Americans of their lands. This two-sidedness is embodied in the novel by John Hale.
Outwardly, John Hale strikes the pose of the friend of the Osages, who is "always...generous and helpful to his darker compatriots" (22). He has been living among the Indians since his boyhood and they grew to trust him. But under the mask of friendliness and friendship lie greed, cupidity and murderous and opportunist tendencies. Hale kills Indians to clear his way to their oil wealth, organizes hunting trips, and ravages the land. What is more, he takes life insurance policies on Indians in debt, with him named as a beneficiary and right after that, they vanish off the face of the earth. It seems that the right name for these policies is death insurance policies rather than life insurance policies (Casteel 53). The character Walker is poisoned, after Hale takes a lien on him.

Hale's killing of Grace Blanket is the first of his heinous acts depicted or reported in the narrative. The character of Grace is based on a real-life Osage woman named Anna Brown. Anna was murdered in Fairfax in what was then Indian Territory in Oklahoma in the 1920s ("The Story Is Brimming Around" 2). After the discovery of oil in her barren allotted land, Grace becomes the richest Indian in town. She is of the Hill Indians, "a peaceful group who had gone away from the changing world some sixty-years earlier, in the 1860s" (5).

As a child, Grace is brought by her mother Lila Blanket, a river prophet, to live with the Grayclouds. Lila has
learned from a story which the Blue River told her that the white world would encroach on the Hill Indians’s settlement. So she brings her beautiful daughter Grace to town so that she learns the laws and ways of the whites to enable her people to fend off the collapse of their world. Knowledge is power, the Hill Indians seem to be thinking. But Grace does not live up to her mother’s expectations; she does everything except learn what she is supposed to learn; instead, she ends up melting into the white society.

Grace spends her money on a large house with Roman columns, which she lavishly and sumptuously decorates and furnishes. Her house is described as looking like “an icy palace of crystal, and European to the ceiling” (48). Like Pauline in *Tracks*, Grace chooses what Albert Memmi characterizes as disappearance into the oppressor (120), thereby courting her death. Her embrace of the oppressor’s values and lifestyle does not offer her protection from John Hale. Knowing that her teenage daughter Nola will be assigned a white guardian-lawyer by court, Hale has planned to cheat the girl out of the fortune she will inherit by conspiring with her white lawyer.

But even death will not protect Grace from greedy white hands. Several days after her burial, Ona Neck finds out that Grace’s grave has been dug out and her body stolen, along with the beads and valuables buried with her. Moses Graycloud, according to the narrator, thinks that Grace’s
body was sold to a museum in Connecticut. This museum is notorious for buying bodies of Indians, moccasins, and baskets. Grace's body is not the only one reported disinterred and stolen in the narrative. In the Osage cemetery, "There are at least fifty holes dug out there and those are just the ones no one's bothered to fill back up" (318). Stolen bodies, the narrator says, are sold on the black market to museums and roadside zoos, where they will be "a premium for display" (120).

In fact, whites' perception of Indians as artifacts to be sold and exchanged for educational and commercial purposes is not limited to the deceased. Even living Indians are perceived as antiques or business investments. For instance, throughout the narrative, John Tate, a white photographer, photographs all events in Indian Territory and sends the pictures to magazines. What is more, Tate marries Ruth Graycloud, Moses's twin sister, for her wealth as well as to use her as a model. Nola is exploited by her court-appointed guardian Forrest and his son Will, who marries Nola after his father is assigned her attorney. Forrest uses his authority to invest her money in a company owned by none other than Hale. On being asked by his son to account for the money gone from Nola's bank account, Forrest says, "What's the point of this questioning? I'm the attorney here. It's up to me to decide about Nola's estate. I believe in Hale's
company" (191). Forrest's statement makes clear Hale's planning to kill Grace to clear his way to her fortune.

The idea of European Americans, like Hale, killing Indians to make a fortune is no more clearly expressed than in the white man Mardy Green's testimony during the court hearing for Hale: "We have to go on, as a race, I mean... It's like clearing the land for your farm, or hunting the food you eat... They shoot deer, don't they? Well, maybe you would call that a plot... or call it murder, but here it's just survival" (326). Green echoes John Winthrop, who gloated in a 1634 letter to an English friend, Sir Nathaniel Rich, over the near demise of an Indian tribe by a small pox epidemic. Winthrop interpreted the catastrophe as an act of God to enable whites to secure their seizure of Indian land: "[They] are neere all dead of the small Poxe, so as the Lord hathe cleared our title to what we possess" (qtd. in Pearce 19). These pronouncements of the notion of clearing seem to provide a capsule history of Indian dispossession, from the time it was vindicated in the name of God to the present, where it has become a question of survival.

Interestingly, even Will whom we see question his father about the missing money exploits Nola himself. Like the other Indian-white marriages, Will's marriage to Nola is a business investment. This is no better expressed than by one of his friends: "He [Will] doesn't need a business. He's got an Indian wife" (193). Although Will seems to have sincere
affection for Nola, his affection is shot through with a perception of her as something antique. For him, the narrator reports, Nola "represent[s] something old and gone to him, something from another time" (195). This idea has support in his trading in artifacts. Jobless and sponging off Nola, Will deals in artifacts stolen from Indian cemeteries: "Looters sold him arrowheads they found near graveyards and small pots painted with spirals and birds. He did not ask where they came from and Nola tried to ignore their growing presence in the house" (195).

Hogan documents European Americans' view of Osage women as business investments by including a letter she found in Terry P. Wilson's book The Underground Reservation: Osage Oil ("An Interview" 116). The narrator relates that Michael Horse has entered into his diary a letter sent to the Indian Agent by a white man searching for a rich Osage woman for a wife:

Dear Sir:

I am a young man with good habits and none of the bad, with several thousand dollars, and want a good Indian girl for a wife. I am sober, honest industrious man and stand well in my community.

I want woman between the ages of 18 and 35 years of age, not full blood, but, prefer one as near white as possible.

I lived on a farm most of my life and know how to get results from a farm as well as a mercantile business. Having means it is natural I want some one my equal financially as well as socially. If you can place me in correspondence with a good woman and I succeed in
marrying her for every Five Thousand Dollars she is worth I will give you Twenty-Five Dollars. If she is worth 25,000 you would get $125 if I get her. This is a plain business proposition and I trust you will consider it as such.

Besides enhancing the documentary aspect to the novel, this letter elucidates what I have said above about the xenophiliac side to assimilation—embracing the "other" because of what they have or represent. Osage women are being commodified and treated as objects for curiosity and fantasy. They are either kept as collectible antiques like Nola, or married for their wealth like Ruth by white men.

Hogan broadens the scope of her portrayal of the exploitation and impoverishment of Native Americans by showing European Americans' application of the blood quantum theory to deny full-bloods the right to have control over their allotted land parcels. Under the General Allotment Acts of 1887, tracts allotted to full-bloods were held in trust for twenty-five years because full-bloods were considered "incompetent" to cultivate their lands or to put them to some other good use. Contrarily, mixed-bloods were allocated large land parcels in better areas and given full control over them. This goes to show that competency is not determined by whether or not Indians really have the capability or the know-how to use their lands productively, but by the quantity of white blood in their veins. It seems that the contradiction in the oxymoron "white blood" seems to
reflect the contradiction embedded in the concept of assimilation. In the narrative, Moses Graycloud, among many full-bloods, discovers that the meager amount of money he receives for leasing his land has been reduced by the federal government, and he is eventually declared "incompetent" and assigned a guardian, even though he is diligent and skillful in trading and farming. Although no oil has been discovered in his land, Moses is doing well financially; he is a model of the self-reliant person. In the text, the declaration of his incompetence serves as testimony that assimilation or so-called civilization of Native Americans has not allowed them access to justice and equal opportunity, or to partake of the American Dream.

The opening up of Indian lands for white buyers and the abrogation of native people's land rights by the claim of incompetence constitute a blatant violation of the U.S. government's designation of Indian Territory as a permanent home for Indians. In a message addressed to the Senate and House of Representatives, January 27, 1825, President James Monroe explains the objective of Indian removal policy:

The great object to be accomplished is the removal of these tribes to the territory designated on conditions which shall be satisfactory to themselves and honorable to the United States. This can be done only by conveying to each tribe a good title to an adequate portion of land to which it may consent to remove, and by providing for it there a system of internal government which shall protect
Importantly, Hogan’s portrayal of the reduction of native lands by means of the Allotment Act vividly reveals that the U.S. government has reneged on its promise to protect Indian Territory from invasion. The Allotment Act itself has offered a legal camouflage for the continuing dispossession of indigenous peoples.

But despite all the killings, all the attempts at their impoverishment and the exploitation of their lands, the Osage characters never give in to their exploiters and oppressors. They express their rejection of the fate of the victim by taking a varied course of resistance. At the front of their struggle for survival stand tall Belle Graycloud, Stace Red Hawk, and Michael Horse. Belle Graycloud, to begin with, is an apprentice in bat medicine. She is distinguished by her inexhaustible caring and concern for the health and well-being of the community; she is a model caretaker as Carew-Miller describes her (40-10). Belle’s nurturing and caring are not restricted to humans, but expand to include animals and the environment. When Grace Blanket, around whose murder the novel is centered, is killed, Belle immediately takes orphaned Nola, Grace’s daughter, into her custody. Belle argues vehemently with the school nurse and a man from the Indian Agency when they show up at the Grayclouds’ house to discuss Nola’s absence from boarding school. Belle bluntly
tells them, "I don’t think Nola will be safe at your school. Here, at least, we keep watch over her" (123).

Belle’s caring for creatures is dramatized through a fight she picks up with a group of eagle hunters from the East. Belle runs into the hunters in town after their return from an eagle-hunting trip sponsored by John Hale. At seeing the carcasses of the three hundred and seventeen eagles they have killed, Belle rushes to attack the hunters: “She stared at the dead, sacred eagles. They looked like a tribe of small, gone people, murdered and taken away in the back of a truck.... [She]...ran toward the truck, yelling at the men” (110). Belle is jailed and then released after being bailed out by her husband Moses Graycloud.

In the confrontation between Belle and the eagle hunters, we see unfolding the cultural collision between two opposed worldviews: the Indian view that is predicated on the concept of unity of humans and all living things in nature, and the Christian view that grants humans full dominion over the earth and all other life forms. While Belle perceives the eagles as a tribe of dead people, from the hunters’ perspective, “They are just birds” (110).

The conflict over the eagles prefigures the standoff at Sorrow Cave in which Belle leads the Indian community against a group of white laid-off oil workers and boys gathered at the entrance to the cave to kill bats:
Unknown to the Indians around Watona, a war had been declared on bats after the case of rabies that killed the young girl. They mistakenly believed bats carried the disease. There was a one-dollar bounty per "flying rat," as the newspaper called them. (277)

Significantly, the bat killing is monitored by the Sheriff Jess Gold, a gesture indicating that "the killing of the bats, like the killing of the Indians, is carried out while the forces of law and order stand by in complicit collusion" (Musher 25). On recognizing what the white people are up to, Belle, who is strolling around the cave with the Hill Indian Silver, tells Silver to get the people to help them stop the killing. The group of people who turn up includes, among many, Michael Horse, the Lakota Indian Stace Red Hawk, Joe Billy (a priest and a bat-medicine man), Martha Billy (a white woman married to Joe), and Father Dunne, a white priest going through a process of conversion to Indian values and spirituality. The group sneaks into the cave and forces the bat hunters to stop shooting. On the next day, when the Sheriff and his force come to gas them out of the cave, they only find Belle. The others have escaped during the night through another entrance on the other side which Horse happened to discover before. Belle is jailed until Moses comes to bail her out.

In portraying the standoff at Sorrow Cave, Hogan seems to be doing two things at the same time: calling into question the Christian hierarchizing worldview that gives
absolute priority and primacy to human life over all creatures (Casteel 52; Musher 24), and defining the concept of community (Carew-Miller 43). During the showdown, the Native American view regarding all creatures is in conflict with the whites' perception of living things as a source of income and profit. For the Indians, the bats are good and a source of healing power, whereas the white laid-off oil workers and boys are hell-bent to shoot them for the one-dollar bounty a head. Andrea Musher suggests that the bat medicine has worked by uniting the people to defend the bats (35). It should be noted that in the same way that the fight over the dead eagles foreshadows the people's coming together to defend the bats, this showdown itself heralds their rallying to raise money to have Hale investigated and arrested by federal agents: "They did not know yet, they had not heard, that the Osage tribe had given $20,000 to the federal agents to conduct an investigation of their own, and almost as soon as the trial was over, the federal officers issued a new warrant for the arrest of Hale" (334). This happens after the community flees from Watona to the Hill Indians' settlement. Their exodus occurs with the escalation of violence and killing against Indians.

Hogan's concept of community is actualized by the coming together at Sorrow Cave of people from different cultural backgrounds. There are Osages, whites converting to Native American spirituality, and the Lakota Stace Red Hawk from
South Dakota. Stace occupies a central position in the narrative indicated on the structural level by the camera-like shifts of the narrative focus to Washington D.C., where he works for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Stace is "a keeper of tradition and a carrier of the sacred pipe of his people" (50). He has gone to Washington D.C. to work as a federal agent in hopes of helping his people:

[H]e believed he could do more for his people in Washington than he could do at home where so many of the young Indian men had been broken that a cop's sole job was to keep them from killing each other as they relived the heritage of violence that had been committed against them. (50-1)

Stace comes to Watona to investigate the crimes against the Osages but, to his dismay, the deeper he gets into his investigation, the firmer becomes his belief that what is transpiring in Indian Territory, "the dark burial ground" (12), is indicative of a massive conspiracy, just as what Horse, Belle, and Moses have been thinking from the start. Stace resigns from his job, upon realizing "that it is not the knowledge, methods, or process of the federal agents that help him to understand what is going on, but rather, his contact with the Indians" (Musher 31).

The trajectory of Stace's development is noticeably the inverse of that of Nanapush. Till before the end of Tracks, Nanapush has been adamantly opposed to working with the government. It is only when he begins to see the urgent
need to help the Anishinabe by his authority as a tribal chairman that he budges from his former position. Stace’s resignation signifies his disillusionment with salvation ever coming for Indians from the government; it makes clear his recognition of the law enforcement agents’ implication in the crimes against the Indians as reflected in the bat-killing scene, in which we see the Sheriff supervising the shooting of the animals. Like those of Horse and Belle, Stace’s actions are motivated by considerations for the community’s well-being, not only of his Lakota community but other Indian tribes as well. His presence in the novel, along with his Lakota tribesman Lionel Tall, the strong medicine man who comes to offer his help, subverts the concept of community as tribally or culturally constructed. The sense of community expressed and embodied in Hogan’s novel transcends the specific and restrictive boundaries of color, culture, and ethnicity as illustrated by the diversity of the social and cultural backgrounds of the participants in the standoff at Sorrow Cave.

This notion is broader than the one enunciated by Nanapush in Erdrich’s *Tracks*. For Nanapush, culture/language establishes communal identity rather than bloodlines (*Tracks* 169); in Hogan’s novel, communities are conceptualized as being formed around common causes. For Hogan, “Community can mean much more than cultural identity; community can also mean coming together of diverse peoples in
a common cause such as caring for a shared planet" (Carew-Miller 43).

Michael Horse, equally important as Belle, plays and performs a variety of roles and functions in the narrative. He is a water diviner, a seer, a dream interpreter, a translator, a keeper of tradition as symbolized by the Osage's ancient fire he tends and keeps burning, a keeper of a diary in which he records all events and crimes in Watona for future generations, and a writer of a gospel, which he wants to include in the Bible to fix the mistakes he thinks it contains. "Except for his gold car, he [is] one of the proud holdouts from the new ways" (13). He is the last Indian to live in a tipi, and the first person to discover oil in the barren land of Grace Blanket: "It was Michael Horse...who had been the first person to discover oil on the Indian wasteland, and he found it on Grace’s parched allotment" (8). In his youth, Horse served in the American army during the Boxer Rebellion in China, translating in three languages. Given the kinds and diversity of functions he serves in the community, I think Michael Horse is a culture hero. It is quite apparent that his functions and his slipping out of one role into another are identical to those traditionally identified with the Native American trickster culture hero. As Leeming and Page explain, a culture hero stands for the value of his culture and tells his community how to survive (48). But unlike the
traditional mythic culture hero, Horse does not travel to the heavens to bring knowledge and deliverance; rather, the knowledge he brings has its source in the Native Americans' experience of internal colonization, an aspect he shares with Nanapush in Tracks.

It stands to reason to say then that Horse's relation to the tradition is established by his acts and actions rather than by any parallelisms between his trickstery development, transformations, and roles and those of any mythical culture hero as in the case of Fools Crow in relation to Scarface, or Nanapush, whose name makes evident his link to the Chippewa mythical culture hero Nanapush/Naanabozho. It seems to me that Hogan's redefinition of the culture hero ties in with her conceptualization of communal identity as I have explained above. She is supposedly suggesting that the identity of the culture hero, or his connection to the tradition, is determined by what he does toward helping his people and preserving their culture in the same way that she defines community on the basis of a certain group of people rallying around a common cause (Carew-Miller 43). If so, then her revision of the tradition seems to go several steps ahead of the revisions carried out by Welch and Erdrich in Fools Crow and Tracks respectively. I am suggesting this based on the multiplicity of Horse's mediatory functions, the services he provides for the community and his tradition, and the degree of Hogan's defamiliarization of his relation to
the tradition of the culture hero. It may suffice to clarify this point by looking into the number of mediations Horse did in the past and those he is doing in the narrative present.

During his service in the American army in China, Horse worked as a mediator, translating in three languages between Indian and non-Indian American soldiers, between Indians and Chinese, and between non-Indian American soldiers and Chinese. This triple mediation is repeated in the narrative. First, Horse mediates between the present and future Osage generations through his diary in which he records the happenings and events in Watona. Second, he mediates between Indians and whites through his gospel which he intends to incorporate into the Bible. Third, he mediates between humans and animals because he has learned the languages of owls and bats on the outskirts of Watona, where he lives away from the turbulent and violent world: “In addition to his writing, Horse was learning the languages of owls and bats. It did not come easy for him...[B]ut he thought...he could learn anything, so at night he’d go out with some of the Hill men and listen to the darkness” (260).

The distance Horse traversed from his military service in the American army to living reclusively and solitarily apparently indicates his disillusionment with white society. Interestingly, his living at the margin seems to strengthen his connection to the trickster culture hero tradition.
"[T]ricksters," Jeanne Rosier Smith says, are "both folk heroes and wanderers on the edge of community, at once marginal and central to the culture" (2). Although Horse lives on the margin, he is always present at every event to enter it into his diary for future generations, and always there to offer his help and services to the Indian community.

In addition to his learning the languages of owls and bats, we see Horse shift from writing in pen to using a typewriter. In this respect, he is different from Nanapush, who realizes later in the narrative that he should use the power of pen and paper. Another difference between them is that Nanapush has Lulu as listener/narratee, while Horse is writing for the coming Indian generations. During one of the session of Hale's trial, the narrator reports,

Horse felt an even more urgent need to write, as if he could write away the appearance of things and take them all the way back down to bare truth. Those who sat near him in court grew used to the scribbling sound of his words on the paper. It becomes part of the trial. He was writing for those who would come later, for the next generation and the next, as if the act of writing was itself part of divination and prophecy, an act of deliverance. (341).

Besides depicting Horse as a historian writing for the future generations, Hogan uses him to reinforce the idea of the hypocrisy underlying the assimilation policy. Although whites claim to be "civilizing" and "educating" the Indians, they hate to see Indians who are educated or imitating their
life style. The narrator relates that the oil companies leasing Indian lands abhor paying Indian lessors their dues; in their view the Indians are standing in the way of progress: "The owners thought that the Indians were a locked door to the house of progress. And even more than that, they disliked the way Indian people displayed their wealth" (56). The inference to be made from this is that assimilation is not about teaching Indians the cultured ways of the whites; rather, it is about dispossessing and impoverishing Native Americans through legal means--legal from whites' perspective, perhaps.

Aware of this hypocrisy and the risk it is most likely to entail, Horse takes great care, throughout the narrative, to not allow anyone else to read his journal for fear that whites will get wind of it and punish him:

He knew that they had ideas about Indians, that they were unschooled, ignorant people who knew nothing about life or money. But whenever an Indian didn't fit their vision, the clerks and agents became afraid. That was why Michael Horse...always remained silent in the presence of the men from Washington. If they knew he kept a journal of all the events in Watona, and if they knew he had translated three languages back and forth during the Boxer Rebellion in China, they would have found a way to cut him down to the size they wanted him to be, and he knew it. Not that all of them were bad. (60)

Peggy Maddus Ackerberg suggests that Horse is a mise en abyme for Hogan's writing for the present and future generations.
(12). By depicting Horse writing about the same events and atrocities reported by the narrator, Hogan enables his writing to break out of the confines of silence and suppression.

Equally significant, in addition to duplicating Hogan by historicizing the same events she has narrativized, Horse also makes it possible for her to carry out another kind of intervention in the dominant cultural text. Besides writing an alternative historical narrative, Hogan is also seeking to undermine the Scriptures through the gospel Horse himself is engaged in writing during the narrative. Horse’s purpose in writing his own chapter is to fix the Bible, which he thinks is “full of mistakes” (273), especially where it proclaims that “all living things are equal” (273). When Father Dunne objects that the Bible does not say so and that it only says that man has control over the creatures of the earth, Horse promptly says that is where it urgently needs to be corrected (274). Horse’s writing of a corrective chapter to the Bible seems to be informed by his recognition of the Bible’s/Christianity’s complicity in the destruction of the indigenous world, humans and the ecological system alike.

Mean Spirit is interspersed with several passages depicting in most grim details the massive damage inflicted upon the earth:
Up the road from Grace’s sunburned roses, was an enormous crater a gas well blowout had made in the earth. It was fifty feet deep and five hundred feet across. This gouge in the earth, just a year earlier, had swallowed five workmen and ten mules. The water was gone from that land forever, the tree dead, and the grass, once long and rich, was burned black.... These bruised fields were noisy and dark. The earth had turned an oily black. Blue flames rose up and roared like torches of burning gas. The earth bled oil. (53-4)

This dismal description personifies the earth by providing it with flesh and blood; the earth is bruised and caused to bleed “the blue-black oil that...smelled like death” (29) by John Hale oil workers. The workers themselves are at once victims and victimizers; poor and landless, they drudge and toil under the vigilant, greedy gaze of Hale: “They worked for John Hale, the oilman who kept watch over them” (148). They are swallowed by the earth they are bruising and bleeding, just as the greatest percentage of their labor’s revenues is swallowed by Hale.

In granting man an unbridled dominion over all creatures, the Bible does not seem to be treating the earth as a natural home but as an object of total exploitation (Deloria 2) The Christian view of nature as exploitable is totally at odds with the native view of nature as a living ecological system whose continuity and integrity is contingent on its component parts remaining in harmony and balance. The Christian church’s implication in the Western
exploitation of the lands of the "other(s)," the "new empty lands," dates to the fifteenth century. After losing its power with the emergence of a powerful European political leadership, the Christian church saw it fit and imperative to bestow its blessings on the conquest and colonization of the "discovered" lands so as to reap part of the plunder (Deloria 255).

In North America, the Christian religious institutions have contributed to the conquest and colonization of indigenous peoples by draping the raiment of religious vindication on those enterprises. George E. Tinker explains that the church and missionary response to European American colonialism has followed two patterns. One pattern involves viewing North America as a New Israel, thereby providing a theological sanction and foundation for the doctrine of Manifest Destiny (vii-iii). The other pattern, though critical of whites' treatment of Indians and Blacks, has had its own Manifest Destiny agenda, which called for conquest by conversion (viii). Christian evangelists have been complicitous, albeit inadvertently in some cases, in the cultural, social, and economic genocide against indigenous peoples (9).

In *Mean Spirit*, The Gospel of Horse articulates the Native American worldview:

"Honor father sky and mother earth. Look after everything, life resides in all things, even the motionless stones. Take
care of the insects for they have their place, and the plants and trees for they feed the people. Everything on earth, every creature and plant wants to live without pain, so do them no harm. Treat all people in creation with respect; all is sacred, especially the bats.

"Live gently with the land. We are one with the land. We are part of everything in our world, part of the roundness and cycles of life. The world does not belong to us. We belong to the world. And all life is sacred.

"Pray to the earth. Restore your self and voice. Remake your spirit, so that it is in harmony with the rest of nature and the universe. Keep peace with all your sisters and brothers. Humans whose minds are healthy desire such peace and justice." (361-2)

Ackerberg says, "Horse rewrites the Bible by inserting what he thinks is missing from its pages" (13). In my opinion, Horse is not rewriting the Bible at all, for to rewrite a certain text is to recast it, to reconstruct it anew from a totally different perspective, that is, to produce another version that co-exists with, or exists alongside, the text of which it is a rewriting. I think the insertion of The Gospel of Horse into the Bible—if he ever gets it copyrighted—would have more dangerous consequences and implications for the Bible than would have a mere rewriting of it. The Gospel Of Horse will engender self-contradiction in the Biblical text due to the juxtaposition of two diametrically opposed worldviews. Put differently, the Bible would lose its meaning in this respect because of the clash between these two differing views; it would be,
I would venture to say, a collection of floating signifiers. Horse’s Gospel would introduce the trace, the differance (deferral/difference), that would disrupt and postpone the Bible’s meaningfulness and signification. Horse’s chapter will syncretize and hybridize in the Bible. Or, further, it will transport the showdown at Sorrow Cave into the Bible.

In Mean Spirit, as I hope this discussion has shown, Hogan offers a post-colonial Native American alternative narrative that counteracts the dominant historical text through its documentary portrayal of the harrowing calamitous effects of the U.S. assimilation policy on Native Americans. Officially touted as deliverance for Indians from their uncivilized existence, assimilation is exposed to be just a genocide in disguise. The Osages are depicted as experiencing the most ruthless forms of exploitation and persecution. They are not only denied control over their land and cheated out of their fortunes, but are dehumanized by being treated as commodities and artifacts, whose value is subject to the fluctuations of the marketplace. They are avidly and ferociously exploited, as is their territory. Rich Osages, like Grace Blanket, are killed so that greedy money-hungry whites like John Hale can lay their hands undeterred on Indian wealth. Even deceased Indians are not safe and secure from looting. Their bodies are stolen, sold,
and set up as exotic spectacles for watchers at museums and zoos.

But despite all the pain and suffering they experience at the hands of their “civilizers,” the Osages never lose hope or the will to survive. They come to realize that their survival is not through disappearance into their oppressors but through helping and caring for each other. Their exodus to the bluffs is not a retreat into the past, but a movement forward to the future. When in the Hill Indians’s settlement, they raise money to have Hale arrested, an act signifying that their strength stems from being united in the face of all the odds and hardships militating against them.

In Mean Spirit, Hogan does more than just rewrite an episode of the history of the internal colonization of Native Americans in the United States; she also rewrites the idea of community as well as the culture hero myth. She stretches the concept of community far beyond bloodlines and cultural boundaries by depicting a community that is united by or around a common cause, as can be seen in the multicultural make-up of the group of people who show up at Sorrow Cave to defend the bats. Similarly, the culture hero myth undergoes a change that can be termed radical in comparison to its revisions in Welch’s and Erdrich’s novels.
Michael Horse is a culture hero who does not travel in search of light or direction as Fools Crow does in Welch’s novel, nor does he have a name that reveals his connection to the tradition as in the case of Nanapush. Horse’s relation to the survival myth can be discerned through his trickster transformations and the multiplicity of functions and mediations he carries out throughout the narrative. The knowledge that Horse will pass on to the future generations is embedded in Native Americans’ experience of domination, marginalization, and exploitation—this is an aspect he shares with Hogan herself, and with Nanapush in Erdrich’s *Tracks*. Michael Horse is a typical late-twentieth-century Native American culture hero.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

I have argued that the state of indigenous people in the United States answers "the criteria for decolonization" (Morris 75), and that many of the creative works of Native American writers are written as a response to this state. I have illustrated the postcoloniality of Native American literature by analyzing the representations of history in Bedford's *Tsali*, Welch's *Fools Crow*, Erdrich's *Tracks*, and Hogan's *Mean Spirit*. The historical representations in these novels bear the imprint of the Native American experience of internal colonization and are motivated by the aspiration to effect change in the situation of the indigenous people in the United States.

Like their postcolonial counterparts in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere, Bedford, Welch, Erdrich, and Hogan turn their marginality to their advantage by appropriating the western novel genre to offer alternative historical narratives that subvert and challenge the dominant historical and cultural text by abrogating the negative representations and
stereotypes of indigenous people and by depicting the enormity of the material and psychological damage that indigenous peoples have suffered at the hands of their oppressors. In so doing, their narratives counteract the dominant representation of American history as epitomizing the triumph of civilization over savagery, by showing that from a native standpoint this history means dispossession, dislocation, and genocide. The representations of history in these Native American narratives provide an enlightening picture of the project of historical reclamation undertaken by Native American writers to provide alternative interpretations and understandings of what happened during the encounter between the original inhabitants of North America and European Americans. This project of “symbolic overhaul” is a crucial part of Native Americans’s struggle for equality, justice, and self-determination.

As these novels allow us insights into the concerns and interests preoccupying the minds of postcolonial Native American novelists, they also draw our attention to the various narrative techniques these writers employ in reclaiming parts of their history. As I have explained in the discussions of the texts, the writers’ ideologies (their concerns and motives) have determined their choices of narrative strategies, of methods of characterization, and of subgenre as in the case of Welch’s *Fools Crow*. Each of these narratives illustrates that technique is not only the tool
for organizing and shaping content, but is also the link between ideology and the text, or rather, the agent for translating ideology into the text.

Bedford’s concern with redeeming the reputation of Tsali has necessitated his emphasizing the mimetic aspect of his character. This emphasis on the mimetic is crucial to Bedford’s project to present Tsali as a possible person endowed with qualities capable of earning him the sympathy and identification of the reader. Tsali’s heroic acts are an application, a transformation into functions, of these qualities that set him apart from others. In Fools Crow, we have seen Welch working toward creating a Bildungsroman that breaks out of the conventional boundaries of the Western subgenre. Welch achieves this not only through presenting a hero whose destiny is tied up with the collective destiny of his community, but also by opening up spaces in the narrative for other voices and other stories, whose inclusion contributes to undermining the egocentrism defining this subgenre.

In Tracks, Erdrich offers a narrative that depicts most of the elements and forces that led to the collapse of the Chippewa society. The dual narrative technique Erdrich uses in this novel is an expression of a desire to capture all of the aspects of the Chippewa’s experience of colonization. Apart from the assimilationist perspective that structures it, Pauline’s story has enabled Erdrich to depict what seems
to have no place in Nanapush's: the identity crisis experienced by the mixed-bloods. Thus, Pauline's story both clashes with and complements that of Nanapush within the overall project of the novel.

Hogan's concern with portraying the far-reaching, destructive impact of U.S. Indian policy on the whole Osage community has resulted in the employment of the external "narrator-focalizer" technique. By not orienting the narrative by the perspective of a certain single character, Hogan has written a novel identified by the absence of the individual hero/heroine in the conventional sense. It is true that Belle Graycloud, Stace Red Hawk, and Michael Horse are major characters/actors in the narrative, yet their prominence is earned through their transcendence of the individual interest and pursuit in favor of fulfilling their duties toward the community.

With all their differences, thematic and formal, these texts collectively speak for the condition of Native America, demonstrating the significance of Native American literature within the framework of Native Americans's struggle for a better future, a better life. It is this discursive oppositionality which these native texts articulate that simultaneously constitutes and expresses their postcoloniality. Their postcoloniality both derives from and gives voice to the state of Native America.
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