Writing Counter-Histories of the Americas: Leslie Marmon Silko's

*Almanac Of The Dead*

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This thesis is all my own work and has not been submitted for a degree to any other institution or university.

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Abstract
Writing Counter-histories of the Americas: Leslie Marmon Silko's
Almanac Of The Dead

This thesis stages a critical interrogation of the colonial politics that
have shaped and continue to shape representations of Native Americans in a
North American context. This critical interrogation is based on a reading of
Leslie Marmon Silko's landmark text Almanac Of The Dead. I argue that
Silko's deployment of Native American counter-discourses of history and
story-telling contests Eurocentric epistemologies and ideologies and their
entrenched colonial relations of power/knowledge.

In the course of this thesis, I focus on the complex representational
economies that constitute Silko's text in order to draw attention to Native
American histories of resistance to material and symbolic practices of
colonialism. Silko's text, I argue, is distinguished by an extraordinary range of
representational practices that cut across Eurocentric epistemological
categories and taxonomies. Drawing on a rich repertoire of genres and
cultural practices -- including the novel, history, photography, the almanac,
political manifesto, prophecy and oral story-telling -- Silko effectively
challenges dominant, Eurocentric representations of Native Americans whilst,
importantly, staging a project of cultural and historical reclamation.

The complexity of Silko's text, I argue, cannot be appreciated unless it is
contextualised within the colonial economies of power/knowledge that have shaped
the Americas post the invasion of 1492 and the tactics of resistance maintained by
Native Americans in the face of ongoing colonial practices. As such, throughout the
course of this thesis, I rigorously map the complex intertextual relations that
constitute the fabric of Silko's text. At every level of her text, I conclude, Silko stages
contestatory interventions that challenge and critique dominant colonial systems of
representation whilst simultaneously marking, re-articulating and valorising Native
American epistemologies and cosmologies that overturn these same colonial systems.
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“The story never stops beginning or ending. It appears headless and bottomless for it is built on differences. Its (in)finitude subverts every notion of completeness and its frame remains a non-totalisable one.”¹

Introduction

I begin this thesis on the cultural politics of knowledge and Indigeneity in North America by invoking the critic and film maker, Trinh T. Minh-ha, whose ground-breaking text, Woman, Native, Other profoundly influenced my critical thinking on issues of colonialism, representation and cultural difference in my undergraduate years. In her introduction to this text, which is centrally concerned with dismantling the Western epistemological and discursive hierarchies marked out in the binaries history/story, fact/fiction and writing/orality, Minh-ha poetically evokes the power of story to articulate cultural differences in a continuous process of unfolding which implicitly contests the fixity and closure inscribed in Western discourses of history and the regimes of truth that authorise their production. Minh-ha's creative critical project is one that, through a process of generic interweaving, overturns the violent Western colonial hierarchies which have classified "story" as "tale, legend, myth, fiction, literature" and "history" as "fact," "reality" and "truth" (148). I cite her in order to mark my indebtedness to her work which, crucially, introduced me to the writings of the Laguna poet and novelist, Leslie Marmon Silko, whose text, Almanac Of The Dead: A Novel, constitutes the critical and political focus of this thesis. Silko's passionate analysis of the politics of colonialism, history and cultural difference in Almanac crystallises in a compelling way precisely those issues around history/story, fact/fiction, and writing/orality raised by Minh-ha in her work.

¹ Trinh T. Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989), 2.
The Cultural Politics of Unlearning

Given the colonial history and politics which inflect the representation and appropriation of Native Americans and their cultural practices and productions in Western scholarly discourses, my decision as a non-Native American to base a dissertation around a specific Native American text requires further elaboration. The cultural politics that I am attempting to elaborate have been addressed by Wendy Rose (Hopi/Mihawk) in her essay "The Great Pretenders: Further Reflections on Whiteshamanism," where she asserts: "We accept as given that whites have as much prerogative to write and speak about us and our cultures as we have to write and speak about them and theirs. The question is how this is done and, to some extent, why it is done" (416). Bearing Rose's critical qualifications in mind, and without subscribing to the colonial politics which produce Native Americans as exotic objects to be read/consumed by the Western gaze, I nevertheless want to acknowledge how my initial reading of Silko's *Almanac* constituted a turning point in my intellectual life. Reading *Almanac* generated a transformation in my understanding of the relationship between colonialism, history, epistemology and Indigeneity. In thinking through these issues, Silko's text compelled me to "do my homework" (Spivak 62). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's phrase encapsulates the idea of a respectful engagement with the discourses and practices of other cultures. Spivak advocates a critical orientation and practice which necessarily abrogates the Western colonial privilege of speaking for or as those cultures (52). It also problematises the Western anthropological fiction which deems the cultural modes and practices of non-Western peoples to be transparent and thus automatically legible to the gaze of the Western investigating subject.

In the context of my own project, this fiction of transparency was rapidly undermined by my initial reading of Silko's text which, among other things,
inscribed a Native American epistemological and cosmological universe radically different from my own. The effect of this non-transparency was to situate me as other in relation both to the text and the Native American cultures it inscribed. The novel made me aware of how, in a very concrete way, issues about cultural difference and cultural legibility necessarily challenged my relationship to the academic protocols and practices I had taken for granted, and that an ethical engagement with the issues raised by Silko's text required me to undergo a process of learning and unlearning.

The imperative of re-educating myself in the politics of history and historiography sent me on a journey to the U.S.A. to research Native American cultures and their representation in a range of media. This proved an invaluable exercise and enabled me to discuss my thesis with Native American cultural producers in different media, and with non-Native Americans who were conversant with the representational politics mapped out in Silko's text. One of these discussions with the Cheyanne/Arapaho film maker Chris Eyre alerted me to the heterogeneity and vigour of contemporary Native American photography, and this proved to be another turning point in the development of my thesis. Chris Eyre's knowledge of contemporary Native American photographers demonstrated to me the critical cultural work of Indigenous artists who were actively intervening against, critiquing and re-imaging white hegemonic archives of photography on Native Americans. This knowledge provided the impetus to redevelop my ideas on photography and its politics, ideas initially stimulated by Leslie Marmon Silko's engagement with colonial photography in *Almanac Of The Dead*.

Viewed in this context, this thesis is above all a tribute to the power of Silko's text: to its capacity to provoke a re-examination of the politics of cultural difference and to the ways its modes of articulation/inscription contest the totalising force of Western colonial ideologies of history and the Western devaluation of Indigenous mediums like story. Silko's construction of a
counter-history of the Americas in *Almanac* entails a creative interplay between fiction and history, an interplay which, to cite Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Dakota), demonstrates "the political reality of the imagination". Both Cook-Lynn's phrase and Silko's textual practices in *Almanac* recall Michel Foucault's illuminating commentary on the relation between fiction, truth, and history. I reproduce it here in order to mark the political and theoretical dimensions underpinning Silko's project:

> As to the problem of fiction, it seems to me a very important one; I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions. I do not mean to say, however, that truth is therefore absent. It seems to me that the possibility exists for fiction to function in truth, for a fictional discourse to induce effects of truth, and for bringing it about that a true discourse engenders or "manufactures" something that does not yet exist, that is, "fictions" it. One "fictions" history on the basis of a political reality that makes it true, one "fictions" a politics not yet in existence on the basis of a historical truth.

In the case of *Almanac*, Silko "fictions" a future "political reality" based on a "historical truth" by constructing the almanac fragment which, through its mobilisation of a specifically Native American cultural discourse, prophecy, predicts an end to Euro-American colonialism and hegemony in the Americas and the return of stolen land to its Indigenous peoples. Therefore, Silko's novel, and the almanac fragment it deploys to contest Western colonial histories of the Americas, exemplifies precisely in Foucault's sense how fiction or story has the capacity to produce history and the future.

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Before I address the scope and theoretical orientation of this thesis, I want to re-mark at this point my desire to be reflexive and ethical in a project that raises questions about the politics of speaking/writing about Native Americans. I do not pretend to speak for Native Americans and, as my own critical practice in this thesis will demonstrate, Native Americans are increasingly speaking/writing for themselves from a range of sites and in a range of voices, voices which individually and collectively contest the "truth" of colonial histories of the Americas which insist that Native Americans are conquered subjects.

**Key Terms and Methodologies**

In this thesis, then, I map a critical interrogation of dominant white history and its politics of representation which I juxtapose with Native American counter-histories/narratives. These counter-histories deploy tactics of agency to intervene in, critique, and overturn the colonial representational privilege exercised by the West, challenging the unequal colonial power relations that this privilege entrenches. I examine these politics in the context of written and oral histories, literary genres and visual culture with a specific focus on photography. My interrogation of these discourses, genres and media necessarily raises questions about the cultural politics of knowledge, and that interrogation is primarily facilitated by my reading of Silko's text. Given the interdisciplinary nature of *Almanac*, I draw upon multiple disciplines to construct my argument in order to do justice to its complex critical engagement with a range of Western and Native American discourses, genres and practices. These disciplines include history, literature, philosophy, epistemology and anthropology.

I want at this point to clarify my use of particular terms in this thesis and to mark their theoretical provenance and utility for my critique of Western historiography and its construction of knowledge about Native Americans. I use the term "representation" in the context of semiotics, a discipline which
problematises the transparency of cultural signs and that, simultaneously, draws attention to the way in which they construct the real. Nevertheless, while cultural signs and signifying systems like language and photography are discursive mediations of reality, they possess a materiality and are always historically contingent and politically located, irrespective of the representational media in which they occur. In other words, the ideological values and cultural hierarchies encoded in representations produce political and social effects in the real world. Dominant representations of Native Americans function therefore to reinforce the unequal power relations engendered by colonialism. For example, photography as a visual medium became a crucial apparatus of colonialism during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in North America, and its power to fix Native American subjectivities and cultural practices made it a vital ideological weapon in the project of American colonialism and imperialism.

I employ the terms "discourse" and "discursive formation" in this thesis as theorised by the French post-structuralist critic Michel Foucault. Foucault's conceptualisation of the nexus between discourse, knowledge, power and regimes of truth provides a useful theoretical hinge upon which questions of history, historiography and knowledge production about Native Americans, as well as Native American contestations of these discourses and their methodological and epistemological status, can be raised. Foucault defines a discursive formation in the following terms:

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functioning transformations), we will say... that we are dealing with a
Thus discourses are systematically organised sets of statements which produce and reproduce objects and concepts of inquiry. They authorise particular ways of speaking or writing about these objects or concepts and their institutional location renders them authoritative as producers and reproducers of dominant institutional meanings, values and beliefs. It is in this sense that discourses construct and reproduce power relations by regulating who can speak in specific sites like the university, and also how they speak. While discourses do not exist in isolation, dominant discourses function to override and devalue the discourses of colonised or minority cultures like Native Americans, discourses which in the Foucauldian sense become subjugated under the universalising momentum of Western colonial regimes.

Foucault defines subjugated knowledges as "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity." 5 Foucault's definition of subjugated knowledges is useful in demonstrating how Native American oral histories and knowledges are denied Western institutional validation because they do not conform to the Western empirical tradition of historiography: this is a tradition characterised by its fetishisation of facticity, and by its privileging of a"scientific" or objective discursive practice. As viewed within this Western tradition, Native American oral histories apparently lack the seeming fixity enabled by Western phonetic writing and its archives of knowledge, a "deficiency" which is seen to compromise its historicity and its truth claims. However, while dominant white historical discourses and their

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modes of representation have historically silenced and marginalised Native American voices, their power is not fixed and monolithic. As Foucault argues, dominant discourses also generate resistance and set up the possibilities for agency and change.

I will argue in this thesis that *Almanac Of The Dead* mobilises counter-discourses on history in order to overturn the dominant culture's prescriptions about what constitutes history, and to challenge that culture's knowledge claims about, and representational control over, Native Americans and their cultures. Silko's critique is one that marshals a different politics of truth to the one enshrined in "objective" Western historical discourses; indeed, her project explicitly recognises that, to quote Foucault, "Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth, that is, the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true" ("Truth and Power" 131). Silko's recourse to a different politics of truth is, however, grounded in a "historical truth" (Foucault "The History of Sexuality" 193), namely the violent dispossession of Native Americans from their ancestral lands, a theft which is overwritten and legitimated by Western colonial discourses of "discovery," conquest and nationalism.

Silko's *Almanac* also functions as a counter-archive to that of the Western model; indeed, the Almanac fragment constructed in her text which "tells the people who they were and where they came from" (245) is designated by one of its keepers as "the book of mouths and tongues (142). This politically resonant phrase marks out a crucial difference between the Western and Native American archives. The almanac as archive literally dismantles the hierarchical binary between writing and orality which privileges Western written discourses of history on the basis of a seeming fixity, which is assumed to guarantee truth claims. Unlike the Western archive which locates orality outside of the archive, Silko's *Almanac* inscribes and transmits lived, embodied, agentic Native American oral histories, oral histories which, to
invoke Minh-ha once again, "subvert every notion of completeness" and "remain...non-totalisable" by Western discourses and frames of reference (2). The non-totalisability of orality/story is a crucial tactic in the text's undermining of the colonial closure inscribed in dominant white histories about Native Americans; non-totalisability undergirds the novel's generative power to "manufacture," in Foucault's sense of the term, a future which will see the re-Indigenisation of the Americas.

In this thesis I understand genre to be a dynamic, historically mediated category which is always socioculturally located, and which, through its capacity to signify ideological values, shapes in crucial ways the reading of a text's content or discourses. Thus genre and discourse intersect to mediate the reading of a given text. Genres are never pure and are subject to transformation and hybridisation. Moreover, the mixing of genres as exemplified by Silko's use of the Western novel and the Mayan almanac enables her to articulate an oppositional political agenda and to override the "proper" generic borders set by Western academia for "authentic" Native Americans and their cultural productions. Silko's deployment of the Mayan almanac genre also disrupts what Gordon Brotherston has identified as the complicity between Western imperialism and its construction of "an overall oral model of America;" 6 this tactic exemplifies, then, how the selection of genre is never a politically or ideologically neutral act.

Throughout this thesis, I make frequent use of the term "tactic," which I borrow from the French post-structuralist critic Michel de Certeau. In the Introduction to his book The Practice Of Everyday Life, de Certeau makes a crucial distinction between the concept of the "strategy" as utilised by dominant groups to secure their power (material or ideological) over subordinate groups and the concept of the "tactic," which he defines as "the

place of the other” (xix). Strategies are always institutionally located, and thus occupy what he terms as the place of the "proper"; institutional sites include government, police, media and universities. Tactics by contrast are defined by de Certeau as:

... a calculus which cannot count on a "proper" (a spatial or institutional localisation), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalise on its advantages.... because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time -- it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized "on the wing." Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into "opportunities" (xix).

What de Certeau's formulation of the concept of the tactic allows for is the possibility of resistance, the exercise of agency by subjects under contexts of seemingly totalising systems or regimes of power such as that exercised by colonial authorities in the Americas. He cites as an example the practices or tactics of South American Indians under Spanish imperial rule who, whilst appearing to capitulate to Spanish cultural and religious discourses and practices, subverted and appropriated them for their own use in ways which eluded Spanish surveillance and control: "They were other within the very colonisation that outwardly assimilated them; their use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving" (xiii).
This notion of the colonised other tactically deflecting the dominant system's power structures and discourses while remaining within it has been similarly articulated by the Anishinaabe writer and critic, Gerald Vizenor, through his use of the term "survivance." Indeed, Vizenor's articulation and frequent deployment of this term in his writings represents, in de Certeau's terms, an embodied, agentic, tactical resistance to the dominant culture's power to interpellate and fix him within the category of the defeated and the vanquished. Vizenor argues that "Survivance... means a Native sense of presence, the motion of sovereignty and the will to resist dominance. Survivance is not just survival but also resistance, not heroic or tragic, but the tease of tradition, and my sense of survivance outwits dominance and victimry." 7 With these concepts in mind, I will argue in this thesis that in the writing of her text and in the representational tactics she mobilises, Silko locates herself and other Native Americans as historically situated agents, actively resisting the ways in which Native American histories, stories and subjectivities have been read by the dominant culture to reinforce the unequal power relations of ongoing colonialism and cultural imperialism in the Americas.

A component of the West's domination over its colonised subjects has resided historically in its power to name; Columbus's mis-naming of the Indigenous occupants of the Americans as "Indians" initiates this colonial privilege. I acknowledge these colonial politics of naming and how their generic deployment has operated to homogenise very different Indigenous cultures in the Americas. Where possible, I refer to the Nation of a particular Native American spokesperson, but the editorial politics of some texts do not always make it possible for me to exercise this courtesy. I also use the terms "Native American," "Native," "Indian" and "Indigenous" to refer to the original

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occupants of the Americas, notwithstanding their Western colonial provenance and my prior qualification of their generic status. In relation to the designation of Western subjects in my thesis, I use the following terms interchangeably: "Western," "European" and "Euro-American."

Synopsis of the Six Chapters

In Chapter One of this thesis, I critically examine dominant white representations of a specific Native American history, that of Geronimo and the Apache nation, which enables me to raise broader questions about the politics of Western history, colonialism and the discursive construction of Indigeneity. I map these politics in a range of discourses and genres which seek to recover the "real" Geronimo and to evaluate his significance for the national culture. I elaborate on the politics of traditional Western historiography in Chapter Two, in order to situate my reading of Lesley Marmon Silko's re-appropriation and re-articulation of the history of Geronimo and the Apaches in *Almanac Of The Dead*. In my analysis I critique the ideologies and practices inflecting traditional Western historiography, and I pay particular attention to the development and entrenchment of the fact/fiction binary in this Western model, a binary which has functioned to de-authorise non-Western modes of historical production. I argue that Silko's dismantling of this binarism and her critique of the Western discourse of the "real" that it structures is enabled by her tactical use of Native American trickster conventions and by her deployment of culturally different narrative practices. In the process, Silko inscribes a specifically Native American regime of truth which challenges the assumed "universality" and "objectivity" of Western historical discourses and, with it, their truth claims.

I revisit these politics in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis, in which I focus on the photographic representation of Native Americans and on photography's relation to Western colonialism. In Chapter Three I map a history of photography's emergence as a new visual medium in the West, a
development which coincided with the Westward expansion of colonialism in North America and with the inception of anthropology as a discipline. Photography was instrumental in facilitating the symbolic and material "capture" of Native Americans at different phases in the colonial project by fixing and regulating their subjectivities and identities. It thus performed an important ideological function by naturalising a Western colonial cultural hierarchy, which, in turn, operated to reproduce unequal colonial power relations. In Chapter Four I examine the continuity of photography's power to reproduce homogenised and sanitised representations of Native Americans. These dominant representations function to occlude contemporary Native American political struggles, including their attempts to represent themselves in a variety of shifting historical and contemporary contexts. Nevertheless, as I argue in this chapter, Native American critics and cultural producers are increasingly challenging the hegemonic white photographic archive, and their interventions into these visual representational politics mark out that representational space as one of contestation and transformation.

Similarly, Native Americans are contesting the dominant white culture's policing of their literary texts, and in Chapter Five I address the politics of genre and historiography in relation to the construction and reception of Native American texts. I focus on the way *Almanac Of The Dead: A Novel* deploys the Mayan almanac genre in order to valorise a specifically Native American generic category and the prophetic mode that it inscribes; this genre symbolises a continuous history of resistance to Western colonialism. Significantly, Silko's title marks out the generic doubleness of her text, and her Indigenisation of the Western novel genre also constitutes an important tactic of resistance to neo-colonial domination. Through this tactic of generic double marking, Silko sets up from the outset a challenge to the dominant culture's prescriptions about cultural and textual "purity" and thus to the regulatory
colonial politics of "authenticity" which function to neutralise oppositional texts and discursive practices.

In the final chapter I elaborate on the politics of Native American prophecy and its articulation/inscription of a culturally different mode of historical discourse in *Almanac Of The Dead*. I argue that through their predictive force -- in relation to Western invasion and to the ultimate disappearance of Euro-American hegemony in the Americas -- these prophecies, as represented by Silko, construct positions of agency for Native Americans which contest Western colonial histories and the unequal power relations they authorise. Native American prophecies also inscribe a different temporality to that enshrined in Western historiography, a difference mobilised by Silko to destabilise the colonial closure to the Indian Wars marked out by Western linear histories and the ideologies of progress that they inscribe.

As I have already acknowledged, this thesis is an interdisciplinary project and there are necessary limits to its scope and methods of investigation. While I focus on questions of history and historiography, my project does not conform to the traditional historical practice of archival retrieval and evaluation of primary source material. Similarly, while I examine literature in relation to Indigeneity and to questions of colonialism and representation, I do not examine conventional literary topoi like theme and character. Moreover, while my thesis centres in crucial ways around a Native American novel, I do not stage an overview of the so-called Native American novel, nor do I attempt to produce a unified theory of its specificities as a genre. Finally, this thesis is not an ethnographic project which constructs Native Americans as objects of knowledge to be revealed by the Western gaze. Rather, I envisage this thesis as participating in anti-colonial cultural projects, committed to dismantling and overturning the objectifying and unequal relations of power that are reproduced by colonial disciplines and practices.
You know, nothing of the past five hundred years was inevitable. Every raised fist and brandished weapon was a choice someone made. The decision to become a nation of thieves and liars was a choice. The decision to censure the native truth was a choice. The decision to manipulate the knowledge of American history was a choice. My immediate choice is to celebrate or mourn. With my relations around me I go into mourning - but I go angry, alive, listening, learning, remembering. I do not go quietly. I do not vanish. I do not forget. I will not let you forget.

(Wendy Rose)  

I begin this chapter on the politics of historiography and Indigeneity with the above citation from the Hopi/Miwok poet and anthropologist, Wendy Rose. It forms part of an impassioned polemic against the celebratory focus of the dominant Euro-American culture's 1992 Columbus quincentennial, and as such constitutes a counter-discursive articulation of both history and identity. As her contestation of the "inevitable" trajectory of the West's imperial agenda makes clear, Rose's polemic, itself part of a counter-quincentennial volume, problematises the teleological sweep of Western Providential history while acknowledging how historiography in the Americas has operated to render

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9 This volume, With-Out Discovery, includes contributions from other Native Americans which critique the dominant culture's celebration of this event. For a fictional representation of the "discovery"of the Americas which reconfigures Columbus as a Mayan Indian who is on a journey to "re-discover" his Native heritage, see Gerald Vizenor, The Heirs of Columbus (Hanover: Wesleyan UP, 1991).
Indigenous histories and bodies as either marginal or invisible. This systematic elision of Native bodies and "the native truth" is signified in the epigraph through the use of the verbs "censure" and "manipulate," terms which foreground the regulatory function of Western colonial discourses in relation to the demarcation and universalisation of historical "fact" and "truth." But while Rose broaches this complicity between colonialism, discourse and Western systems of knowledge in this extract, she also tactically registers and refuses the discursive violence produced by this intersection in order to empower contemporary Indigenous voices and knowledges (5). Moreover, through her explicit contestation of the colonialis tropue of the "Vanishing Native," articulated in the phrases "I go angry, alive, listening, learning".... I do not vanish," Rose re-inscribes a corporeal Native American historiography which asserts the materiality and specificity of contemporary Indigenous bodies, histories and political struggles in unequivocally oppositional terms.

Her stance therefore disallows any neutral position in relation to a national cultural event, the quincentennial, which marks the inauguration of 500 years of Euro-American imperialism and genocide of the Native peoples of the Americas. Nor does it permit the consignment of Native Americans to the moribund and homogeneous category of victim. Rather, Rose's trenchant narrative echoes that of many Native American critics, writers and activists in recent times, who recognise that discursive resistance to ongoing white colonisation must be waged and that control over their representation in a range of media is crucial to the wider struggle against Euro-American imperialism. Finally, her counter-quincentennial narrative also brings into focus and implicitly undermines some of the cherished tenets inscribed in traditional Western historiography, namely "objectivity," "neutrality," "universality" and "truth," which have legitimated and continue to inflect hegemonic representations and histories of Native Americans.
My purpose in this chapter is to engage with the politics of historiography and cultural difference by examining the links in the U.S.A between national narratives of identity and colonialism in relation to representations of Native Americans in dominant white discourses. In general, I interrogate rhetorical and textual structures in these discourses which operate to erase, colonise, and/or neutralise Indigenous histories and subjectivities in order to appropriate them for synthetic narratives of nation. I focus here on a specific Indigenous history, that of Geronimo and the Apaches, which, in its hegemonic versions, I regard as being symptomatic of the practices I identify above. My selection of this particular history is driven by its iterability in the national cultural arena, which makes it a productive site for a re-examination of the ongoing discursive construction and appropriation of the Indigene by dominant histories. With this in mind, I map the shifting contours of the figure of Geronimo from his paradoxical positioning in these discourses as both representative "savage" and exemplary resistance leader, to his ultimate re-constitution as a "great American" (Faulk 220). This latter representational category simultaneously registers his recuperation in the 1970s by and for the national American culture and marks the elision of the cultural differences which underpin Apache resistance to white colonisation and imperialism in the first instance. However, in spite of the rhetoric of inclusion which structures this process of recuperation, I argue that it is nevertheless fractured by an ambivalence which reflects the continuing efficacy of the colonial trope of savagism in shaping dominant narratives of self and nation. Therefore, whether representing Geronimo as noble or ignoble other, the texts which constitute this field register a blindness to the politics of cultural difference/s and thus to the ways in which their discursive production of Indigeneity is historically, ideologically and politically mediated. Through their collective failure to adequately address or theorise the Eurocentric categories and practices which inflect their construction of history,
these texts reproduce and buttress colonialist ideologies which function to legitimate the ongoing white imperial project in North America and to marginalise contemporary Indigenous political voices and struggles through an implicit, sometimes explicit, invocation of the nineteenth-century Vanishing Race doctrine.

**Mapping the Indigene**

Since the publication of Roy Harvey Pearce's seminal study, *The Savages Of America* in the 1950s, there has been substantial critical agreement that representations of Native Americans by the dominant culture in a range of discourses and media have crucially shaped national identity formations in North America. As Pearce's extensive analysis demonstrated, from the period of the American Revolution, American conceptions of self and culture were articulated through an ongoing process of differentiation from the Indigenous "others" whose conquest and dispossession was central to its nation building enterprise. As others, their significatory function was delimited to the generic categories of either noble or ignoble savages. But regardless of which generic category of representation they were made to occupy in this shifting colonial context, Native American difference was usually negatively defined and produced in relation to the positive attributes seen to inhere in the "civilised" and "civilising" colonial subject. As Pearce and others have argued, the hierarchical binary set up between the "civilised" self and the "savage" other forms the matrix of many hegemonic American cultural narratives. It

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also grounds those narratives through reference to the ideology of progress -- which provides a foundation for Providential colonial historiography (the idea of history as divinely ordered progress) and therefore operates to rationalise and sanction the American imperial project of Westward expansion. It is worth noting here, that these generic representations of Native Americans remain pervasive in contemporary American culture and that, as many Native American and non-Native American commentators and critics have observed, Indigenous subjects are still constructed in the 1990s as "the quintessential Other, whose role is to be the object of the White colonialist gaze" (Bird 4).  

Before I trace the continuity of this phenomenon in relation to the discourse on Geronimo, I want to examine in more detail the philosophical and historical provenance of this representational economy through reference to Roy Harvey Pearce's invaluable text.

This text, first published in 1953, mapped the systematisation of dominant theories on what Pearce termed "savagism" and the emergence "of a specifically nationalistic self-consciousness" and culture in North America from 1770 to 1850 (4). The term "savagism" encompassed Eurocentric notions of both noble and ignoble savagery Pearce argues, and it came to function as the conceptual axis upon which American "civilisation" could construct the particularities of its national identity in opposition to both Indigenous cultures and its European cultural progenitors. Pearce's term signifies his recognition that these generic categories were tropic constructions and that they did not and could not account for the cultural and political complexities of actual Native Americans. He says of early colonial

11 This comment by Elizabeth S. Bird is made in the context of her evaluation of the Disney film *Pocahontas*. She argues that its representations of Indianness reproduce the homogeneous and absolute other designated through Robert Berkhofer Jr's term,"the white man's Indian"(3). Elizabeth S. Bird, "Introduction: Constructing the Indian, 1830s - 1990s," *Dressing in Feathers*, ed. Elizabeth S. Bird, (Boulder: Westview Press,1996), 1-12. This text examines the historical and contemporary construction and commodification of Indianness within American popular culture and includes essays by Native American and non-Native American scholars.
representations: "The Indian became important for the English mind, not for what he was in himself, but rather for what he showed civilised men they were not and must not be" (5). Negatively differentiated from their Western colonisers through notions of lack or deficit, then, "American Indians were everywhere found to be...men who were not men, who were religiously and politically incomplete" (6). This negativity was initially typified in New England constructions of the Indigene as a satanic other, whose resistance to the Christian "civilising" mission must be violently countered and sanctioned through reference to the Providential intervention of God (19). Thus Pearce argues that these evaluations masked the extent to which the American self and nation was violently constituted and rendered meaningful though the discursive production of the Native American as a category of unbridgable difference (ix).

Pearce locates his study of "savagism" and "civilisation" within Western philosophy's history of ideas (x). His main objective is to explicate the historical conditions and philosophical heritage which inflected the production and circulation of savagism as a primary trope in colonial discourses, and to map its discursive systematisation in disciplines such as history, anthropology and literature. In both its noble and ignoble variants, this trope, he argues, developed out of Western assumptions about the Indigene's "proper" position as "natural man" and with it the right of "civilised" man to engender his transformation from a state of nature to a state of civility (6). It should be noted here that these Western discourses on "Indianness" are gendered through the repetition of the category man, a grammatical strategy which universalises human subjectivity, and effectively excludes Native American women in all their cultural and historical specificities from entering into these colonial discourses as subjects of representation.

Pearce contends that this "transformation" into civility had to be violently prosecuted on the frontier in the face of concerted Indian resistance,
but this resistance served only to reinforce Western notions about the cultural inferiority of the Indigene and to promote the idea of his inevitable disappearance. Given this Indigenous intransigence, Pearce argues:

The problem, then, became one of understanding the Indian, not as one to be civilised and lived with, but rather as one whose nature and way of life was an obstacle to civilised progress westward. What was observed was that the virtues of high civilisation, as well as its vices, destroyed what could be frankly admitted to be savage virtues. How explain this paradox of the admitted incompatibility of admitted virtues? (41)

Pearce finds that this paradox is resolved in colonial discourses by focusing on "necessary differences" in Indian subjectivity and culture rather than on "possible likenesses" to their colonisers. This focus on radical difference, he contends, comes to provide "a grand rationale for the progress of American civilisation over what was called American savagism"(41).

He argues that while Americans sought to particularise their understanding of savagism through a rejection of the European construct of the noble savage, as theorised for example by the French philosopher Jean-Jacquie Rousseau, the epistemological foundations of this trope were nevertheless grounded in European systems of thought. In particular, he finds that savagism came to be articulated and finally naturalised and

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12 See for example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, A Discourse on Inequality, trans. Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin, 1984.) For a recent critical analysis of the historical genesis, discursive construction and Western anthropological deployment of the trope of noble savagery, see Ter Ellingsen, The Myth of the Noble Savage (Berkeley: California UP, 2001).

13 Ellingsen argues that "The 'Savage' and the 'Oriental' were the two great ethnographic paradigms developed by European writers during the age of exploration and colonialism, and the symbolic opposition between 'wild' and 'domesticated' peoples, between 'savages' and 'civilisation,' was constructed as part of the discourse
systematised through an American reading of the Scottish philosophical school of common sense and moral sentiment (82). The appeal of this philosophy lay in its focus on the evolutionary development of human "nature" and culture, and in its espousal of history as the linear mapping of Western civilisation and progress: "Every human institution and custom was found to develop unilinearly and to furnish evidence for the laws of man's original nature. This development was judged to be progressive, of the nature of a continuous movement with no breaks, as growth has no breaks, a movement directed by Nature" (83). Mobilising a "sociology of progress" (83), then, the Scottish school sought to explain the movement in Western culture from the biblical fall to its apparent apogee in Enlightenment Europe. The empirical data for this sociology was furnished through observations and studies of "primitive" cultures. But while the "conjectural histories" produced out of this empirical praxis acknowledged "savage" virtues as well as their vices, the evolutionary focus conceived in terms of "man's social destiny" (103) inevitably devalued Indigenous cultures by ranking them as exemplars of pre-history and pre-civilisation. As such, they had to give way to the superior moral and cultural values of the West. This condition of cultural immaturity and arrest had to be accounted for, and the "savage's" failure to progress in America was explained by William Robertson (an exponent of this school) in his 1777 *History Of America* through reference to environmental factors (86). Thus, in the specific context of colonial America, the operations of "savage nature" were, in Pearce's words, "made manifest" and the outcome of the violent interactions between Western and Native American cultures considered to be not only predictable, but morally justified through the systematic appropriation of a philosophy which rendered "savagism into common sense" and which validated what were to become the pre-eminent
American cultural virtues of "rationalism, freedom and individualism" (89). This rendition of savagism into common sense enabled later American commentators like Thomas Jefferson to argue for the "savage's essential humanity" (95). But that humanity was delimited through its insertion into a genealogy in which the Indigene could signify only as a human prototype whose time had passed and who in turn must now pass away. It is in this sense that "The theory of the progressive stages of history and the relationship of character to circumstance explained the savage's essential inferiority, the final inferiority of even his savage virtues" (95). Hence the distinction between noble and ignoble savages was rendered increasingly redundant and fostered the emergence of a dominant ideological stance of "pity and censure" (58). This conceptual/moral coupling effectively made the Indigene responsible for his/her own decline and disappearance.

Pearce maps the consolidation of this common sense philosophical legacy in relation to savagism in a series of historiographical, literary and anthropological texts, and he concludes that it had become discursively entrenched in the national culture by the mid-nineteenth century. He asserts:

Americans who were setting out to make a new society could find a place in it for the Indian only if he would become what they were -- settled, steady, civilised. Yet somehow he would not be anything but what he was -- roaming, unreliable, savage. So they concluded that they were destined to civilise him, because he could not and would not be civilised. He was to be pitied for this, and also to be censured. (53)

That is to say, while viewed as an object of pity by the dominant culture, the Indian was finally held to be accountable for his "degeneracy," and these ontological limitations made inevitable his/her disappearance under the
advance of American "civilisation." I later argue, in relation to Frederick Turner's production of Apache history in the 1970s, that his ambivalence around "savage nature" reflects and reproduces this nineteenth-century ideology invoked in Pearce's couplet, pity and censure. Turner's revaluation of Geronimo and the Apaches also attests to the continuing influence of the colonial trope of savagism on national cultural production, an influence which ultimately compromises Turner's own critique of the nexus between progress and American civilisation.

However, as the above citation suggests, Pearce's critique of savagism appears to leave the category of civilisation intact. Although the discourses, ideology and practices of American imperialism are subjected to a sustained critique in his text, the conceptual and political valency of this latter category is only implicitly contested through its relation to the production of savagism. Indeed, near the conclusion of the book, civilisation is seemingly endorsed by Pearce in a problematic commentary on changing government policy towards Native Americans:

Recent attempts of our government have been to go that far – as it were, to begin over again: to grant the Indian what remains of his cultural heritage as an Indian and to encourage him to hold onto it and still to become integrated in the American civilisation which has been brought to him and which can yet raise him. Our enlightened aim now is, in the words of one who has recently been concerned with the Indian's welfare, to let him learn all the devices the white man has and still be an Indian. (242)

While it appears that Pearce's agenda is to acknowledge the validity of Native American cultural differences, this statement, through its deployment of key colonial terms like "enlightenment" and "welfare," registers a palpable tension
between the assimilating drive of the dominant culture and the desire to accommodate cultural difference/s. Indeed, the Eurocentric paternalism articulated by Pearce, and further inscribed in the phrase "yet raise him," re-institutes the notion of the white man's burden, a familiar colonial trope which functions to re-privilege white "civilisation" by insisting that the Native other be assimilated into its elevated and elevating cultural regime. In addition, while Pearce's use of the term "enlightened" is an implicit acknowledgement of the violent white colonial history of relations with Native Americans, it fails to address the colonial politics which continue to authorise radically unequal power relations between the dominant culture and its Native others. These power relations are precisely what enable the dominant culture to make determinations - politically and institutionally - about the "welfare" of Native Americans and thus to regulate the cultural practices which constitute their "Indianness." 14 In fairness to Pearce, his valorisation of white civilisation is qualified with the words "thus far our civilisation has come, and we can say that it is more civilised than it was" (242). Nevertheless, the net effect of his observations is still to posit the notion of Western civilisation as both desirable and necessary. Hence the idea of civilisation as a Western category which buttresses a specifically Western epistemology and politics is not adequately addressed in Pearce's argument.

This critical reserve in relation to the category of civilisation can be partially ascribed to Pearce's location as an objectivist, empiricist historian, whose historiographical practice is thereby informed by an ethic of scholarly detachment from the ideas, values and practices which constitute his objects of study. This positionality is inscribed in two significant statements which I now cite in order to examine their ideological and political valency. Firstly, he

14 For an analysis of the history of how political, administrative and institutional determinations increasingly inflect and regulate Native American cultural identities and practices, and how Native Americans resist those impositions in a range of shifting contexts, see Stephen Cornell, *The Return of the Native* (New York: Oxford UP, 1988).
 contends in the preface to his text: "We are not in a position either to justify the past or to instruct it. We can only assent to its certitudes and ask ourselves how they comport with our own"(ix). This citation once more occludes the unequal power relations which vest the production and representation of white colonial histories of Native Americans in the hands of the hegemonic culture. This white privilege, marked by the third person pronoun "We" and reproduced in Pearce's observation that "We can only assent to its certitudes," re-activates another type of Providentialism, which, in this instance is rewritten as a form of fatalism. Consequently, this fatalist discourse disallows the possibility of articulating contestatory histories or claims for justice by Native Americans which might challenge those "certitudes" and the ideologies which legitimate them. Indeed, Pearce's desire to construct a position of neutrality in relation to official white historiography inadvertently colludes with that "censure of the native truth"(5) condemned by Wendy Rose in the epigraph to this chapter. Her stance is one that unequivocably demands an ethical engagement with the "facts" of white Native relations precisely through her refusal to accept the "inevitability" of the Western imperial trajectory and its material and discursive obliteration of Native bodies and their claims to ownership of their ancestral lands.

Pearce's collusion with this process of silencing is reinforced by his prefatorial citation of the historian Professor Arthur O. Lovejoy's disquisition on the intellectual continuities between "our forebears" (xii) and the more contemporary historical field. According to Lovejoy:

The adequate record of even the confusions of our forebears may help, not only to clarify those confusions, but to engender a salutary doubt whether we are wholly immune from different but equally great confusions. For though we have more empirical information at our
disposal, we have not different or better minds, and it is, after all, the
action of the mind upon facts that makes both philosophy and science
-- and, indeed, largely makes the "facts." (xii)

This passage again marks out a position of white privilege in relation to the
power of the non-Native historian to make determinations of "facts" within a
historical field regulated by Western "minds" and "empirical" methodologies.
It also privileges the white archive --"The adequate record"-- as the sole
source of possible "information" through which historical "events" can be
validated and interpreted, a strategy which elides the socio-culturally marked
bodies and living oral testimonies of Native Americans which might challenge
the truth claims of this specifically Western repository of knowledge. In
addition, both Pearce's and Lovejoy's refusal to pass judgement on their
historical progenitors functions to efface cultural differences and also to
disavow ethical claims in the production (understood in the largest sense) of
history. I will elaborate on the politics of the Western archive later in this
chapter when I engage with Native American critiques of its limitations in
relation to the production of "Indian" history.

Finally, the ethical disavowal discernable in the statements I have thus
far examined by Pearce and Lovejoy is also manifest in another statement by
Pearce which is enunciated in relation to the trope of savagism; namely, that
in the period of his review, it "was for its time true" (76). And yet, this
assertion is seemingly contradicted by his recognition of the historically and
culturally contingent relationship between the production of "facts" and
"truth," a recognition signified by his approval of Lovejoy's prior
acknowledgment of the subjective relationship between facticity and
interpretation. While he rigorously questions the factual construction of the
Indigene in the texts he surveys, his empiricist/objectivist method
simultaneously enables him to salvage certain "facts" to argue his thesis on
the relation between civilisation and savagism. For example, from a contemporary context which offers him access to a greater store of "empirical information" (xii) than his predecessors, he contends: "we can look at American studies of the Indian and see, in a century-long perspective, how the facts belie those conclusions" (105). It is in this sense, that the nexus between facticity and the production of truth as an objective, empirically realisable phenomenon resurfaces to ground Pearce's historiographical theory and practice.

Nevertheless, it is not my intention to impugn or diminish the overall value of Pearce's study by drawing attention to the political implications of the philosophy of history that informs his practice. Rather, I want on the one hand to mark his significant contribution to the critical recognition of how the hegemonic American culture's construction and appropriation of the Indigene functioned to constitute its founding cultural narratives, and on the other hand, to disclose the power of colonial discourses to inscribe and inflect the production of Native American subjectivities and histories.
Re-evaluating Dominant Representations of Geronimo and the Apache Nation: The Politics of Colonial Recuperation

I now stage a critique of dominant representations of Geronimo and the Apache Nation in order to broach the politics of dominant historiography and to exemplify in some detail how the appropriative drive of the colonising culture both effaces and/or re-orders the complex and heterogeneous cultural differences of Native American Nations in order to serve its shifting political and ideological agendas. Bearing in mind Pearce's analysis of the complex and often contradictory ways in which the trope of savagism is mobilised over time in hegemonic discourses, it is useful to note that the criterion for demarcating the ignoble from the noble savage is generally a temporal one, which is linked to the particular conditions of struggles over land and resources. That is to say, insertion into these generic categories is determined by the nature and extent of Indigenous resistance to white land expropriations, and by the temporal distance between those struggles and their inscription by the colonising culture. As many commentators have noted, the earlier Republican representations of the Indigene as noble savage circulated at the height of the Indian Wars; during the Westward land drive this representation was increasingly supplanted by the category of the fiendish or ignoble other. With military conquest (seen by official histories to be completed and marked by the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre), the noble

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15 Angie Debo suggests that the genesis of the name Geronimo can be explained in either of two ways. Firstly, that the Mexicans engaging the Apaches in battle were unable to pronounce his Apache name. Alternatively, the name was a translation of the Mexican invocation of St. Jerome during the course of battle. She says that the "Apaches took it up as their battle cry, and Goyahkla became Geronimo" (13). Angie Debo, *Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place* (London: Pimlico, 1976, 1993). Rebecca L. Robbins (Standing Rock Sioux) renders Geronimo's Apache name as Gothalay; see Rebecca L. Robbins, "Self-Determination and Subordination: The Past, Present and Future of American Indian Governance," *The State Of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, ed. M. Annette Jaimes (Juaneño/Yaqui), (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 91. Although I acknowledge the colonial naming politics which accrue around the signifier Geronimo, I retain the name in this thesis for purposes of textual clarity and ready identification.
savage was resurrected and pressed into the service of the Vanishing Race thesis, which in turn provided a rationale for white imperialism and nation building. This representational shift is acutely manifested in the historical reconfiguring of Geronimo. Paradoxically, it is Geronimo's exemplary position as successful guerilla leader, a position construed at the time of the Apache wars as a product of his genetically "savage" Indian nature, that ultimately fosters his twentieth-century recuperation by the national culture as a figure of resistance to political tyranny and as an emblem of the democratic ethos seen to reside at the core of the American nation. That is to say, he is refigured by the dominant culture as an embodiment - however unstable - of noble savagery.

An overview of the literature on the Apache wars reveals that, in contrast to the marginal position assigned to Native Americans in general, the figure of Geronimo has acquired an iconic status in the white American cultural arena. The events which have been used to construct the story of his resistance to American imperialism in the Southwest have been widely debated, reproduced and circulated by the hegemonic white culture to exemplify the shifting position of the Indigene within the master narratives of North American identity. The seeming elasticity of Geronimo's signifying function in these narratives is reflected in the following range of Eurocentric designations: "a red Apache Tamerlaine" (cited in Lubbers 226), "The human tiger" (cited in Sonnichsen 8), "the Butcher" (Sonnichsen 13), "Diablo" (Sonnichsen 13), an "Indian George Washington" (Sonnichsen 5), an "Indian

Moses” (Sonnichsen 5), "The Napolean of Indians" (Salzman 215), "The Father of his People," (Salzman 221), and finally, a "Great American" (Faulk 220). But as these naming practices suggest, he has been alternatively demonised or heroised, othered and ultimately incorporated into the signifying categories of a Western representational economy. Although I focus here mainly on a series of 1970s texts which strive to assimilate and recuperate the history of Geronimo and the Apaches, I turn briefly to nineteenth-century representations of Geronimo in order to situate and contextualise his twentieth century recuperation.

At the height of the Apache wars, for example, Geronimo was unambiguously figured as a demonic "savage" other. I cite two instances from different print media to exemplify this category of representation in more detail and to demonstrate how such representations operate to disenfranchise Indigenous cultures precisely through this process of categorical differentiation from "civilised" Americans. The first example comes from an article by M.Perkins in *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, published in the year of Geronimo's initial surrender, 1886, and is apparently inspired by his observation of a portrait of Geronimo by a local artist. He says of the portrait:

> It was taken when he glories in a gaudy sash about his hat such as is worn by ladies, an old pair of spurs, a discarded cartridge belt. He and his few followers are more dangerous than an army of civilised fighters, for they can murder like the fiends they are, and like fleas elude the grasp of their pursuers. (4)

In terms of the colonialist ideology which sanctions its construction, this representation is unexceptional in so far as it is organised by the common colonial tropes of "fiend" and "flea" which in conjunction, operate to dehumanise the Apaches, and thus invalidate their resistance to white
"civilisation." It also reflects the colonial discursive practice of reductively gendering the Indigenous subject in order to reinforce patriarchal white supremacist values. Hence Geronimo is implicitly feminised/orientalised through reference to his "gaudy" hat sash, an item of dress worn by Western women or oriental men. 17 This particular journalistic piece is, however, remarkably restrained in that it avoids the graphic attention to blood and physiognomy which seem to be mandatory in representations of Geronimo at that period. The second example I cite below, which is the the first stanza from the poem "Geronimo" by Ernest McGaffey, evinces no such restraint, and is symptomatic of the orientalisation of the Native American subject by literary genres like poetry in nineteenth-century America.

Beside that tent and under guard  
In majesty alone he stands,  
As some chained eagle, broken-winged,  
With eyes that gleam like smouldering brands,  
A savage face, streaked o'er with paint,  
And coal-black hair in unkempt mane,  
Thin, cruel lips, set rigidly,  
A red Apache Tamerlane. 18

This stanza and the poem in general is organised and regulated by a series of tropes which are constitutive of the ignoble savage category in this colonial period, and these in turn both explicitly and implicitly draw upon the discourses of orientalism and natural science to produce their signifying force.

18 Cited in Lubbers, 226. Lubber's text provides an historical analysis of the construction of Native American stereotypes within the fields of literature and the visual arts from 1776 to 1884. Klaus Lubbers, Born for the Shade (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994).
Thus Geronimo's quasi-human status is marked primarily in the first stanza by the iteration of physiognomical detail garnered from the lexicon of orientalism and figured in lines such as "eyes that gleam like smouldering brands" and "Thin, cruel lips". The orientalist provenance of this demonising representation is then explicitly signposted through metaphorically rendering Geronimo as a "red Apache Tamerlane," the fourteenth-century Mongol Khan whose Western reputation for military prowess and "bloodlust" during his campaigns obviously incited McGaffery to make the comparison. This metaphoric reduction, then, invokes the motif of blood, which is explicitly articulated in the lines "The eagle feather on his head/Is dull with many a bloody stain" in stanza three. Through this deployment of the culturally specific signifier of the eagle feather, the poem produces a linkage between "oriental despotism" and Apache spillage of blood, to position Geronimo within a subordinate category of human typology, and ideologically to validate his capture and reduction to the "caged tiger" which constitutes the main image in the final stanza.

The reproduction of this orientalist cluster of imagery persists into the twentieth century, albeit with some modifications enabled by the distance in time from the Apache wars. This modification is hinted at in the following flamboyant example, which conforms largely to the above conventions, but attenuates its negative construction through a grudging acknowledgement of Geronimo's more admirable, if unspecified, qualities:

Springing from an ancestry in the black ventricles of whose hearts the clotted ooze of robbery and murder was ever creeping, his subsequent record for sublime villainy is not surprising, but along with those qualities which challenge the indignation and detestation of a civilised people, he possesses certain attributes which appeal
to our admiration. (unpaginated foreword)  

In this passage, the body of the other is produced as a figure of abjection, a body violently inscribed and rendered through the dissecting gaze of the white colonial eye as corporeal excess and waste, a strategy enabled by the construction of organic tropes like "black ventricles" and "clotted ooze."  

This excessive corporealisation positions the other as being outside of the parameters of white "civilisation," which in turn risks contamination from the "creeping" waste products of a culture whose practices - signified by "robbery and murder" - are seen to be biologically (the heart) and genetically ("ancestry") determined. As such, the other produced in this passage is literally beyond redemption, an assumption which affirms the legitimacy of the white colonial power's methods of appropriating Apache territory.

The above passage is also preceded by a reference to Geronimo as a "typical Bedouin" and followed by the obligatory reference to his "career of blood." The rhetorical excesses of this piece - written in 1906 by Mrs Camilus S. Fly as a foreword to an edition of her husband's photographs of Geronimo's provisional surrender at Skelton Canyon - possibly owes much to the context of publication and her desire to increase sales by titillating the public imagination. As such it stands as a prototype of the twentieth-century commodification of Apache savagery which begins to circulate in such genres as novels, histories and visual media like Western films.

19 This foreword is by Mrs Mary Fly and comes from an edition of her husband, C. S. Fly's photographs of Geronimo and the Apaches.
21 Mrs Fly's foreword is from a reprinted limited Centennial edition of C.S.Flys' photographs of Geronimo located in the library of the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson. These photographs and the foreword were originally published by Mrs Fly in 1906 in a text entitled by her Geronimo, the Apache Chief. Mary Fly, Geronimo, the Apache Chief (Tucson: the Adobe Corral of the Westerners, 1986).
22 While the scope of this thesis does not enable me to engage with filmic representations of Native Americans, it is worth noting that Hollywood films have...
Nevertheless, by the late 1960s and 1970s, representations of Geronimo increasingly reflect the changing values of mainstream American culture in the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement and the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s. For instance, in the summation to his 1969 historiography, *The Geronimo Campaign*, Odie B. Faulk claims Geronimo for the national culture by inserting him into the generic category of the "great American" (220). Richard Slotkin, in his examination of the impact of these counter-cultural movements on the discursive production of Indians in relation to national narratives of the period, argues that the change in the hegemonic representational economy was shaped yet again by "White agendas" (*Gunfighter Nation* 630). 23 These different agendas, however well intentioned, he maintains, effaced Native American specificities in the drive to incorporate Indigenous histories "into the mainstream of American culture" (630). Moreover, he recognizes that the lexical and semantic shifts operating, for example, in *Life* magazine's conversion of Crazy Horse (the Oglala resistance leader) from "savage" into "great man", both appropriate and refigure him as yet another version of white America's generic "Other".

This representational shift in relation to Geronimo is addressed by S.L. Sonnichsen who provides a valuable dichronic survey of a range of media and played a crucial role in the construction and commodification of Native American "savagery," and thus have served the ideological function of rationalising Euro-American colonialism and imperialism. Robert J. Conley (Cherokee) provides a list of these films which reproduce colonialisist representations of Geronimo in his novel, *Geronimo: An American Legend*, (London: Pan Books, 1994), 218. This novel was based on a story by John Milius who co-wrote the screenplay with Larry Gross for the 1993 Columbia Pictures film of the same name. Conley argues that this film "starring full-blood Cherokee actor, Wes Studi, gives us a long overdue, balanced portrait of the great patriot warrior" (218). However, I would argue that, while this film is an improvement on previous Western representations of Geronimo, it is still inflected by a colonialist representational politics exemplified by its use of a white narrator, the historical figure Britton Davis, to mediate relations between whites and Indians and to comment authoritatively upon the unfolding of historical events.

genres in which Geronimo has been inscribed, appropriated and commodified. He suggests that, historically Geronimo has occupied, sometimes simultaneously, both axes of the representational grid regulating the discourse of Indianness, but that in contemporary culture, "Geronimo the Good," to use his phrase, predominates over " Geronimo the Wicked" (6). Sonnichsen contends that this valorisation has been partially impelled by the influence of Geronimo's autobiography, which through its focus on the rigours of training for Apache youth, has ironically spawned a genre of "books for young people, holding Geronimo up as a model for white American boys" (25). Sonnichsen is critical of what he deems to be the apotheosis of Geronimo, that is to say, his elevation to exemplary resistance fighter and insertion into the Western category of "hero." Curiously, in a move which appears to ignore his prior acknowledgment of the often contradictory representational sites Geronimo inhabits in the discourse, he cites several passages from Forrest Carter's turgid novel, Watch For Me On The Mountain, to support his critique of this transformation. These extracts foreground Carter's re-positioning of Geronimo as powerful shaman and resistance leader, or in Sonnichsen's words, as an "Apache Moses/Messiah" and an "Indian George Washington" (15-16). But a close reading of this text demonstrates that the trope of savagism undercuts and intersects with the heroic leitmotif and thus destabilises Carter's rehabilitative project. The following passage typifies this contradictory movement:

By the time Geronimo entered the back of S.D's wagon, he presented a horrifying figure. Hot blood from the slashed neck arteries of nineteen men splattered and ran in rivulets from his forehead, down across the yellow stripes before his eyes.

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24 Sonnichsen's essay, "From Savage to Saint: A New Image for Geronimo," has been published in numerous textual sites. The version I cite is published in Geronimo and the End of the Apache Wars, ed. C.L.Sonnichsen, (London: Nebraska UP,1990), 5-34.
His face, bare chest, and arms were thick with blood.
The black eyes were animal-hungry, ferocious for a kill. (197)

While Sonnichsen dismisses Carter's "shamanic" representation of Geronimo as a fictional excess, he does not apply the same standard of evaluation to his equally problematic production of the ignoble savagist trope. That he chooses to ignore this parallel figuration is not surprising, given that his own agenda materialises as a desire to challenge the recuperation of "the most notorious of the Indian leaders" (21). Indeed, his recourse to a colonialist vocabulary "objectively" to describe Apache raiding practices - "Apache raiders looted, murdered, and burned" (9) - notwithstanding his desire to evoke the real fears of white settlers in Arizona, conveniently elides the colonial context of Apache dispossession and their legitimate resistance to this process. Therefore, while Sonnichsen rightly questions the validity of the construction of these categories of representation, he is oblivious to issues of cultural difference/s and he fails to adequately address the conditions which authorise and regulate their production. That is to say, he is unable to account for their discursivity or to acknowledge the often complex politics and ideologies which drive their reproduction. In addition, his re-appraisal of this field implicitly relies on the possibility of locating the "true" Geronimo. This desire is characteristic of white hegemonic discourse on Geronimo, and I now turn to a more detailed examination of this desire and the historiographical practices and politics which undergird it.

Historiography and the Politics of Truth

I focus here on a series of texts produced in the late 1960s and early 1970s which reproduce versions of the generic categories delimiting Native American representations that I have already discussed. These texts in general seek to recuperate Geronimo and the Apaches as signifiers of a
national culture encoded primarily through the interconnected thematics of democracy, freedom and justice. They are also permeated by the changing cultural values generated by the counter-cultural movements of their period. However, it is worth noting that two of these texts, Angie Debo's biography (frequently cited as the definitive biography), and Odie B. Faulk's historiography, have been institutionally revalidated through their unrevised republication in the 1990s. Geronimo's autobiography (originally published in 1906 and republished in 1974 with an introduction by Frederick W. Turner) was also re-published in 1996, albeit with a revised introduction by Turner which reflects to some degree contemporary institutional attention to the politics of cultural difference.

Although the discourse on Geronimo is constituted by heterogeneous genres -- which include histories, novels and biographies -- it is unified by and grounded in the ideologies of objectivity and facticity which are characteristic of traditional Western historical discourses. As I will demonstrate, it also implicitly privileges and reifies a Western notion of truth as a universal and politically neutral entity. But as Michel Foucault has so rigorously argued in the context of discursive formations and knowledge production, "truth" and power are not mutually exclusive. Indeed they are enmeshed in complex relations whereby "truth...induces regular effects of power" ("Truth and Power"131), and the conditions for its discursive production and circulation become systematised in any given society:

Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth;
the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true....(131)25

The pursuit of truth in the texts on Geronimo is regulated precisely by the sanctioning of particular statements and the cultural and institutional status of the subjects who enunciate them. Hence all of the texts I discuss incorporate both official white records of the campaigns against the Apaches into their accounts, and also the autobiography/oral testimony of Geronimo to further authorise their projects. Much of this official record is comprised of white eyewitness accounts, which generally suggest the incommensurability of the competing stories which have been used to construct both the events of the Apache wars and the life of Geronimo. For example, in the preface to his narrative on the Apache wars26 Britton Davis, a participant in these events, says:

The whole of it has never been, will never be told.... So much fiction has been written of the Apache by persons whose knowledge was gained from bar room talk, and so many self-glorifiers have claimed a part in the capture of Geronimo who was never captured, that I feel the need for authenticating my connection with the [Apaches] .... In relating my experiences with the Apache it will be my purpose to stick to facts; otherwise the historical feature in design for it, would have little value. (xxviii-xxix)

In spite of his intention to produce a "factual" narrative, Davis suggests here the difficulty of maintaining the fact-fiction binary in a colonial context which regulates the production of truth.

Debo's more recent account explicitly addresses this problematic. Nevertheless, she also retains some faith in her ability to produce truth by interpreting extant facts and by adjudicating on competing truth claims in relation to the construction of Geronimo's life. She asserts:

I wish I could believe that I have written a definitive biography. But too many times I have had to resort to "probably".... Some of these [conjectures] may be wrong, but I doubt that evidence will ever be uncovered to establish all the facts beyond question. These Apaches were a wild people.... The hunter might glimpse them, but that was all.... [Geronimo] and his white adversaries never arrived at the same definition of truth: to them he was simply a liar whose word could not be trusted; but if one can follow his reasoning, he is seen as a man of essential integrity.... His suspicions were real, the instinctive distrust of any wild creature.... A lesser man could not have written his name so boldly on the history of the Southwest. (x-xi)

Debo's statement both hints at and glosses over the problem. That is to say, the trope of capture which is mobilised in these two extracts foregrounds the difficulty of recovering an Indigenous perspective in a context in which both "facts" and "truth" are grounded in and produced by colonialist ideologies, discourses and practices. Moreover, Debo's desire in her biographical project to invest Geronimo with the status of human subject is systematically undermined by her recourse to the anthropological rhetoric of primitivisation. By constructing Geronimo as a "wild creature" whose resistance to white colonisation is impelled by mere instinct, Debo effects a double displacement
which effaces Geronimo's position as agent and also consigns him to the inarticulate order of nature. This trope encoding primitivism also functions to qualify and ultimately de-authorise Debo's prior ascription of Geronimo "as a man of essential integrity." While truth, then, is assigned a relative value in this passage, it is stabilised and given coherence through implicit reference to the "primitive's" categorical opposite, the "civilised" Western subject.

By erecting a cultural and veridical hierarchy, Debo implicitly questions Geronimo's ability to speak on his own behalf, let alone speak "the truth" as required by Western conventions of rationality and objectivity. At various points in the biography, this contest over truth and fact in relation to the evaluation of sources is bought into play. For example, when assessing an event narrated by Geronimo in his autobiography, she comments: "This is his story and it may well be true" (39). Generally speaking, information from other Apache sources, when contradicted by white evidence is either qualified or invalidated as "confused" or erroneous (304-5).  

The writer, James Welch (Blackfoot) has observed that white historiography invariably "discount [s] Indian testimony as unreliable and contradictory," and, as Debo's frequent invocation of the Western record makes clear, this cultural/epistemological hierarchy is structured through the privileging of the Western archive. That is to say, Indigenous testimony/narrative is characterised by lack and is always in need of supplementation by the graphic authority of the white archive.  

27 There are exceptions to this. For example, Debo describes Jason Betzinez (Apache) as a "reliable witness" (166), although she later contradicts this by asserting that the testimony of Betzinez and other Apache elders in relation to tribal genealogies contained errors (304-305).


29 Interestingly, Jason Betzinez opens his autobiography with an explicit critique of the Western archive, when he states "To the Indian it is a curious thing that white people accept as fact only that which is written on paper, whereas events retold by word of mouth, even if of greater importance, are disparaged as being mere folklore." Jason Betzinez with Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, I Fought with Geronimo (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1987), 1. Nye notes in his foreword that Betzinez wrote his own autobiography, and that Nye's function was to "rigorously" edit the manuscript, a point he makes so as to distinguish this text from the "as told to" genre of Indian autobiography (unpaginated).
This hierarchical relationship is also articulated, for example, in the following comment by Frederick W. Turner in the 1974 \(^{30}\) and 1996 \(^{31}\) editions of the autobiography on the veridical value of Geronimo's input: "As to the accuracy of the whole, let us say to begin with that Geronimo did not choose to tell Barrett [his editor] everything.... At any rate, there are numerous gaps and omissions in his narrative, and wherever possible I have tried to supply the relevant factual data in footnotes followed by my initials" (38).

Turner's adjudication on the truth status of Geronimo's testimony exemplifies precisely how Western historiography and its desire for accuracy is predicated on the illusory notion that everything is always recuperable, speakable, that is to say, "archivable." His position then, fails to accommodate the possibility of a tactical refusal on Geronimo's part "to tell...everything," and consequently, disallows any consideration of an Indigenous politics of silence in the context of the totalising demands made by Western historians and ethnographers for knowledge about the other. Moreover, Turner's editorial strategy of factual supplementation, in relation to the "gaps and omissions" he discerns in Geronimo's autobiographical voice, demonstrates his desire for mastery over the history of Apache resistance to white colonialism, a mastery which effectively functions to erase tactical Indigenous silences in the face of the enemy. To some extent, Turner does acknowledge that Geronimo's silence on certain issues can be ascribed to his status as a prisoner of war, and to his treatment at the hands of white authorities. But he qualifies this by asserting that Geronimo was a "bitter man" (38), and Geronimo's reliability as a source is further undermined by Turner's contention that: "In some cases, particularly those events before


Geronimo came to the attention of the whites, it is simply impossible to comment on what he says" (38).

As the above citations by Debo and Turner suggest, evidentiary value is assigned through reference to the principle of Western facticity, and to the fixity of perspective enabled by the process of writing. Thus it is the Western archive's fixity over the unreliable mobility of Indigenous speech/memory which renders it authoritative and enables it to circulate as truth. It becomes apparent, then, that Debo's use of the metaphor of inscription to suggest "that a lesser man could not have written his name so boldly on the history of the Southwest" (xi), ironically re-articulates and encodes the Western privilege of writing/speaking for the other. In spite of her prior acknowledgement of the conjectural basis of much of her project, Debo insists on her own authority to adjudicate on conflicting historical truth claims, and, in particular, to demarcate the limits of Geronimo's integrity as historical source. This manoeuvre is rendered more problematic by Debo's own reliance on the autobiography of Geronimo, which, in her text, is assigned the function of representing the Indigenous point of view.

As a prelude to my examination of Geronimo's autobiography, I want to stage a more detailed engagement with the politics of the Western archive and the function it serves in delimiting, authorising and hierarchising discourses, discursive practices and knowledges in relation to the historical field.\(^{32}\) I will focus here in particular on Native American critiques of the Western archive's regulation and disavowal of Indigenous oral testimony/histories as valid and culturally different modes of producing historical truth and knowledge about the past and present. \(^{33}\)


\(^{33}\) This disciplinary contest over the evidentiary value of Indigenous oral testimony has recently been played out in the context of Australian discourses on Aboriginal
Native American Critiques of the Western Archive

The questions and the politics raised by the use of the Western archive have recently been addressed in *Natives and Academics*, a compilation of essays by Native American academics which collectively challenge the privileged position assigned to the Western archive in producing representations and histories of Native Americans in past and contemporary contexts. In her introduction to the volume, Devon A. Mihesuah (Oklahoma Choctaw), notes the absence of Native voices and perspectives in the production of Indian histories, an absence she ascribes to a Western epistemological and methodological orientation which continues to read orality as unreliable and deficient in evidential value (2). She also argues that, while many Indians have "expertise...about their tribe's history and culture," their lack of a Western university education places them at a disadvantage in relation to the Western institutional protocols which produce the very category of "expertise" (2). She specifically contests the epistemological binary erected in Western discourses between the "record" and Native "oral traditions," and in the following passage she problematises the Western fetish for accuracy/truth and its relation to a limited set of Eurocentric methodologies deployed in the ethnographic and historical fields:

Many historians and anthropologists also argue that Indians cannot accurately recount their past using oral traditions. They refuse to use historiography. Specifically, the Australian historian Keith Windschuttle has called into question figures regarding massacres of Tasmanian Aboriginals on the basis that they do not appear in the Western archive. Keith Windschuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (Sydney: Macleay Press, 2002). For an interrogation of his position see Robert Manne, ed. *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (Melbourne: Black Inc, Agenda, 2003).

34 Angela Cavender Wilson, "American Indian History or Non-Indian Perceptions of American Indian History?," *Natives And Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*, ed. Devon A. Mihesuah (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1998), 21-26. This volume contains an invaluable collection of essays on the politics of representing and writing about Native American by well-known Native American historians and academics such as Donald L. Fixico, Laurie Anne Whitt and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn.
informants, believing modern Indians' versions of their tribes' histories are "fantasies." But are not some written records fantasy? Are not some writings of some army officers, missionaries, explorers, and pioneers who encountered Indians exaggerated and biased? Using the Native voice exclusively may not yield a precise picture of past events, but neither will the sole use of skeletal remains, midden heaps, or non-Indians' diaries, government reports, and letters. (2-3)

The above passage also demonstrates how the structures which constitute the Western archive - "records," "skeletal remains," midden heaps," "diaries," "government reports," and "letters" function as an inert repository of knowledge, the residue of an ossified past which must be recuperated and revivified by the Western historian. This process can be distinguished from that of Native oral traditions, traditions which have been described by Anna Lee Walters (Navajo/ Pawnee/Otoe) as "animate and alive," 35 and as constituting a continuous living chain of transmission:

Through lineage of clan, band, and family, I learned that tribal history was animate and alive, vested in individual or group tribal members whose responsibility it is to sustain this living quality in the oral description of our existence and experience. This is what my grandfather and grandmother did through their religious activities and through their words: they kept history alive. (76)

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35 Anna Lee Walters, *Talking Indian: Reflections on Survival and Writing* (Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1992), 76. She also argues that "When [tribal histories] are told by tribal people in informal and formal oral traditions, their content and form, as history, is still discredited and minimised by the mainstream" (82). For a fictionalised contestation of the politics of the Western archive and its relation to Navajo oral traditions, see her novel, *Ghost Singer* (Albuquerque: New Mexico UP, 1994).
Angela Cavender Wilson (Dakota) in her contribution to the collection of essays, also addresses the politics identified by Mihesuah in relation to the Western archive, its white institutional custodians, and its marginalisation of Native American voices and perspectives in the production of histories about Indians. She argues that "American Indian history is a field dominated by white male historians" (23), who make little attempt at investigating "how Native people would interpret, analyse, or question the documents they confront, nor have they asked if the Native people they are studying have their own versions or stories of their past" (23). She notes that Western academic resistance to the use of Native oral accounts as components of their own histories is based on a presumption of the infallibility of the Western record and, equally, on a suspicion of orality as that which cannot be corroborated and whose generational mobility and lack of fixity renders it unreliable as source material for a Western archive (24). She cites the following catalogue of frequent answers from Western scholars about their failure to use and validate these Indigenous oral stories, a catalogue which reveals a relentless Eurocentric privileging of facticity and truth as determined by Western standards of value:

"Indians have no record of this time period."
"I don't know any Indians who will talk to me."
"Oral sources cannot be validated and therefore are not trustworthy."
"Fact cannot be distinguished from fantasy."
"Oral accounts change with each generation." (24)

In her defence of Native American orality, Cavender Wilson asserts that:

These stories, much more than written documents by non-Indians, provide detailed descriptions of our historical players. They give us
information about our motivations, our decision-making processes, and about how non-material, non-physical circumstances (those things generally defined as supernatural, metaphysical, and spiritual by Western thinkers) have shaped our past and our understanding of the present. (24-25)

In another essay, 36 she makes a number of points about the cultural politics of producing histories about Indians, some of which bear directly on the sort of editorial proprietorship demonstrated by Turner in his arbitration on what will count as truth in Geronimo's oral testimony, and in his "factual" supplementation of that testimony with reference to the Western record. To begin with, she questions the Western desire to produce truth as a unitary and absolute measure of value by arguing that in the oral tradition "there may be more than one right story" (113). 37 She also pointedly rejects the Western protocol which demands that Native sources require corroboration and validation by Western archives: "the stories must be respected in their own right, and historians must be willing to let them stand on their own" (111). They must also be read in their total cultural context and not forced to comply with Western standards of truth and the theoretical models which construct that standard (114). Moreover, she notes that within Native oral traditions "the stories are considered...to be living entities, with a power and spirit of their own" (111). In effect: "ours are not merely interesting stories or a simple disquisition of historical facts, but more importantly, they are [living]


37 This point she raises about the operation of a non-Western regime of truth in relation to Native American conceptions of history/story is also discussed by Leslie Marmon Silko in the context of Pueblo oral traditions. See Leslie Marmon Silko, "Interior And Exterior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories," Yellow Woman And A Beauty Of Spirit, Leslie Marmon Silko (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 25-47. I analyse this essay in Chapter Two.
transmissions of a culture upon which our survival as a people depends" (111).

This notion of history as embodied and spoken also underwrites Leslie Marmon Silko’s construction of a counter-archive, namely, the almanac fragment which structures an Indigenous re-inscription of 500 years of history in *Almanac Of The Dead*. Crucially, this fragment embodies a history of "mouths and tongues" (142) whose living power circulates continuously to remind the people "who they were and where they had come from in the stories" (246). The almanac thus operates in the text to contest the regime of truth embedded in the Western archive and the colonial histories of Native Americans that it authorises. I will elaborate on her use of the almanac genre in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis. Now that I have addressed the politics of history and Indigeneity from these Native American perspectives, I will return to my examination of the status of Geronimo's autobiography, where I demonstrate how some of the Western discursive and evaluative criteria identified above inflect both the production and reception/reading of this text.

**Autobiography, "Authenticity" and "Vanishing" Indians**

In spite of the often ambivalent assessment by Western critics as to the precise historiographic value of Geronimo's autobiography, it is generally deployed in the dominant discourse as a signifier of "authentic" Indigenous subjectivity. Thus its primary virtue is seen to reside in its re-presentation of Apache cultural beliefs and practices. For instance, the historian Odie B. Faulk reproduces part of the Apache creation story inscribed in this text as an epigraph to his construction of Apache history, and Angie Debo and Alexander Adams both selectively interpolate from the autobiography into their biographies of Geronimo. 38 As I have already noted in relation to Debo's

construction of Geronimo, the autobiography functions as a supplement to the dominant historical discourse but it is also implicitly and explicitly represented as a text always in need of supplementation by the Western record. This problematic is elsewhere articulated by Debo when she asserts that, while the autobiography is deficient as a "factual account," it deserves to be valorised on the basis that its spirit is "unmistakably Indian" (4). While its "factual" status is deemed to be questionable - facticity being the index of its historiographical value - the politics around its production and inscription of "Indianness" is left unexamined. That is to say, the text's historiographic lack is redeemed by its capacity to evoke a recognizably "Indian spirit," and this phrase encodes the drive for authenticity which marks the Indian autobiographical genre.

As is the case with Turner, then, Debo's criticism of the autobiography's factual inadequacies is based partially on a perception as to the limitations of Indigenous orality/memory, a perception which rules out the possibility of Geronimo's tactical silence (his refusal "to tell everything" [38] to invoke Turner's words) in a context where radically unequal colonial power relations structure and mediate his collaboration with Barrett at Fort Sill. Moreover, her valorisation of the text's putative Indian spirit, a spirit opposed to the concrete materiality of facts, functions to decorporealise, essentialise and homogenise complex Native American subjectivities and histories. This rhetorical manoeuvre performs two functions. Firstly, it assumes the transparency/readability of the category "Indianness," a category which Jana

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39 This factual deficiency she ascribes to "the old warrior's fading memory" and to "his natural tendency to magnify his youthful exploits" (4-5).
Sequoya (Chickasaw) argues is an imaginative construction produced out of ongoing unequal power relations between Native Americans and their Western colonisers.  

Secondly, it unproblematically positions Debo as the arbiter of the sign "Indianness," a strategy which bears out Sequoya's assertion about the political effects of a colonial history which vests control over the representation of Indigenes in Western subjects and in Western institutional sites (455). Sequoya links what she names as the "red-herring discourse" (454) of Indianness to the iconography of the Vanishing Indian, an iconography which "constitutes both the authenticating sign of 'Indianness' and an alibi for the usurpation of the territorial and cultural space indicated by that sign" (455).

A more recent evaluation of the status of Geronimo's autobiography, *Geronimo/His Own Story*, confidently and unambiguously extols this text as "one of the most extraordinary and invaluable documents in the annals of Native American history - the authentic testament of a remarkable 'war shaman.'" This pronouncement, which endorses the text as an historical document through an appeal to the code of authenticity, echoes the nineteenth-century rhetoric surrounding the production of this type of as-told-to genre of Indian autobiography, and I now want to examine the politics of authenticity in relation to this text's historical conditions of production.

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42 This statement occurs on the back coverage of the 1996 edition of Geronimo's autobiography.

43 Arnold Krupat notes Geronimo's autobiography was produced in a context of cultural and linguistic complexity which involved the use of an English speaking Apache interpreter, Asa Daklugie, to translate and mediate Geronimo's and Barrett's conversations. Krupat concludes that the "final text [of the autobiography]...is very much the work of Daklugie and, most particularly, Barrett himself (61-62). Arnold Krupat, "History, Science, and Geronimo's Story," *For Those Who Come After* (Berkeley: California UP, 1985), 54-74.

briefly address the contemporary context of publication and the politics of editing in order to map the continuity of the ruse of authenticity, and how it operates to perpetuate and validate the interlinked colonial ideologies of Progress and the "Vanishing" Indian.

In his valuable survey of the enabling conditions of this nineteenth-century as-told-to genre of Indian autobiography, Arnold Krupat observes that they were generally produced and received as historical or scientific documents and not as literary texts (21). In this nineteenth-century classificatory system, Native American difference is discursively registered through reference to the categories of ethnography and history. Hence the implicit hierarchy of truth values drawn between literary and scientific discourses in this taxonomy invests the genre with authority and enables its producers to circulate their texts as "authentic" documents of Indigenous subjectivity and cultural practices. I will now elaborate on the politics of this genre through an analysis of Geronimo's autobiography, and I begin with an examination of the textual markers which buttress the claims made about its status as an authentic document of Indigenous culture.

Originally entitled Geronimo's Story of His Life, the autobiography, first published in 1906, 45 was a collaborative project initiated by Stephen Barrett during Geronimo's last years as a prisoner of war at Fort Sill. (The text was re-published in 1974 and re-edited by Frederick W. Turner III, and for the purposes of this analysis I refer to the 1974 Abacus edition.) Barrett was then a superintendent of schools at Lawton, Oklahoma, and, according to Krupat, it was not until Barrett agreed to Geronimo's request for payment for his services that Geronimo agreed to participate in the project. In his brief

preface to the text, Barrett enunciates the largely ethnographic agenda which inflected its production in a lexicon derived from, and given "scientific" validity by, the Vanishing Race ideology. His intention then is to make available to "the reading public an authentic record of the private life of the Apache Indians," and thereby to contribute to the "general store of information regarding vanishing types." 46

But as my analysis will demonstrate, Barrett's desire to access and preserve "authentic" Indigenous cultural practices encapsulates what Anne E. Goldman 47 identifies in this genre as "The conflict between presencing and preservation [which] suggests in microcosm the problematic relation between autobiographical and ethnographic impulses in life history more generally " (182).

In an effort to gloss over his mediatory function and to authenticate his material as the spontaneous narration of his Native subject, Barrett later attributes the following statement to Geronimo: "Write what I have spoken" (46). This ruse of presencing and non-mediation is reinforced by another authenticating textual strategy - the affixing of Geronimo's signature in English to a "Dedicatory" addressed to President Theodore Roosevelt. This dedication foregrounds the munificence of the "Great White Father," and also Geronimo's desire to obtain justice for his dispossessed people in an unspecified future. It reads as follows:

Because he has given me permission to tell my story;
because he has read that story and knows I speak the truth;
because I believe that he is fair-minded and will cause my

46 Krupat notes that Barrett "was a professional educator, a student of sociology whose amateur attempt at history writing was importantly influenced by the new centrality of the social sciences" (64). He thus argues that Barrett's lexicon and understanding of the term culture was "consistent with its use in American social sciences of the period by Franz Boas and his students"(65).

people to receive justice in the future; and because he is chief of a great people, I dedicate this story of my life to Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States. (unpaginated)

Geronimo's signature is capitalised and inscribed in diagonal fashion below this "Dedicatory," and through this double marking by the word and by the signature, Barrett strives to create the illusion of Geronimo's unmediated presence, and to paradoxically signal his capture of this "authentic" other.

But as this passage makes clear, without Roosevelt's fiat the text could not have proceeded, a point which both Barrett and Geronimo note with gratitude from their different textual and institutional locations. However, these textual strategies, and the unequal power relations they encode, demonstrate how the colonial desire for authenticity in the context of autobiographical production and its construction/dissemination of Native American subjectivity is always complicated and mediated by the intersection of linguistic, cultural, institutional and governmental structures which effectively make authenticity an impossible category of signification. To cite Jana Sequoya again, "the figure of the 'authentic' Indian is a figment of the [Western] imagination" (453). These structures circumscribe Geronimo's access to the process of production, and his institutional status as a prisoner of war is affirmed through Roosevelt's intervention. On the one hand, this intervention apparently marks out the benign paternal intentions of the colonial power represented by the "Great white father." On the other, it enables this illusory category of "authenticity" to signify as a colonial desire which can only be fulfilled within the violent terms of the colonial regime and the power relations it structures and authorises.

In addition, through its iteration of the justice motif, the "Dedicatory" also signals the generic function performed by the collaborative autobiographies produced after 1830 to represent an Indigenous perspective on history in the aftermath of military defeat (Krupat 6). Thus as Krupat has
convincingly argued, "Whereas victory is the enabling condition of western autobiography, defeat is the enabling condition of Indian autobiography"(48). In his analysis of the genre, Krupat notes that these texts constituted "an attempt to preserve, complete, or correct the record in the name of historical justice" (6). The problematic nature of this salvage operation, which is masked by its discursive and disciplinary constitution as ethnography or history, becomes evident in the textual borders of Geronimo's autobiography. As the "Dedicatory" and Preface suggest, the genre, even as it formalises the thematic of justice, also encodes and valorises the ideology of "progressive expansionism"(34) and with it a cultural hierarchy which, even in its liberal manifestations, can lament but not question the demise of the "Vanishing Race," whose history it is obliged to preserve. The limitations of the justice motif and the political containment it encodes is formulated by Barrett in what Krupat identifies as the "presumptively neutral" language of proto-ethnography in his Preface (63). Thus he announces that the autobiography will map "information regarding vanishing types" and it will do so by conferring on Geronimo "the right to state the causes which impelled him in his opposition to our civilisation and laws"(unpaginated Preface). Given the politically charged context of this text's production, Barrett may have thought it wise to announce his agenda in these conciliatory terms. Nevertheless, Geronimo is hierarchically positioned here as white "civilisation's" other, and it is only through civilisation's liberalist mediation - invoked in the juridicial language of "right" and through its beneficial embodiment in Roosevelt - that he may speak against his oppression and dispossession.

The multiple levels of mediation in this text have been ably mapped by Krupat, and I draw on his work to elaborate on the politics which drove its initial production and its contemporary recuperation as an exemplary Indigenous document (60-63). In addition to the usual constraints placed on textual authority and "authenticity" by the practice of translation, the
construction of this text was also inflected by Geronimo's status as a prisoner of war. In order to proceed with publication, Barrett had to submit the manuscript to various officials in the War Department and without Roosevelt's intercession, the project would have collapsed (60). Barrett accepted Roosevelt's advice on a number of publishing details, the most notable being the inclusion of amendatory notes "disclaiming responsibility for adverse criticisms of any persons mentioned by Geronimo" (xiii & 60). Significantly, this colonial circuit of mediation is all but effaced by the editing strategies of Frederick W. Turner in the 1974 edition of the text. For instance, he erases Barrett's narration of his proceedings with the War Department, and also his account of Apache/white warfare in the nineteenth century on the basis that it constitutes "obviously superfluous material " (42). He also consigns Barrett's account of Geronimo's surrender (chapter xviii in the original text) to an Appendix which he deems to be its "proper" place in the 1996 edition (171). In addition, the title of the autobiography undergoes a subtle but politically resonant transformation from Geronimo's Story of His Life to Geronimo/His Own Story. The 1996 edition also contains a textual supplement to the title - "The Autobiography of a Great Patriot Warrior "- and the attribution of editorial responsibility to Barrett on the internal title page in the 1974 edition is re-inscribed "As Told to S. M. Barrett. " The text is thus recoded to signify the more passive function of the transcriber. The net effect of these editorial alterations - constituting yet another level of overt mediation - is to occlude the colonial regime's intercession in the text's production and to minimise Barrett's primary function in producing this "authentic" document of Geronimo's life (Krupat 61).

I do not want to suggest at this point that this text or the genre in general has no value. As Krupat argues, at the very least, it is in the "presentation of an Indian voice as not vanished and silent, but as still living and able to be heard that the oppositional potential of Indian autobiography
resides" (35). I would, however, amend this claim by suggesting that although these nineteenth-century texts must be read through the mediating lens of colonialism and its practices, they can still inscribe resistance and that, as Goldman contends, "editorial agendas can mask but not obliterate the imperatives of the speakers " (179). In Geronimo's case, the autobiography provides a format through which he can articulate a claim to his "homeland" and also express his desire to return there to avoid the cultural extinction which his autobiography as testament to a "vanishing type" will mark.

Nevertheless, as Turner's contemporary editorial practices indicate, the recuperation and institutionalisation of such texts often fails to register sufficiently the colonial power relations which drive their production, nor the extent to which their own editorial politics reproduce those relations and ideologies. In particular, the failure of the dominant discourse on Geronimo to theorise the politics of cultural difference in the act of appropriating his story for the national culture continues into the 1990s.

**Appropriating Indigeneity: Cultural Difference and Narratives of Nation**

In this section I perform a brief comparison of the rhetorical strategies used by Geronimo's two biographers, Angie Debo and Alexander B. Adams, to represent and rehabilitate Geronimo as a figure for dominant narratives of nation. In spite of their differing agendas, both biographers register a blindness to cultural difference/s, and to the power relations which underwrite their unquestioned privilege to script Native American representations in the first place. I then turn to a different institutional and textual site, that of the introductory essay written by Frederick Turner to the 1974 edition of Geronimo's autobiography.

I have already noted that Debo's biography of Geronimo was republished in 1993, and has been institutionally revalidated by Turner's 1996 endorsement of Debo as "Geronimo's most thorough biographer" (3). In Debo's biography, Geronimo's cultural difference - acknowledged primarily
through the trope of "wild" Indian - is subordinated to her desire to position him within dominant cultural categories and within the ethnocentric parameters of humanist biography. This humanist agenda is signalled initially by the title, *Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place*, and enunciated in the introduction as follows: "My task was to explore Geronimo's individual experiences, his motivations, his personal life and character" (x). While Debo's focus on the individual is shaped by the laudable desire to redress the stereotypical portrayal of Geronimo (xi), this strategy is predicated on universalist notions of human consciousness, behaviour and values, although in this instance individuality is particularised to generically recognizable American traits. The following extract catalogues these quintessential "American" traits:

His energy, his determination, and his sturdy independence can be perceived as traits which distinguished him throughout his life. His strong economic sense is apparent, whether in supporting his family and providing for his band by hunting or raiding as a wild Apache or in setting up a profitable business of selling souvenirs and banking the money he acquired in his later days as a Wild West exhibit.... He was hard-headed and practical minded, ruthless in competition, stern and unbending in his judgements, unrelenting in his hatreds. (xi)

She also makes the startling claim that in "a different culture he would have been a captain of industry" (233). This foregrounding of Geronimo's alleged "economic sense" and his projected transformation into an industrial tycoon enables Debo to construct him as an exemplar of American pragmatic individualism. Questions of cultural difference are elided by this manoeuvre,

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48 Her precise words are "Thus he is seen not as a lay figure or as a Wild West character but as an individual" (xi).
and the problematics of addressing Indigenous specificities are not raised. For example, Debo does not consider the possibility that Geronimo's adoption of Western economic practices - such as insisting on payment for his autobiography and for photographic portraits - might constitute an act of tactical resistance to American imperialism within the constraints of his position as a prisoner of war. By incorporating Geronimo into the master narratives of progress and identity, Debo effaces both the context of his status as a prisoner of war, and also the political valency of his tactical appropriation of hegemonic economic practices. Therefore, in this biography Geronimo's cultural difference is neutralised and he becomes yet another figure in the production of dominant American narratives of the self.

Like Debo, Adam's appropriation of Apache history in his biography of Geronimo is enabled by the strategy of reading the Indigene through the homogenising lens of national character and history. Within these parameters, the story of Geronimo and the Apaches becomes "a story of men, women, and children holding at bay a large and powerful nation. It is a story of tenacity and courage and of a battle fought against overwhelming odds" (23). He argues that official histories have thus far misrepresented the "true" position of the Apaches by refusing to situate their actions in a heroic context and by denying the extent of the violations against their cultural integrity and land base by the white invaders. Adams rightly focuses on the nexus between American imperialism and the dynamics of Apache resistance, and he foregrounds the genocidal thrust of official Indian policy in an epigraph to the text. This epigraph, a citation from a report by Vincent Colyer to the Board of Indian Commissioners in 1871, explicitly draws on the rhetoric of

49 This notion of Geronimo's tactical appropriation of Western economic practices is articulated by Leslie Marmon Silko in *Almanac Of The Dead*. The Mexican Indian Calabazas remarks of one of the Geronimo surrogates: "Shrewd Pancakes had made the best of the situation. And if the whites wanted to pay him to ride spotted ponies in Wild West shows and wave an unloaded rifle over his head as the character the white journalists called Geronimo, then that was okay with him! "(235). Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac Of The Dead: A Novel* (New York: Penguin, 1991).
extermination and thus marks Adam's position as an attempt to engage with and contest the ideology and politics of colonialism invoked by that rhetoric. However, this agenda is undermined by a parallel desire to resituate this Indigenous history within a contemporary evaluation of national character. He thus argues that the net effect of white historical actions and discursive "distortions" of those actions produces a "deterioration in the [national] character" (24), which denies the American people access to their "real" collective self. From this perspective, the articulation of Geronimo's true story stands as a corrective to the "mythic" self underpinning master narratives of American identity. In the process, the specificities of Apache resistance to white American imperialism are relegated to the background in order to subserve the project of locating and narrating the real American self. This strategy of appropriation and incorporation is rendered explicit in the final paragraph to the preface:

Even if the Apaches themselves desired their story to be lost, we should not let it be. It tells us too much about ourselves.... In places such as these, [in New Mexico] the spirit of the Apaches still exists, but it is not limited to them alone. It lives wherever men and women are struggling against overwhelming odds for freedom and justice. We, as Americans, should be proud that the Apache's story is part of our country's heritage. (26-7)

This passage graphically encapsulates the assimilative logic of colonialism by which Apache resistance against American imperialism is valorised only to be claimed and reconstituted within the hegemonic rhetorics of the democratic nation, whose very construction in the name of "freedom" and "justice" functions to occlude the historical and contemporary operations of American colonialism and imperialism. The rhetoric of this passage also functions to
displace the materiality of Indigenous struggles against white invasion and
cultural negation through appeals to Western notions of spirit, justice and
freedom. Through these strategies, Geronimo's cultural difference is
neutralised and his biography is made to bear the burden of exemplifying the
heroic leitmotif considered by Adams to be constitutive of the dominant
American character, and thus the nation itself.

The ethnocentric limitations of these texts are reinforced by their
collective failure to address the problematics of their positionality in relation to
the production of Geronimo. That is to say, questions of cultural difference,
power, knowledge and colonialism are not adequately engaged with, nor is
the issue of speaking/writing for or as the other. As Silko's critique in Almanac
Of The Dead makes clear, the broaching of questions such as who writes
history and what practices and conditions shape its production are crucial to
an understanding of how dominant representations of Indigenous subjects
circulate to reflect the wider context of ongoing colonialism.

For instance, in the preface to his biography Geronimo, Adams makes
a concession to the idea of Indigenous representation by including an account
of discussions held between himself and an unnamed Apache elder. The
elder is critical about white misrepresentations of Geronimo and Apache
history and is also, according to Adams, resistant to Adam's biographical
project on the basis that "The white man has already forgotten the Apaches,
so let their history be forgotten also" (20). Adam's use of this dialogic strategy
enables him to foreground the idea of white invasion and thus to contextualise
Apache resistance in ways which invest it with a legitimacy either denied or
neutralised by other writers. Nevertheless, while framing his narrative in
terms of a Western call to justice - the imperative of adjusting the historical
record to enable Geronimo and the Apache's story to be heard - Adams
consigns his anonymous Apache informant to the background, and ultimately
arrogates the right to speak in his place. Moreover, he specifically overrides the informant's refusal to participate in the construction of hegemonic versions of Apache history, thereby invalidating its political force as an act of resistance to white cultural imperialism. In effect, the dialogic scene scripted in this preface replicates the politics of traditional anthropological practice; the Apache's testimony lacks the fiat of the signature, the name, and thus Adams can process it and speak on his behalf. This appropriative practice reinforces asymmetrical power relations by converting dialogism to monologism, and thus Adam's gesture towards nominal Indigenous representation is finally undermined.

**History, Eco-Politics and the Other**

Turner's textual production of Indianness is also staged through a problematic recuperation of Indigenous history and culture which enables him to reformulate dominant narratives of American national identity in the context of eco-politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s. His appropriative strategies both mirror and extend those of Debo and Adams. In his 1974 introduction to Geronimo's autobiography, Turner re-presents an overview of frontier history which to some extent acknowledges both the violence of the colonial project and the discursive practices which legitimate its dispossession and subjugation of Indigenous peoples. However this re-presentation is primarily annexed to a critique of Western colonialism's ecological impact in the 1960s, and this in turn functions as a site for his re-examination of dominant narratives of the American self. Moreover, this dual agenda is articulated within a culturally essentialist framework which enables Native Americans to signify only in terms of absolute difference from their white American counterparts. That is to say, they are reproduced as either noble or savage others, and are temporally located in the past. In short, Turner's lamentation

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50 It is conceivable that the Apache elder did not wish to be named but, if so, Adams does not state this in his preface.
upon the ecological degradation generated by colonialism becomes an implicit endorsement of the Vanishing Race ideology, an endorsement which cannot account for the cultural and political existence of contemporary Native Americans.  

Turner's intervention into history and its legacy is structured by a sustained critique of the ideology of Progress, and the imperialistic agendas which it sanctioned. To set up his critical position on Progress - capitalised to mark ironic distance - he initially juxtaposes citations from two major nineteenth-century American literary figures, Herman Melville and Henry Thoreau, whose interest in Nature and the Indian is well known. The essay begins with an epigraph from Melville which problematises the binary logic underpinning that foundational colonial hierarchy, civilisation/savagism, whose specifically American praxis I have already examined in relation to the work of Roy Harvey Pearce. Formulated as a question, "What separates the enlightened man from the savage? Is it a thing distinct, or is it an advanced stage of barbarism?" (13), this epigraph is followed by Turner's reflection on Thoreau's notion of the Indian as one "who had once stood in reverent proximity to the natural world" (13). This generic Indian - re-inscribed as the noble savage - is contrasted by Turner with his destructive "civilised" white counterpart in order to displace the binarism and its legitimating role in the violent white imperial project. It is worth noting that Turner's apparent displacement of this binary is undermined at key points in his essay, and I will shortly examine some of those textual disjunctions in relation to his production of the Apache "savage." Here, Turner's alignment of the Indigene with

51 In the 1996 edition of Geronimo's autobiography, Turner revises this introductory essay and excises some of the more questionable points made about the doctrine of progress, ecology and the hegemonic Self. He also makes a fleeting reference to the struggles of contemporary Native Americans over land and fishing rights and the white racism that continues to be levelled at those struggles (34). However, the cultural hierarchy between the "civilised" and the "savage" Apache is retained and with it an implicit rationalisation of the impact of colonialism and imperialism upon traditional Apache cultures.
"nature" drives his critique of the doctrine of Progress and colonialism, but his primary concern emerges as the desire to map the deleterious effects of these forces upon the hegemonic national culture. Paradoxically, this solipsistic return is enunciated in terms which rhetorically validate the very colonial process put into question at the beginning of the essay: "We must ask what it is we are destroying in ourselves and others in this mad lust for adventure which we choose to call Progress and whether in the process of Progress we are forgetting - have already forgotten - what it means to be men" (15). Here colonialism is written over as a patriarchal "adventure" and the syntactic hierarchy set up in this passage between "ourselves" and "others" assigns cultural priority to the colonisers. In Turner's formulation, it is the Western self and Western culture which are primarily threatened by the privileging of the paradigm of untrammeled progress. And it is at this moment of self-reflection/discovery that his thesis on Progress returns to the Indigene, who functions as the mediating term in what becomes, in effect, a narrative of neo-colonial "re-discovery." This narrative axis is strikingly captured in a passage which develops out of yet another reflection on the constitutive power of the civilisation/savagism binary in the discursive construction of the American nation:

But in order to ask those questions [about the nexus between progress and civilisation] we must do no less than imagine ourselves as Indians, so as to unite the now separate strands of this chronicle and see it as the story of men's lives ruled unwillingly and otherwise by the idea of Progress and marching under that banner towards the setting sun, only to discover when we arrived at the journey's end that we had lost on the way whatever it was we hoped to find.... (17)
This narrative of self-discovery hinges upon a problematic rediscovery of the other's history, which must be accessed by an act of cultural appropriation encapsulated in Turner's injunction to "imagine ourselves as Indians." 52 But this manoeuvre both appropriates and displaces actual Native Americans, and thus replicates the discursive practices of American colonialism. Moreover, through its relentless foregrounding of the hegemonic self (crucially marked by its terms of address), this narrative also functions as an apologia for Progress and the colonial dynamic which it underpins.

In a curious passage which undermines Turner's prior questioning of its value, Progress resurfaces as the very ground of Western History, which is invoked as a means of legitimating the Western "discovery" and colonisation of the "New World." He says of Cortés:

[He] was but an instrument of history as he stood on those mosquito infested sands [of Mexico]...and ordered his men to burn the ships so there could be no turning back...for whatever force...had sent Cortés on the trail of his countrymen to Cuba and Mexico [it was] as if he had been a toy soldier held between the thumb and forefinger of a hand moving over a toy terrain. (15-16)

52 Turner's position is consistent with what Richard Slotkin argues is the appropriation of a concept of generic Indianness by white counter-cultural groups to signify a "healthy opposition to a sick [Anglo-American] culture" (630). He says of the new environmental movement in the period invoked by Turner, "the Native American religious bond to nature symbolised an ecological critique of the exploitation and pollution of the natural world that accompanied industrial progress" (629), a perception that is manifest in Turner's essay. In fairness to Turner, he qualifies this appropriative injunction in a later essay with his use of the phrase "strategic adoption of an aboriginal view of life" (117). He also acknowledges that this strategy is inherently problematic. However, he continues to elide issues of power relations and of institutional and public access to cultural production and political processes by re-articulating the view that Euro-Americans are also the "victims" of the late effects of colonialism and capitalism (117). Frederick Turner, "On the Revision of Monuments," The American Indian and the Problem of History, ed. Calvin Martin (New York: Oxford UP, 1987), 114-119.
Turner invokes here a Providential model of historiography which, in its focus on the presumptively inevitable outcome of conquistadorial enterprises, elides the politics of Western imperialism by representing history as a process of Providential unfolding whose teleological structure transcends human agency and desire (Perera and Pugliese 6). In their incisive analysis of this model in the North American context, Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese argue: "Providential historiography, then, announces a return to the Columbian nexus of Jerusalem and the New World, as it also marks a consolidation and sanctioning of colonial ventures under the aegis of religion" (5). Whilst the "sacred telos" anchoring Providential historiography is latent here, the Providential metaphor of the moving hand traces its textual remainder, and thus in Perera and Pugliese's terms, Turner's understanding of history operates as a sanction for imperial "ventures." This tacit support is reinforced by his tendency to rationalise or neutralise the violence underpinning the colonial dynamic, despite his at times zealous mapping of the process. This rationalisation is achieved primarily through his use of the term "culture clash" to designate interactions between white and Indigenous cultures, a term which suggests that their outcome was preordained, and whose very understatement cannot account for or legitimate Indigenous resistance to white invasion and the violent usurpation of their lands. For example, in his cataloguing of these clashes, he says "Indians swept into battles of foregone conclusions with whites" (19), and he laments that the colonisation of the West drew "onward to its relentless conclusion" (21). In general, then, the specificities of white invasion and Native American resistance are glossed over and subsumed by this acceptance of the inevitability of Western historical progress.

I want to make it clear that I am not questioning the sincerity of Turner's desire to challenge the atrocities committed against Native American cultures in the name of Progress but pointing out that the terms of his argument reproduce the colonialist logic which structures and validates it. This logic also surfaces in Turner's text as a tendency to essentialise and to hierarchise cultural difference as a means of anchoring his plea to Americans to reconsider "man's proper relationship to the natural world" (40). Thus, he argues that in contrast to white American culture, Native American "cultures were essentially static" (17), an assertion which invokes a classic Hegelian notion of the non-Western other or "primitive" as being outside of culture and history and which thus authorises their colonisation and "civilisation" under the auspices of Western nation states. 54 This statement is then qualified by an uncontextualised reference to the Indigene's affinity with "the natural world" (17). It seems that it is only in her/his former relation to the natural world that the Indigene's difference can be safely contained and acknowledged, a point that I will return to later in this section. Turner's analysis of the "inevitable" outcome of the "culture clash" between the Apaches and the white colonisers also hinges on his production of an essentialising cultural hierarchy, and both his mapping of and attitude to Apache "nature"/character demonstrate the continuing influence of what Pearce identified as the systematic conversion of the colonial trope of "savagism" into common sense understandings within the dominant cultural economy.

To Turner, although regrettable, it is axiomatic that the Apache's "pretechnological" culture must give way to the "numerical and technological superiority" of the white invaders (38), a claim that runs counter to contemporary Native American understandings of both tradition and its relation to technology. His categorisation of Apache culture as "static" and

"pretechnological," then, is structured by a familiar series of interlinked Western binaries: modernity/tradition, culture/nature and technology/pre-technology. These rhetorical strategies effectively place the Apaches outside culture and history as defined by the West and thus implicitly function to rationalise their violent disappearance.

By way of rebuttal, the Cherokee artist, poet and critic, Jimmie Durham, has vigorously argued against the colonialist practice of classifying traditional Native American cultures as static, a classification which becomes inextricably linked to Western claims about their allegedly "pre-technological" status. Instead he affirms the existence of traditional cultures as dynamic entities prior to colonisation, while also acknowledging a continuous Native American tradition of appropriating Western technologies as instruments of resistance to ongoing colonisation. As Durham argues, Indigenous appropriations of technology mark out tactics of resistance to white invasion and to the cultural hierarchy inscribed in the kind of "primitivist" ideologies formulated by Westerners like Turner in his exposition of Apache culture:

We have, and have always had, technology. We accept all technology that contributes to the well-being of our people, which must include the well-being of the earth itself and all life upon it; that acceptance is neither a new thing nor an "accommodation": it is one of our traditions.(10).

Durham's position with regard to the tactical appropriation of Western technologies by Native cultures is affirmed by Jana Sequoya, who in addressing - albeit in a different context - the interpellative powers of colonising cultures and the resistance it provokes among colonised subjects,

remarks: "Native American Indians necessarily and regularly appropriate the technological and discursive forms, as well as the representational ideologies, of the dominant society, in order to negotiate the prevailing social conditions" (470). She argues that, in specific contexts, appropriation – of for example television viewing as a Laguna Pueblo cultural practice - does not necessarily constitute overt "resistance" to the dominant white culture; but nor does it constitute incorporation and assimilation into white mainstream notions of "Americanness" (471). Rather, it reflects participants in the culture's active incorporation of appropriate "structures of modernisation into the old traditions" (471), a process which attests to the dynamic principles and agency embedded in traditional cultures like the Laguna Pueblo Indians. 56 While Sequoya's example derives from a contemporary Native American context, her comments and those of Durham provide crucial Native American perspectives on tradition and technology which stand in diametrical opposition to Turner's understanding of the category of the "traditional."

Turner's espousal of the notion of cultural stasis and the developmental schema which it drives also structures his representations of Geronimo and the Apaches in more sinister ways. In an effort to dispel what he regards as a tendency by "Indian apologists" to "distort history" by representing Indians as "peace loving", he uses Apache culture to exemplify the genetically "savage" nature of some Indigenous peoples as a means of implicitly rationalising their dispossession. For instance, Apache culture is marked by "the raid [and]...the war of vengeance" (33), and Geronimo's ability to execute these cultural imperatives is precisely - according to Turner - what constitutes his "perfection" as an Apache cultural model (34). Whilst it is

56 In a footnote to her essay, "How(!) Is An Indian?," Sequoya defines her use of the term "traditional" as follows. "I am using the term traditional in the way generally used by Native Americans to indicate a distinction between 'modernising' factions within tribal communities and those seeking to retain or revitalise cultural practices and values that sustained collective identity prior to conquest, relocation, and interpellation by dominant economic and social formations" (471).
important to question generic representations of Native Americans, Turner elides questions of resistance to imperial aggression and, unlike Pearce, fails to adequately consider the politics of their deployment in the white symbolic economy. As such, he simply replaces one essentialising colonial category of representation with another:

Look through any collection of photographs of the Apaches and you will see looking out at you faces that neither give nor ask quarter, faces broad and unsmiling...set with eyes so deep and hot that they appear almost glazed and strangely milky, and still all these years later seem to scorch the very pages they are printed on. (26)

This demonising representation becomes the pretext through which Turner will again broach the respective nature and values of Western and Apache cultures. Likening another photographic representation of the Apache to "a steel - or bone-pointed missile," he acknowledges that Western evaluations of this culture are probably "ethnocentric" and "lopsided"(28). But this acknowledgment does not prevent him from reformulating a primitivist view of Apache culture: "And now...perhaps one could say that this was a way of life, a culture, that could not and should not endure; that the stakes are now too high to allow one group of people to live by stealing from others and killing them when they retaliated" (28). This extraordinary passage elides the violence of the Western colonial project and effectively sanctions the disappearance of this "primitive" group by constructing them as inherently militaristic and barbaric. Located in a cultural time warp, they must submit to transformation under the auspices of Western "civilisation," while their resistance to it is rewritten as theft and murder. It seems that in contrast to the abstract and homogenous Indigene who dominates Turner's thesis on
progress, Geronimo and the Apaches cannot be readily identified as innocent victims of Western development and progress.

As I have already suggested, Turner's views on history and cultural difference reflect an Hegelian philosophical legacy which, as Joseph Pugliese has forcefully argued, provides an ideological rationale for European colonialism. In his analysis of Hegel's theory of historical development, Pugliese notes that Hegel's exclusion of non-Western others from "the stage of World History" is predicated on his perception of their "inferior" cultural status ("Embodied Economies" 167). Residing in "their natural condition of rudeness and barbarism" (167), they are fated either to vanish or be assimilated by the onward march of Western history, which is validated in turn by the "progressive" momentum of the Hegelian dialectic (167). Pugliese says of this Hegelian developmental schema: "Already discernible here is the ideology of the 'primitive' which will proceed to inflect so much of colonial discourse, and which will offer a rationalisation for colonial strategies of conquest and exploitation" (167).

In a particularly self-serving moment, Turner's reinscription of the Apache "primitive" and their "fate" provides a departure point for a homily on the levelling effects of progress on contemporary America. In other words, he appropriates the story of Geronimo and the Apaches as an object lesson in order to clarify his ecological agenda:

Geronimo and his people were unwilling sacrifices to progress, but we are, too. The men and women strapped to business machines and those in assembly lines are equally victims with Geronimo, Black Kettle and the Cherokee. And those of us who think we have escaped such dehumanising routines are no less victims in virtually every aspect of our lives, in the food we eat, the air we breathe, the waters we drink and play in. All of us, red and white,
have been sacrificed to Progress, and our continent has become
but a morsel being steadily devoured by those huge metallic
jaws that not so long ago ground up the Indian exceedingly small. (40)

This statement registers a remarkable blindness to the ongoing material
effects of colonialism on contemporary Native Americans, and to the
demographic statistics which map a history of genocide in the Americas. It
also elides questions of unequal access to the very structures of American
political, institutional and economic systems whose legitimacy and viability
have been purchased through the colonial dispossession and usurpation of
Native Americans and their lands. It is this process of dispossession which,
legally, politically and administratively, limits Native American capacities to
challenge the ecological ravages of Western capitalism and to contest
breaches of their rights as sovereign nations, rights encoded in treaties
ratified by Western systems of law. Therefore, by positing an experiential
equivalence between "white" and "red" through his recourse to the unifying
rubric of "victim," Turner again elides the project of American imperialism and
incorporates Geronimo's story into the hegemonic narrative of the American
self. This privileging of the ecological motif displaces any consideration of the
asymmetrical power relations which obtain between Native Americans and
their colonisers in the past and in the present.

This tactic of reciprocity - at least in terms of outcomes - also
underwrites Odie B. Faulk's historiography, *The Geronimo Campaign.*
originally published in 1969. Like Turner, Faulk represents the outcome of the
Apache Wars as "inevitable," and ascribes it to the "technological" superiority

57 For an analysis of these demographic statistics see Lenora A. Stiffarm (Gros
Ventre) and Phil Lane,Jr. (Yankton Sioux/Chickasaw), " The Demography of Native
North America," *The State Of Native America: Genocide, Colonisation and
See also David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: Columbus And The Conquest Of
of the Americans. But, curiously, he also insists that there were no "winners," and he grounds this proposition through reference to Greek tragedy, and to his perception of this genre as a morally uplifting force: "The great theme of Greek tragedy is the inevitability of defeat and the triumph of surviving it "(vii). This Western moral framework invites him to conclude:

And the national culture lost what the Indians might have contributed to it had there been a peaceful resolution to the clash of civilisations.

The final Geronimo campaign must have pleased whatever Greek gods were still haunting Mount Olympus; it was a tragedy of which they surely would have approved. There were no victors. (viii)

By assigning "victim" status to both civilisations, Faulk also erases cultural differences and glosses over unequal power relations between coloniser and colonised, although he readily endorses the technological/cultural disparity which will determine the inevitability of Apache military defeat. Moreover, this strategy of reciprocity is reinforced by his use of the Western category of "tragedy," which operates as a legitimating metaphor for white American imperialism by allowing Native American specificities to be subsumed within its generic borders as mere actors. It disallows the possibility of an Apache perspective on their struggles. Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe) has vigorously contested this tendency by "the literature of dominance" to re-constitute Native histories/stories as tragedies and he argues that "the stories that turn the tribes tragic are not their own stories." 58 He challenges this ethnocentric classification on the following grounds. Firstly, it functions as a form of discursive colonisation because it denies agency to Native Americans by producing historical closure, and by rhetorically ameliorating the violence of

58 Gerald Vizenor, Manifest Manners: Post-Indian Warriors of Survivance (Hanover: Wesleyan UP, 1994), 16.
colonial dispossession. Secondly, it cannot account for cultural difference/s and for other modes of cultural production which resist incorporation into largely self-serving national and colonial narratives.

In Turner's case, this historical closure - signified by the inevitability motif - is buttressed by his reinscription of the Vanishing Race ideology in a passage which converts the other into yet another object lesson for Western consumption.

So the last words of Thoreau continue to haunt us as they remind us of a certain race of men, less progressive, less ambitious, but no less human and quite possibly a bit more so. Those words remind us that this race of men had an important lesson to teach us about man's proper relationship to his natural environment.... [In the] Indian autobiographies...there speaks a single voice.... That voice is the voice of a man with his feet planted like roots in the soil of his mother earth.... We need to read these life stories of [Geronimo]... and the Indians because they enable us to relearn both our limitations and our excellences. As Americans there could be no more appropriate place for us to begin this new kind of progress than with the stories of a race of men which has well nigh vanished because we have forgotten these things. (40-41)

This passage consolidates the process of constructing the Indigene as an unitary figure whose otherness must be contained and read through the Western binaries of nature/culture, progress/stasis. It recirculates the colonial tropes of Nature's child and cultural remnant to insert the Indigene into what Johannes Fabian has described in the context of traditional anthropological discourse as the "allochronic time of the other." 59 In Fabian's terms,

59 Johannes Fabian, *Time And The Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*
anthropology is an allochronic discourse - "a science of other men in another time" (143). In this discourse cultural difference/otherness is measured in temporal terms as distance/separation from the present time of the anthropologists who employ it to constitute their non-Western objects of knowledge (149). Turner's use of this temporal mechanism enables him to reproduce a cultural hierarchy which displaces Native Americans as the subjects of their own stories and consigns them to an ahistorical past in which they signify only as vanishing/vanished Indians, the most visible victims of white America's flawed environmental policies. In addition, his decontextualisation of Native American spiritual practices and his failure to examine their links with Indigenous political and cultural systems, attest to the shallowness of his putative identification. In short, Geronimo's autobiography is valorised, not for its ability to provide an Indigenous perspective on Apache cultural practices and resistance to white imperialism, but for its efficacy in reflecting aspects of the dominant American self in the context of eco-politics in the nineteen sixties/seventies. Turner's appropriation of the story of Geronimo and the Apaches thereby reaffirms the centrality and legitimacy of the doctrine of progress and foregrounds its constitutive function in the construction of hegemonic narratives of nation.

In this chapter I have examined the politics of colonial historiography both past and present and the ongoing contest over the production of Native American histories. As a prelude to my engagement with Leslie Marmon Silko's re-articulation and re-appropriation of the history of Geronimo and the Apaches, in the next chapter I elaborate on the ideologies and practices underpinning traditional Western historiography and their relation to the construction of the Western binary fact/fiction. Silko's destabilisation of this binarism and the Western historical discourse of the real that it encodes is enabled by her deployment of Native American trickster conventions, and by

(New York: Columbia UP, 1983).
her construction of a different narrative practice which rejects the Western desire for "absolute truth," and, instead, permits "differing versions" of truth and "outright contradictions" to co-exist and multiply. 60

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Chapter Two
Re-figuring Geronimo: Story/History and the Politics of Cultural Difference

Perhaps the story has become just a story when I have become adept at consuming truth as fact. Imagination s thus equated with falsification, and I am made to believe that if, accordingly, I am not told or do not establish in so many words what is true and what is false, I or the listener may no longer be able to differentiate fancy from fact. Literature and history were once/still are stories: this does not necessarily mean that the space they form is undifferentiated, but that this space can articulate on a different set of principles, one which might be said to stand outside the hierarchical realm of facts. On the one hand, each society has its own politics of truth; on the other hand, being truthful is being in the in-between of all regimes of truth...

(Trinh T. Minh-ha) 61

In this chapter, I examine the politics of historiography and its relation to the representation of Geronimo and the Apache Nation by focusing on a specific intervention by the Laguna writer Leslie Marmon Silko. Her overturning of dominant white history and its modes of representation is located in part one of her text, *Almanac Of The Dead: A Novel*, in which she stages an exhaustive re-mapping of 500 years of histories in the Americas - histories narrated primarily from multiple Indigenous perspectives. As Silko makes clear, this tactical re-orientation, and the colonial representational

privilege it overturns, necessarily calls into question the hegemony of Western knowledges, discourses and the values and practices they naturalise and legitimate. As such, this reversal of representational control, is crucially informed by her desire to politicise issues of cultural difference and to redress the asymmetrical knowledge/power relations generated by ongoing colonialism in North America.

Central to this agenda, then, is her critique of traditional Western historiography and its de-legitimation of non-Western modes of knowing and narrating history. This critique is mobilised in various ways. To begin with, her re-configuration of Geronimo is narratologically enabled and grounded through reference to orality and Indigenous story-telling practices. In this way, Silko confers an epistemological privilege upon an authoritative Native American cultural matrix as a prelude to her contestation of the colonial history/story binarism. Recognising how this binary has structured traditional Western historiographical practice, and, in the colonial context, sanctioned colonial rule, Silko denaturalises this binary and the cultural hierarchy it installs and naturalises. She does so by drawing attention to its culturally specific discursive construction and its imbrication with Western colonial ideologies, values and practices. In the process, the cultural and institutional authority of this dominant Western historical discourse is challenged and symbolically undermined.

Similarly, Silko unsettles the dominant culture’s systematic co-optation of Geronimo for national narratives of identity through her disruption of traditional Western representational strategies which figure him as either noble or ignoble “savage.” She destabilises these representational strategies and the “objective” or self-evident status of the referential grid in which they are embedded by marking their Western cultural provenance and their implication in colonial standards of evaluating and regulating other cultures. By establishing this link, Silko demonstrates how the trope of “savagism"
functioned politically and ideologically to invalidate Native American cultural differences and to justify the imperial practices of genocide and territorial dispossession. Hence she re-claims Geronimo for an oppositional political agenda by re-accentuating the "fact" that his campaign of resistance to the American military machine was a "war in defence of the homelands" (Almanac 40), a focus which also renders him unavailable for assimilation into the homogenising category of "the great American" (Faulk 220).  

In addition, Silko disrupts discursive, generic and disciplinary borders - a disruption signified initially through the generic double marking inscribed in her title Almanac Of The Dead: A Novel. This practice underpins her recognition of how, in the North American cultural context, rigid disciplinary borders have functioned to regulate the imagination and to de-authorise cultural productions which transgress border limits and discursive codes. Effectively, these borders entrench epistemological, and thus ideological, hierarchies, which, in practice work to erase cultural difference. I later situate this tactical disruption of Silko's by staging a reading of Hayden White's examination of the politics of disciplinary formation in modern Western historiography, and by analysing Terence Martin's illuminating engagement with the nexus between the metaphysical ascendancy of Scottish Common Sense philosophy and the development of an hierarchical disciplinary division between history and the novel in North America (Martin vii ).

Finally, Silko's re-appropriation of Geronimo as a specifically Indigenous figure of resistance to Western imperialism and cultural hegemony is also mobilised by a tactical contestation of the discourse of the "real," a discourse which structures and demarcates traditional Western history from

62 For another Native American re-appropriation of Geronimo as a specifically Indigenous resistance figure, see the collection of poetry by Armand Garnet Ruffo (Ojibway), At Geronimo’s Grave (Regina: Coteau Books, 2001).

its fictional counterparts, and which functions to devalorise other representations of historical experience. Central to her interrogation of this discourse is her tactical production of Geronimo as a trickster figure. This Indigenous category, and the competing stories it generates about the facts of the Apache Wars in the Southwest, provide a departure point for her radical problematisation of Western historiography. To begin with, this tactical deployment allows her to refuse the discursive capture and historical closure marked by the articulation of the dominant Western historiographical desire to recover the "real" Geronimo; it also enables her symbolically to set limits to the West's knowledge claims in relation to colonised Indigenous cultures. Silko thus interrogates reified notions of facticity which characterise traditional Western historiography as she also makes visible the complicity of colonial binaries like fact/fiction, history and story in silencing and marginalising Native American voices and cultural productions.

History and the Cultural Politics of Knowledge

Before I elaborate on Silko's re-constitution of the history of Geronimo, I want to examine here in more detail the relation between traditional Western historiography and the production of cultural difference. I do so in order to demonstrate how its tenets and the practices they inscribe operate to colonise and censor Native American discourses and practices on the construction of history and reality. By representing itself as the arbiter of the real - a function which anchors its truth claims - this Western tradition effaces the cultural specificity of its discursive production of history and reality while abrogating to itself a position of cultural authority grounded in standards enunciated through the rubrics of "objectivity," "universality," "truth" and its correlative "facticity." Laying claim to a methodology informed by "value-neutrality," this dominant tradition registers a blindness to the political and ideological effects of its adherence to a set of discourses and practices which are structured by a Eurocentric epistemology, ontology and methodology.
Laurie Anne Whitt (Choctaw) has recently argued in her essay 64 on the cultural politics of knowledge in North America that the presumption of "value-neutrality" embedded in this dominant Western historiographical tradition inscribes a colonial ideology and knowledge/power hierarchy that functions to inhibit the production and valorisation of Indigenous cultural difference/s. Tracing the nexus between "value-neutrality," "universality," "objectivity" and "truth" to the enduring legacy of positivism in Western knowledge production, she systematically critiques the ideological force of these notions in relation to Western interpretations of Indigenous science, 65 spirituality and history, 66 in order to demonstrate their implication in colonial power relations and practices (231-232). In her refutation of these presumptively "neutral" tenets - and the claims made by practitioners in Western disciplines to transcend the Western philosophical and cultural provenance that they inscribe - she insists on the cultural specificity of all knowledge production and on a recognition of the different ethical and political assumptions which inhere in culturally diverse processes of "cognition" and "evaluation" (232):

To speak of a knowledge system is to abandon the idea that a single epistemology is universally shared by, or applicable to, all humans in so far as they are human. Instead, it facilitates a cultural parsing of the concept of epistemology: there are specific

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66 For a Native American critique of these Western tenets and the power relations which enable their inscription and circulation in the context of historiography, see Donald Grinde, Jr.,"Historical Narratives Of Nationhood And The Semiotic Construction Of Social Identity: A Native American Perspective," *Issues in Native American Cultural Identity*, ed. Michael K. Green (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 201-232.
This crucial point about the plurality of knowledge systems, and the different discourses and values they circulate, shapes in fundamental ways Silko's deconstruction of the official history of Geronimo and her imaginative reconstitution of it as an oppositional category of reading. Like Whitt, Silko recognises that constructions of reality and history are culturally specific productions, but in the context of North America, colonialism and cultural imperialism structure unequal relations of power/knowledge between the dominant culture and Native American cultures which ensures the circulation of the dominant model as authoritative and natural.

Whitt forcefully addresses this knowledge hierarchy produced out of colonialism and institutionally replicated in contemporary structures and sites of power. She articulates the dilemmas confronting Native American critics and cultural producers who invoke non-Western epistemologies and cultural modes to challenge Western discourses of the "real" and the authorities of knowledge delimitation they encode and prescribe. She enunciates this colonial hierarchisation of knowledge in the following passage and draws attention to the political function of facticity in devaluing Indigenous cultural modes and knowledges:

The dominant knowledge system embraces an anti-pluralism as well, a lack of receptiveness to alternative epistemologies, to other ways of knowing the world.... Knowledge transmission in indigenous communities traditionally occurs in forms that are, from the dominant perspective, suspect - such as stories and ceremonies. They defy a ready reduction to factual propositions and are seen as "tainted" with a normative and spiritual
component. Consequently, other knowledge systems are reduced to "superstition," the very antithesis of knowledge.

(236)

What this passage implicitly sets up for interrogation are the Western colonial binaries named by the couplets fact/fiction, history/story, and their function in de-authorising and devalourising those "alternative epistemologies" and realities which ground Indigenous cultural discourses and modes. Whitt, in drawing attention to the colonial project which continues to enforce this knowledge hierarchy in North America and the "dominant/subordinate [power] relations" (240) it naturalises and sanctions at an institutional level, contends that these "oppressive" power relations will be reproduced unless the dominant culture's "lack of receptiveness to alternative epistemologies" is redressed. In spite of the cultural and institutional hegemony which circumscribes Native American interventions in debates about power, knowledge and cultural difference, she nevertheless insists that the cultural perspectives and productions of Indigenous peoples "whose identities have been devalued by the dominant culture" (240) are "epistemologically powerful"(240). Clearly, then, in so far as the articulation of these Indigenous perspectives testifies to the increasing practice of Native American assumption of control over self-representation, they operate as important sites of resistance to Euro-American cultural hegemony.

**History/Story and the Politics of "Truth"

I will now briefly map the politics of history's disciplinary demarcation from literature in the West, and the ideological assumptions and effects which accrue around its naturalisation of a unitary Western regime of truth. This demarcation has come to signify a rigid opposition between historical and literary discourses in the West, an opposition that Trinh T. Minh-ha in the epigraph to this chapter demonstrates. This opposition is embedded in and
structured by a chain of hierarchical binary couplets which include history/story, fact/fiction, truth/falsity and imagination/reality. I have already argued, with reference to Laurie Anne Whitt's analysis of the cultural politics of knowledge, that these binarisms are not ideologically neutral categories, and that through their hierarchical deployment, they serve to undermine the authority of culturally different modes of constituting historicity and reality, such as the story. Indeed Minh-ha, in her critique of the Western "scientistic" (121) ideology and practice which authorises the separation of history from story, maintains that it functions to "primitivise" non-Western story-telling practices (119) by constructing an equivalence between "science," "truth" and the "real." That is to say, "the scientifically true" (125) - a notion commonly identified in the West with attributes "of uniformity and prescription" - is made commensurable with the "real" (125) and perpetuated by particular discourses and institutions. Given the self-evidence of this correspondence between truth and reality then, Minh-ha argues that "scientism" discredits the articulation and production of other knowledges, realities and cultural modes by enforcing a lexicon and taxonomy that is both colonialist and patriarchal. She says of the cultural hierarchy produced out of this particular regime of truth: "Not only has the 'civilised' mind classified many of the realities it does not understand in the categories of the untrue and the superstitious, it has also turned the story - as total event of a community, a people - into a fatherly lesson for children of a certain age" (124). Clearly, then, the "scientistic" ideology which underwrites the history/storybinary also re-reproduces another potent colonial binarism in which the "civilised" Western subject is hierarchically elevated over the "primitive" non-Western other. I will elaborate on the politics of the devaluation of story and its relation to orality, historicity and cultural difference in a later section of this chapter. What I want to address now in more detail is the drive to elevate Western historiography to the status of a science and, with it, the constitution and privileging of facticity
as an empirically verifiable measure of truth in relation to historiographical production.

**Facticity, Narrativity and Disciplinary Demarcation.**

My focus at this juncture, then, will be firstly to foreground the emergence of modern Western historiography as a putatively "scientific" discipline engaged in the practice of representing "real" events, a task perceived as distinguishing the historian from the producer of "fictional" representations of events originating in the imagination. As Roland Barthes, Hayden White and others have convincingly argued, this objective was realised through a process of differentiation from fictive discourses, a process which through its valorisation of facticity, aimed to constitute and consolidate the emergent discipline's claims to operate as an ideologically "neutral" domain. 67

In his seminal essay, "Historical Discourse," 68 first published in 1967, Roland Barthes stages an analysis of the linguistic markers and content-analytical units (150) structuring historical and literary discourse in order to ask the question "whether...we are always justified in contrasting poetic and novelistic discourse, fictional and historical narrative" (145). He concludes that both historical discourse and fictional genres, like the classical novel, deploy similar content-analytical units (152), and that, for example, when "units of the index type predominate (with continued reference to an implicit meaning), history falls into metaphorical form and tends to become lyrical and symbolic" (152). In addition to this similarity at the level of content units, he argues that the absolute distinction between historical and fictional discourses


cannot be sustained on the basis of structural elements. On this ground alone he contends:

[H]istorical discourse is essentially a product of ideology, or rather of imagination, if we accept the view that it is via the language of imagination that responsibility for an utterance passes from a purely linguistic entity to a psychological or ideological one. (153)

He thus questions the privileged position of facticity in Western positivist historiography and its link to what he describes as the "reality effect" (154) that it seemingly anchors. In particular, the idea of the pure "fact" or the fact in itself is merely a linguistic "term in a discourse" and not a description of or "simple reproduction of something on another plane of existence altogether, some extra-structural 'reality" (153). 69 Given the impossibility of locating an a priori "reality" which the facts might unproblematically re-constitute, Barthes argues that historical discourse cannot lay claim to objective status by "sheltering behind the apparent omnipotence of the referent" (154). Indeed, he argues that "historical discourse does not follow reality, it only signifies it; it asserts at this very moment: this happened, but the meaning conveyed is only that someone is making that assertion" (154). Finally, Barthes remarks on the irony that, at the very time when historical discourse was seeking to mark out its specificity as a discipline, it did so through the elevation of narrative "into a privileged form for the expression of reality" (155). He concludes:

69 For an example of this problematic adherence to the notion of the "pure fact" in the context of writing Native American history, see Wilcomb E. Washburn, "Distinguishing History from Moral Philosophy and Public Advocacy," The American Indian and the Problem of History, ed. Calvin Martin (New York: Oxford UP, 1987), 91-97. Washburn argues: "Since the elaboration of an ideological position is more a mental exercise than a search for factual knowledge...Indian history has increasingly become a matter of assumptions and assertions rather than a catalog or analysis of factual truths" (92). For a critique of Washburn's position, see Laurie Anne Whitt, "Indigenous Peoples and the Cultural Politics of Knowledge," Issues in Native American Cultural Identity, ed. Michael K. Green (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 238-240.
By denying this, by refusing to separate the referent from
the simple assertion of it, history could not do otherwise –
at that privileged moment in the nineteenth century when it
was trying to establish itself as a genre in its own right –
than take the "pure and simple" narration of the facts as the
best proof that they were true, and thus promote narrative into
a privileged form for the expression of reality.... The paradox
comes full circle: narrative structure was evolved in the crucible
of fiction (via myth and the first epics), yet it has become at once
the sign and the proof of reality. (155)

I will now explore the questions and politics raised by Barthes in more detail
by examining three essays by Hayden White which are indebted to Barthes' original arguments: "The Fictions of Factual Representation," "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," and "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality." My analysis does not purport to exhaust the issues raised in these essays and by other poststructuralist critics; rather, my objective is to locate the cultural, epistemological and discursive parameters of the context in which Silko's critique of Western historiography and colonialism is formulated. I will then address this discursive and disciplinary differentiation in the specific context of North America through reference to Terence Martin's book, The Instructed Vision. This text examines how both the cultural conditions and the philosophical legacy of Scottish Common sense intersected to produce a "suspicion of the

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imagination" (viii), a suspicion which regulated and ultimately entrenched a hierarchical epistemological distinction between historiography and the novel in North America. I later argue that some readings of Almanac Of The Dead resurrect this categorical history/novel opposition, and the common sense criteria of evaluation structuring it, in order to dismiss its oppositional political agenda.

Hayden White examines the cultural and historical conditions shaping the process of disciplinary formation for modern historiography in the West in order to demonstrate that its drive to constitute itself as a science relied upon a systematic differentiation of its goals and practices from those identified with literature and the imagination. In contemporary terms, this demarcation structures the erection of a veridical hierarchy between historical and fictive discourses and is based on the assumption that they inscribe radically different ontological and epistemological orders. Generally speaking, historical discourses represent "events which are in principle observable or perceivable," while fictional discourses represent events which are "imagined or invented" ("Fictions" 121). Historical discourse is then aligned with the order of the "actual" - the "real" as defined through Western empirical criteria - while literary discourse is confined to the order of the "possible" or the merely imaginary. This dualistic schema in which the historical real is invested with a veridical privilege over literature's imaginary is, White argues, perpetuated by "the Western prejudice for empiricism" ("Fiction" 122), which institutes standards of correspondence and coherence in the articulation and representation of the real ("Fiction" 122).

However, the "self-evidence" of these standards - and that of empiricism's belief in a mimetic reality which is somehow outside of cultural and discursive mediation - is, White argues, "illusory", and effaces the relation between the content of the discourse and its mode of inscription (Preface to Content ix). Indeed, he contends that this illusion of coherence and
correspondence can be produced only through recourse to dominant Western narrative conventions. As such, history's desire to position itself as literature's diammetrical opposite is, at least on this level, both paradoxical and untenable. White concludes that through its drive to centralise its authority as a discipline and to entrench a "scientific" regime of truth, modern Western historiography has effaced its commonalities with literature in order to perpetuate the myth of its epistemic singularity and "objectivity." 71 But this claim partially turns upon a problematic understanding of narrative as a neutral medium, a purely formal category, which can be readily distinguished from the content of the discourse which it merely frames. From this perspective, the content of the discourse alone signifies historiography's epistemic value, and the ideological and political valencies of narrative selection are removed from consideration. As White argues, the choice of a narrative form to construct historical representations necessarily "entails ontological and epistemic choices with distinct ideological and even specifically political implications" (Preface ix). In other words, the relationship between content and form is one of imbrication rather than of opposition; this relationship is culturally, politically and ideologically mediated and to insist otherwise, is to postulate the notion that, in the context of historiography, "the form in which historical events present themselves to a prospective narrator is found rather than constructed " ("Question" 27). Clearly, the perpetuation of the fiction of narrative neutrality, and the elision of the cultural politics around questions of content and form that it embeds, works against the production and valorisation of culturally different discourses and modes of constituting "reality," knowledge and experience.

71 For a classic text which examines the idea of objectivity within the American historical profession, see Peter Novick, That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988). For more recent texts which examine the impact of post-structuralist theories on American historiography, see David Harland, The Degradation of American History (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1997), and George G. Iggers, Historiography in the Twentieth Century: from Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge (Hanover: Wesleyan UP, 1997).
With these politics in mind, I will later map, with reference to Native American counter-historical discourses, the ideological and political investments inhering in the dominant Western empiricist construction of historical reality. In the process, I will examine how culturally different modes of narrating and constructing reality challenge the ontological and epistemological authority of Western history by foregrounding the cultural specificity of its discourses and practices, and by examining its implication in colonial processes and power relations.

At this point I want to illuminate the cultural hegemony of this dominant Western historiographical tradition by briefly mapping its historical constitution as a value-neutral discipline in the West. I trace this emergence with reference to Hayden White's useful analysis of this phenomenon in his essay "The Fictions of Factual Representations." White identifies as critical to this process that cultural moment after the French Revolution when a climate of resistance to "all forms of myths" (124) induced a transformation in the discourse, its practices and the "conceptual matrix" (122) in which it was embedded. This "hostility" to myth was articulated through the rhetoric of exorcising "partisan," that is to say ideologically "contaminated" analyses of historical events. As a corollary of this process of de-mythification, the drive for objectivity materialised, a drive that could seemingly be guaranteed through the installation of scientific methods and standards for adducing and evaluating truth.

This discursive shift was structured by an empiricist re-orientation of the discipline, a shift which instantiated the inter-related binarisms of history/story, fact/fiction and inaugurated the "fetishisation" of facticity ("Fiction" 126). Facticity - ostensibly a scientific, that is to say, value free index of historical interpretation - was deemed to provide a guarantee of the truth of the emergent discipline's knowledge claims. Speaking to this claim White argues that:
Historians continued to believe that different interpretations of the same set of events were the functions of ideological distortions or of inadequate factual data. They continued to believe that if one only eschewed ideology and remained true to the facts, history would produce a knowledge as certain as anything offered by the physical sciences and as objective as a mathematical exercise. ("Fiction" 125)

But this position - namely that "the facts speak for themselves"(125) - is itself culturally and ideologically produced and circulated. Roland Barthes argues that this notion of the history appearing "to write itself" (148) is produced out of the systematic elision of any "direct allusion to the originator of the text"(148), an elision secured by the construction of an "objective...persona" (149) through the use of "apersonal pronoun[s]" (149). He asserts that "at the level of discourse, objectivity, or the absence of any clues to the narrator, turns out to be a particular form of fiction, the result of what might be called the referential illusion, where the historian tries to give the illusion of the referent speaking for itself" (149). As White suggests, this "referential illusion," which Barthes construes as a "rhetorical alibi" (149) for objectivity in conventional Western historiography, conveniently elides the link between interpretative practices and the cultural presuppositions which impose shape and meaning on any reading of the facts (125). As I later discuss in this chapter, this point is forcefully made by Silko in her interrogation of the facts of Geronimo's resistance to military and cultural capture in *Almanac Of The Dead*. In spite of the dominant tradition's endorsement of the a priori existence of "the facts," historical representations, like fictional representations, then, are mediated by and made culturally meaningful only through particular discourses and discursive practices. This attests to the
impossibility of constructing a value-neutral and universally valid interpretive practice; rather, acts of interpretation and the knowledge matrix which constitutes their authority are structured by cultural, ideological and political considerations and imperatives.

By way of reinforcement, White, in his examination of the separation of history from literature - a separation deemed essential to the discipline's constitution as "the realistic science par excellence" (124) - makes the crucial point that this contemporary paradigm of Western historiography and the regime of truth that it inscribed was preceded by a more pluralistic critical context in which diverse representational practices prevailed. Hence prior to the French Revolution "historiography was conventionally regarded as a literary art" (123) and the hierarchical opposition between the discourses - inscribed in the binarisms of real/imaginary, fact/fiction - had not been naturalised and institutionalised. Instead, while a differentiation between "fact and fancy" existed, it was not structured as a binary and the interweaving of these categories in the representation of "real events in historical discourse" embodied a recognition that "many kinds of truth, even in history, could be presented to the reader only by fictional techniques of representation" (122):

Truth was not equated with fact, but with a combination of fact and the conceptual matrix within which it was appropriately located in the discourse. The imagination no less than reason had to be engaged in any adequate representation of the truth; and this meant that the techniques of fiction-making were as necessary to the composition of a historical discourse as erudition might be.... (123)

In other words, prior to the early nineteenth century, there was a cultural acceptance that truth in relation to the production of historical representations
could be apprehended and accessed through a combination of imagination and rationality, a recognition which exemplifies Foucault's proposition that all societies have their different regimes of truth, and that "truth" is an effect of particular knowledge/power relations.  

To reiterate, this discursive shift and the different regime of truth it mobilised was generated in the context of Western disciplinary formation and the professionalisation of modern historiography. In line with this agenda, and in order to constitute its authority, the discipline aspired towards scientific status, an objective which could be met through the implementation of an empirical methodology and through the erection of disciplinary borders. White says of the history/story opposition: "the prevalence of any interest in story-telling within a discipline aspiring to the status of a science was prima facie evidence of its proto-scientific, not to mention its manifestly mythical or ideological, nature. Getting the 'story' out of 'history' was therefore a first step in the transformation of historical studies into a science." Furthermore, in tracing the reification of facticity in modern historiography in the context of this disciplinary demarcation, White concludes:

[In the early nineteenth century, however, it became conventional, at least among historians, to identify truth with fact and to regard fiction as the opposite of truth, hence as a hindrance to the understanding of reality rather than as a way of apprehending it. History came to be set over against fiction, and especially the novel, as the representation of the "actual" to the representation of the "possible" or only "imaginable." And thus was born the dream of a historical discourse that would consist of nothing but factually accurate

statements about a realm of events which were (or had been) observable in principle, the arrangement of which in order of their original occurrence would permit them to figure forth their true meaning or significance. ("Fiction" 123)

Within this schema, historians gradually conventionalised the equation of truth with fact, an entity that corresponded to the real and, as a corollary, fiction became its antithesis; that is to say, fiction was made consonant with non-truth or, to use Minh-ha's term, with "falsification" 74 ("Fiction" 123). This devaluation of fiction's capacity to inscribe its own truth claims was based on a perception of its failure to capture the real, a discourse structured by an empirical methodology -- one grounded in the reification of facticity critiqued in the previous pages. To conclude, by its desire to invest itself with the authority and status of a science, modern Western historiography has presented itself as a singular discourse of the real. As I have argued, what this presentation fails to account for is the specificity of the cultural and discursive production of this Western historical real and the ideological and political effects of this blindness when questions about the production of cultural difference are centrally invoked. I will return to these politics shortly, but for now, I will turn my attention to Terence Martin's analysis of the philosophical basis of the fact/fiction binary in its specific North American cultural configuration.

Scottish Common Sense Philosophy and the "Suspicion of the Imagination"

Martin's objective in The Instructed Vision is to map the relation between Scottish Common Sense - "a philosophy of realism" which, by the early nineteenth century, constituted "the official metaphysics of America" -

and "the origins of American fiction" (vii). In tracing this nexus and the rigid distinction between history and fiction which it mandated, Martin demonstrates how the Scottish Common Sense legacy provided a moral and philosophical framework in North America which could take the place of Puritanism without posing any fundamental challenges to its tenets and practices. This ideological consistency and continuity was evidenced through its rearticulation of the "American suspicion of the imagination" (viii) - a suspicion originating in Puritan theology and in the material conditions of colonial existence. In the moral vacuum created by the "dilution of Puritan theology," a dilution threatening its "case against the imagination", Scottish Common Sense philosophy came to ground an "apologetics", in which "the old arguments could be given a new force" (161). Simply put: "Its watchword, common sense, contained an immediate conviction of right and wrong, of the reality of the external world, freedom etc., about which there was no warrant for debate or doubt, while its discussion of association, desire, will and feeling was lucidity itself, and fitted our practical country" (3). As the previous quotation suggests, this occupation of the moral space vacated by Puritanism was structured by the hierarchical elevation of common sense - conceived of as an objective index in the evaluation of external reality - over the imagination, which was relegated to the subordinate and subjective ontological order of the possible. 75 Martin contends that the institutionalisation of this hierarchy and the moral indictment of the imagination that it legitimated helped to maintain an inherently conservative social order, which in turn had critical ramifications for the development of fiction in North America (161). Informed by "an ideology of containment" (11), Scottish Common Sense provided for its exponents, "an enlightened and extremely effective" framework through which the imagination could be regulated and contained (viii). In short, it appealed

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75 Martin defines his use of the term imagination as "that faculty by means of which we explore the order of possibility" (viii).
to the conservative intellectuals who inhabited institutional sites of power and who identified in its tenets the moral basis for subserving and stabilising a conservative social order, an agenda seen as crucial to the economic progression of the nation (4-5). In the previous chapter, I have already addressed with reference to Roy Harvey Pearce’s study of “civilisation” and “savagism” the ways in which Scottish Common Sense furnished an ideological rationale for national progress and colonial expansion, a rationale which construed moral and economic progress as indivisible processes.

In order to explain the metaphysical ascendancy of Common Sense thought, Martin stages a comprehensive analysis of its gradual intellectual and pedagogical assimilation into North American curriculae and institutions from the American Enlightenment in the eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. In addressing the critical consensus in relation to this ascendancy, Martin notes that it was initially based upon “an appeal to reason and the moral sense” (4) which enabled a reconceptualisation of reality, and which fostered a dynamic, nascent American intellectual tradition until it was appropriated and institutionalised by the Presbyterian clergy (4). By the nineteenth century, then, Scottish philosophy “had ceased to be a critical stimulant in society and was serving as a purely pedagogical discipline” (5). Given the focus of this chapter, I am unable here to examine the complexities and permutations of Martin’s mapping of this process of institutionalisation nor can I engage with his analysis of competing intellectual paradigms of the imagination and reality. Rather, I will limit myself to a schematic overview of his arguments in the context of the Scottish metaphysical ascendancy as it relates to the history/fiction demarcation up until the mid-nineteenth century.

Martin examines this process of border delimitation between history and fiction by analysing the dominant philosophical and pedagogical arguments made in favour of the common sense position. These arguments about the nature of perception and reality pointed to a ready acceptance of
empirical criteria of evaluation, and thus to the endorsement of a self-evident relationship between perception, the real and the true. Martin cites as an early example of this position, statements made by President of Princeton, Samuel Smith in 1787. Smith was highly regarded as a moral philosopher (14) and whose pronouncements on the inculcation of the "moral sense" reflected this empirical Scottish legacy -- a legacy in which the hegemony of facts is already discernible. In his lectures, Martin notes, Smith, in contesting the theories of perception articulated by Locke, Berkeley and Hume, "calls for judgements based on experience and fact interpreted by plain common sense" (14). In other words, the "testimony of the senses must be admitted as true and require no outside, additional evidence" (14). Moreover, "Smith views the moral sense as a faculty capable of development; since it is empirical...it can be trained in a manner analogous to the other senses" (14). In this regard, the moral sense becomes synonymous with reason (30), a faculty which then distinguishes it from the unreliability of the imagination. This notion of the infallibility of common sense perception in the apprehension of reality came to constitute what Martin names "the Metaphysical Sanction" (85), a sanction which gained its force through the absorption of the ideas of prominent Scottish philosophers like Thomas Reid, William Hamilton, and Dugald Reid. In order to elucidate the hierarchical differentiation between history and fiction in more detail, I shall cite Martin's summation of Thomas Reid's metaphysical position:

[Reid] sought to re-establish the validity of man's perception in terms of the primary, unimpeachable testimony of consciousness.
What man saw and heard and felt was real, they contended;

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76 Smith was a member of the American Philosophical Society, and this address given in 1787 was entitled "On the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species." Martin notes that this "address was published in the same year with 'Strictures on Lord Kaim's Discourse on the Original Diversity of Mankind" (13). He became President of Princeton in 1795.
it was reality -- concrete, external, extramental. This emphasis on the objective existence of extramental reality, so necessary for a rejection of idealistic thought, had, necessarily, a profound effect on the metaphysics of the Scottish realistic philosophers. It drove them to concentrate on the actually existing object, the perceivable entity; it begot the tendency to narrow the limits of reality to actually existing being. The order of possibility, it is true, was never denied, nor could it be; but possibles were conceived of in the mind -- one could not perceive them in the same way....

The whole movement of Scottish Common Sense metaphysics was out of the mind; indeed, its total structure rests on the foundation of objectively, actually existing reality. The natural result of this emphasis is a metaphysics in which actuality holds the crucial and primary position. (85-86)

In this passage one can identify the metaphysical rationale behind the erection of the binary relation between history and fiction, a rationale grounded in the privileging of the order of the actual over the order of the possible. The former order was identified with the "extramental" category of the real, while the latter was posited as the domain of the imaginary and the intramental. This distinction between the categories of the extramental and the intramental, and the different orders they invoked, had critical implications for the development of the novel and the subordinate status assigned to it relative to the discipline of history. For this differentiation, in line with Scottish Common Sense's moral and social project, framed another hierarchical distinction between "God-created reality" and "man-created reality," a distinction conferring a veridical privilege on the creations of God. In effect, novels as "man-created" products emanating from the imagination and exemplifying an inferior order of being, were viewed as threats to the social
and moral order because they implicitly challenged the authority of God and the reality and truth of his creations. Therefore, "Since the writers [of novels] (and the events) [they depict] lack truth as their basis, they are continually liable to give false notions of things, to pervert the consequences of human actions, and to misrepresent the ways of divine providence" (61). The novel then became synonymous with "the specious and the false" (46-47), while history, given its correspondence to the order of the actual and the extramental, was invested with the authority of truth.

On this basis then, the novel as a potential pedagogical instrument of instruction was devalorised and proscribed. Martin examines these pedagogical debates over the relative merits and demerits of history and the novel as a genre in the early nineteenth century in order to explicate the basis of the rigid opposition drawn between them. It is important to note here that the novel was readily conflated with the romance, a genre which through its "deliberate refraction of reality" (148) could be readily marked out as history's diammetrical opposite (62). This censure of the novel and of fiction in general is encapsulated in an address in 1810 by Dr James Gray at the "Philadelphia Academy for the Instruction of Young Ladies." 77 Gray was a graduate of Glasgow University and his address is informed, argues Martin, by Scottish Common Sense principles and tenets. In making his case against the novel as a vehicle of pedagogical improvement, Grey inscribes the antithesis between the novel and history through the construction of a series of binary oppositions which structure the commonsensical ontological and epistemological hierarchy between the actual and the possible. 78

In his advocacy of the study of human nature, then, Grey issues a caution against the novel as a form of knowledge on the basis that its

77 As Martin notes, Dr Gray was "a significant figure in the Associate Reformed Church" and was instrumental in "the establishment of its Theological Seminary in New York" (64).
78 This binary between history and fiction was gendered. History was masculine and fiction feminine. On this historically gendered binary, see Ann Douglas, *The Feminisation of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977).
language is "so ambiguous and undefined, something which needs so much commentary and qualification, that, like the Gordian knot it is better to cut it at once than to waste time in unravelling its complications" (65). This ambiguity stands in contrast to the prevailing intellectual orthodoxy which "believed the Scots to have a monopoly on 'facts,' on 'distinct meaning,' and on 'precision in language" (31). Posing the rhetorical possibility of the novel's interchangeability with history as a reliable source of knowledge on human nature, Grey responds in the negative, a response dictated by his perception of the novel's inauthenticity:

[No] extent of genius and learning can supply the want of a practical acquaintance with society. The only accession which our experimental knowledge on this subject admits to, is derived from authentic history. If it be asked, May not novels supply the place of history? May they not exhibit views of human nature not found in history? And may they not exhibit more perfect instances of virtue and vice than any that occur in real life? To the two latter interrogations I answer, that these perfect characters, are only perfect monsters. They go to mislead. They can do no good.... As to the other interrogatory, the answer is obvious, that to supplant a reality by a fiction is a preposterous method of diffusing truth. But I would ask, is human nature really adequate to the production of a consistent human character by the creations of fancy?.... Ghosts, goblins and enchanted castles, do for children; Masters and Misses are enraptured with the sentimental novel; but, unless a morbid taste for fiction be contracted, or the growth of mind be stunted for a want of nutriment, men and women demand fact and doctrine. (66-68)
Not surprisingly, this passage inscribes the Western privileging of history over story through a binary logic which functions to authorise and naturalise a correlation between the real and the true. This correspondence between the real and the true is, like "human nature," presented as axiomatic and secured through invoking the "authenticity" and transparency of "fact" and "doctrine."

By way of contrast, fiction, and the novel in particular, is projected here as an inauthentic and monstrous simulacra of "real "life, a "creation of fancy," which, in its opposition to "fact" and "doctrine," reveals itself as a deficient and infantile mode of producing knowledge about the world. It diffuses, rather than produces, truth, and as such attests to the instability of the imagination as a faculty for securing truth. As this and the following passage demonstrate, history’s primacy as a pedagogical instrument in this period was arrived at through reference to a specifically common sense construction of reality in which the true was made consonant with the actual (70):

For history ordered a series of actual events, history related the successes and failures...of actual men, history as record, is actuality in the form of language. Precisely for this reason, Grey and many other critics of the novel encouraged the reading of history as an antidote to novel -reading and as a valuable and safe method of extending one's knowledge of reality.... History for such a society conforms to common sense; it derives from a sense of reality which glorifies the actual and ignores or denigrates (because it fears) the possible.... Implicit in this distinction is a critical philosophy of history which sees history as open to common sense study and reconstruction because it happened, while the novel, never having happened, is thereby closed to the same kind of consideration.
In the antithesis between the written word as history and the written word as fiction one sees reflected the basic metaphysical antithesis between the actual and the possible. (73-74)

Given this argument, it was accepted that the study of history was an invaluable "guide to the formation of common sense" (73-74), and the identification of history with common sense became an axiom of the period. In the passage cited above, Martin reiterates the Scottish metaphysical legitimation of the rigid history/fiction binarism by re-explicating its common sense matrix. It clearly demonstrates that "suspicion of the imagination" (viii), which in the North American context produces fiction as an artefactual production of merely possible experience, and in the process, relegates it to a subordinate epistemological status. Conversely, the above passage also articulates a view of history which, through its empirical emphasis on the nexus between the real and the actual, prefigures the reification of facticity (facts being deduced from commensensical cognitive processes) in modern American historiography.

Martin argues that the critical and institutional naturalisation of this rigid hierarchy necessarily imposed limitations on the conception and execution of fictional texts. In particular, the denial of the truth value of imaginative or possible experience meant that, in practice, fiction writers were unable to reconcile the conflicting demands of producing history within a fictional context and vice versa (130). This dilemma was enhanced by the critical and moral patrolling of discursive and generic borders mandated by the Scottish metaphysical hegemony, which ensured that in the period these borders remained unbreachable. Whilst the romance genre marked a radical break from the ideological constraints of common sense metaphysics in the first half of the nineteenth century, the "American fictive imagination" continued to be
constrained by the "mechanistic" influence of the "Scottish metaphysic" until the end of the nineteenth century (126). Martin concludes his study with a double acknowledgment. Firstly, he notes that different conceptual paradigms of the imagination came to challenge the philosophical hegemony of the actual, and thus to liberate North American fiction from its mechanistic fetters. However, he qualifies this assertion with the following argument:

Despite the pervasive importance of idealisms, our implicit philosophical preference continues to give a metaphysical primacy to the actual order; existentialism tends to bring our moral attention to bear even more closely on actuality. We test our command of possibility by our ability to relate it to actuality. And the terms of social existence insist on such a command, for without it there is the potential danger of subversion. (161)

Although this observation is articulated in the context of the 1960s, I will argue, as a prelude to my reading of Silko's *Almanac Of The Dead*, a text which precisely engages and subverts this colonial proscription on generic and discursive miscegenation, that its vestigial effects remain legible in current American critical practice.

To this end, I will analyse a review of Silko's text by Sven Birkerts, a review which implicitly reproduces the epistemological hierarchy between the actual and the possible in order to denigrate its subversive potential. In doing so, and by invoking the self-evident authority of "common sense" to ground his critical evaluation, Birkerts fails to read for cultural difference/s and also to acknowledge how Silko's text functions precisely to interrogate and destabilise those cultural, epistemological, discursive and generic hierarchies, which have entrenched a Western colonial world view, and, with it, Western

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control over the representation of Native Americans. This agenda is explicitly marked in the title *Almanac Of The Dead: A Novel* which juxtaposes and counterpoints a Native American historical genre - the almanac - with the Western novel genre. In Chapter Five I perform a detailed analysis of the politics of genre and cultural difference in this text; at this point I draw attention to this generic double marking for the purpose of situating Birkerts' review. This tactic operates as a departure point for Silko's systematic deconstruction of the colonial binaries of history/story and fact/fiction and the ideological and political effects which accrue around their naturalisation. It is worth noting that Birkerts fails to engage with the implications of the title.

**Re-inscribing "Common Sense:" A Reading of Silko's *Almanac Of The Dead*.**

In order to address what he perceives to be *Almanac Of The Dead's* "failure" of "technique" and "vision," Birkerts frames his evaluation of this text by invoking Silko's prior novel, *Ceremony*, which he generally endorses as a product of a "gritty and imaginative" writer, and one with "appeal to serious readers" (40). This unremarkable assessment is, however, qualified with reference to what he identifies as *Ceremony's* different narrative strands; these he designates as its "naturalistic narrative modes" and as "the more startling mythopoeia of the indigenous story-telling tradition" (39). In other words, Birkerts' hierarchical classification of *Ceremony's* contrasting narrative modes implicitly valorises a traditional Western preference for realistic narratological strategies over the more "fictional" and culturally alien "mythopoeia" of Native American story telling practices.

Reproduced here in this hierarchising juxtaposition - a juxtaposition reinforced through the pejorative use of the epithet "startling" - is the Western colonial practice of reducing Native American narrative modes (and the cosmologies and epistemologies which structure them) to the status of mere fiction, legend, myth, a manoeuvre which functions, then, to deny their force.
as oppositional cultural representations of history and historical experience. Arguably, Birkerts' preference for the "naturalistic" over the "mythopoeic" also re-installs the fact/fiction, history/story set of binarisms by implicitly reinscribing what Terence Martin identified above as the American cultural predilection for the actual over the possible. While imagination and its relation to possible experience is not in and of itself proscribed, Birkerts' preference for the "naturalistic" or realistic (connoted by the use of the term "gritty") functions culturally and ideologically to circumscribe the limits of both actuality and possibility and to proscribe the production of cultural difference.

However, in his review of Almanac this critique of Native American narrative modes becomes more abrasive, and its terms explicitly invoke a common sense standard of evaluation to devalorise the Indigenous prophetic strand in the text. This prophetic strand is inscribed in the almanac genre and is a crucial component of the text, which is also narrated in a series of Native American stories collectively foretelling "the appearance, conflict with and eventual disappearance of things European" in the Americas (Almanac 570) and the return of the land to its dispossessed Indigenous Nations. The subversive thrust of this prophecy is contested by Birkerts, not because the issues it raises do not relate to "real" injustices in North America, but because structurally, textually and politically it is an affront to the logic of common sense.

Once again, Birkerts identifies two competing narrative strands in the text: the first is "naturalistic" or realistic, while the second embraces the "mystical-prophetical," which he acknowledges is grounded in "the sacred

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80 Birkerts' phrase "the more startling mythopoeia of the indigenous story-telling tradition" (39) invokes Donald Grinde Jr.'s observation that Western epistemologies, discourses and genres invariably operate to devalue the cultural productions of its "Others." While the following comment is directed at the West's differentiation between Western religion and Native American spirituality, it is also relevant to Birkerts' reductive assertion. Grinde argues: "For example, when Jesus Christ walks on water this is treated as 'religion', but, when Coyote steals fire in the Navajo spiritual tradition, it is invariably characterised by the dominant culture's discourse as 'legend,' or worse yet, 'folklore."Historical Narratives of Nationhood," Issues in Native American Cultural Identity, ed. Michael K. Green (New York; Peter Green, 1995),204.
traditions of the Native American people" (40). In spite of this acknowledgement, he invalidates this cultural matrix and the counter-historical discourse it mobilises by designating the almanac extracts interpolated into the novel as "nonsensical" (41). This judgement is enforced through the rhetorical invocation of the latter term's antithesis - common sense. After this adjudication, Birkerts concludes that the text is characterised by a failure of synthesis, that is to say its naturalistic and prophetic narrative strands - corresponding broadly to the real and the fictional, the actual and the possible - cannot be reconciled:

A novel can only achieve so much synthesis and remain readable. That the oppressed of the world should break their chains and retake what's theirs in not an unappealing idea (for some), but it is so contrary to what we know both of the structures of power and the psychology of the oppressed that the imagination simply baulks...[H]er premise of revolutionary insurrection is tethered to airy nothing. It is, frankly, naive to the point of silliness. The appeal to prophecy cannot make up the commonsense deficit. While it is true that a great deal of fiction is an enactment of wish-fulfillment scenarios, it is also true that little of it is of the first order. (41)

Birkerts' demand for synthesis in relation to the genre of the novel re-articulates a classic colonial desire for the incorporation and homogenisation of cultural difference. This Western sublation of difference is located in what Joseph Pugliese discerns in his analysis of the syncretic model of post-
colonial theory as "the motor of Hegelian dialectics" (346). In his critique of the synthesising effect of the Hegelian dialectic, he argues:

Yet, what escapes this ongoing process of syncretic neo-colonial consumption is that unspeakable alterity which is immanent in difference but not reducible to it. Alterity signifies, in Levinasian terms, as other to difference precisely because it is "unencompassable"... in other words, it remains that which refuses to be dialecticised or syncretised by either my language or methodologies. (347)

While Birkerts' demand for readability and synthesis derives from a different methodological site, namely the Leavisite literary critical tradition with its belief in the organic nature of great literature where everything is successfully unified, his critique of Silko's deployment of prophecy is one that cannot account for representations of cultural difference which symbolically and politically resist reduction to Western linguistic or methodological frames of reference. Furthermore, his recourse to a common sense understanding of material reality/actuality functions to regulate not only the limits of the "imagination" but also to enforce rigid boundaries between history and fiction, although he does so in defiance of Silko's seditious narrative and textual strategies. Oblivious to his own cultural and institutional privilege, then, and to the Western limits of his imagination and knowledge base, Birkerts' diatribe against Indigenous "nonsense" reveals an uncompromising albeit unwitting debt to common sense and to the "suspicion of the imagination" (viii) that it sustained. 82

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82 Joni Adamson notes that in contrast to the positive reception of Silko's text by Native Americans, the dominant culture's reception was generally unfavorable, and often hostile. She says "Early reviews of Almanac Of The Dead judged the novel a failure in terms of the reviewers' own expectations for the genre of the Native American novel. Novels in general, these reviewers insisted, must be brief, have fully developed characters, a linear narrative,
It is worth remembering Terence Martin's point that this tradition was shaped by "an ideology of containment" (11) and was annexed to a conservative social, cultural and moral order. This ideology of containment is manifest in Birkerts' diatribe, which cannot conceive of the need to read for cultural difference. His critique of the novel, then, invalidates Silko's narrative tactics and her representation of "the politics of the imagination." 83 These tactics operate in Silko's text to defy Western literary prescriptions about wholeness and generic purity. What his colonialist indictment of Silko's project reaffirms is how the critical evaluation of Native American texts by many Western critics continues to reflect dominant/subordinate power relations and the institutional sites and ideologies which sustain them. It also implicitly repositions the West as the only valid matrix of knowledge and truth, a stance which, as I will now demonstrate, is actively contested by Silko in her radical re-appropriation of the history of Geronimo and the Apaches.

**Story/History, and Cultural Difference**

In an interview with Laura Coltelli, 84 Silko frames her agenda in *Almanac Of The Dead* in the following terms: "it's about time, and what's called history, and story, and who makes the story, and who remembers" (151). Elsewhere she speaks of the generative power of orality and story in relation to traditional Pueblo story telling practices. She says of this tradition and the practices it inscribes:

> [T]he ancient Pueblo people depended upon collective memory through successive generations to maintain and transmit an entire culture, a worldview complete with proven strategies for survival.

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The oral narrative, or story, became the medium through which the complex of Pueblo knowledge and belief was maintained. Whatever the event or the subject, the ancient people perceived the world and themselves as part of an ancient, continuous story composed of innumerable bundles of other stories. 85

Silko's commentary on these practices emphasises how difference rather than synthesis characterises the Pueblo narrative tradition. Thus, her metaphor of "innumerable bundles of other stories" marks and preserves a sense of discrete difference/s, while simultaneously situating those differences within a "continuous story" which embodies the developing "complex" of Pueblo knowledge and belief." She also comments on how these story telling practices and the knowledges they embed remain viable in the contemporary context, an effect she attributes to the "inclusiveness" of the tradition, an inclusiveness which signifies its dynamic operation and which contradicts the dominant Western anthropological understanding of orality as a rigidly fixed and stable cultural formation ("Interior" 31). Indeed, she insists that Pueblo cosmology generally was conducive to "the production of multiple meaning" 86 and that this multiplicity - in conjunction with a cultural resistance to the hierarchical ordering of story types - facilitated an understanding of truth as a communal entity, arrived at by processes of debate and collective adjudication ("Interior" 32). As the following citations suggest, Pueblo understandings of history and truth were and are dialogically produced, and - in contrast to the orthodoxies of the dominant Western empirical historiographical tradition the relation between the two is perspectival rather than monologic and absolute: "The ancient Pueblo people sought a communal

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86 Leslie Marmon Silko, "Fifth World: The Return Of Ma Ah Shea True Ee," Yellow Woman (133).
truth, not an absolute truth. For them this truth lived somewhere within the web of differing versions, disputes over minor points, and outright contradictions tangling with old feuds and village rivalries” (“Interior” 32). Yet again, Silko draws attention in this passage to the politics of producing truth in an Indigenous context which rejects synthesis - "absolute truth" - in favour of a "communal truth" which respects and validates "differing versions" and "outright contradictions." This culturally different regime of truth is one that necessarily acknowledges the competing, contestatory status of truth in the context of the unfolding political dynamics of "feuds and village rivalries."

This interpretative practice, and the more mobile regime of truth it constructs, remain, Silko argues, operative in the present. For "the Laguna Pueblos go on producing their own rich and continuously developing body of oral and occasionally written stories that reject any decisive conclusion in favour of ever increasing possibilities" ( "Fifth" 133). Clearly, this focus on possibility, and, with it, the rejection of the narrative convention of closure as a guarantee of meaning and truth, stands in contradistinction to the Western historiographical predilection for a linear model of narrativity. As Hayden White has argued, this Western narrative model produces effects of cohesion and closure to naturalise and authorise its mapping of the historical real. By way of contrast, Pueblo narrative conventions and practices are predicated upon a different cultural conception of the nexus between narrative, history and temporality: as Silko puts it in a video interview, Indigenous cultures experience "time, narrative, [and] history as not linear but [as] all encompassing." 87

In making this point, she explicitly draws attention to the political function of Western linearity and historicity in relation to the overall Western imperial project in the Americas. She argues that a linear model of time and

narrativity operates to amputate the past from the present by consigning the so called Indian Wars to the distant past. This temporal bracketting implicitly valorises a teleological model of history in which Indigenous dispossession is legitimated as an inevitable result of Western progress; it also marks out an arbitrary closure to the violent colonial project, and thus dislocates and marginalises contemporary Indigenous instances of resistance to Euro-American hegemony. Contrary to this colonial logic, then, Silko insists that; “The Indian wars have never ceased,” 88 an assertion which, through its reiteration in *Almanac*, enshrines the political and symbolic leitmotif of Indigenous resistance to Western cultural domination. Not surprisingly, Silko's engagement with the cultural “fictions” of Western history proceeds by way of an initial assault upon the "facts" of Geronimo’s resistance to Anglo-American military power.

**Re-figuring Geronimo and the Politics of Cultural Difference**

Silko's reclamation of Geronimo as a figure of Indigenous resistance is, then, initiated through a systematic contestation of the interlinked colonial binaries of history/story and fiction/fact. As I have already argued, her engagement with these binarisms is shaped by her recognition of how Western classificatory systems and the discursive and disciplinary boundaries they enforce operate to de-authorise Indigenous discourses and cultural modes by foregrounding their "fictive" or "mythical" status. In order to re-privilege the Indigenous category of story, Silko stages a reversal of this Western fact/fiction dichotomy in the following ways.

Firstly, she begins her deconstruction of the official history of Geronimo by enabling various Native American speakers and story tellers to re-present the known facts of his engagement with the Anglo-American military regime in the Southwest. These Indigenous representations include Geronimo’s tactical

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evasion of various American military units, his negotiation of the conditions of surrender with Generals Crook and Miles, and his subsequent imprisonment at Fort Sill. Collectively, these Indigenous perspectives function to disrupt the colonial rationalisation inscribed in the nineteenth-century doctrine of Manifest Destiny and the policy of Westward expansion it mandated by re-contextualising Geronimo's campaign of resistance as a "war in defence of the homelands" (Almanac 40).

This disruption of the ideological legitimation of colonialism is also furthered through an engagement by various Native American narrators with the trope of "capture" - a trope which encapsulates an interpretative theme in the dominant historical discourses on the Apaches. In the Indigenous counter-discourse, the trope of capture is foregrounded in order to interrogate and displace the colonial trope of "ignoble savagism," a trope encoded through the colonial signifiers of treachery and trickery. For instance, Sterling, a Native American narrator who takes on the role of interrogating the official history of Geronimo for the benefit of his white auditor, Seese, explicates the link between capture and trickery in the following terms: "[Geronimo]...thought he and his men would be allowed to go back to the White Mountains and live in peace.... They never did catch him. The only way they could do it was by tricking him.... None of the promises were kept" (79). His stance is reiterated by Calabazas, a Mexican Indian whose revolutionary activities in the present invoke the figure of Geronimo as model and guide: "Only by betrayal of the truce flag did the white men take him. Geronimo would never have been taken except with treachery" (221). In effect, the stereotype of the treacherous "savage" is reversed, overturned and displaced on to the colonising power, and its factual basis is linked to the ideological and political practices of colonialism, which are founded upon deception and treachery.
However, Silko's intervention in this field is not limited to an Indigenous reconstruction and interpretation of the facts that comprise Geronimo's particular history. Rather, she stages a comprehensive assault on the Western privileging of facticity by examining its relation to the colonial representation of Indigeneity and to the production of imperialist historiographies. She does so by demonstrating the contingent operation of facts and the different regimes of truth that they mobilise. Significantly, she achieves this primarily by interspersing details of official Southwestern historiography with fictitious Indigenous narratives. These narratives resist colonialist closure by challenging the universal status of Western historiographical production and the cultural authority on which it is based. To this end, she constructs a series of competing Indigenous stories about the "real" Geronimo in which the trope of capture is mobilised through reference to Native American trickster conventions and narratives.

This tactic, through its articulation of the cultural politics of possibility and the imagination, re-instantiates Indigenous agency by linking past and present resistance to cultural and material domination. Moreover, as Gerald Vizenor has demonstrated in his extensive writings on what he terms, "trickster discourse," 89 the dynamism of the trickster figure liberates Native American stories and subjectivities from the reductive impact of Western social science interpretations, and thus functions to disrupt and overturn the Western colonial demand for ontological fixity.

**Trickster Stories and the Tactics of Agency.**

I want to now situate Silko's constitution of Geronimo as a trickster figure by briefly examining the cultural provenance of Southwestern trickster stories and by addressing the politics of the West's interpretative regulation of their cultural meaning through reference to Gerald Vizenor's extensive critical

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writings in this area. Vizenor, like Silko, reappropriates the seditious comic power of Native American trickster figures to map out positions of agency for Indigenous writers and critics, and to contest the policing of literary and disciplinary borders by the hegemonic North American culture.

Trickster figures, and the stories they generate, occupy an important place in Native American oral and written traditions. Their permutations reflect not only the heterogeneity of Indigenous cultures, but also their capacity to respond imaginatively and symbolically to the violent changes engendered by Western colonialism and ongoing cultural imperialism. While trickster figures manifest the specific characteristics of their different cultural provenances, their power is produced out of their liminal status; this liminality enables tricksters to "live interstitially, to confuse, and to escape the structures of society." 90 It also positions the trickster figure as an outlaw in relation to the culture, and also in relation to the colonising power. As an outlaw and comic escapologist, the trickster radically questions and finally eludes the constraints of Western categories and laws. By turning "white authority back on itself" 91 trickster stories enact a dynamic of agency and thus resist the discursive closures generated by colonial and neo-colonial discourses. Indigenous writers like Vizenor and Silko resituate these traditional figures within contemporary and historical contexts in order to challenge the dominant culture's discursive and epistemological hierarchies.

For example, Silko's political play with the tropics of history through the figure of Geronimo, is inflected by, and enacts, a retelling of the Southwestern oral tradition of Coyote stories. Kenneth Lincoln notes that Old Man Coyote "is a comic changing spirit " (22) who engages in "shape shiftings," while

90 Susie O'Brien, 'Please Eunice, Don’t Be Ignorant': The White Reader as Trickster in Lee Maracle's Fiction," Canadian Literature 144 (Spring 1995), 81.
91 Linda J. Krumholtz, "To Understand This World Differently": Reading and Subversion in Leslie Marmon Silko's Storyteller,"Ariel 25 1 (January 1994), 105.
Linda Krumholtz observes that Coyote is generally marked by his capacity "for trickery, immorality, and deception" (104). Thus in the Coyote stories he is represented as "a lecher, a glutton, a thief, and a clown, whose uncontrolled appetites lead him to death again and again, though his death is never permanent" (Krumholtz 104). Within the culture, Coyote operates as a site of instruction and entertainment, and "one of his signal characteristics... is that he is often tricked, usually through an attempt to over-reach his capabilities" (O'Brien 81).

However, these statements need to be qualified in order to demonstrate how Silko works within and against some interpretations of this Southwestern oral tradition. To begin with, her recourse to this tradition is shaped by an agenda which unequivocally condemns the immorality of Western colonial usurpation of Indigenous lands. Furthermore, the initiative of Old Pancakes - the Geronimo surrogate who takes the place of the "real" Geronimo in captivity, a substitution attributed to the use of "his skills as a liar and a joker" (Almanac 229-30) is represented in the text as an act of heroic resistance to violent colonial regulation and, as such, is seen to embody an inherently moral endeavour.

In their different ways, Silko and Vizenor tactically disrupt the narrow interpretational and disciplinary space accorded to these figures within dominant institutional sites. For Silko in particular, her use and re-valorisation of this Indigenous trickster story category serves as a departure point for a dismantling of the Western hierarchical binary that has existed between history and story. Her project reflects Joseph Pugliese’s contention that:

[O]rality is another form of "writing," in the extended Derridean

sense; and that orality produces its own different form of historicity; a non-teleological, non-linear history that celebrates its tropological status as story, and which maintains its continuity in the very process of ongoing and transformative retelling.  

Vizenor's critique of Western co-optations of Indigenous trickster stories is also grounded in a desire to "celebrate" their "tropological status," and to restore the communal matrix elided through what he perceives to be the hegemony of social science readings (Narrative Chance "A Postmodern Introduction" 9). With this agenda in mind, he interrogates the anthropological and "linguistic colonisation of tribal memories" ("Trickster of Liberty" xiv)  

as a prelude to his "emancipation" of trickster figures and the stories they generate from the ethnographic niche assigned to them by Western academics and institutions. This emancipatory tactic, facilitated by his appropriation of postmodern discourses and practices, enables a contestation of Western interpretative practices and taxonomies in relation to Indigenous oral traditions, which then functions to widen the interpretative space accorded to "tribal" literatures within the dominant institutional economy.

To begin with, Vizenor argues that the trickster's multiplicity and power to elude capture has incited the dominant culture's anthropological drive to codify and circulate trickster stories as "cultural information" (Narrative Chance "Preface" x). This desire for mastery and fixity, he contends, reduces these Indigenous cultural productions to the status of anthropological artefacts, which are defined through reference to the "scientific" and universalising norms of hegemonic cultural discourses and practices. Vizenor exposes the comically ethnocentric limitations of anthropological practice in

95 Gerald Vizenor, Trickster of Liberty: Tribal Heirs to a Wild Baronage (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1988).
relation to the "translation" of trickster stories in the following example of an encounter between a Native American informant, Tom Badger, and an anthropologist, Victor Barnouw, in his essay, "Trickster Discourse," published in the volume *Narrative Chance*.

Tom Badger was a reserved, intelligent, mild-mannered man in his seventies.... I gave him a Rorschach Test and collected two Draw Person drawings...[and]...there was evidence of emotional dependency and also some confusion about sex.... The two interpretations suggest the existence of repression, which is also suggested by the origin myth, with its avoidance of women and its recurrent oral and anal themes. (198-199)

This reduction of cultural difference through reference to Western empirical criteria of evaluation constrains the generative potential of these trickster figures and their comic power to incite laughter and to challenge colonial standards and values. Vizenor argues:

Tribal tricksters arise in imagination, [they are] a comic discourse and language game. Narrative voices are corporeal in the oral tradition; on the other hand, translated trickster remain[s] in printed words, summoned with passive news that holds gestures and wild names down to the number on the page. The translator imposes a worldview that sustains a monologue, a forfeiture of the language game. (*Trickster of Liberty* x-xi)

This process of colonial policing, as explicated through Western institutional and disciplinary discourses and practices which "translate"and effectively decorporealise/disarticulate Native American "oral tradition[s]" from their communal sites of production, is actively resisted by Vizenor in his extensive
fictional and critical writings. 96 For example, in the prologue to his novel The Trickster of Liberty Vizenor interrogates and tactically subverts both the unequal power relations characterising anthropological translative practices and the "knowledge" base that is extracted from "Native informants." To this end, he stages an encounter between an anthropologist, Eastman Shicer, and his Indigenous trickster informant, Sergeant Alex Holbraiser. Shicer's attempts to discursively capture the trickster figure are resisted by Alex in the course of their linguistic duel on the relative merits of the Western authorities who constitute this particular field. In a narrative aside to this dialogue, it becomes apparent that Alex, who embodies the disruptive "Native informant," fictionalises her information and therefore contaminates the knowledge that it will generate for Western institutions.

Eastman Shicer, cultural anthropologist and aerobics instructor, had recorded every sound she made last summer and then transcribed her words to discover what he believed was a "trickster code." The words she invented to distract the anthropologist became "primal signs" in his lexicon.... The anthropologist would celebrate theories over imagination; in this sense, academic evidence was a euphemism for colonisation of tribal memories and trickster narratives. (xiii-xiv)

Shicer's search for a definitive code is finally rebutted by Alex's contention that "The trickster is a comic holotrope in a narrative, not a real person, but

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96 See also, Gerald Vizenor, "Trickster Discourse: Comic and Tragic Themes in Native American Literature," Buried Roots & Indestructible Seeds, ed. Mark A. Lindquist and Martin Zanger (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 1994), 67-83. This essay includes an extract from his novel, The Heirs of Columbus. In this novel Vizenor uses trickster discourse to play with notions of history and fiction in order to politicise the ways in which Native American histories and subjectivities have been subordinated to dominant discourses of "discovery" and colonial conquest. For a discussion of this novel, see Gerald Vizenor and A. Robert Lee, Postindian Conversations (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1999), 127-135. See also, Barry E. Laga, "Gerald Vizenor And The Heirs Of Columbus: A Postmodern Quest For More Discourse," American Indian Quarterly Vol 18 1 (Winter 1994), 71-86.
then neither are anthropologists" (xiv). Through the use of these tactics, Susie O'Brien suggests, "Vizenor... shatters an illusion of the monologistic integrity of anthropological identity by exposing the fictionality of their boundaries" (86). By foregrounding the "fictional" basis of Western anthropological knowledge, and its complicity in perpetuating colonial power relations, Vizenor places its truth claims under erasure and undermines its authority over the interpretation of Native American knowledges and cultural forms.

Vizenor concludes that anthropology's attempts to translate the trickster's cultural complexity into meaningful Western cultural codes exemplifies a mode of "colonial surveillance" (Trickster of Liberty x), and that social science generally manifests a will to power in its monologic construction of Native American subjectivities and cultural practices. In elaborating on the extent to which this dominant cultural and institutional will to power produces a deformation of "tribal stories," Vizenor argues:

Structuralism and other social science theories never seem to enter stories as a language game without an institutional advantage; those unexpected cultural harmonies, those common intersections in aural performances and trickster discourse, are translated...[and]...transformed....[They] are academic tropes to power rather than tribal stories in a language game. (Preface Narrative Chance xii)

It is significant that Vizenor challenges this institutional authority and will to power through his tactical appropriation of postmodern discourses and practices. Firstly, this enables him to oppose the self-evidence of Western anthropology's knowledge base with the self-reflexively fictional tactics of Western postmodern literary discourses; in this way he destabilises the
hegemony of the Western empirical real and politicises the nexus between imagination and the inscription of cultural difference. It also enables him to renegotiate the limited academic interpretative space assigned to Native American cultural discourses by operating directly within these privileged Western institutional discourses and sites.

For instance, in his preface to a book of postmodernist interpretations of Native American literatures, *Narrative Chance*, he provocatively asserts: "The postmodern opened in tribal imagination; oral cultures have never been without a postmodern condition" (x). This assertion tactically assigns a privilege to Native American oral traditions by suggesting that its practices pre-empt those of Western postmodernism; this cultural prioritisation functions then to destabilise the colonial Western hierarchy between modernity and the traditional, a hierarchy which continues to structure the interpretative field in relation to Native American literatures.

Vizenor secures another tactical advantage by identifying parallels between Indigenous oral practices and those of postmodernism. He observes that "postmodern creation is expressed in the acceptance, even glorification of play, chance, indeterminancy, and self-conscious-performance" ("Trickster Discourse: Comic" 193). He suggests that "the postmodern pose" ("Preface" *Narrative Chance* xii), a pose which appears to imitate the ludic operations of Indigenous trickster figures, effects a rupture in the Western binary between orality and writing by foregrounding the common narrative properties of non-linearity, dialogic interaction and non-closure. This rupture in effect helps to void the problem foisted upon contemporary Native American writers, in relation to questions raised by Western academics about the interconnection between their use of Western writing and their inscription of "traditional" oral narrative themes and conventions. 97 In their contemporary incarnations, then,

97 I take up these issues of orality, writing, genre and authenticity in Chapter Five of this thesis.
the trickster is "a semiotic sign in a written narrative" ("Trickster Discourse: Comic" 206), a comic sign, but one in which the" humour...is closer to the oral tradition and bound to a specific culture" (206). This semiotic status invites "the most active readers [to] become obverse tricksters" (Trickster of Liberty x), and thus replicates the dialogic connection between the narrator and audience in oral narrative performances. By insisting upon the cultural specificity of humour in the context of the trickster's "aesthetic" and "semiotic" operations, Vizenor prevents his co-optation of postmodernist literary praxis from reproducing the cultural neutralisation effected by the West's positioning of its knowledges and discourses as universal. Instead, his recourse to this paradigm functions to politicise questions of cultural difference and its imaginative inscription in contemporary Native American literatures, and to "liberate" the trickster from the reductive interpretative shackles of Western empirical realism and anthropological objectivity.

Re-figuring Geronimo as Trickster Figure in Almanac Of The Dead

Silko's engagement with the politics of cultural difference, Western history and colonialism in Part One of Almanac Of The Dead is mobilised through her tactical deployment of trickster figure conventions. This deployment enables her to imaginatively disrupt and derail the cultural and discursive authority of the Western empirical real, and its privileging in traditional Western historiographical practice, as a prelude to her larger project of revalorising the different reality produced in Indigenous stories and cultural practices. In the context of Western representations of Geronimo, then, she refigures him and the resistance he embodies in order to liberate this particular Indigenous history from the ethnocentric interpretative field in which it has been enmeshed. As such, her critique effects a reauthorisation of Native American perspectives and representational modes in which the thematic of resistance to white American imperialism and cultural hegemony is given primacy.
To this end, she constructs a series of seemingly incommensurable narratives around the figure of Geronimo which initially challenge the reader's capacity to invest them with a coherent meaning. This refusal of coherence serves two purposes. Firstly, it sets up her reconfiguration of Geronimo through an appeal to the traditions of trickster story telling; and secondly, it disrupts the ideology of presence and synthesis which marks and authorises the monologic official history under interrogation. Hence, in one of these narratives, the communal matrix and dialogic process of story telling is established: "Old Mahawala started out, and then the others, one by one, had contributed some detail or opinion or alternative version. The story they told did not run in a line for the horizon but circled and spiraled like the red-tailed hawk" (224). This mode of narration challenges the Western historiographical standards of linearity, presence, objectivity and closure by enunciating a culturally different mode of narrating and knowing. Mahawala, a Yaqui elder and story teller, begins this Geronimo story with the words: "Of course the real man they called Geronimo, they never did catch. The real Geronimo got away" (224). This sentence instantiates the trickster provenance of the story, and is also signalled by Mahawala's nephew's initial confusion about the response he should make to her words, a confusion shared by the non-Indigenous reader of the text, whose reading practices are framed by different cultural parameters:

Calabazas had looked at each face to determine in an instant if this was a joke or not. Because if it was a joke and he appeared to take it seriously, they would have him. And if it wasn't a joke they would have him too. But when Calabazas realised the old ones were serious about this Geronimo story, he had given in. (224)
While this passage sets up the notions of ruse and play, it also suggests that a more serious purpose haunts the construction of this particular Geronimo story, and this purpose is clarified by the production of different narrative elements and perspectives which collectively effect a destabilisation of the Western concept of the real.

For instance, in the above story the subject position of Geronimo is assigned to at least four different Apache raiders at different junctures in the narrative. These raiders collaborate to impersonate the "real" Geronimo and thus enable him to elude both corporeal and discursive capture by the colonising culture. Hence, the very notion of a transparent real and of a unified and ontologically fixed Native American subject who can be unproblematically read by the Western gaze is challenged by the use of an Indigenous representational tactic. Furthermore, by constructing Geronimo as a figure of repetition and dissemination, Western humanist conceptions of unity and identity - conceptions which underwrite traditional historiographical representations - are destabilised and finally dismantled under the weight of more authoritative Indigenous narratives and discourses.

This shifting figure also functions to foreground Indigenous perceptions of white obtuseness, specifically an inability to perceive and to value cultural difference. As the Geronimo narratives make clear, this obtuseness is subverted and turned back upon its colonial bearers and the authority they seek to entrench. For example:

The elders used to argue that this was one of the most dangerous qualities of the Europeans: Europeans suffered a sort of blindness to the world.... To whites all Apache warriors looked alike, and no one realised for a while, there had been three different Apache warriors called Geronimo who ranged across the Sonoran desert south of Tucson. (224-5)
Shortly after this passage, the reader is informed that: "The Apache warrior called Geronimo had been three, even four different men" (225). In yet another Geronimo story, Yoeme, who functions as the almanac keeper and who is specifically marked by the trickster designation of "she-coyote" (114) says:

I have seen the photographs that are labelled "Geronimo".... But the man identified in the photographs is, not, of course, the man the U.S. army had been chasing. He is the man who always accompanied the one who performed certain feats. He is the man who agreed to play the role for the protection of the other man.... The man who fled had further work to do, work that could not be done in captivity. (129)

This colonial misreading of Native American subjectivity is used to circumvent cultural and discursive capture; in effect the "real" Geronimo cannot be located and is thus positioned in these narratives as a fictional construction produced out of colonial power relations and framed within a Eurocentric cultural and discursive economy. As such, this tactical intervention not only maps out positions of agency for Native American subjects, it also denaturalises the interconnected hierarchical Western binaries of fact/fiction and history/story by implicating them in colonial practices and by demonstrating their contingent operation as culturally specific rather than universal modes of knowledge and narration.

Like Vizenor, then, Silko’s critique of colonial representational practices is motivated by a desire to contest the monolithic authority of Western master narratives, and to reclaim a sense of Indigenous agency over history and representation which these master narratives have either neutralised or elided. As I have already suggested, it is the trickster figure, and the stories
he/she generates, which enable this dynamic of agency to be tropologically constructed. For instance, Wide Ledge, one of the Geronimo surrogates, performs a reading of a series of photographic images of Geronimo which question the self-identity of this visual representational mode in order to reiterate the nexus between cultural knowledge, location and specific reading and interpretative practices. Wide Ledge's analysis is formulated in the context of an Indigenous debate over the recurrent photographic image of an unidentified Apache warrior which appears to displace and represent - inaccurately it would seem - the real Apache under threat of capture by the camera's gaze:

The puzzle had been to account for the Apache warrior whose broad, dark face, penetrating eyes, and powerful barrel chested body had appeared in every photo taken of the other Geronimo. The image of this man appeared where the faces of the other Geronimo's faces should have been.... The identity of the Apache in the photograph could not be determined. (228)

This passage instantiates a critique of the anthropological trope of "soulapture" which I examine in Chapter Four on Native American interventions into photography and its relation to colonial discourses and practices. In that chapter I examine how this trope helps to buttress the ideology of the Native American "primitive," but, for the moment, I invoke it to elucidate Silko's tactics of agency. In this passage, the reproduction of this stereotypical visual representation of Geronimo functions to problematise the evidentiary status assigned to photographs in the dominant discourse. These photographs, are widely circulated in the dominant discourses to fix his identity and to reinforce the idea of his capitulation to the hegemonic culture.
In spite of the inability of the Yaqui elders and the Apaches to identify this Apache warrior, they eventually offer an explanation for this phenomenon which converts contingency into agency, and thus marks another level of Indigenous reclamation of historical experience. The Yaqui elders suggest: "The face in all the photographs had belonged to one long dead who knew the plight of the 'Geronimos" (232). The articulation of this ancestral intervention by the elders marshals a counter-epistemology and counter-interpretative practice that prioritises non-Western explanatory categories, and which therefore challenges the authority of Western discourses and the explanatory categories they evoke. It also foregrounds the mediated nature of photographic production and its deployment as a colonial apparatus in this context. Through this trickster-like play on the notions of identity and difference, Silko produces a space in which the figure of Geronimo cannot be captured or contained within the discursive or representational parameters laid down by the West.

And yet these trickster operations, which problematise the self-evidence of the nexus between "truth" and the "real", invoke a referential basis - namely the interlinked contexts of Western colonialism and ongoing American cultural imperialism. To this extent, Almanac acknowledges that the real and truth are produced by the coloniser and that they must be challenged in order to empower Indigenous cultural productions. However, while Silko's intervention into Euro-American master narratives is predicated on an understanding of the provisionality of all truth claims, she nevertheless demands that her readers register the political "truth" about Western colonial violence and the continuous Native American history of resistance it has engendered.

Finally, Silko's play upon names and naming also registers an awareness of the material conditions of colonialism, and the oppressive power relations that the colonial privilege of naming helps to sustain. Through her
interrogation and displacement of the unity of the name she demonstrates how the power to name is complicit in producing the colonising culture's real. For instance, Yoeme, the historian and trickster, asserts:

They were all hunting the Apaches running with the man they called Geronimo. That was not his name. No wonder there has been so much confusion among white people and their historians. The Man encouraged the confusion. He has been called a medicine man, but that title is misleading. He was a man who was able to perform certain feats. (129)

It is significant that this man is not named, and that the nature of his activities is not revealed. He remains outside of Western nomenclature and categories, and thus escapes regulation and containment by the coloniser's homogenising gaze. Once again, the coloniser in this story is incapable of reading or seeing Indigenous cultural differences, an incapacity which in turn enables the Indigene to tactically exploit his limitations. This obtuseness underscores a recognition that: "whites put great store in names. But once the whites had a name for a thing, they seemed unable to recognise the thing itself.... To whites all Apache warriors looked alike (224-5).

In these Indigenous narratives the identity of the name is dismantled and displaced by assigning the Geronimo figure multiple names. As I have argued, this trickster ruse also underpins the thematic of mistaken identity which enables the re-inscription of Indigenous difference, resistance and agency. For instance, the Apache raider who takes on the burden of filling the Geronimo subject position in captivity is given the name of Old Pancakes, a name which signifies his trickster function, and by implication, his ability to operate outside of the constraints of colonial law and its apparatuses of control. The text insists that it is Old Pancakes and not one of the tactically
designated Geronimo imposters - Red Clay, Sleet, Big Pine and Wide Ledge - who finally surrenders to General Miles at Skelton Canyon. Old Pancakes inadvertently pre-empts a decision arrived at by a meeting of the four other Geronimos, at which Wide Ledge is nominated as the one whose surrender to white military authorities will divert attention from the operations of the unnamed Indigenous guerilla leader invoked by Yoeme:

Well, Old Pancakes had really done it. Old Pancakes had claimed he was the warrior called Geronimo. The Indian scouts doubted the story, but the attache to General Miles heard the name Geronimo.... Thus Old Pancakes had finally been able to use his skills as a liar and a joker to seize the opportunity to save the others.... [It was] reported that Old Pancakes had not expected the trick to work because he was such an old man and he had no warriors with him any more. (229-30)

Although the veracity of Old Pancakes' pre-emptive trick is apparently undermined by a prior story which targets Red Clay as the "final Geronimo who died in Oklahoma" (226), this ruse maps out a contestatory politics which refuses the subordinate position of the other and instead implicitly confers that status on the colonial power. Ultimately, this tactical reversal of colonial power relations, and the multilayered resistance to cultural and material hegemony it embodies, works to foreground the dynamics of Indigenous agency and cultural difference through a reworking and celebration of Indigenous story telling modes and practices. In particular, Silko's reinscription of Geronimo as a trickster figure enables him to elude corporeal and discursive capture, a representational tactic which functions to overturn the ontological fixity imposed on the Indigene by Western colonial discourses and representational strategies.
This chapter has staged a critique of the politics of writing histories by foregrounding how the consolidation of the fact/fiction, history/story set of binaries within Western discourses has functioned to privilege a specifically Western notion of the real and to construct a unitary regime of truth that in turn operates to devalue culturally different modes of constructing history, truth and reality. These politics of truth similarly inform traditional Western discourses on photography, a medium whose capacity to objectively capture/document the "real" has been until recently assumed, and whose emergence as a medium in the early nineteenth century coincided with an aggressive policy of Westward expansion in the Americas. As I will argue in the next chapter, photography became a crucial colonial apparatus in North America, and its power to frame and regulate Native American subjectivities and cultural practices at different phases of the Indian Wars in the nineteenth century made it an important ideological weapon in the overall project of American colonialism and imperialism.
Chapter Three
Photography and the Politics of Visual Representation

Ethnographic - "scientific" - photographs of American Indians fit so exactly into the canon of "truths" needed to construct the [dominant] American narrative that most often they are taken at face value. There is even still an idea that photography, is objectively "representational." (Jimmie Durham) 98

In this chapter, I examine the politics of photography as a specific visual technology in relation to colonial representations of Indigeneity in North America. My purpose is to map the continuity of photography's deployment as an apparatus for constituting Native American subjectivities and histories in a variety of shifting socio-cultural sites and to foreground its constitutive function in structuring and reproducing the asymmetrical power relations inaugurated by Western colonialism. That is to say, photography's emergence in the West as a new visual mode of representation in the early nineteenth century, coincided with both the Westward expansion of colonialism in North America and with the inception of anthropology as a discipline. 99 As such, it became one of the key instrumentalities facilitating the material and symbolic "capture" of Indigenous peoples by making them available for insertion into a Western visual economy and knowledge matrix. Moreover, as the trope of "capture" suggests, colonial photography was a fundamentally predatory practice, which accelerated the appropriation and

commodification of Indigenous cultures by rendering them as passive objects for consumption by the Western gaze. In addition, the circulation of photographs by the hegemonic culture from a variety of cultural and institutional sites - military and survey expeditions, ethnography, art and tourism - at different phases in the colonial project functioned ontologically to "fix" Indigenous identities and to naturalise a Western colonial cultural hierarchy which then operated to reinforce the unequal relations of power mandated by colonialism.

Before I detail specific instances of the deployment of photography in practice, I want to map a genealogy of its conception and emergence as a visual medium in the West. Given that photography's emergence as a technology is concurrent and co-extensive with the expansion of colonialism in North America, it is imperative to situate the socio-cultural and historical context of this process in order to comprehend how the various discourses and discursive practices it assembled and mobilised worked to maintain the power relations set up by colonialism.

"Burning with Desire": Photography and "Conception"

To this end, I now examine a recent critical history of photography by Geoffrey Batchen which differentiates itself from standard texts on photography's development by tracing the emergence of a discourse of the medium's conception instead of reproducing a linear history which reifies an originary moment of photographic "technical reproduction, of individual invention" (35-36). This archaeological project, whose agenda is broadly

framed by Batchen as a desire to articulate questions about the politics of photography's specificity as a medium, engages with a range of historical commentaries and the heterogeneous epistemological and discursive domains which inform and structure their understandings of the idea and practice of photography in the West. In his text *Burning with Desire*, Batchen signifies this process of conceptualisation through his use of the phrase "the desire to photograph," a phrase deriving from a statement by Louis Daguerre which encapsulates the ambivalent epistemological status of photography at the time: "I cannot hide the fact that I am burning with desire to see your experiments from nature" (52). By mapping the relationship between desire and photography in what he terms "proto-photographic discourses" (ix) from the period 1790–1839, Batchen sets out to destabilise the prevailing conceptual, methodological and political orthodoxies which characterise traditional photographic histories and contemporary Western critical discourses and photographic practices. ¹⁰³

Batchen observes that traditional histories of photography in the West have been preoccupied with locating an unproblematic temporal moment of origin for the medium's emergence, and, with it, the identification of a single founding father whose "paternity" and ownership of the technological process of photographic reproduction can be asserted without equivocation (35). Thus, he argues, these standard histories - in spite of competing claims to this privileged position of founding father - generally mark photography's inception as that historical moment in 1839 when Daguerre's photographic technical apparatus reproduced an "image of nature" (66), an image whose singularity was recognised and authenticated by the contemporary scientific community. Not withstanding the timing of this particular technological achievement,

¹⁰³ For an overview of nineteenth-century American and European writing about photography from fields such as art theory, social reform and physiology, see also Mary Warner Marien, *Photography and Its Critics: a Cultural History, 1839-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).
Batchen asks the following question in the context of a critical evaluation of Tom Wedgewood's different claim to be an inaugurator of the photographic process, a question which bears upon his perception of the limitations of orthodox understandings of photography's inception.

The claims made for Wedgewood as first photographer... assume that the inaugural idea of photography must be marked by some definite evidence of a technological struggle in its direction. But what of those ideas that are no more than ideas? Could not photography have been imagined in some earlier ideal moment of speculation by a creative but not technological mind? (31)

The posing of this rhetorical question marks Batchen's divergence from traditional approaches to the problem of photography's historical identity and ontology, and ultimately his reframing of this problem in terms which acknowledge "the logic of the rhetorical structure" (24) underpinning the foundational paradigm. Batchen then sets out to demonstrate how this paradigm's "theoretically fragile edifice" (24) relies on the production of a particular conception of history, a conception which privileges originality, priority and linearity (36) and which is inattentive to questions of history and the exercise of power (ix). Thus he argues that reducing complex questions of photography's emergence to a "search for origins" (24) is predicated upon an empirical model of history:

Traditionally, photography's commentators have been quick to rephrase this ontological question in terms of a historical one, that is, a search for origins. “What is photography?” is all to readily transformed into “Where and when did photography begin?” Responses to this
second question have been easier to formulate, relying as they do on concepts of history seldom closely examined and on evidence regarded as self-evident. Consequently, photography's historiography is generally comprised of a rapid movement from the difficulties of philosophical investigation to a simple and selective exposition of facts. By this means, a theoretically fragile edifice, that identity signalled by the word photography, has been erected on a a rarely questioned foundation of endlessly repeated historical information. (24)

Batchen eschews this traditional model and its reification of inventions and beginnings. Instead, he performs a Foucauldian archeological analysis which foregrounds the particular historical and cultural conditions of possibility that marked photography's emergence in the years 1790 to 1839 (57), and which produced the simultaneous appearance of a desire to "devise a means by which nature, especially those views found in the back of a camera obscura, could be made to represent itself automatically" (56). This mode of analysis, he argues, necessarily engages the conceptual and metaphoric as well as the technological aspects of photography's development as a medium (57). Therefore through his re-examination of a series of what he designates as concept metaphors (100) in the proto-photographic discourses - landscape, nature, camera image, spontaneity - Batchen sets out not to "recover the truth of the proto-photographers intentions" (57) in relation to photography, but to

[M]ake visible the conditions of possibility that might allow photography to be conceived when it was; to reveal the economy of metaphors that, in the years around 1800, could bring a concept like "photography" into the European imaginary. It is, in short, a task similar to that described by Foucault: "My problem was to ascertain the sets of transformations in the regime of discourses necessary and sufficient
for people to use these words rather than those, a particular type of discourse rather than some other type, for people to be able to look at things from such and such an angle and not some other one." (57) 104

Given that the idea of a desire to photograph only emerged at a specific juncture in Western culture, Batchen argues that the meaning of these concept metaphors in the period, and the seemingly opposed discourses which structure them in the proto-photographic commentaries require elucidation in order to gauge how questions of the timing and the meaning of photography's conception are linked (53), and how these concept metaphors bear upon current critical understandings of its specificity as a medium. Informed, then, by a lexicon deriving from science and literature, he concludes that these proto-photographic discourses developed at a time when the classic paradigm of knowledge in the West was under transformation, and when the modern episteme emerged and generated new ways of conceptualising knowledges and human subjectivity. For example, the oppositional relation between culture and nature in the West, and also the relation between observer and the object of observation, was increasingly problematised by developments in, for instance, geology, optics, and philosophy (59). Although natural philosophy was concerned with questions about "nature," "human nature" and "the nature of things," (58) Batchen observes that the very concept of "nature" and its relation to culture was more ambivalently figured in this period"(58). This ambivalence in turn inflected the proto-photographer's discourses on photography, and this ambivalence about its ontological status, he maintains, continues to permeate contemporary critical debates on photography. In short, and as his examination of the Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's writings on "nature" and subjectivity

104 This quotation comes from Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings: 1972-1977, ed. Colin Gordon (Brighton: Harvester Press,1980), 211.
suggests, notions of representation as "somehow pre-established, reliable, neutral and transparent to its object" (58) were undermined and displaced by an understanding of the "interactive and constitutive relation between nature and culture (as embodied in the observer)" (61-2) around the time of photography's conceptualisation. 105

For instance, in his examination of landscape and the picturesque, Batchen notes that Coleridge questioned the until then accepted view of the artist as a mere conduit between God/nature and the production of an image (76), and with it, the idea of transparency that accrued around an understanding of image making as the mechanical reproduction of the real. By 1800, Batchen argues, the picturesque, a tradition which influenced contemporary understandings of photography's operations, had embraced the "idea of critical self-reflexivity" in its conception and practices (77), and thus the prior demarcation between representation and referent was rendered obsolete and replaced by an "endless circuit of representations" (78). This turned on the acknowledgment of the "viewing subject" as actively constructing self and object in the very process of viewing. I will return briefly to this argument on representation, changes in the conceptualisation of the human subject and vision when I later reference Batchen's engagement with what he describes as a key rhetorical figure in the discourses on photography - the camera obscura (78). Here, in the context of debates about the relation between culture and nature, he concludes: "At the very time that photography was being conceived, nature had become irrevocably tied to human subjectivity; its representation was no longer an act of passive and adoring contemplation but an active and constitutive mode of (self) consciousness. Nature and culture were interconstitutive entities" (62).

Given that my focus in this chapter pertains specifically to the ways in which colonial photography in North America deploys "canons of realism" (Faris 17) to construct particular kinds of subjectivity for Native Americans, my re-presentation of Batchen's argument about the meaning of photography's timing is necessarily schematic. It cannot do justice to his exhaustive mapping of a range of proto-photographic commentaries in the period, nor to his insightful genealogy of the development of technologies of vision in the West and the discourses and traditions which they embed and articulate. For the purposes of this chapter, then, I want briefly to focus now on how the linguistic and conceptual ambivalence which Batchen identifies in these commentaries about the identity and specificity of photographic images provides a valuable site for a re-examination of the politics of photographic representation in the context of Western colonialism in North America.

This undecidability about the status and practice of photography in the period of its conception and emergence was generated, then, by the proto-photographer's recognition of nature as an increasingly problematic category, and also of the equally problematic role of the observer/photographer in mediating the production of photographic images. Was photography to be categorised as a science or an art, or did it occupy a more liminal position? Given this dilemma, what was the actual representational status of the images reproduced by the camera, and that of the technological process itself? These questions are repeatedly formulated in the discourses of the proto-photographers, and the following examples cited by Batchen illuminate the difficulty of fixing the identity of photography in terms which align it simply with either nature or culture, science or art, the real or representation. For instance, William Henry Fox Talbot described photography as "an act of 'natural magic," but also as an apparatus and process which results in "pictures" or "drawings" that are "effected" or "impressed" (fixed) by the "boundless powers of natural chemistry" (66); Claude Niépce understood the
process as enabling "the copying of views from nature" (62) and the photograph as "a faithful image "of nature" (62), while Daguerre regarded it as "the spontaneous reproduction of the images of nature received in the camera obscura" (66).

However, Batchen argues that while the figure of nature is continuously invoked in these formulations, its status remains equivocal, and he poses the following question in relation to that equivocality: "Is nature painted by photography or being induced to paint herself? Is she produced by or a producer of photography? "(63). Batchen notes that this uncertainty is reproduced in early efforts to coin a generic term for the photographic process, and he argues that Niépce's struggle with numerous word-signs to conceptually fix its identity is emblematic of the difficulties confronting the proto-photographers' desire to classify their process. Although Niépce eventually settled on heliographie - "sun-writing/drawing"- (63) a term that Batchen argues was selected for its association with science and the natural sciences (64) - his prior attempts generically to mark it articulate his perception of the problematic relationship between the process and the representations it produced. These word-signs are as follows; "nature, itself, writing, painting, picture, sign, imprint, trace, image, effigy, model, figure, representation, description, portrait, show, representing, showing, true, real " (64). Regarding Niépce's "conceptual dilemma" (64), Batchen draws this conclusion:

Obviously, for Niépce, nature was central to photography, but he could never resolve with any precision how to articulate the relationship between the two. In his note this conceptual hesitation is reproduced at the level of nomenclature itself. Rather than replace heliographie with another single word, he could never bring himself to make a final decision. He left instead a contradictory set of pairs (nature or her
copy, representation or reality?). It is as if, to his mind, the nature of photography itself could only be properly represented by way of a sustained paradox. (64)

Thus the proto-photographic discourses on the relationship between "nature" and photography foreground contradiction and "paradox," a discursive orientation which is at odds with the claims of those who identify photography as an empirical medium and practice, and who want to valorise it as a neutral/"natural" technological apparatus engaged in producing scientific images of the "real."

Batchen performs a detailed examination of other tropes deployed in the proto-photographic discourses which problematise assumptions about its objective status through engaging questions of how vision, viewing relations and subjectivity were being redefined in the period around 1800. These tropes include the camera obscura, spontaneous reproduction and the picture. Again, I am unable to deal here with the complex ways in which these tropes were circulated and understood, and I will confine myself to some brief remarks which emerge from Batchen's comprehensive analysis of the ways in which these tropes articulate a shifting Western history of vision/subjectivity in relation to the camera and the eye.

Of the camera obscura, he remarks, by reference to an analogy drawn by Erasmus Darwin between a poem and the camera obscura (a subjective/constructed text and an ostensibly mechanical/objective apparatus of viewing) that Darwin's understanding of these different mediums was not framed in binary terms like culture/nature or representation/reality. Rather, in identifying the requisites of writing good poetry in the period, requisites which included the production of "visual similes" and "pictorial language" (80) to expedite "direct ...expression" (80), Darwin was cognisant of the following:
[He] did not assume that the view provided by the camera obscura gave access to an entirely unmediated "real" of the kind that positivists later claimed as photography's preserve; it provided instead a "pictorial" way of seeing. Indeed, one reason that the camera obscura was so popular with prephotographic artists was that it automatically modified the scene it reflected, stressing tonal masses and compressing forms in a manner complementary to picturesque taste. (80)

In mapping this shifting relationship between the camera and the eye in the intellectual discourses of the period, Batchen concludes that as a "condition of modernity," viewing was reconceptualised as an active/constitutive rather than as a passive/empirical practice. This necessarily reconfigured observer/observed relations, and also, the observer's claims to produce objective or non-mediated representations (82).

Finally, in order to disclose the power relations inscribed in specific Western conventions of viewing and painting which bear upon the conceptualisation of photography and its representational politics, Batchen critiques another "foundational" event in the history of photography - namely the invention of linear or monocular perspective. He notes that even postmodernist critics like Victor Burgin regard this invention as a generative force in the conceptualisation and invention of photography; indeed, Burgin has asserted that "perspective represents the 'essential details' of photography as a representational system" (107). The introduction of linear perspective with its focus "on a single point of vision" revolutionised painting in the Italian Renaissance and standardised both a style of painting and a hegemonic relation between the observing subject and the observed object (108). According to Batchen:
Perspective is, in other words, a homogenising system of representation constructed around a given point of origin – the eye of an individual observer. This system also implies a boundary between this eye and what is seen, a clear separation of observing subject and observed object. As Christian Metz has described it, the vanishing point of monocular perspective "inscribes an empty emplacement for the spectator-subject, an all-powerful position which is that of God himself, or more broadly of some ultimate signified. “ (108)

Thus the "homogenising" effect enabled by linear perspective transforms the relation between "observing subject and observed object" at a particular historical moment in the West, and, in the process, confers on the subject/observer a position of power and authority in relation to the production of visual representations.

As I will argue in my analysis of colonial photography of Native Americans in the context of its dominant critical reception, what becomes occluded in these discourses is the specificity - cultural and historical - of ways of seeing/ knowing/representing and consequently, the reproduction of a concept of photography that identifies it with nature, science and the real.

In the light of Batchen’s reconceptualisation of photography, then, I want to offer some preliminary comments on the politics of photographic representations of Native Americans as a prelude to my engagement with the critical reception of the photographic oeuvres of Edward S. Curtis and Adam Clarke Vroman. I will examine a recent critical text on photography of Navajo by James Faris, a text which is exemplary in its articulation of the critical issues and the representational politics which accrue around Western colonialism and its relation to the construction of Indigenous subjectivities and histories. Indeed, Faris remarks that, in the dominant cultural and critical
contexts, the nexus between discourses and practices of colonialism, Indigeneity, photography and power in the North American context have generally been marked by an absence of critical self-reflexivity and by inadequate theorisation. Hence his text provides a valuable adjunct to my own readings of colonial photographies and of the dominant critical practices in this field in North America. These practices inadvertently reproduce those asymmetrical power relations between the West and the Indigene, relations that photography as a hegemonic Western system of representation structures and perpetuates.

**The Trope of "Capture": Colonialism, Photography and the Production of the "Real"

In noting the proliferation of hunting metaphors like "shot" and "capture" in nineteenth-century photographic discourses on colonised cultures, James Faris, in his recent critical history, *Navajo and Photography*, draws attention to the way in which these tropes inscribed a particular conception of photography and a hierarchical power relation between the photographing I/eye and its objects of representation. In the following passage, he elaborates on its mobilisation of this power differential and the shifting ideological valencies which marked out permutations within the North American colonial process and its official policies for regulating Indigenous subjectivities:

> With the rise of hunting metaphors (the "shot," the "captured" image), photography became symbolic in the West's history of conquest, of defeat, of assimilation or disappearance, a force by which white men's power was validated. This aspect was particularly

vital in photography that involved social relations with minorities and of subjugation. Such considerations gave rise to a preservational motivation -- things (cultures, peoples) only disappear as evidence of the West's own history. Nostalgic tendencies, so common in the repertoire of the photography of Native Americans, have come to signify desire for, at best, more liberal and generous white men, and at worst, the conqueror, the Indian fighter, the raw expansionist, the frontier tamer. (14)

These permutations in relations between coloniser and colonised are mapped out in photographs of Geronimo, which also usefully mark the generic limits of colonial photography of Native Americans. For example, the earlier photographic representations of Geronimo taken after his capture at Skelton Canyon circulated as evidence of the "savage nature" and cultural inferiority of the Indigene and buttressed the colonial rationale for Apache conquest and dispossession. Conversely, Edward Curtis's photograph of Geronimo, taken prior to Geronimo's participation in President Theodore Roosevelt's inaugural parade in 1905, helps to instantiate the visual genre of noble savage, a category which simultaneously marks military defeat and historical closure.

Significantly, it also memorialises the loss of Native American traditional cultures -- a gesture which, through its articulation of the historical inevitability of this process, again rationalises colonial violence and territorial dispossession of Native American cultures. As I later argue in relation to my critique of the photography of Edward Curtis, this generic visual reinscription of the figure of the noble savage helps to inaugurate a Western fetish for the

107 This photograph has been widely reproduced in a variety of texts and sites. In addition to its reproduction in photographic anthologies of Native Americans, it appears in New Age texts which commodify Native American "spirituality." See for example David Borgenicht, ed. Native American Wisdom: Photographs of Edward S. Curtis (Philadelphia: Running Press Books, 1993), 62. It is also reproduced on a Pomegranate bookmark I purchased in Taos in 1996.
"authentic" Native American, a fetish impelled by a nostalgic drive which, in practice, functions ontologically to fix Native American subjectivities and cultural practices through reference to Western anthropological criteria. I will discuss these Geronimo photographs in more detail later in this chapter. I invoke them here to suggest the generic limits and colonial ideologies structuring Western photography of Native Americans in these contexts and thus to initiate a critique of the status and iconic nature of photography, which in dominant critical discourses about photography of Native Americans is still perceived as a medium with a transparent relation to the real.

For now I want to present a schematic overview of how a particular conception of photography as a mimetic medium inscribing the real came to circulate in late nineteenth-century colonial discourses on Native Americans. Briefly, then, this effect of the real was ascribed to the camera's mechanical capacity to neutrally produce images of nature. In this instance, images of Native American subjects and of their cultural practices. This ascription of neutrality was bound up with an understanding of the camera as a purely technological apparatus which delivered unmediated copies of nature - a category which Indigenes were unproblematically inserted into - in spite of the particularity of the I/eye setting up the image.

On this basis, photographs were received and circulated as documents which mirrored or captured Indigenous reality in the colonial context, and their constitutive function in producing Western versions of that reality were ignored. The document generally functions as a privileged category in Western historical and ethnographic discourses. That is to say, it is assigned a high veridical value on the basis of its putatively objective and value-free status, a status founded on assumptions about the correspondence between its representation of particular objects of knowledge and their referents. As I have already argued in relation to dominant historiographical practices of representing Indigenous cultures in North America, the naive empiricism
which authorises this mimetic understanding of representation elides not only the specifically Western epistemological matrix structuring the representation, it also reproduces the unequal power relations authorised by ongoing colonialism. This representational politics, then, is reproduced in Western discourses on photography and the Indigene, a politics enabled by the dominant critical reception of it as a neutral, objective technology which then produces its objects as transparent categories of viewing/reading and interpretation.

Indeed, in addressing the specific deployment of ethnographic photography in colonial North America towards the end of the nineteenth century, James Faris argues that this presumption of neutrality was readily embraced by anthropological practitioners because it helped to expedite "the discipline's emergence as a social science" (15), an event which coalesced with Western imperialist expansion into Native American territories such as Navajoland. Similarly, this anthropological documentation of the Indigene, one of the categories of photography Faris maps in his recent critical history -- *Photography of Navajo* -- relied on "canons of realism" (17) to produce Navajo as objects of knowledge for Western consumption. However, as Faris notes, in spite of the presumed transparency of these photographic documents of Navajo reality, they required supplementation by anthropological written texts, a practice which necessarily problematises the self-evidence of their visual reproduction of Navajo subjectivity and cultural practices.

Faris articulates the representational politics structuring the continuity of this conception of photography and its constitutive production of Navajo subjectivity in the following terms:

> *Photography of Navajo* by definition leans on canons of realism, the opaqueness of the subject, the transparency of the photograph. Navajo are received as real, as existing independently of the
technology, of the social relations that placed them in the photograph, and of their own social relations. But they do not exist, or at least not in any necessary or non-trivial way revealed in the photograph. As noted, photographers say less about Navajo than about photographers of Navajo -- indeed, in the limited ways in which Navajo appeared, photographers used amazingly few tropes, and these are remarkably consistent over time. Navajo, by definition, are set in their alterity to white men, their distance of Other accepted without so much as a whimper from viewers. They appear unproblematic as Other, and the photograph functions as document, as presentation of Navajo alterity. Non-hostile Navajo are, after all, such attractive Others (and certainly vital to a vast tourist industry in the region). (17)

Although Faris's critique of both the dominant Western conception of photography, and the politics of its deployment as both a representational and disciplinary apparatus, focuses primarily on representations of Navajo, this passage encapsulates how the generic registers framing photography of Native Americans function to regulate and delimit Indigenous identities and subject positions. This generic delimitation in turn provides the structural parameters and frames by which Western discourses (of ethnography, historiography, art criticism, tourism texts) naturalise their reproduction of the Indigene as a cultural "Other" at the level of the visual, and in the process, reinforce Western hegemony and the asymmetrical power relations it legitimates.

**Constructing the "Other": Vision, Photography and the Discourses of Western Humanism**

I want briefly to examine Faris's critical evaluation of the links between Western concepts of the visual and the ideologies of Western humanism,
which he sees as germane to the continued photographic appropriation and commodification of Navajo. While Navajo are the subject of this text, Faris's critical and theoretical observations in relation to photography and Western discourses of the other can be usefully extrapolated to Western photography of different Native American cultures without erasing their cultural and historical specificities.

Faris forcefully argues that the unacknowledged privileging of a Western scopic economy as embodied in dominant photographic practices, and the Western humanist discourses which inflect it, continue to produce Native Americans as the undifferentiated other in a variety of sites and discourses. Thus the production of photographs as a site of knowledge about Indigenous cultures function, to privilege Western subjectivity and the position of the investigating subject; the Western eye/I prevails in the construction of Navajo reality. He argues that "it is clear that Navajo appear [in photographs] only as another intention of the West, not because the 'reality' of Navajo is not comprehensible but because it may well be impossible to approach in prevailing discourses of the West or in Western modes of visual representation" (19). Western aesthetics and the humanist discourses which posit these as "universal," he argues, function also to universalise assumptions about "reality," and to structure the construction of knowledges about Indigenous subjects and cultures (19). Hence the very practice of Western photography in these contexts, and the unequal power relations which are consequently reproduced, disallow the production of non-generic representations of Indigenes and elide the specificity of Navajo cultural practices and histories. The ideological and political effects of reproducing Navajo photographically through a limited number of tropes is named and marked by Faris in the following passage:

As Navajo change, so, too, does the photographic subject, but
because the West has only a limited series of ways in which it accepts Navajo images, photography must, in most circumstances, continually repeat itself. Navajo can only be accepted as exemplars of a tradition the West names for them (thus maintaining the tradition/modern dichotomy so important to Western notions of progress and hierarchy) ....(20)

Faris makes another crucial point in relation to this Western history of photographically colonising and appropriating Indigenous subjects. Namely, that in spite of the shifting contexts in which photographic representations are produced -- from military conquest to the post-civil rights milieu - there can be no non-violent representation of Indigenes given the colonial power relations which still mark interactions between Native Americans and the dominant culture, and given the perpetuation of generic images which ideologically fix Indigenes as figures of exotica and alterity (19). 108 He argues that in the contemporary context this representational violence is elided by the hegemony assigned to vision and visual practices in the West, especially in so far as it relates to the valorisation of art and the artist inscribed in liberal Western humanist discourses and practices. Hence the West invests itself with a "natural' privilege...to view, to see anything, anywhere, anytime and the consequent benefits to be gained if this vision is extended to those with the right artistic talent, character, and empathy " (23). In rebutting the liberal good intentions which underpin some photographic projects of Native Americans, Faris argues that good intentions cannot nullify the symbolic and material violence of the commodifying imperative which inflects most Western ethnographic or artistic representations of non-Western others:

But the world of other humans is not simply available as fodder, either for photographic capture or for ethnographic predation, however compassionate the westerner. The belief that vision must be accorded all privilege, that there exists some natural concession or fundamental freedom to extend sight everywhere, must be understood as a temporal and historical feature of expansion and power, not a biological or universally accruing human right. (23)

Faris's comments on the politics of Western aesthetics and the representation of non-Western others are illuminating, and I will argue that a humanist politics of good intentions provides a critical departure point for much of the evaluation of the work of colonial photographers like Curtis and Vroman.

**Colonial Photography: Vroman, Curtis and the Politics of "Authenticity"**

I now map a brief history of the relation between colonialism and the photography of Indigenes in North America in order to situate my analysis of the critical reception of Vroman and Curtis, two photographers whose oeuvres mapped paradigmatic representations of Native Americans around the beginning of the twentieth century. Curtis' work in particular continues to be circulated in a variety of socio-cultural contexts and sites and has been crucial in structuring and perpetuating "authentic" representations of Native American subjectivities and cultural practices, and, concomitantly, hierarchical ideologies of race and culture which authorise ongoing colonial relations between the dominant and Native American cultures.

I have already noted the conjunction between photography's emergence as a technology and what has been described by various commentators as the aggressive official policy of westward expansion in the
early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{109} Christopher M. Lyman in his influential 1980s monograph on Edward Sheriff Curtis \textsuperscript{110} draws attention to the ideological links between Western progress/colonial expansion and the cultural/racial hierarchies they constructed and validated. As he argues in the following passage, the nineteenth-century doctrine of Manifest Destiny effectively sanctioned a range of violent colonial practices (including genocide) against Native Americans:

The crime of those killed was their "Indianness," and the punishment was justified under the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. According to this convenient and often murderous doctrine, those who were thought to be racially "inferior"- especially Indians - had to be swept from the path of Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic "progress." If they could neither be enslaved nor assimilated then the common practice was to exterminate them. (18)

With the advent of photographic technology the material effects of this doctrine could be discursively mapped to signify Indigenous capitulation to white supremacy by reinforcing hegemonic ideologies about race and the inevitability of Western "progress" and "civilisation." Photographers participated in this project of Westward expansion in various ways. They often accompanied military campaigns to shoot pictures of resistant Native American subjects prior to and after treaty negotiations. \textsuperscript{111} As Lyman has

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[110] Christopher M. Lyman, \textit{The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions: Photography by Edward S. Curtis} ( New York: Pantheon, 1982).
\item[111] See Paula Richardson Fleming and Judith Lyn Luskey, \textit{The North American Indian in Early Photographs} ( New York: Harper and Row, 1986). For other useful compilations and commentaries on photography of Native Americans, see Paula Richardson Fleming and Judith Lyn Luskey, \textit{Grand Endeavours of American Indian}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
observed, these photographs and their accompanying captions functioned to legitimate the excesses of white imperialism by emphasising the "savage"/militaristic nature of Indigenous leaders and warriors (86). In addition, and as the dominant discourses on Geronimo suggest, they effectively confer status on triumphant white military leaders, by implicitly investing them with superior military prowess. Photographs in these contexts, then, mobilised ideologies about racial differences in order to justify colonial wars of dispossession and genocide.

This process of othering is exemplified by C.S. Fly's well known photograph of Geronimo and by the supplementary text which mediated contemporary readings of its meanings. 112 In this photograph Geronimo is poised on horseback gazing inscrutably at the camera lens and the photograph's surface is inscribed with the words, "Geronimo, The Apache Chief, as taken before the surrender to General Crook in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico. The most fiendish, cruel, and bloodthirsty of the Apaches now defying the United States and Mexico." 113 This construction of Geronimo as "savage other" can be usefully contrasted with another photograph taken by Edward Curtis shortly before Theodore Roosevelt's

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112 A collection of Fly's photographs were retouched and printed by his wife, Mrs. M. Fly in Geronimo: The Apache Chief ( Tucson: Adobe Corral of the Westerners Inc, 1986). This text is a limited edition which was reprinted from a copy held by the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson. The original was published by Mrs Fly in 1905 or 1906. For a biographical exposition of Fly's life and works, see Evelyn S. Cooper, "C.S.Fly of Arizona: the Life and Times of a Frontier Photographer,"History of Photography Vol 13 No 1 (January-March 1989), 31-47.

113 This photograph and its caption are reproduced in Nancy Hathaway, Native American Portraits: 1862-1918 (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1990), 50.
presidential inauguration in 1905 - nearly twenty years after his surrender to General Miles at Skelton Canyon.

Geronimo has been a prisoner of war for almost twenty years, and the photograph bears the imprint of the Vanishing Race thesis, an ideology which shaped most of Curtis's photographic oeuvre. This insidious ideology, generated by the aftermath of Indigenous military defeat, was produced out of the shifting power relations structured by colonialism, and, like the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, it functioned to legitimate the material and cultural genocide and "decline" of Native American cultures and Nations. As Curtis' reflections on this historical inevitability will later suggest, the Vanishing Race thesis signified the final niche in that colonial evolutionary cultural schema, in which assumptions about Anglo-Saxon racial/cultural superiority naturalised and rationalised the violence of the Western colonial project.

This genre of photography assembles and mobilises discourses, ideologies and photographic techniques which fix Indigenous subjects in a distant historical past, a strategy which, Lyman argues in the context of Curtis' oeuvre, was facilitated by a belief in the problematic concept of the "ethnographic present" (50) 114 : "Under the concept of the ethnographic present, Indians were studied in the context of the time when their ethnicity was thought to have existed in a 'pure' form" (50). While this scientific belief in an uncontaminated and "authentic" Native American subjectivity was a product of the Western imaginary (50), its influence was manifested in the use of technical manipulations to achieve the illusion of a pre-contact Native American cultural purity. 115

115 For example, Curtis excised an alarm clock from the foreground of a Piegan Lodge to conceal evidence of Native American acculturation.
This genre also functions and circulates as evidence of historical closure - the end of the so called "Indian Wars" and with it Native American resistance to colonial violence. In this Curtis portrait, Geronimo is represented in profile, his gaze averted from the camera, apparently engaged in some deep meditation on his life. This anthropological framing of the subject reinforces Geronimo's powerlessness and elides the violent colonial relations which marked his and the Apache Nation's resistance to Western imperialism in their homelands. This power dimension is reinforced by the accompanying caption constructed by Ralph Andrews, Curtis's first biographer in the 1960s, which draws upon Curtis's original text.

Curtis found in this benign old man no sign of the infamous warrior, the scourge of the desert. He saw Geronimo in Washington, D.C. where the Apache had come to plead with the Great White Father, after knowing him in his native Arizona hills. Here he would gaze wistfully into the distance and speak of days when he had pride with complete inability to understand the guile and treachery of the white scouts and soldiers.  

Geronimo is now constructed through the above texts as a benevolent and impotent remnant of a Vanishing Race, whose implicit transformation under the auspices of Western culture attests to the inevitability and desirability of its triumph in this colonial context. Speaking to these representational politics, the critic and writer Vine Deloria Jr (Standing Rock Sioux) has argued that:

Photography in the first decades of this century was partially a useful tool for recording scenes in a West that was rapidly

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becoming domesticated; it was also a weapon in the final skirmishes of cultural warfare in which the Natives of North America could be properly and finally embedded in their place in the cultural evolutionary decline.  

Through his use of a military analogy, Deloria's observation enunciates in unequivocal terms how, far from being a neutral technology, photography operated as a colonial apparatus which replicated at the level of culture and representation the violence of the colonial project. Christopher Lyman has noted that the Curtis photograph of Geronimo was "heavily retouched" (80-81) to reinforce its ideological import. The photograph was taken at the Carlisle Indian school in Pennsylvania, the day prior to the inauguration of President Roosevelt, and to Geronimo's participation in the inaugural parade (80). It was later retouched at Curtis' studio. While Lyman does not specify the precise techniques involved in the retouching of this photograph, his commentary on this process in general is illuminating:

In its simplest form retouching was done on the negative itself by using a stylus or abrasive on the emulsion to add details, or a retouching pencil to change or remove them.... [It] was also done by painting or drawing on a print and then rephotographing the print to create a negative which incorporated the retouching. (70)

He observes that the photogravures used in The North American Indian presented further opportunities for technical modification or embellishment.

Photogravures were prints in ink made from a steel-faced plate.

copper plate. Through use of a photochemical acid engraving process, these plates were made from a glass-plate positive of a photograph. The effect of this engraving process was to create pinprick concavities in the plate surface which retained ink, much like hand engraving. By engraving or abrading by hand, dark areas could be created. (70)

This effect of darkness is discernible in Curtis' portrait of Geronimo, and one can extrapolate from Lyman's commentary on the use of this technique in Curtis's famous photograph, "The Vanishing Race --Navaho," that it signifies the uncertainty of the future for Native American cultures. Its pictorial impact is to reinforce the ideology of the Vanishing Native (80).

As the above genres of photographs suggest, when frontier conditions changed, photographs of Native Americans reflected the different agendas and power relations which those changes signified. For instance, frontier photographers also participated in the major Western Photo-Survey expeditions, whose purpose was to document and market the West as a desirable site for white habitation (Lyman 28, Sandweiss "Undecisive Moments" 121-22). As part of their agenda it was necessary to demonstrate visually that Native Americans no longer posed a threat to white settlement, and thus photographic representations of Indigenes began to map their apparent domestication and assimilation of white cultural practices. For example, Martha Sandweiss notes that some photographs taken by Timothy O'Sullivan on the Wheeler Surveys "illustrate the civility of the Navajo Indians and the lush grazing lands awaiting settlers in southern Colorado's Conejos valley" ("Undecisive Moments" 122).

Finally, Lyman has observed that, from the 1870s, these surveys were buttressed by the emergent science of ethnology (48 - 49). From this point Native Americans were increasingly exposed to the Western ethnographic
gaze, and photography became an invaluable adjunct to the interlinked processes of ethnographic documentation and colonisation (Bantu 22). Military defeat had also fostered popular interest in the cultural practices of Indigenous peoples, and survey photographers began to capture representations of Native American Nations in order to satisfy the burgeoning desire of the dominant culture to view exotic images of their former foes (Lyman 25). This context also gave impetus to an emergent tourism in the West which encouraged the homogenisation and commodification of Native Americans through the medium of photography (Lyman 55-58) and genres such as the postcard which it engendered. As Lyman notes, Curtis utilised this popular desire for images of Native Americans by transforming many of his photographs into prints and postcards, strategies which enabled him to partially finance his larger project of producing a photographic monument to the North American Indian.

Colonialism and the Document

In this section I examine the photographic oeuvres of Edward Curtis and Adam Clark Vroman by mapping some of the critical discourses which these oeuvres have engendered. Adam Clark Vroman produced a corpus of work on Indigenous peoples of the Southwest between 1895 and 1904 and is usually differentiated in histories of photography from Curtis in relation to genre and to his photographic practices. Vroman is generally positioned in these histories as an exponent of a less invasive and more intimate mode of photographing Indigenous subjects, an evaluation which is not deemed to be inconsistent with the documentary classification assigned to his work. Curtis

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and his monumental archive, *The North American Indians*,\(^{119}\) has been located within the pictorialist tradition of photography, a classification which in the eyes of his contemporaries and of many critics does not invalidate its documentary status. Nevertheless, and in contrast to Vroman, the critical reception of his work by Native Americans and by Euro-Americans has shifted across time, and this variable reception has been generated by the subsequent recognition of his invasive photographic practices and his use of technical manipulations to produce representations of Native Americans that conformed to his sense of the ethnographic present. Thus, in many recent commentaries on Curtis, the manipulations of "reality" that these practices entailed are seen to have compromised and problematised the documentary status and truth value of his work. That is to say, its authority as an archive of "real" Native American subjectivity and history has been challenged to varying degrees, and its complicity in naturalising and regulating colonial power relations has been interrogated by many Native Americans and non-Native Americans.

In light of this critical differentiation drawn between Vroman and Curtis, I want to interrogate the ideological and political values which are encoded in the category of the documentary photograph. I will later demonstrate in Chapter Four of this thesis how Leslie Marmon Silko’s critique of colonial photography de-stabilises the self-evidence of the documentary category and also establishes how crucial this representational medium was in shaping dominant ideas about Native American subjects and histories. Her re-evaluation of photography as a colonial apparatus draws attention to the ways in which unequal power relations structured the representation of historical figures like Geronimo, and were produced and circulated in dominant

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discourses to fix Indigenous subjectivities and to occlude instances of resistance to white imperialism.

Martha Sandweiss in her introduction to the text *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America*, argues that: "Not long after the invention of photography, it was widely acknowledged that photographs had a particular utility as historical documents, capable of bringing the distant near and preserving the past for the future" (xiii). The category of the document conventionally signified ideas of objectivity and ethnographic veracity and, in the context of photography, this category was generally distinguished from that of the more artistic and subjective genre exemplified in the pictorialist tradition with which Curtis was aligned (Lyman 18).

Lyman notes that Curtis classified his own practice as "art-science" (17), a strategy which enabled him to straddle both categories and thus to avoid the limitations consequent upon adherence to the conventions of ethnographic documentation. Lyman argues that this apparently contradictory term undermines the rigid binary distinction between the subjective and the objective orientations that have conventionally differentiated the pictorialist art genre from the ethnographic documentary genre. He asserts that it is difficult to "definitively" insert Curtis's oeuvre into either category, nevertheless, and in spite of Lyman's critique of the colonial ideologies underpinning Curtis's practices, he concludes that:

As documents, Curtis's photographs are no less important. His images frequently failed to portray Indians as they actually were. But while documents - as a species of fact - are not always true to their intention, they are usually true to something. Curtis's photographs, in conjunction with their text and captions, truly document "the" North American "Indian."

(21-22)
Thus irrespective of his prior acknowledgment of the difficulties of classifying Curtis' work, a difficulty marked by the oxymoronic term "art-science," it seems that in this passage, Lyman recuperates Curtis for an ethnographic aesthetic practice in order to validate what he perceives to be the truth claims of Curtis's oeuvre. As his reference to the photograph's ability to truly document suggests, these truth claims are anchored to Lyman's resurrection of the "truth" effects of the documentary category, although that resurrection is to some extent qualified by his reservations about the objective status of this Curtis archive. In her examination of the generic terms used to classify the photography of Vroman and Curtis Erin Younger, also applies the oxymoronic label "art-documentary" (18) to the work of both photographers.

I will argue that the slipperiness of these taxonomic labels underscores a cultural politics which has been insufficiently addressed in discourses of photography, aesthetics and Indigeneity. Moreover, putting aside the question of the power relations which structure the photography of Native Americans by the West for the moment, the oxymoronic category of "art-documentary" succinctly encapsulates how photography as a technology and a practice always entails subjective processes of manipulation and intervention. As such, photography's claims - and the claims made for the documentary category in particular - to "objectively" produce "true" images of "reality" cannot be sustained even through reference to the technological aspects of photography.

This proposition has been cogently argued by Geoffrey Batchen in an article which is germane to the history and politics of photography on Native Americans. Batchen's argument is articulated in the context of concerns

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raised about digital imaging supplanting analogical photography as a representational mode. He notes that "the main difference...[between these two technologies] seems to be that, whereas photography still claims some sort of objectivity, digital imaging remains an overtly fictional process. As a practice that is known to be nothing but fabrication, digitalisation abandons even the rhetoric of truth that has been such an important part of photography's cultural success " ("Ghost Stories" 6). He concludes:

The history of photography is already full of images that have been manipulated in some way or other. In fact, it could be argued that photography is nothing but that history.... I'm suggesting that the production of any and every photograph involves practices of intervention and manipulation. After all, what else is photography, other than the manipulation of light levels, exposure times, chemical concentrations, tonal ranges and so on? In the mere act of transcribing world into picture, three dimensions into two, photographers necessarily manufacture the images they make. Artifice of one kind or another is therefore an inescapable part of photographic life. (6)

Keeping these statements by Batchen in mind, I shall examine the politics of the categories, art-photography and documentary in more detail.

Adam Clark Vroman was an amateur photographer and collector who produced a series of photographs of Southwestern Native Americans between 1895 and 1904. Vroman and his project have not received the same critical attention as Curtis but they are frequently contrasted in dominant critical discourses and this provides a useful departure point for an interrogation of the above categories – art-photography and the documentary. Vroman is generally lauded for his refusal to reproduce the ethnographic typologies and
regularities characteristic of colonial photography and for his eschewal of the intrusive and often violent practices deployed by numerous Western photographers in pursuit of their Indigenous subjects. He is also valorised for his refusal to engage with the "sentimental" excesses which characterised the work of photographers like Curtis. Thus Vroman's reputation as an ethical photographer is anchored in that "rhetoric of truth" (Batchen 6) which has been invested in the genre of the documentary. The following comments made by the renowned North American photographic historian and critic Beamont Newhall in his introduction to Ruth Mahood's 1961 edition of Vroman's photographs instantiates this critical tradition on Vroman. He argues that Vroman "avoided the sentimental, the contrived, and the obvious. He photographed simply, directly and sympathetically" (10). Moreover: "The Indians became his friends.... His photographs of them are portraits of personalities, not records of aborigines. They are individuals, not characteristic types" (13). Newhall concludes his assessment of Vroman's value as follows:

One must never, in judging Vroman's work, overlook its purpose: he was a documentary photographer. Every photo he took for its informational value.... They reveal him as a sensitive, gifted photographer, whose work of unquestioned documentary value is a proud heritage in the history of American photography. (17-20)

Elsewhere Vroman has been praised for his celebration of "ordinary events" and people. Read in conjunction, these appraisals function to elide the

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unequal relations of power which obtain in these colonial contexts, and to marginalise, if not obliterate, Indigenous cultural differences by co-opting them into the Western humanist categories of "the individual" and the "ordinary." These cultural differences and the colonial dynamics which enforce their assimilation into the "ordinary" are rhetorically achieved and structured by the extraordinariness of the "sensitive" and "gifted" artist embodied in Vroman. Newhall fails, on the one hand, to question the ethical contradictions inhering in his belief in the West's right to view and consume its others, in the name of art/science and, on the other, to question his concomitant privileging of the Western category of the artist as a conduit to knowledge of the other. Newhall's assessment graphically exemplifies James Faris's argument about the inability of Western humanist discourses to avow and engage with the ideological and political limitations of their good intentions in relation to the representation of "ordinary" Native Americans. Newhall's position is paradigmatic of the ways in which Vroman's oeuvre is read through a Western humanist agenda which universalises and naturalises its own highly specific cultural practices and values through reference to the presumptively neutral standards and discourses of Western aesthetics.

This humanist agenda is fully articulated in the editorial politics of Robert Webb and William Weinstein in their 1973 edition of Vroman photographs, *Dwellers At The Source*. 124 Before I map these politics, I will engage with Susan Sontag's and Martha Rosler's brief evaluations of Vroman's oeuvre in the context of American documentary photography. 125 Their arguments about the status and practice of documentary photography

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implicitly mobilises a rhetoric of truth and objectivity in order to salvage some photographic practices from the taint of collusion with colonial regimes.

In language which recalls Newhall's earlier estimate, Susan Sontag has argued: "Vroman's handsome photographs are unexpressive, uncondescending, unsentimental... they are not idiomatic, they do not invite sympathy. They make no propaganda for the Indians" (62). Sontag's commentary on Vroman is articulated through reference to her analysis of the dominant tradition within American documentary photography. She identifies two major categories in this American tradition, which she classifies as scientific and didactic. To expedite this classificatory process, she contrasts the photographs of August Sanders and Vroman with those of Roy Stryker in the Farm Security Project of 1935. This latter project was designed to invest the depression poor in America with the status of human subjects, and to thereby position them as worthy objects of middle class consideration and patronage. Stryker's photographic strategies in this official venture, Sontag argues, situates his work within a didactic tradition, which she then compares with the more detached scientific enterprises of Sanders and Vroman. On the one hand, her use of this taxonomy suggests the impossibility of maintaining the fiction of documentary photography as a practice which mimetically reconstitutes the world and which unproblematically produces "truths" about the "human condition." Indeed, Sontag insists that photography in general cannot operate as a value-free medium. Nevertheless, by constructing the above binary - scientific versus didactic - within this documentary field, she necessarily implies that some photographies are more "objective" and less inflected by ideologies than are others. On returning to her appraisal of Vroman, it seems that the distinction made by Sontag between photography as science or propaganda can be rearticulated as the difference between art and ideology. Vroman's photographs of Native

Americans are "handsome" and they avoid polemic or "propaganda." This humanist position which implicitly posits an outside to/of ideology is predicated on the operation of Western art and Western aesthetics as privileged categories of representation and knowledge. Indeed, as the discourses on Vroman and Curtis make clear, art, in spite of its grounding in specifically Western, as opposed to universal cultural, ontological and epistemological matrices, is deemed to transcend the unhallowed ground of politics and ideology.

In relation to Vroman's privileged position as viewer/artist/investigating subject with regard to the colonised Southwestern Native Americans, we may well ask what Sontag means by her problematic assertion that his photographs "make no propaganda for the Indians? " (61) That he re-presents them as they really are? Or that he refuses to construct them as passive victims of the colonising process? While the latter position can be lauded, Sontag's use of the term "propaganda" also disallows the use of photography as a discursive vehicle of resistance to white cultural imperialism. For instance, the editor of a recent volume of photographs of Native Americans, Lucy Lippard, argues that her selection of archival photographs which mark resistance to photographic colonisation was impelled by her desire to challenge the conventional categories commonly circulated within mainstream American culture. 127 This change in editorial practice by Lippard renders even more salient the absence of alternative traditions of representing Native Americans in mainstream anthologies which purport to document Indigenous historical experiences.

James Faris in his recent critical history of photography of Navajo also argues that most photographic anthologies on Native Americans exclude

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127 Lucy R. Lippard, ed. Partial Recall (New York: The New Press, 1992). This volume includes a Preface by Leslie Marmon Silko and a series of essays by various Native American critics, writers and cultural producers which stage re-readings of selected colonial photographs.
images which embody Indigenous resistance to photography and which clearly mark out their recognition of the uses to which photographs could be put by the colonising culture. I will return to the politics of anthologies later in this chapter. To return briefly to Sontag's deployment of the term "propaganda," I want to note that she fails to acknowledge in this context that photography is capable of mobilising a politics of exclusion as well as a politics of calculated exposure. Although Sontag generally broaches issues of photography's productivity with regard to power, knowledge and subjectivity, she fails to adequately account for the colonial context which authorises hegemonic inscriptions of Indigenous peoples in the first instance. She therefore glosses over the asymmetrical power relations which structure the production of colonial photography, a tactic which cannot be remedied by invoking Vroman as a "friend" of the Indians.

Moreover, she fails to sufficiently address the ways in which aesthetic choices and practices are informed by particular ideological and political agendas which may be covert rather than overt. She contends that: "Sanders didn't know that he was photographing a disappearing world. Vroman did. He also knew that there was no saving the world he was recording" (63). In this schema, colonisation and its effects are viewed as inevitable, and the discourses which are embedded in photography are regarded as incapable of producing interventions in the "real" world. This statement is later contradicted by her assertion that with the completion of the transcontinental railway by the 1870s, the colonisation of Indigenous peoples was reinforced through the medium of photography (64). But it seems that colonisation is confined to those engaged in the emergent tourist industry, and that "Discreet, serious amateurs like Vroman" (64) necessarily operate outside of the colonial economy of discourses and practices in which tourism is grounded. While it is important to distinguish between tourist photography and that produced by "serious amateurs like Vroman," this differentiation is a matter of degree and
does not account for the different sites and circuits which deploy documentary photographs by practitioners like Vroman and Curtis to construct and commodify Native Americans as objects of knowledge in a range of Western discourses and fields.

Sontag's stance is echoed and amplified by Martha Rosler in her essay examining the links between colonial discourses and practices as embodied in different genres of photography on Native Americans. After interrogating the "sentimental pictorialism" of Edward Curtis, which she compares with the "cooler, more anthropological " work of Adam Clarke Vroman (311), she draws the following conclusions:

We can, nevertheless, freely exempt all photographers, all the filmmakers, as well as the ethnographers, ancillas to imperialism, from charges of wilful complicity with the dispossession of the American native peoples. We can even thank them, as many of the present-day descendants do, for considering their ancestors worthy of photographic attention and thus creating a historical record (if only a visual one). We can thank them further for not picturing the destitution of the native peoples, for it is difficult to imagine what good it might have done. (311)

Rosler's offensive reduction of the colonial politics which underpin dominant white representations of Indigenes to questions of "preservation" and "gratitude" exemplifies what James Faris has refered to as a Western "ruins aesthetic" (21). This Western aesthetic reproduces those very colonial relations of power and complicity from which Rosler must - at least rhetorically - exculpate Western photographers, filmmakers and ethnographers. She also

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implicitly invokes the ideology of historical inevitability that circulates in
dominant discourses around the violent dispossession of Native Americans.
Like Sontag, she privileges Western discourses and categories like
anthropology, art, history and photography as appropriate indices of
evaluation, seemingly to confer absolution upon those Westerners engaged in
the discursive colonisation of Native Americans. Presupposing in advance
the neutrality of the Western anthropological gaze, and disinclined to question
the Western privilege of viewing its others, Rosler ascribes a historical and
veridical value to the category of the documentary which cannot account for
the ethnocentric and culturally specific ways in which colonial photography
constituted Indigenous subjectivities and mandated unequal power relations.

These power relations operate at the level of discourse and
representation itself, in so far as Native Americans lacked control over the
representational modes which inscribe them. As such, Rosler's judicial
invocation of "wilful complicity" as the only index through which Western
cultural producers can be made accountable for the material effects of
colonialism conveniently elides these cultural politics, and mimimises the
nexus between photographic discourses, modes of representation and power.

It is one thing to condemn what James Faris describes as "victim"
photography of Native Americans, as embodied for example in what he
regards as an ethically problematic photographic anthology by Marc Gaede
featuring representations of mainly drunken and dying Native Americans in
Arizona. 129 However, by suggesting that the adoption of different aesthetic
codes and discursive practices could not have made a difference to the
trajectory of colonialism in North America, Rosler understates the political and
ideological effects of generic Western representations in repressing
contestatory histories and representations. In the context of her valorisation
of Vroman's "anthropological coolness" (31) over Curtis's "sentimental

129 Marc Gaede, Bordertowns ed, Marnie Gaede ( La Canada, Ca: Chaco Press, 1899).
pictorialism" (31), it is worth invoking the response of an ungrateful Native American who refuses to make the nice distinctions and gradations insisted on by Rosler and Sontag. In a critique of colonial photography articulated in her Preface to the anthology *Partial Recall*, Leslie Marmon Silko designates both Curtis and Vroman as "voyeurs/vampires" ¹³⁰ and thus re-inscribes them as equally complicit in the project of Euro-American imperialism. Her incisive categorisation stands as a useful corrective to Rosler and Sontag's depoliticisation of Western aesthetic and generic categories and discourses.

The humanist agenda which structures readings of Vroman's work is fully elaborated by Webb and Weinstein in their prefatory text to the 1973 edition of his photographs of the American Southwest. Their prefatory text, in spite of its critique of the objectifying effects of ethnographic photography, is remarkably anthropological in its desire to read Vroman's images as transcultural and transhistorical through reference to the Western tropes, narratives and discourses of human genealogy and origins. In their formulation, Native Americans "communicate with us across the barriers of time, language and cultural difference" in order to (as the "primitive" subject must) disclose the "roots" of our "common identity" (unpaginated preface). This anthropological orientation, also marked in the title - *Dwellers at the Source* - is enunciated in the following passage:

When we think about the Indian photographs of Adam Clark Vroman, something altogether startling is revealed to us: there are no pictures of inscrutable savages! And therein lies the profound difference from so much of the photography of the period. There is no sensationalism, no deliberate portrayal of squalor, no sentimentalism, no propaganda... Vroman approached the Indians of the Southwest with the intention of portraying them as human beings, not as objects to be described in

scientific journals, not as curiosities to be exploited commercially or for personal aggrandisement: simply as human beings... in these photographs people communicate with us across the barriers of time, language and cultural difference. With no falseness between us and the images of these faces, we are exposed so vividly to the humanity of a people that the roots of our common identity are perceived immediately.  

This colonialist eulogy to Vroman is underpinned by Webb and Weinstein's desire to differentiate his work from what they see as the excesses of pictorialists like Curtis. Webb and Weinstein argue that by consciously avoiding the generic conventions of these other practices, Vroman developed a photographic style which breached the boundaries and limitations inscribed in the binary traditions of pictorialism and documentary photography. They classify this style as "informationalist" (21), and contend that it produces a photograph which "despite how informative it might be...[is invested with the]...power to inspire us, to sensitise us to a wider experience of the world we inhabit " (17). It would seem that "informationalist" photography simultaneously documents "real" human attributes and experiences while representing that "reality" through the sensitive eye/I of the photographer/artist. They argue "Vroman penetrated beyond the surface to present an image of the people's inner-most selves"(15). This penetrating gaze and the patriarchal/colonial lexicon which authorises its deployment views, constructs, interprets and ultimately mutes Native American subjects, who must be read through the "sensitive" I/eye which is contingent on and validated by Vroman's culturally privileged position as an artist. This then enables Vroman to dispel

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the "falseness" which characterises those representations produced for the purposes of "sensationalism", "sentimentalism," or "propaganda."

Sensibility then produces a transcendent imagination and practice which encodes truths about the human condition, truths not available through ethnographic observation and documentation. Thus Webb and Weinstein's coinage of the term "informationalist" photography is another attempt to negotiate the oxymoron suggested by Erin Younger's term, "art-documentary" which she applies to both Curtis and Vroman's work. 132 However, Younger's use of the above term makes explicit the mediated nature of their photographic projects (for example by issues of cultural and gendered differences), whilst acknowledging that their documentation of Native American cultures encodes an historically and culturally specific mode of representation. By way of contrast, Webb and Weinstein's deployment of a parallel term mobilises that "rhetoric of truth" (6) which Batchen argues has inflected understandings of photography as a cultural practice, and which, in this instance, can only be accessed by gifted individuals like Vroman.

This rhetorical manoeuvre manifests a desire to save Vroman from the charges of cultural imperialism, which informed some critiques of Curtis's project. However, Webb and Weinstein's re-appraisal of Vroman's work is also impelled by a universalising and assimilating drive that is equally problematic. By disclosing the "essential" humanity of his Indigenous subjects, they suggest that Vroman's photography somehow transcends its colonial context. But, irrespective of the claims they make on his behalf, their recourse to phallogocentric language - marked by the past participle "penetrated"- unwittingly reinscribes photography as a colonising apparatus

which operates in a context of unequal power relations between the master photographer and his Indigenous subjects.

Moreover, the ethnocentrism of their humanist stance and the depoliticisation of Western aesthetics that it produces ultimately reconstitutes Native Americans as yet another version of the "primitive other." This tactic of primitivisation is crucial to their construction of a master narrative of identity around their reading of Vroman's portraits, and I reproduce it in the following passage:

It is in the portraits especially that Vroman's genius is most openly displayed, and through them we reach the heart of his message.... The inference is immediate: here is a people strong, vigorous, proud, eternal. More mysteriously, here are people who are knowable to us... perhaps we have always known them! Our responses arise from our deepest natures as we gaze upon these reflections of a people still in reverent communion with the earth. We discover that their humanity is, after all our own. They are the dwellers at the source from which we all came and to which we shall some day return. The identity is complete. (25)

While Curtis's photographs systematically encode the ideologies of the Vanishing Race and the noble savage - constructions critiqued by Webb and Weinstein - this reading primitivises and homogenises Indigenous cultural differences by unproblematically aligning them with the order of nature. The trope of autochthony, invoked in such phrases as "reverent communion with the earth" and "dwellers at the source," positions Indigenes as primeval remnants and as passive objects whose affinity with nature signifies their tenuous relation to culture. Although this trope also functions to situate them as Ab-original, the discovery of their cultural meaning is solely mediated by
the Western gaze, which does not permit or invite a returned gaze to challenge its observational or interpretative hegemony.

Their reading practices, then, reprivilege the Western I/eye as the investigating subject and, in the process, reestablishes the cultural distance between "them" and "us" which their ruse of a common identity is intended to breach. This objectifying gaze enacts a discovery: namely that "we" and "they" share a common identity, which can be acknowledged once false notions and representations of "them" are challenged and dispelled through art's humanising intervention. This humanist ruse of identity is especially problematic in the context of Western representations of Indigenous cultures. By positing a universal origin and identity for all cultures, Webb and Weinstein effectively elide both the specificity of Native American experiences and the colonial economy which enabled their inscription by the hegemonic culture in the first instance. Instead, they are co-opted and synthesised into a master narrative of American identity. Although Webb and Weinstein rightly laud Vroman's refusal to construct Native Americans through reference to the prevailing genres and stereotypes of either "noble" or "inscrutable" savages, they also participate in their discursive colonisation by eliding Indigenous cultural differences through the imposition of "universal" Western humanist criteria. As such, they fail to consider the politics of representing others and are not reflexive about how dominant critical discourses and practices on Indigeneity reproduce colonial ideologies and power relations.

Re-mapping the Politics of The North American Indian

Recent critical discourses on Edward Sheriff Curtis and his monumental archive, The North American Indian, have generally been more attentive to the colonial politics inscribed in his representations of Native Americans. However, I will map a history of the archive's reception and classification which suggests that his recuperation by dominant discourses continues to privilege the category of the documentary and to efface the
power relations which enable these photographs to circulate as evidence of "authentic" Native American subjectivity in a range of cultural sites. These sites include photographic anthologies, postcards, posters and New Age "spiritual" texts. For instance, Vine Deloria Jr critiques this commodifying imperative in the context of the counter-cultural "re-discovery" of Native Americans:

Everyone loves the Edward Curtis Indians. On dormitory walls on various campuses we find noble redmen staring past us into the sepia eternity along with poses of W.C.Fields and Humphrey Bogart. Anthologies about Indians, multiplying faster than the proverbial rabbit, have obligatory Curtis reproductions sandwiched between old cliches about surrender, mother earth, and days of glory. This generation of Americans, busy as previous generations in discovering, savouring and discarding its image of the American Indian, has been enthusiastic in acquiring Curtis photographs to affirm its identity.  

Deloria Jr's observation articulates the continuity of the hegemonic culture's appropriation of the Indigene to constitute its narratives of identity, an appropriation grounded in and authorised by the "authenticity" of Curtis's photographic archive.

This archive, published between 1907 and 1930, comprised "twenty volumes of illustrated text in twenty portfolios of large-size photogravures" involving eighty Native American Nations. It has been variously described as "the most profound document of pure Indian culture ever made" (Coleman 134)

"the largest anthropological enterprise ever undertaken" (Gidley 180) and, more generally, as a "monument" to its progenitor and his subjects.

Curtis's anthropological agenda is articulated in his preface to the first volume as a desire to produce "a comprehensive record of all the important tribes... that still retained to a considerable degree their primitive customs and traditions." 135 His elaboration of this objective to his friend, the ethnographer George Bird Grinnell, encapsulates that insidious ideological convergence marked in the doctrines of Manifest Destiny and the Vanishing Race. It also invokes the preservationalist discourse which these ideologies legitimated:

But I want to make them live forever - in a sort of history by photographs.... You know and I know, and of course everybody does who thinks of it, the Indians of North America are vanishing. They've crumbled from their pride and power into pitifully small numbers, painful poverty and sorry weakness. There won't be anything left of them in a few generations and it's a tragedy - a national tragedy.... So I want to produce an irrefutable record of a race doomed to extinction - to show this Indian as he was in his normal, noble life so people will know that he was no debauched vagabond but a man of proud stature and noble heritage.136

In spite of the apparently sympathetic stance expressed in this passage, Curtis also believed that "Indians... lack by many ages that which is necessary to enable them to meet the competition of the Caucasian race." 137 As such, he endorsed prevailing notions about racial and cultural hierarchies and also

135 Cited in Lyman, 51.
137 Cited in Andrews, 56.
subscribed to that Western historical telos by which the "primitive other" would inevitably be displaced through the triumph of "civilisation" and "progress." As Lyman has argued, his project was framed by an anthropological memorialising impulse, which was in turn shaped by the notion of the "ethnographic present" (50). This concept functioned to regulate Indigenous subjectivities and identities by conflating "real" Indianness with cultural values and practices uncontaminated by exposure to the colonising white culture (51). Lyman has also argued that, although Curtis was influenced by the emergent discourse of ethnography, the expenses incurred by him in this massive venture necessitated the production of photographs which appealed to popular notions of "Indianness." Equally informed, then, by commercial imperatives and by the concept of the ethnographic present, Curtis ignored the heterogeneity embodied in Native American cultures in order to produce a unified historical record of their lives. In effect, Curtis's enterprise naturalised the violence of the white colonial project and effaced the struggles of Indigenous peoples to define their subjectivity and cultures in a shifting contemporary context.

From the outset, The North American Indian received widespread official support which invested it with a legitimacy guaranteeing its circulation within prominent North American circles. This network of official patronage has been identified by Mick Gidley and included the renowned financier J.Pierpont Morgan, the railroad tycoons E.H.Harriman and Henry Huntington, the banker Andrew Carnegie and President Theodore Roosevelt (181). Gidley also notes that "there was a much closer correspondence of assumptions between the project and the Federal Government's Bureau of Indian Affairs than might have been expected, not only in Roosevelt's time, but throughout the duration of the project" (181). Gidley's mapping of some of these institutional links is affirmed by a contemporary appraisal of Curtis's work. John A. Tennant remarked in 1905 that "It is not difficult to appreciate
the immense value and importance of this work to the ethnologist, the historian, and the artist. He continued, "the undertaking is the most remarkable artistic and historical work thus far attempted in America. It has been enthusiastically endorsed by President Roosevelt, the Bureau of American Ethnology at Washington, and other eminent authorities in this special field." 138 This evaluation significantly marks out the multiple sites in which these photographic representations acquired an institutional utility. Their valorisation at these sites ensured their circulation as signs of "authentic" knowledge about Indigenous cultures and practices.

More recent critical evaluations of Curtis and his project have, to varying degrees and with different emphases, acknowledged the colonial ideologies and power relations which structured and authorised his project on The North American Indian. 139 However, in spite of this recognition, Curtis continues to enjoy a privileged position within the hegemonic culture, and the epistemological status of his archive remains largely undisturbed by revelations about his "manipulations" and his invasive practices in securing photographic subjects.

I want to end my analysis by engaging with the noted critic and writer, Vine Deloria Jr's intervention into this debate on cultural appropriation and self-definition. This intervention is mapped in his 1982 preface to Christopher Lyman's valuable analysis of Curtis and colonial photography in his text, The Vanishing Race And Other Illusions. Deloria notes, in relation to the Curtis

139 See for example, Christopher Cadazo, ed. Native Nations: First Americans as Seen by Edward S. Curtis (Boston: Little Brown & Co, 1993). Cadazo constructs Curtis as a visionary figure, and his introduction foregrounds the heroic motif which is characteristic of the discourse on Curtis. This volume also includes a foreword by the Gros Venture scholar, George P. Horsecapture which validates the Curtis project for its capacity to retrieve, at the level of the visual, traces of his ancestor's past which have been all but erased by colonialism, 13-17. See also Gerald Hausman and Bob Kapoon, eds. Prayer to the Great Mystery: The Uncollected Writings and Photography of Edward S. Curtis (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).
revival of the 1970s, that his "romanticisation of Indians was well received by the Indian community itself"(12). He ascribes this reception to the fragmentation engendered by colonialism, and to Native American desires to produce a unified "national image" to facilitate various political agendas (12). But he also notes:

Wiser and more experienced Indians detested the fawning over Curtis. They had previously experienced such periods of intense euphoria inspired by the white majority only to find the climate radically shifting and producing substantial hardships when people forgot their pledge of undying guilt towards the nation's first citizens. Thus a weak smile and an uncomfortable shrug was about the only response that Curtis pictures invoked in older Indians, and many tried to indicate, without condemning, that while these pictures certainly hinted at past glories and innate righteousness, they presented such a sanitised view of Indians that many believed them to be harmful to their cause. (13)

Deloria's comments foreground the ways in which this genre of photography functions to maintain colonial power relations by reproducing homogenised and "sanitised" representations of Native Americans. Specifically, these representations, by fixing Native American subjectivities in a distant past, operate to occlude contemporary Native American political struggles, struggles which included their endeavours to represent themselves in a range of shifting historical and contemporary contexts. Deloria Jr's engagement with the politics of colonial photography and his rejection of the ruse of Indigenous" authenticity" which it mediates has been addressed by numerous Native American critics, writers and photographers in recent times, and their
interventions into debates on photography will constitute the focus of the next chapter.
Chapter Four
Native American Interventions in the Politics of Photographic Representation

Tribal cultures have been transformed in photographic images from mythic time into museum commodities.... Photographs of tribal people...are not connections to the traditional past, these images are discontinuous artifacts in a colonial road show.

(Gerald Vizenor) 140

Native people have -- but are not perceived as having -- diverse histories, cultures, languages, economics, politics and world views. As Native people, we must claim rights to, and ownership of, strategic and intellectual space for our works.... Native survival was and remains a contest over life, humanity, land, systems of knowledge, memory and representations. Native memories and representations are persistently pushed aside to make way for constructed western myths and their representations of Native people. Ownership of Native representations is a critical arena of this contest, for there are those who insist on following the tired, romantic formulas used to depict Native peoples. Those myths ensure an existence without context, without history.... Such constructed myths and representations are given institutional validation in the classroom and are continually supported by popular culture and media.

(Theresa Harlan) 141

The Indian with a camera is an omen of the time in the future that all


Euro-Americans dread: the time when the indigenous people of the Americas will re-take their land. Euro-Americans distract themselves with whether a real, or traditional, or authentic Indian would, should, or could work with a camera (get those Indians back to their basket making!).

(Le Silko)  

The epigraphs to this chapter on Native American responses to photography incisively map the cultural politics which inflect contemporary debates about the continuing power of Western visual representations to construct, homogenise, and regulate Indigenous subjectivities, identities and histories. In different ways, the critical positions articulated in these epigraphic frames attest to the heterogeneity and complexity of "traditional" and contemporary Native American cultural formations and practices. But this cultural heterogeneity has been rendered invisible through the dominant Euro-American culture's reproduction of the generic visual representations popularised by colonial photographers like Edward Curtis, representations which continue to frame dominant cultural ideas about what constitutes an "authentic," "traditional" or "real" Native American subject or cultural practice. By challenging the colonial ideologies which structure and classify these hegemonic representations as instances of the "authentic," and by identifying the cultural and academic policing which renders them authoritative, Vizenor, Harlan and Silko mark out the colonial and neo-colonial power relations which have ensured dominant control over the representation of Native Americans. However, these Indigenous critics also demand "ownership" over the representation of Native Americans, and thus mark out that cultural space as one of contestation and transformation. This ownership includes the power to re-view and to re-inscribe colonial photographic representations of subjects.

like Geronimo. It also encompasses the production of Indigenous photographic representations and practices which inscribe cultural difference and which refuse the anthropological capture/fixity claimed for colonial photography by the West.

Arguably, then, the construction of "strategic and intellectual space," to cite Harlan, is made manifest in the different Native American responses to photography that I map in this chapter. While I focus primarily on particular Native American re-readings of colonial photography and its tropes, I also briefly address the politics of contemporary Native American photography. 143 As I will demonstrate in this chapter, these different types of practices embed tactics of agency and are crucial to the process of constructing a "visual history" (Harlan "Creating A Visual History") of, for and by Native Americans. With this structure in mind, I will make an initial critical detour to the politics of contemporary Native American photography.

In this detour I want briefly to examine another essay by the critic and curator, Theresa Harlan (Laguna/Santo Domingo/Jemez Pueblo). 144 In this essay she stages a critique of hegemonic curatorial practices in relation to the exhibition of Native American photography. Her aim is to interrogate the colonialisist regulation of Native American identities and cultural practices as they occur in dominant discourses, representational practices and institutional sites.

Harlan argues that the power of Western colonial photography to authenticate and to fix Indigenous subjectivities, identities and cultural practices according to Western criteria of the real continues to "exert...[a] pernicious influence" (13) on contemporary perceptions of Native Americans. This "pernicious influence" is further marked by the dominant culture's

143 I discuss in more detail issues in relation to contemporary Native American photography in an appendix to this thesis.
reception and exhibition of contemporary Native American photography, which constitutes the main focus of her essay. Reflecting on the nexus between Western prescriptions about Indigenous authenticity and the cultural impact of hegemonic visual representations on Indigenous communities, she notes: "It has been and is the experience of Native Americans to be told and shown what 'real Indians' look like based on photographs by Euro-American photographers" (14). She argues that this anthropological positioning of Indigenes through photography and the cultural hierarchy it mandates is replicated in current curatorial practices involving the exhibition of contemporary Native American photography and art. These practices, which generally relegate the exhibition of Native American art and photography to anthropology and natural history museums, exemplifies a politics of othering and "segregation" which replicates the colonial discourses and ideologies embedded in and circulated by Western colonial photography of Native Americans (13-14). In short, these mainstream curatorial politics implicitly reproduce the ideology of the culturally static Native American "primitive" or other and, with it, unequal colonial power relations:

Native artists are rarely invited to exhibit at contemporary fine art museums. The reason for this segregation of Native photography and Native art in general is that Native Americans are still viewed within the racial and cultural context of anthropology. That is, we are still viewed as a backward and simple people by the curious. Most non-Native American audiences, critics, and curators have not matured in their patronising concepts of Native Americans, and have accordingly not shed their racial stereotypes. It would be a mistake to ignore the consequences of this reality – the omission of works by contemporary Native American artists in the visual arts community and in art history. It would also be a
mistake to ignore the earlier historical relationship between Euro-American photography and Native Americans, as this early Euro-American photographic documentation of Native Americans still exerts its pernicious influence. (13-14)

Harlan raises crucial questions here of Indigenous access to the hegemonic cultural arena in relation to the production and circulation of visual representations, and to the perpetuation within that cultural arena of "racial stereotypes." She also elaborates upon the dominant institutional constraints placed on the exhibition of Indigenous photography, but, significantly, she also reiterates the demand made in the epigraph framing this chapter; namely, that Indigenous cultures must exercise control over representations in the cultural arena. To this end, the deployment of photography by Native Americans functions "as a political weapon" (15) to combat the ongoing homogenisation of their subjectivities, histories and cultural practices by the West. Like Silko, Harlan recognises that Indigenous appropriations of Western visual technologies like photography are crucial to the reclamation of cultural sovereignty - a point more obliquely made by Silko's provocative and prophetic invocation of the "Indian with a camera...[as] an omen of the time in the future... when the indigenous people of the Americas will re-take their land" ("The Indian" 178).

At this juncture, I want briefly to recontextualise the historical conditions shaping nineteenth century and early twentieth century colonial photography of Native Americans by mapping some of the official policies and institutional regimes which both constrained and engendered Native American resistance to photography as an apparatus of colonialism. I will do so in order to broach the historical question: in the context of an institutionalised -- at virtually every level -- regime of genocidal violence, what possible tactics are available to the subaltern to contest physical and symbolic annihilation under colonialism?
As I argued in the previous chapter, photography of Indigenes towards the end of the nineteenth century facilitated this process of symbolic annihilation by encoding the ideology of the Vanishing Race - an ideology potently framed and captured in colonial archives by acclaimed photographers like Edward Curtis. Indeed, as Ann Maxwell argues, photography's imaging of this trope simultaneously marks a memorialising impulse to those "vanishing" cultures while eliding the violent colonial practices which legitimate the colonising culture's deployment of technologies like photography against Native Americans. Specifically, she examines the relation between "the politics of authenticity" (111) and the "aesthetic of salvage ethnography" which structured the Curtis genre. Curtis' pre-occupation with "authenticity" was primarily, she argues, a strategy for deflecting and masking "the damage inflicted by colonialism" (111). She concludes that Curtis' archive "gave genocide an acceptable face" (110), and the "aesthetic of salvage ethnography" (111) it enshrined became "an important part of the cultural machinery of imperialism" (111). What then were the material conditions shaping Native American resistance to Euro-American colonialism, and how did this inflect Indigenous tactical responses to the symbolic capture threatened by photography in this period?

These conditions, and the various official policies and administrative regimes enabled by the shifting power relations marking different phases of colonisation in North America, are concisely mapped by Stephen Cornell in his book, *The Return of the Native*. Through his examination of these policies and regimes Cornell argues that the emergence of the U.S.A in the nineteenth century "as the world's leading economic power" (34) was congruent with and contingent upon the seizure of the Native American land

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base. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Indigenous dispossession and genocide produced by the exercise of military power was bolstered by the ideology of assimilation and the various practices for "managing" Native American cultures that it sanctioned. For example, he argues, referring specifically to the removal policies inaugurated by the 1887 Dawes Act:

Thus the goal of assimilation helped rationalise removal. It was
Not until late in the nineteenth century that a program of assimilation -- the allotment policy -- was systematically used to obtain Indian lands. But whether as rationale or independent instrument, assimilation was very much part of the dispossession process, and the two methods supported each other in pursuit of the larger goal, the incorporation of Indian resources. (41)

It is impossible within the scope of this chapter to do justice to the complexity of the issues Cornell raises in relation to changing government policies and practices about the colonial management of Native Americans, and thus to his analysis of their resistance to this management (6). What follows will be a necessarily schematic overview of some of the main points of his argument.

Cornell's agenda in Return of the Native is to draw attention to the continuity of Native American resistance to colonial and neo-colonial domination -- physical, cultural and symbolic -- in order to account for their "failure" to "vanish" as predicted by another colonial photographer, Joseph Dixon in 1913 (6). Cornell begins his analysis of this phenomenon of "return" by foregrounding resurgent Indian political activism in the 1970s, an activism potently embodied in the 1973 seizure of the village of Wounded Knee. This was the site of the infamous 1890 massacre of the Sioux (4), an event commonly read in dominant discourses as marking colonial closure to

147 For a fictionalised account of Joseph Dixon and his participation in the Rodman Wannamaker Expedition, see Charles Fergus, Shadow Catcher (New York: Soho, 1991).
the military phase of conquest and dispossession. Cornell notes that the "survivors of this slaughter were among the last Indians to be brought under the direct administrative control of the United States" (3), and he contends that the seizure of Wounded Knee in 1973 symbolises "the resurgent phase of a diffuse, fragmented Indian resistance, a movement that has continued in one form or another for generations" (6). In other words, the Indigene refused to "vanish."

However, military conquest, dispossession and the institution of a reservation policy began to mandate increasingly unequal power relations between the dominant culture and Native Americans; in particular, the reservation system produced "economic marginalisation and dependency" on the U.S. Government (54). Hence resistance to hegemony had to be channelled into more covert modes of action - for instance, into spiritual/political movements like the Ghost Dances. Given the seemingly totalising regimes of physical and institutional control generated by the reservation system, Cornell argues that towards the end of the nineteenth century "Reservation dependence and confinement drastically reduced Indian choices of action. Armed resistance had become suicidal...." (60). Native Americans were now increasingly subject to "an elaborate set of tutelary, administrative controls over [their] lives, coupled with the attempted abrogation of indigenous systems of governance" (57). Moreover, "legal constraints encircled them; non-Indian authority bound them at every turn" (60), and the "main protagonist" in the overall schema of enforced assimilation and detribalisation was the BIA - the Bureau of Indian Affairs (57). Cornell examines in detail the permutations of various government policies - enshrined in legislation like the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887- which were designed to accelerate the process of cultural assimilation and to foster the expropriation of the extant Native American land base. He argues that the scope of these assimilationist
policies were wide-ranging and that the extent of their intrusion into Native American lives and communities should not be underestimated:

Treaty provisions and legislative acts alone fail to convey the full extent or impact of BIA interference. Charged with the civilising process, the BIA adopted a course designed to force its recusant and often unruly wards into the socio-cultural modes preferred by the larger society. While Congress and the courts stripped the substance from Indian decision making power, the BIA went after those social structures and cultural practices that, even under conditions of powerlessness, sustained the tribal community. (57)

Thus prohibitions on language use and spiritual practices for example, and policies such as boarding schools for Native American children, were designed to promote "civilised" Christian values, to assimilate Native American cultural differences and therefore to undermine the structures and practices of Native American communities and Nations. Cornell draws parallels between the violent effects of these assimilationist policies and administrative regimes --articulated in the official ideology of cultural extinction -- (42) and the Native American demographic post invasion "collapse" (53) by the end of the nineteenth century, which "came perilously close to [physical] extinction" (53). 148

Nevertheless, in spite of these violent regimes of conquest, dispossession and regulation, Cornell argues that Indigenous resistance assumed different forms during different phases of colonisation, and by way of example he invokes the supernatural agency symbolised in movements like the Ghost Dance, movements which were, in the circumstances, "

148 For an analysis of these demographics see Lenore A. Stiffarm (Gros Ventre) and Phil Lane Jr (Yankton Sioux/Chickasaw), "The Demography of Native North America: A Question of American Indian Survival," The State Of Native America: Genocide, Colonization and Resistance, ed. M. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 23-53.
fundamentally political" (66). He concludes that in spite of the totalising regimes of control exercised over Native Americans in this period, resistance against cultural annihilation continued to be waged. 149 "Resistance had removed from the political arena -- as that is generally understood -- to the ideological: long after the warrior had retired from the field, the battle continued on the terrain of ideas, identity, and interpretation" (67).

It is in the context mapped above, then, that Native American tactics of agency in relation to Euro-American colonialism and its apparatuses of control must be understood. With regard to colonial photography and the trope of the Vanishing Race it encodes, the following question should be broached. How under these conditions do Native Americans deploy a series of contestatory tactics that, at the visually symbolic level, fracture, disorient and subvert the dominant regime's desire for neat colonial capture and closure? For instance, addressing Geronimo's status as a prisoner of war at Fort Sill, Jimmie Durham analyses a photograph taken at the 101 Ranch near Ponca City, Oklahoma, in 1904, which seemingly marks the triumph of conquest and assimilation, a triumph embodied in Geronimo's adoption of Western dress. However, Durham reads the photograph in terms of resistance rather than capitulation. He argues that, although it constitutes an officially produced representation - one enabled by a transformation in power relations and subject positions - it nevertheless exemplifies how "even the tightest system is not completely closed." 150 In other words, Indigenous resistance in such a context assumes a more covert form, one that necessarily escapes the surveillance of the colonial/institutional regime. I will examine in more detail this re-reading by Durham later in the chapter.

Re-viewing/Re-reading Colonial Photography

I want to focus now in more detail on some resistant Native American readings of colonial photography, readings which disarticulate the "truth" of the colonial discourses buttressing Western photographic practices and which necessarily contest the ontological fixity assigned to Native Americans through photography's putative power of capture. I begin with an analysis of Gerald Vizenor's engagement with these politics in his polemical essay "Socioacupuncture: Mythic Reversals and the Striptease in Four Scenes."\(^{151}\)

In this essay, he stages a trenchant critique of colonial photography's claim to document "traditional" Native Americans by focusing on what he terms the construction of the "metasavage" in the work of Edward Sheriff Curtis. In the process, he draws attention to the commodifying imperative which Curtis' pictorialist archive inspired. As part of his critical engagement with this figure of the "metasavage" (413), and the dominant cultural sites which deploy and authorise it, Vizenor stages a re-reading of the Vanishing Race ideology in order to map out and then reconfigure the power relations framed in colonial photography.

In short, Vizenor's agenda here is to de-privilege the kind of hegemonic representations inaugurated by Edward Curtis, and to contest the spurious claims to ethnographic authenticity that continue to accompany Western academic appraisals of his work. Through his invocation of Roland Barthes's notion of the striptease and the pleasure/fear it incites in the spectator, Vizenor deploys the notion of the reverse striptease (416) - which can be encapsulated in the phrase dressing in feathers - to mark Western colonialism's desire to construct, view and consume its others in a range of ethnocentric/ethnographic discourses and in cultural sites like the museum and the academic conference. Vizenor argues that this Western fetishisation

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of the "metasavage" inaugurated by colonial photography decontextualises and dehistoricises Indigenous cultural practices by effectively reading tradition as a form of cultural embalmment -- a practice which he proceeds to critique and overturn through the construction and deployment of a trickster figure, Tune Browne.

I then analyse in more detail a second intervention by the Laguna writer Leslie Marmon Silko, which forms part of her engagement with the politics of Western historical discourses on Geronimo and the Apaches in *Almanac Of The Dead*. Silko, through her recourse to Indigenous trickster conventions of story telling, plays upon and contests the power of the camera to capture or document the "real" Geronimo, to fix his identity photographically, a tactic which then calls into question the mimetic status of photography and its capacity to transparently represent its referents. In the process, the documentary/empirical status and veridical value invested in photography by dominant Western discourses is interrogated and decisively undermined, and the ontological fixity of the Indigene - seemingly mirrored by the photographic image - is contested and destabilised through the trickster-like ruse of multiple "Geronimo" subjectivities. Significantly, photography is re-presented and re-read through Indigenous eyes as a specific Western visual representational apparatus which, in the context of the Apache Wars, is necessarily imbricated within colonial practices and power relations.

In addition, Silko interrogates and recontextualises the trope of "soul theft," a trope which conventionally elides both the invasiveness of colonial photography of Indigenes and their resistance to it as an apparatus of colonialism. As Theresa Harlan observes, this trope - encapsulating the fear held by some Native Americans that photography "would bring illness" ("A Curator's Perpective" 14) and, cumulatively, would produce a weakening of the soul (14) - circulates in dominant discourses to reinforce Western

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anthropological assumptions about Native American's "primitive" nature. This assumption ignores the colonial conditions of violent appropriation under which photography acquired its discursive and institutional force in relation to Western knowledge about Native Americans, and thereby erases their resistance to the Western capture threatened by photography in these contexts. Harlan, like Silko, rejects the dominant anthropological reading of this trope and the potential "loss" it implied, as "the illogical belief of a backward and simple people." (14) Instead, she resituates it through reference to the asymmetrical power relations structuring colonial photography in order to argue that:

The loss [feared by "our grandmothers and grandfathers"] was very real and generations later is still felt by Native Americans today. Euro-American photographers contributed to and participated in the replacement of Native-conceived self imagery/identity with that of the Euro-American perceived and projected imagery of Native Americans. (14)

In other words, the circulation of these hegemonic Western visual representations and their displacement of Native American modes of representation functioned to erode cultural sovereignty, and to homogenise the representation of cultural differences under colonialism. Thus some Native American responses to the invasive I/eye of the camera and the hierarchical subject/object positions it instantiated - inscribed in the trope of soul theft - are, Harlan argues, logical and rational reactions to the threat of loss of material, cultural and representational sovereignty. Hence Silko's re-appropriation and re-reading of this trope functions tactically as an assertion of Indigenous agency and sovereignty over photographic representation. It also functions as a necessary rebuttal of the Western cultural hierarchy which
prescriptively reads Native American resistances to Euro-American imperialism as instances of "primitivism."

**Colonial Photography and the De-Construction of the "Metasavage"**

In his essay on colonial photography, Gerald Vizenor interrogates the Western ethnographic gaze mandated by colonial power relations and practices by focusing on the figure of what he designates as the "metasavage" (413). This figure, made hyper visible through the photography of Edward Curtis, has been circulated and re-produced in a number of dominant cultural sites, and Vizenor's tactical deconstruction of this figure demonstrates how dominant representational practices become inscribed on the body of the Indigene.

Vizenor begins his critique by foregrounding the colonial desire/fear which regulates Western visual representations of the "metasavage" by referencing Roland Barthes's essay on that common Western spectacle -- the striptease. He cites Barthes's summation of this specular ritual as one "based on the pretence of fear, as if eroticism here went no further than a sort of delicious terror, whose ritual signs have only to be announced to evoke at once the idea of sex and its conjuration" (411). By marking the voyeuristic gaze which structures the pleasure/fear felt by the spectator in this ritual enactment, Vizenor redeployes this figure of the striptease and the specular relations it embeds in order to argue that "Tribal cultures are colonised in a reversal of the striptease" (411). That is to say, colonial representations of the Indigene fetishise "moccasins...feathers...[and] leathers" (411) to mark their capture/possession of an authentic Native American past. In effect, Vizenor argues, the complexities and lived experiences of traditional Native American cultures are effaced by these representational practices; they are "stopped in emulsion, colonised in print to resolve the insecurities and inhibitions of the dominant culture" (411). He later argues that
this genre of imaging the Indigene as a remnant of a vanished culture embeds a discourse of extinction (415), a discourse which validates the colonial practices of those "who invented us on negatives"(415). 153

From another location entirely, but a location similarly inscribed by violent powers of colonialism, the Aboriginal critic Ian Anderson also stages a critique of the iconography of the Vanishing Race thesis. 154 Anderson examines the politics of Tru-ger-nan-er's circulation within the dominant Australian culture as the "last full blood Tasmanian Aborigine"(10), a politics in which she signifies as "an emblem of extinction" (10) and thereby symbolically "establishes a full stop in the 'story of a doomed race"(11). This "potent" symbolism, he argues was visually aided by the display of Tru-ger-nan-er's skeleton in the Royal Society of Tasmania museum from 1904 until 1947, a display which embodied her as "a totem of triumphant colonialism" (10). This iconography, and the colonial closure which it marks, has functioned to render illegitimate her descendants and their contemporary political/cultural agendas. Anderson argues: "As a colonial symbol Tru-ger-nan-er signifies the land empty of natives, and declares the colonial period over" (10). Moreover, "She declares the necessity of destruction and violation and evokes from the white-side of the frontier, a paradox of guilt and resignation (11)."

Anderson then proceeds to critique the politics of "authenticity" which consign contemporary Tasmanian Aborigines - the un-vanished - to the culturally indeterminate category of the "hybrid" (11). It is precisely those linkages between the "doomed" race theory, colonial closure and cultural "inauthenticity" - inscribed in colonial photography and currently reproduced in the dominant culture's visual commodification of the Indigene - that Vizenor names and critiques through the figure of the "metasavage"(413), a figure he

locates in the work of Edward Curtis. Vizenor's critique of Curtis's practices, and of the colonial tropes and ideologies which his photography framed, reverses the anthropological subject/object relations structuring these contexts by making Curtis the object of investigation. Vizenor begins to interrogate these practices in the following passage:

Edward Curtis possessed romantic and inhibited images of tribal people in his photographs. Posed and decorated in traditional vestments and costumes, his pictorial tribes are secular reversals of a ritual striptease, frozen faces on a calendar of arrogant discovery, a solemn ethnocentric appeal for recognition of his own insecurities: his retouched emulsion images are based on a "pretence of fear." (412)

He contends that these essentialised ethnocentric representations, and the "discovery" of the "other" they lay claim to, are structured by the potent binary erected by the West between "savagism" and "civilisation" (411). But Curtis's photographic "discovery" of the "other" - noble or savage - and the "titillation" it engenders for the viewer, embodies, he argues, that colonial desire for knowledge of the self: a knowledge produced through Western anthropological constructions of the "other."

In a tactical manoeuvre which calls into question both the self-evidence of the above binarism and the logic of the Vanishing Race ideology - naturalised and legitimated through colonial archives like the Curtis oeuvre - Vizenor makes the following claim: "Curtis could have vanished in his own culture, which he strove to understand through tribal civilisations, if tribal people had appeared in his soft focus photographs as assimilated: perched at pianos, dressed in machine stitched clothes, or writing letters to corrupt government agents" (412). Vizenor then undermines the preservationalist
value ascribed to Curtis's archive in dominant discourses, and with it, the heroic status which has been invested in his struggle against the odds to capture "authentic" Native American subjects and cultural practices for the Western historical and anthropological record. As Christopher Lyman has argued in his monograph on Curtis, these dominant valorisations have functioned partially to exculpate Curtis from charges of overtly manipulating the conditions of photographic production which accrued around his ethnographic salvage operation. Vizenor argues:

Curtis paid some tribal people to pose for photographs; he sold their images and lectured on their culture to raise cash to continue his travels to tribal communities. He traveled with his camera to capture the neo-noble tribes, to preserve metasavages in the ethnographic present as consumable objects of the past. (412-13)

This passage makes visible an economy of colonial photography. It thus articulates in unequivocal terms the vested interests and power relations inhering in proto-ethnographic/colonial projects like Curtis', projects which lay claim to a "disinterested" "preservationalist" ethic. Equally the specular commodification of the Indigene which the Curtis archive facilitates and structures is also shown to inhere in the original transactions enabling the project's survival. Colonial photography then embeds a practice of consumption rather than an ethic of preservation.

Prior to his "undressing" of the "metasavage," Vizenor then invokes a range of hegemonic contemporary cultural sites and practices which continue to fetishise and authorise this figure of the Indigene (413). He debunks the ostensible "neutrality" of this Western academic "obsession with the tribal past" and argues that these representational practices and the commodifying
Finally, Vizenor stages another metaphorical striptease by introducing Tune Brown, a "mixed-blood tribal trickster from a woodland reservation" (414) who initially enacts the role of the "metasavage" dressed in "braids and feathers" (415) as a prelude to his symbolic act of sartorial divestment at the inaugural "international conference on socioacupuncture and tribal identities" (415). This narrative begins by mapping Tune's adoption of this dress, a move occasioned by his decision to seek election as an alderman. He becomes aware of the disjunction between popular images of Native Americans and his self-image, and gradually transforms himself into a replica of a Curtis metasavage. His failure to win the election generates a process of self-reflection and he acknowledges his collusion with hegemonic prescriptions about cultural "authenticity," a collusion inscribed on his body and in his simulations of traditional Indigenous cultural practices (414-15). This self-knowledge becomes a source of agency and in his capacity as a lecturer at the conference on Indigenous identities, he stages a Curtis pictorialist tableau in order to condemn publicly his former collusion with the dominant culture. He then says to his "tribal" audience:

Curtis paid us for the poses; it was hot then, but he wanted us to wear leathers to create the appearance of a traditional scene, his idea of the past .... Curtis stood alone behind his camera, we pitied him there, he seemed lost, separated from his shadow, a desperate man who paid tribal people to become the images in his captured families. We never saw the photographs then and never thought that it would make a difference in the world of dreams, that we would become his images....But it did make a difference, we were caught dead in camera time, extinct in photographs, and
now in search of our past we walk right back into these photographs, we become the invented images as this one did during the aldermanic election, to validate those who invented us on negatives. (415)

Tune, in an act which symbolically refuses the cultural "extinction" and "capture" marked out in colonial photographic archives, performs a striptease for the Indigenous audience and divests himself of the braids, feathers and leathers. He also removes his wristwatch, a gesture which replicates Curtis's original erasure of a clock from a Piegan Lodge to literally arrest time, but, which, in this instance, signifies the dissolution of colonial time and the cultural extinction that Curtis' photography seems to frame and threaten. 155

Significantly, when Tune removes the watch, "the dichotomies of past and present dissolved one last time" (417) and, by implication, he is free to negotiate his own identity.

Vizenor's deconstruction of the "metasavage" provides powerful insights into how colonial photography continues to shape the ways in which Native American subjectivities and identities are subject to neo-colonial regulation and demarcation. But his own text embodies a significant intervention through its disruption of the colonial ideologies and hegemonic discourses on the Indigene which photography as a practice has helped to naturalise and enshrine. By refusing the "capture" threatened by the West's voyeuristic gaze, Vizenor's text and his trickster performer Tune Brown escape the representational limits set for them by the West. In doing so, Vizenor asserts cultural sovereignty over the representational process, a

155 Vizenor cites Christopher Lyman as source for this erasure from the photograph "In a Piegan Lodge." He says that Lyman "reveals that the image of a clock, which on the negative appeared in a box between two tribal men, was removed from the gravure print published in the multivolume The North American Indian (1907-1930)." 412.
practice also manifested in Leslie Marmon Silko's reconfiguration of Geronimo and colonial photography.

**Photography and the Document in *Almanac Of The Dead***

In the previous chapter, I examined in detail how Western colonial photography of Native Americans was marked by a limited range of visual registers which perpetuated dominant Euro-American stereotypes of them as either "noble" or "ignoble" savages. I also argued with reference to Geronimo that these binary categories of representation were inflected by shifting power relations between the colonising culture and the Apache nation. Thus early photographs of Geronimo taken by photographers such as C.S. Fly and A. Frank Randall during military negotiations frequently represent him as demonic other, posed with gun in hand or astride his horse gazing belligerently at the camera. By way of contrast, in the aftermath of military defeat photographs such as Edward Curtis's well known representation in *The North American Indian* reproduce the genre of "noble" savage, a category which marks military and cultural capture and inaugurates the "end" of the Indian Wars. Both genres functioned to legitimate colonial dispossession and genocide of Native Americans.

It is worth noting that the most commonly reproduced photographs of Geronimo in contemporary texts examining the Apache wars and Geronimo's life can be inserted into these two generic categories, although the favoured genre is that of ignoble savage. For example, the cover page of Odie B. Falk's history of the Apache wars, republished in 1993, features the 1884 A. Frank Randall photograph iconising Apache "savagery," while Alexander B. Adam's biography of Geronimo features on its cover the well-known and widely reproduced image in the same genre by C.S. Fly taken in 1884. 156

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popular and academic re-production of this visual genre seems to endorse Jimmie Durham's contention that "In the American myth, Apaches are a symbol of inscrutable cruelty" ("Geronimo!" 55).

Durham's comment is made in the context of his selection of a photograph of Geronimo for analysis in the text Partial ReCall, which features a number of photographs commonly excluded from anthologies and other dominant sites which circulate imagery of Native Americans. His choice of photograph, entitled "Geronimo at the Wheel" taken in 1904 at the 101 Ranch near Ponca City, Oklahoma, was partially motivated by its comparative novelty, and by his desire to overturn a common tendency to read it in terms of assimilation and capitulation to U.S cultural hegemony. 157 This photograph shows Geronimo dressed in a top hat and suit with hands placed firmly on the wheel of a car, flanked by three other male Native American subjects, one of whom is dressed in Plains Indian attire. Geronimo gazes directly at the camera, and as such, the photograph does not conform to the conventions of Apache "savagery" or "nobility" embedded in the above genres.

Durham makes the important point that in the context of colonial ideologies and practices: "All photographs of American Indians are photographs of dead people, in that their use assumes ownership of the subject, which is seen as static, completely 'understandable.' Except, of course, even the tightest system is not completely closed" (56). In other words, any reading of colonial photographs needs to take into account the ways in which Native American subjects like Geronimo resisted their colonial positioning and framing through photography. Irrespective of the genre, and the power relations structuring its production, Durham argues for a reading of these representations which recognises Geronimo's "brilliant [tactical] intervention" (58) in the colonial visual economy: "In every image, he looks

through the camera at the viewer, seriously, intently, with a specific message. Geronimo uses the photograph to 'get at' those people who imagine themselves as the 'audience' of his struggles. He seems to be trying to see us. He is demanding to be seen, on his own terms" (56).

Speaking to the photograph which forms the subject of his essay, Durham invokes - in order to debunk - the common criticism (by Native American and non-Native American viewers) of it as encoding Geronimo's assimilation into Euro-American "civilisation," the end of his resistance (57). This interpretation plays into the dominant culture's desire to fix Native Americans in "the (designated) past," an agenda which denies them agency and the possibility of maintaining cultural "integrity"(58) under colonial regimes and the symbolic modes and practices which sustain and legitimate them. "We do not want to see the valiant and 'savage' old warrior in a top hat, as though he had given up and accepted 'civilisation.' We do not want to see him in this century. We want him to remain in the (designated) past" (57). Durham concludes his analysis by foregrounding Geronimo's continuing ability to resist colonial domination, a focus which places Geronimo in control over the photographic technology deployed to mark both his colonial "capture" and to signify the end of Apache resistance to U.S. imperialism:

In early photos Geronimo is so beautifully and belligerently at home in the chaparral, and he almost always has his rifle ready.... Later, in the twentieth century, when he is not allowed a rifle, he puts on your hat, takes the wheel, and stares the camera down. This photo makes clear that no matter what had been taken from him, he had given up nothing.... If Geronimo had been defeated, he would have stayed on the reservation, dressed "properly" for America's Indian myths....Geronimo's stance is a brilliant intervention.... He continues to resist, to maintain,
Durham's insistence on the non-transparency of the colonial photograph, and his mapping of tactics of resistance is manifest, albeit in different ways, in Leslie Marmon Silko's intervention in the colonial conditions enabling the construction, reproduction and commodification of images of Geronimo. As a prelude to her re-appropriation of Geronimo, Silko interrogates the very medium of photography in order to deprivilege the documentary status assigned to colonial photographic archives and the texts and cultural sites which circulate them. Under colonialism, these photographic documents circulated in official histories as evidence of Indigenous "nature" and cultural practices. Moreover, their transparency and intelligibility was seemingly guaranteed by a Western belief in the camera's capacity to mimetically reproduce its objects of representation, to capture the "real."

However, as Silko's critique of colonial photography demonstrates, this reading of photography's status as a realistic medium privileges a specifically Western epistemological and interpretative cultural matrix, which elides cultural differences and the unequal colonial power relations which structure photographic representations of Indigenes in the period. Thus, her reinscription of the story of Geronimo and the Apache Nation, a reinscription which foregrounds the complicity of photography in ontologically fixing Native American identities and in erasing their resistance to colonialism, is initiated through her tactical deployment of Indigenous trickster story-telling practices which then challenge the "universality" and "objectivity" of Western categories such as the documentary photograph.

In Chapter Two, I analysed in detail Silko's use of Southwestern trickster conventions in her text *Almanac Of The Dead* to destabilise Western historical narratives on Geronimo and the Apaches and the
hierarchical Western history/story binarism which has functioned to devalorise Indigenous historical narrative modes and practices. To facilitate her re-reading of photography and the trope of soul theft, I will briefly re-contextualise her use of the trickster figure to destabilise traditional Western historiography’s privileging of the discourse of the real, and with it, the idea of representation as embodying a stable and originary presence.

To this end, Silko constructs a series of seemingly incommensurable Geronimo stories, narrated by various Native American story tellers, that collectively undermine the possibility of re-presenting a unified Geronimo subject or narrative. In these narratives the subject position of Geronimo is assigned to at least four different Apache raiders who collaborate to impersonate the "real" Geronimo and thus enable him to elude both corporeal and discursive capture by the colonising culture. As the Yaqui story teller Mahawala remarks: "Of course the real man they called Geronimo, they never did catch. The real Geronimo got away" (224). In another narrative, Yoeme, a trickster figure and Yaqui historian/story-teller asserts: "I have seen the photographs that are labelled ‘Geronimo’.... But the Apache man identified in the photographs is not of course the man the U.S army had been chasing. He is the man who always accompanied the one who performed certain feats" (129). With this Indigenous representational tactic, the very notion of a transparent "real" and of a unified and ontologically fixed Native American subject who can be unproblematically read by the Western gaze is contested and undermined. Moreover, this tactic of multiple subjectivities challenges Western humanist conceptions of unity and identity, conceptions underpinning both traditional Western historiographical narratives and the photographic representations which, in relation to dominant histories of the Apache Wars, furnish visual evidence of Indigenous conquest and capitulation to the invading culture.
Thus Silko initiates her critique of colonial photography by challenging the self-evidence of photographic representation itself. She does so by repositioning Native Americans as investigating subjects of photography's ontological status, thereby reversing colonial subject/object positions and the unequal power relations which have informed Western readings of Indigenous responses to photography. This Native American re-evaluation of photography, then, necessarily foregrounds cultural difference by drawing attention to the politics of culturally specific ways of seeing and reading. For instance, as part of an ongoing Indigenous debate about the "true" identity of an Apache warrior whose photographic image is recurrently circulated by the U.S military to signify Geronimo's capture, Wide Ledge, one of the "Geronimo" surrogates, calls into question the mimetic status of photography and the readability of its objects of representation:

From what he had seen, Wide Ledge said, the white people had little smudges and marks like animal tracks across snow or light brown dust; these "tracks" were supposed to "represent" persons, places or things. Wide Ledge explained how with a certain amount of training and time, he had been able to see the "tracks" representing a horse, a canyon, and a white man. But invariably, Wide Ledge said, these traces of other beings and other places preserved on paper became confused even for the white people, who believed they understood these tracks so well. Wide Ledge had actually observed a young soldier fly into a rage at the photographer because the soldier said the image on the paper did not truly represent him. The soldiers friends had examined the photograph, but among themselves they could not agree. (227)

Wide Ledge's analysis of photographic representation operates as a rebuttal of the notion of photography's capacity to reproduce unmediated copies of
"nature" or the "real" as understood in Western empirical philosophy. Indeed, as this passage unequivocally demonstrates, "nature" - whether human or non-human - is not an empirically recognisable, universally readable entity, and nor are the criterion for evaluating its existence. Instead, it can only be accessed through representations, representations which are structured and read with reference to culturally specific knowledges, discourses, values, and interpretative practices.

Wide Ledge's mastery of these Western viewing/reading practices through "training and time," reinforces both the non-transparency of the photographic medium and the significance of cultural location with regard to acts of interpretation. By reversing the colonial/anthropological subject positions mandated by Western colonialism in this passage, Silko confers a cultural and interpretative privilege upon her Indigenous speaker which decisively resituates the colonising culture as "other" and renders it and its practices as objects for investigation. Hence the politics of cultural difference, colonialism and representation is interrogated in this passage, and with it, the ontology and status of the photographic image itself.

In his discourse on photography, Wide Ledge draws attention to its ontological otherness, its tracing of differences marked by his use of terms like "track" and "trace" which generate "confusion" about the identity of photographic subjects "even for the white people who believed they understood these tracks so well" (227). This observation is further exemplified by the story of the white soldier's rage, which is produced in response to "the image on the paper [by a photographer which] did not truly represent him" (227). Although the use of terms like "track" and "trace" signify the operation of an Indigenous visual representational code, they also function as a critique of the Western idea of mimetic representation, a mode that photography has frequently been aligned with. The soldier's rage at his inability to recognise his reflection in the photograph undermines the idea of
photography as re-presenting an original presence, of "capturing" the self-identical. Instead, photography in this Indigenous re-formulation is viewed as a specific Western visual representational mode and the photograph is seen to constitute an assemblage of traces, of differences, rather than to embody a copy or reflection of the "real."

This critique of photography's ontological status is tactically deployed in relation to what the Yaqui elders describe as "the strange phenomenon of the Geronimo photographs" (225). In a play upon the relation between identity, difference and the real, the Apache Geronimo imposters proceed to examine and to debate the meaning of a recurrent photographic image of an Apache warrior - named as Geronimo in official photographs of military negotiations between the U.S. military and the Apaches. To the Apaches, the subject of the photographs cannot be identified, and the ontological conundrum posed by this image's apparent displacement of the "real" Apache warriors (photographed in different contexts to protect the identity of the "real" resistance leader Geronimo) defies ready resolution:

Each of the so-called Geronimos had learned to demand prints of themselves as payment for posing. At meetings in the mountains they had compared photographs. The puzzle had been to account for the Apache warrior whose broad, dark face, penetrating eyes, and powerful barrel-chested body had appeared in every photograph taken of the other Geronimos. The image of this man appeared where the faces of the other Geronimos should have been. The old man called Nana by the whites studied the photographs and conferred with his acquaintances, elderly people who had ranged in the mountains even before the Apache Wars. The identity of the Apache in the photograph could not be determined, but a number of theories
were advanced by both Apaches and Yaquis concerning this phenomenon. (228)

Bearing in mind the trickster provenance of this story, the nexus between identity, imposture and multiple subjects stands as an indictment of what is described elsewhere in *Almanac Of The Dead* as the colonial culture's inability to read or value cultural difference. As one Native American narrator remarks: "To whites all Apache warriors looked alike and no one realised that for a while, there had been three different Apache warriors called Geronimo who had ranged across the Sonoran desert south of Tucson" (225).

Therefore, the elders' refusal to identify the subject of the photographs as "Geronimo" functions to de-authorise the widely circulated official photographs which operate as evidentiary adjuncts of Apache defeat and cultural inferiority in dominant narratives of the Apache wars. By insisting on the incommensurability here between representation and referent, the elders foreground both the West's privileging of the visual and their deployment of visual technologies like photography to appropriate, commodify and regulate Native American subjects in ways that erase or marginalise their resistance to cultural and material capture. In this instance, the trickster ruse of non-identity enables Geronimo to elude corporeal and discursive capture by the hegemonic culture, and Silko's articulation of this counter-reading of the Apache Wars marks her reclamation of agency and sovereignty over the photographic representation of Native American subjects and the hegemonic histories they have conventionally buttressed.

Significantly, Silko's re-reading of official colonial photographs of Geronimo also functions as a departure point for her interrogation of the trope of soul theft. As Theresa Harlan asserts, this trope is embedded in dominant discourses on photography of Indigenes, and through its ideological constitution and validation of the "primitive" Native American subject, it
operates to efface the unequal relations of power ratified by Western colonialism. This Western anthropological reading of soul theft also neutralises the possibility of its deployment by different Native American cultures as a self-reflexive tactic against their photographic capture by the invading culture. In other words, given the colonial and institutional constraints which delimited the modes of resistance available to Native Americans towards the end of the nineteenth century, soul theft can be read as a covert tactical deflection of colonial photography's function as a cultural apparatus of Western imperialism. Hence the naturalisation and circulation of this trope in dominant discourses on Native American responses to photography serves to minimise and occlude both the invasive practices of colonial photographers, and Native American tactical resistance to the symbolic annihilation which photography as a colonial practice implied.

Silko, then, marks her intention to further deconstruct the ideology of the "primitive" by enabling her Native American narrators in *Almanac Of The Dead* to theorise on the "phenomenon" of photography and its uncanny capacity to replicate identical images of an Apache warrior who, they emphatically declare, is not "Geronimo." Hence the "identity of the Apache in the photograph could not be determined, but a number of theories were advanced by both Apaches and Yaquis concerning this phenomenon"(228). While the idea of theory is invoked in this Indigenous disquisition on photography to critique the Eurocentric parameters of Western anthropological theories of "the other," the passage also constructs an Indigenous theoretical paradigm and epistemological framework through which Native American subjectivities and histories can be articulated. Silko's tactical appropriation of "theory," then, again constructs positions of agency for Indigenes and necessarily pre-empts Western attempts to insert Native American responses to photography into an economy of the "primitive." Before I stage a close analysis of this Indigenous counter-theorisation of soul
theft, I want to contextualise its history in Western discourses on photography.

**The Trope of Soul Theft**

Numerous Western critics and commentators have remarked upon the reluctance of Native American subjects to be photographed by Western photographers. In colonial contexts that resistance has generally been ascribed to the fear of photography's invasive power, a reaction encapsulated in the figure of soul theft. The extent to which this trope has been naturalised in Western discourses on the Indigene and photography is manifested in a comment by the art critic Lucy Lippard in *Partial Recall*. Lippard’s project in this anthology is an important one, in so far as it is attentive to the colonial power relations structuring both photography and its critical interpretation by the West. To this end she marks her intention to challenge the West’s self-ascribed privilege “to represent everybody” (23) and, apart from her introductory essay, the volume mainly embodies a series of re-readings and critical interventions in colonial photography by various Native American critics, artists and photographers.

In the first part of her introductory essay, which maps the politics of photographic representation and colonialism, Lippard comments on the critical and ethical reassessment of Curtis and his photographic practices in the 1980s. Whilst acknowledging the validity of much of this revaluation, she nevertheless proceeds to recuperate Curtis and his archive, a recuperation which relies partially on her reactivation of the trope of soul theft. She argues:

> While mistaken in his conviction that he was recording the last Days of a "vanishing race," he was right in believing that his photographs would be invaluable (not infallible) documents of
a historical process of representation.... Curtis was not a tourist.
He was apparently trusted by many of the people he lived with
and documented.... [He] made great financial sacrifices... (23) 158

This validation is anchored by her citation of a claim made by A.D.Coleman in
his preface to a volume of Curtis photographs in 1972. 159 Coleman's agenda
in this preface is to map out what he regards as the reciprocal relations
existing between Curtis and his Native American subjects during the
construction of The North American Indian. In a rhetorical manoeuvre which
obliterates the unequal colonial power relations structuring photography in
these contexts, he contends that Curtis and his Native American subjects
operated as "spokesmen for each other," and that the resultant archive can
be read as a "self-portrait" and as "a visual autobiography of Indian culture"
(vii). Coleman concludes his evaluation of this project by claiming "that just
as Edward Curtis stole the spirit of the Indians, they in turn stole his" (vii).

In her re-assessment of Curtis, Lippard reproduces this comment
without question, and then links it to her belief that Curtis' position as an artist
ultimately exculpates him from charges of manipulation, appropriation and
collusion with colonialism. She argues: "As A.D. Coleman has observed,
Curtis was an unabashed interpreter. But, 'just as Edward Curtis stole the
spirit of the Indians, they in turn stole his.' Curtis was, finally, an artist, with all
the implied shortcomings that came with that title" (25). I reproduce these
more contemporary deployments of soul theft not to denigrate Lippard's
otherwise admirable project, but to demonstrate how this trope remains
largely unexamined and naturalised in Western discourses on photography.

159 A.D.Coleman and T.C Mcluhan, Portraits From American Indian Life: Edward S. Curtis
(New York: Outerbridge & Lazard, Inc, in association with the American Museum of Natural
History, 1977), i-vii.
I will now map the politics embedded in this trope by examining its permutations in colonial narratives, and by engaging with resistant Native American re-readings of its meanings for Native American cultures.

The trope of soul theft has functioned in Western discourses on photography of Indigenes to regulate and to assimilate different Native American responses to the violence/violation threatened by photography. This violent appropriation, literally inscribed in the trope, is read by the Native American critic Theresa Harlan as a legitimating metaphor for the loss of cultural sovereignty and agency over representation that photography as a colonial apparatus so forcefully enshrined. The effects of the discourses and practices structuring this photography have been enduring and, Harlan argues, are manifested in contemporary Native American struggles to construct and regulate their own cultural representations and identities. Although colonial photography mobilised particular Native American cultural beliefs about illness and death, she argues that these beliefs and the refusal to be photographed that they engendered were grounded in the experience of colonialism and the unequal power relations that it reproduced ("A Curator's Perspective" 14).

While she articulates a different perspective on soul theft, Leslie Marmon Silko also produces a resistant reading of this trope in relation to contemporary Pueblo cultural responses to Western photography of their ceremonies and cultural practices. She re-examines the contexts of its circulation in order to contest conventional Western readings of it as encoding a "primitivist" fear of the camera or the image. Instead she points to the initial acceptance of the camera within Pueblo cultures which was based on cultural

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160 This lack of reflexivity is redressed by Martha A. Sandweiss in her recent text on American photography of the West. For her engagement with the politics of this trope, see Martha A. Sandweiss, Print the Legend: Photography and the American West (New Haven: Yale UP, 2002), 219-234.
understandings of the relationship between spirituality and iconography. As the following comment makes clear, Pueblo culture's ultimate rejection of the Western privilege to photograph them is grounded in the material conditions of colonialism and in the burgeoning tourist economy which it buttressed: "The Pueblo people did not fear or hate cameras or the photographic image so much as they objected to the intrusive vulgarity of the white men who gazed through the lens" (175). She elaborates on this theme and links it to the regulatory function that photography came to fulfil in line with official policies of assimilation in the period:

At first, white men and their cameras were not barred from the sacred kachina dances and kiva rites. But soon the Hopi and other Pueblo people learned from experience that most white photographers would be used to prosecute the caciques and other kiva members, because the United States government had outlawed the practice of the Pueblo religion in favour of Christianity exclusively. Pueblo people may not believe that the camera steals the soul of the subject, but certainly Pueblo people are quite aware of the intimate nature of the photographic image. Because Pueblo people appreciate so deeply the power and significance of the photographic image, they refuse to allow strangers with cameras the outrages to privacy that had been forced upon Pueblo people in the past. (175-6)

In spite of the different and complex reactions to photography among particular Native American Nations, the trope of soul theft assimilated these differences of meaning and cultural context and came to circulate in Western

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discourses on photography as a term of opprobrium. Through its evocative power to fix Native American responses to photography as instances of "primitive" awe of Western technology, this trope occluded specific acts of resistance to photography, while the evolutionary cultural hierarchy it encoded helped to legitimate the violent colonial dispossession and oppression of Native American Nations.

Briefly, then, Western commentaries on this trope identify certain regularities in relation to Western colonial descriptions of Native American reactions to photography. Lucy Lippard identifies and summarises some of these regularities. She notes the common observation that certain Native American cultures designated photographers as "shadow catchers" (30), a term reflecting their perception that photography's utilisation of light sources to fix "shadows" signified an affinity with the realm of the dead and the spirit world. It is worth remarking that one of the developers of the Daguerrotype photographic process, Edward Fox Talbot, described this process in an 1839 paper as "the 'art of fixing a shadow,' conceding that the capturing of such elusive shades appears to me to partake of the character of the marvellous."

While no explicit link is made here between shadow fixing and death, as I will later argue, such links were made in some early Western responses to the putative power of photography.

The word "shadow" in this context, notes Lippard, "referred to death or the souls of the dead" (30). She contends that: "The transfer of a black-and-white likeness to paper meant to some that a part of their lives had been taken away, to others that their vital power had diminished. These beliefs have never fully disappeared" (30). This conceptual nexus between the shadow and the soul of dead ancestors then gave rise to the belief that photography could steal the soul, a process which was thought of by different

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people in different contexts. Firstly as the literal entrapment of the photographic subject's soul or spirit within the photograph or mechanical body of the camera and, secondly, as photography's capacity to initiate a process of gradual corporeal dematerialisation in its subjects. The latter process is suggested by the observations of the colonial ethnographer Charles Fletcher Lummis who wrote that various Native Americans he encountered in the Southwest believed "that the photograph was taken not only of them, but from them; and that with enough prints, they would waste away to nothingness."

The following story, cited by James C. Faris, exemplifies the colonial photographer Carl Moon's understanding of the first process in an encounter with Navajo Elders in 1914. It is important to note that Faris's reproduction of this narrative by Moon (whom he designates as a romantic preservationalist in the mode of Edward Curtis) occurs in the context of his examination of the tactics deployed by colonial photographers to breach Navajo resistance to their appropriation through photography in a variety of contexts (152-153). Thus, in spite of its surface articulation of a "primitivist" Navajo reaction to photography, the narrative is mobilised by Faris to foreground Moon's duplicity and his unethical desire for mastery over the Navajo subjects of his photographic representations. Moon's invocation of this trope and the pleasure he takes in manipulating it is manifest in his narrative of the encounter with the Navajo elders:

One day I was visited [at his Fred Harvey El Tovar Studio at Grand Canyon] by six men of the Navajo tribe who, after much smoking and visiting, made known the real cause of their call.

Directly over my desk was a framed portrait of one of the old medicine men of their tribe, who had just died. Believing that a part of his soul was imprisoned in the portrait -- else how could it look so like him -- they asked me if I would not destroy it, so that his spirit might be released and be at peace. I immediately took the print from the frame and tore it into bits while the men looked on with silent approval. After thanking me they each shook my hand in turn and filed quietly out of the room. They did not suspect that there might still be in existence other copies of the picture or a negative. (153)

In this instance, Moon unhesitatingly constructs the Navajo as incapable of reading Western technology, not to mention the ruses of wily Westerners, but at the same time his implicit primitivising of Navajo makes visible the unequal power relations and subject positions enabled by photography and by the colonial control over representations of Navajo that it produced.

A variation on this Western interpretation of soul theft is reproduced in Earle Forrest's frontier narrative of his encounters with Indigenes in the Southwest, during a journey which he also documents with photographs. Whilst in what he designates as "Navaholand," he expresses an interest in photographing the Navajo and is informed by a fellow Westermer of the following cultural prohibition on photography that he will face:

Most Indians around here have seen very few whites. They never leave the reservation except to visit the Utes. They're friendly, but very superstitious about photographs. They're afraid that if anything happen to the picture, they'll die right away. Only a few have ever seen a camera, and it's a very mysterious affair to them, for they cannot understand it. They think it's magic of some kind, and they're afraid of bad spirits (28).

Not surprisingly, Western observers noted that this Indigenous perception of photography as an invitation to literal or metaphorical death in many instances impelled a refusal to be photographed, a practice exemplified by the famous example of the Oglala warrior, Crazy Horse, who refused to be photographed in his lifetime (Lippard 38). Other instances of this resistance to photography are extensively mapped in Lippard's volume, *Partial Recall* and in James Faris' text, *Navajo and Photography*. With some notable exceptions - like Faris and Sandweiss - both frontier and more contemporary Western analyses of this phenomenon ascribe it to a "primitive" fear of the "supernatural" power of the camera. This ascription, which reinscribes an ontological difference between the Western subject and its others, necessarily invalidates Native American acts of resistance to photography by reading them as mere "instinct," rather than, as in the example of Crazy Horse, as tactical responses to the invasive l/eye of the camera based on a knowledge of its regulatory function in the wider context of colonial discourses and practices.

This tendency by some Western critics to reproduce the cultural knowledge hierarchy between the Western subject and the "primitive" other in relation to questions of photographic representation and power is manifested in the following comments by Susan Sontag in *On Photography*. I cite them here because they function as a useful prelude to Alan Trachtenberg and Geoffrey Batchen's critical re-examination of early Western responses to the daguerreotype, a re-examination which disallows the kind of hierarchical distinction drawn between the Western subject and its others in the context of comprehending the potential power of images produced by a novel visual technology such as the camera.

Sontag's admittedly brief comments on the immutability of "primitive" responses to photography's invasive capacity is made in the context of an
analysis of different cultural interpretations of the relation between the photographic "image" and its object or subject and the anxieties that photography can provoke. In the following comment, Sontag unproblematically invokes and naturalises the trope of soul theft through an appeal to common sense. She avers, "As everyone knows, primitive people fear that the camera will rob them of some part of their being," a response she ascribes to their "primitive" understanding of how the photographic representation embodies "the partial identity of image and object" (158). In other words, the "primitive," in contrast to her Western counterpart, is unable sufficiently to differentiate between the image and the self, a conflation which threatens ontological loss or transformation.

This interpretative misrecognition on the part of the Indigene is reinforced and contrasted with a culturally different response to the impact of photography in another section of her text where Sontag contends: "Many people (Westerners) are anxious when they are about to be photographed: not because they fear, as primitives do, being violated..." (85). 166 While Sontag appropriately invokes the violation feared by so called "primitives" in relation to the threat of photography, she fails to link it to the unequal power relations and material conditions structuring the West's photography of its others. Instead, "violation" is experienced by the other as an instinctive and culturally homogeneous response to Western technology, a response shaped by an adherence to "primitive" belief systems encapsulated in the trope of soul theft. While Sontag's brief generalisations on soul theft and the "primitive" are precisely that, generalisations, they are consistent with dominant discourses about Native American understandings of subjectivity, photography and the "supernatural" power it could wield.

166 To be fair to Sontag, the anxiety experienced by Western subjects about being photographed is not attributed to rational considerations, but to aesthetic ones - the fear of not looking attractive.
However, Western critics like Alan Trachtenberg and Geoffrey Batchen have examined the ways in which the fear of photography's effects in relation to human subjectivity was registered in early commentaries in the West. Aspects of their analyses invite comparison with colonial readings of Native American responses to photography, and, as such, they form a useful counterpoint to the dominant readings of soul theft and the "primitive" identified in the preceding pages. Both Trachtenberg 167 and Batchen 168 argue that photography from its inception in the West has been associated with the language of death, magic and the spirit world (Trachtenberg 26, Batchen 5).

Trachtenberg remarks that images produced by the daguerrotype photographic process in the 1850s - whereby the image was held in a plate made out of a "silver plated copper sheet burnished to a bright mirror effect" - were regarded with some suspicion in so far as the process created what he describes as an "apparitional effect" (26). He summarises this effect in the following terms: "at the merest tilt of the plate, the actual image seems to flicker away, then reappears in negatively reversed tones, making the portrayed sitter look literally like a shade or shadow of himself or herself" (26). He notes that early commentators on the daguerrotype process had recourse to a "preternatural vocabulary" when describing the resultant images; as such, necromancy rather than science or "practical reality" was more readily invoked as a reference point in explanation of its uncanny results (26).

For photographic subjects, the process of photographic capture generated anxieties about its potential ontological impact, which in some instances caused the subject to flee from the scene as if pursued by a "legion of evil spirits" (26). Trachtenberg argues that the level of "popular anxiety"

experienced by Americans in relation to the prospect of being photographed in this early period has been underestimated by historians, and he enumerates the cultural and epistemological base of that anxiety:

Its "magnetic" quality links photography both to the demonism of Faustian science and to the anxious fascination aroused by mesmerism and its hint of the occult and the forbidden. Photography's mirror-like qualities also added to this ambivalence. The mirror -- associated with wizardry, black magic, divination, and transgressive encounters with the dead or absent—served perfectly as a metaphor for the new medium. Mirrors stood simultaneously for truth and deception, and it is no surprise that in a period of very rapid change, in which new technologies seemed to challenge and overthrow ancient notions of time and space and human relatedness, such a traditional image should surface in popular responses to something new and strange and inexplicable.

(27)

Interestingly, Trachtenberg also identifies in some early discourses on photography the emergence of an idea analogous to that of soul theft; namely, the fear of surveillance attendant upon the loss of "one's image" (28) in the photographic encounter. Clearly, the sense of "violation," invoked by Sontag as a marker for the epistemologically and ontologically naive response of the "primitive" to the inexplicable "magic" of photography, is also discernible in these early Western reactions to the threat of ontological capture it seemingly posed. Like Trachtenberg, Geoffrey Batchen revisits the beginnings of photography in the West in order to broach a series of questions (ethical and epistemological) about the cultural ramifications posed by the technological advent of digitalised photography. This detour to photography's "origins" draws attention to how the discourses generated by
this technological innovation embedded a lexicon of death, black magic and the supernatural. Thus in the context of the development of the daguerrotype, Batchen observes that "necromancy' (communication with the dead) ... [was] ...a term used by a number of contemporary journalists to describe the actions of both [Louis] Daguerre's and [Henry] Fox Talbot's processes" (5). These spectral connotations, he argues, initially gave rise to fears about photography's power in relation to human subjects, and, as the following narrative suggests, this fear was not limited to a popular or uneducated demographic base.

Batchen reproduces an interesting story narrated by the French photographer, Gaspard Nadar, about his friend the novelist Honoré de Balzac's theorisation of photography's potential impact upon the body. This theory underpinned Balzac's "intense fear of being photographed" (4), and it constitutes in effect an early articulation of the trope of soul theft from the vantage point of a Western subject:

According to Balzac's theory, all physical bodies are made up entirely of layers of ghostlike images, an intimate number of leaflike skins laid one on top of the other. Since Balzac believed man was incapable of making something material from an apparition, from something impalpable - that is, creating something from nothing - he concluded that every time someone had his photograph taken, one of the spectral layers was removed from the body and transferred to the photograph. Repeated exposures entailed the unavoidable loss of subsequent ghostly layers, that is, the very essence of life. (4)

This theory bears an uncanny resemblance to the version of Native American soul theft that I previously cited as described by the ethnographer Charles
Fletcher Lummis in his travels in the American Southwest: "that the photograph was taken not only of them, but from them; and that with enough prints, they would waste away to nothingness." 169 Thus both viewpoints in spite of their different cultural provenances, register a justifiable wariness about what Batchen identifies as photography's inauguration "of a peculiarly modern conjunction of power - knowledge - subject" (5). I am not suggesting that these responses to photography can be readily conflated; indeed the power relations structuring these photographic contexts must be differentiated with reference to Western colonialism. Nevertheless, these parallel articulations of soul theft also suggest that resistance to the invasiveness of photographic technology cannot simply be ascribed or reduced to the "primitive's" fear of Western technology.

Re-appropriating "Soul Theft": Native American Tactics of Agency in the Photographic Context

As the previous section suggests, Native American reactions to photography were not homogeneous, although these different responses generally signified both an awareness of photography's invasive potential, and marked out resistance to the symbolic and material capture posed by the circulation of their photographic representations in a variety of institutional sites. Contemporary Native American re-evaluations of colonial photography generally contest the Western construction and interpretation of the trope of "soul theft" as it circulates in dominant discourses on Indigenes and photography. They do so in order to mark the asymmetrical power relations and subject positions produced by photography's role as a colonial apparatus, and to facilitate tactical reversals of those power relations and subject positions by re-presenting different Indigenous narratives and theories on the meaning of photography for Native American cultures.

For example, Timothy Sweet describes the Creek poet Joy Harjo's re-reading of a family photograph as a "co-optation" of the trope of soul theft. These photographs of Harjo's great-grandparents on her father's side were "culled" from a family album and encapsulate a moment in history when oil strikes in 1905 on land allocated to the Muskogee Nation under the controversial Dawes Act of 1887 enriched families such as her great-grandparents. She invokes this trope in the following narrative, but her re-reading functions to challenge dominant representations and to re-inscribe agency to Indigenous subjects by valorising an everyday photographic practice and site - the family photograph and album:

I think of my Aunt Lois's admonishments about photographs. She said that they could steal your soul. I believe it's true, for an imprint remains behind forever, locked in paper and chemicals. Perhaps the family will always be touring somewhere close to the border, dressed in their Sunday best, acutely aware of the soul stealer that Marsie Harjo hired to photograph them, steadying his tripod on the side of the road. Who's to say they didn't want something left to mark time in that intimate space where they could exist forever as a family, a world drenched in sepia? Nothing would ever be the same again, but here the family is ever-present, as is the un-named photographer through his visual arrangement. I wonder if he was surprised to see rich Indians?

(90)

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172 Harjo says in her reflections on one of these family photographs that "the image of a Muskogee family in a car only the wealthy could own.....challenges the popular culture's version of 'Indian'--an image that fits no tribe or person" (91-92).
In effect, this resituating of a quotidian Western representational practice functions powerfully to disrupt the limited visual representational space allotted to Native Americans. It therefore constitutes an alternative site of representation to the reified images preserved in official colonial archives and in the colonialist anthologies which reproduce them as monuments to a "vanished"/vanquished culture.

Timothy Sweet has argued that contemporary Native American refigurations of soul theft engage with the power/knowledge nexus embedded in photography, and he notes the persistence of the trope and its naturalisation in dominant discourses about Indigenes and photography -- even when "exploitative" photography of Indigenes is the subject of critique (497). He contends that the heterogeneous re-deployment of this trope by Native Americans exemplifies an important tactical intervention into representational sites by disrupting the dominant cultural paradigm of them as objects and victims, and by repositioning them as agents in the representational process (498). While the main focus of my examination of this tactic of agency will be an analysis of Leslie Marmon Silko's renarrativisation of Geronimo in *Almanac Of The Dead*, I want briefly to engage with a similar analysis staged by Sweet in his essay on soul theft, representation and the politics of agency.

Sweet delineates the political valency of this tactical appropriation of soul theft and the resistance to photographic capture that it maps through an examination of an incident narrated by the Lakota Medicine Man and storyteller John (Fire) Lame Deer in the autobiography he collaborated on with Richard Erdoes. Sweet notes that in the final chapter of his autobiography, Lame Deer tells the story of how, at a political convention of Native American Nations, attempts by Western reporters photographically to capture his sacred pipe in a ceremony failed. The pipe's resistance to photographic

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appropriation, Sweet argues, is especially marked, given that the pipe appears in a number of photographs taken by Richard Erdoes in Lame Deer's autobiography (499). He concludes that the different outcomes can be ascribed to the fact that Erdoes has been authorised by Lame Deer to operate as the "transmitting agent of...[his]... narrative" (500). But it is especially significant that the sacred pipe incarnates spiritual power.

In the context of producing photographs for the autobiography, Erdoes is required to refrain from photographing the Yuwipi ceremonies after the lights have been extinguished. Sweet suggests that this "prohibition of photography does not seem to derive from a concern that it could capture the power of the Yuwipi spirits.... Rather than fearing their own capture on film, they evidently disdain competing against false representations of themselves -- any light emanating from or reproduced from other sources, even moonlight "(503-4). In effect: "The spirit powers are in control. Photography cannot steal the soul" (504). Sweet argues, then, that Lame Deer's autobiography and the account of its production by his collaborator, Erdoes, narrativises and redeployes the trope of soul theft within a specifically Native American cosmological and epistemological framework. The power of the ancestors - embodied in the Yuwipi ceremony - ensures that Western surveillance of Native American spiritual practices is limited, and enables the Lakota to control their representation by the West - even when the photographer/writer is specifically enlisted to produce an authorised text about Lame Deer's life.

Thus Indigenous agency over photographic representation of their cultural practices is asserted and the West's voyeuristic gaze is deflected in these situations narrated by Lame Deer to Erdoes.

Theorising "Soul Theft" in Almanac Of The Dead

I have already argued that Leslie Marmon Silko's reinscription of the history of Geronimo and the Apaches in Almanac Of The Dead relies on the tactical use of Southwestern trickster stories, a practice which enables her to
valorise cultural difference in terms which refuse the reified position granted to the other in the West's discourses and practices about Native Americans. To this end, she stages a critique of colonial photography and its claim to have "captured" the "real" Geronimo, a process which necessarily engages with questions about the status of photography as a medium, its structuring of power relations and subject positions in colonial contexts, and its regulatory function with regard to Native American subjectivities and identities. The interrogation of these issues raised by the West's deployment of photography proceeds through the text's articulation of a series of Indigenous narratives about Geronimo. These narratives emphatically refuse the position of other, and call into question the very production of this anthropological category and the theories which buttress it in various Western discourses and practices.

In *Almanac* a debate is conducted by the Geronimo surrogates/imposters on photography and soul theft which effectively deprivileges the idea of theory as the exclusive province of the West. The Geronimo imposters declare in response to a recurrent photographic image of an Apache warrior that:

> The identity of the Apache in the photograph could not be determined, but a number of theories were advanced by both Apaches and Yaquis concerning this phenomenon; the light of the polished crystal, the light of the sun, and the light of the warrior's soul had left their distinctive mark with the Apache face white people identified as Geronimo. (228)

As I previously suggested - and notwithstanding the trickster provenance of these narratives - Silko invokes the idea of theory in this Indigenous disquisition on photography and soul theft to critique the West's frequently unexamined assumptions about its privilege both to authorise theoretical
paradigms - to demarcate what counts as theory/knowledge - and to constitute its others as objects of knowledge. These interlinked processes have historically embedded a cultural and epistemological hierarchy, which Laurie Anne Whitt (Choctaw) argues is a ongoing legacy of colonialism and its oppressive power structures and practices. She contends that:

Knowledge-transmission in indigenous communities traditionally occurs in forms that are, from the dominant perspective, suspect -- such as stories and ceremonies. They defy a ready reduction to factual propositions and are seen as "tainted" with a normative and spiritual component. Consequently, other knowledge systems are reduced to "superstition," the very antithesis of knowledge. This encounter is often fatal for indigenous systems because the supreme confidence of Westerners or Westernised elites in their knowledge is coupled to the superior means of political and economic force at their disposal. 174

Laurie Whitt's incisive precis in this passage on the cultural politics of knowledge in relation to the West's reception of Indigenous paradigms and practices can be usefully read in tandem with Silko's agenda in this section of Almanac Of The Dead,. Silko constructs and valorises an Indigenous epistemological/cosmological framework in order to critique and denaturalise the trope of soul theft. Her tactical appropriation of theory, then, again constructs positions of agency for Indigenes and necessarily pre-empts Western attempts to insert Native American responses to colonial photography into a Western discursive economy of the "primitive." This tactic replicates and validates the original Apache resistance to military capture.

Thus, in yet another playful twist on the notion of mimetic realism, the Apache "Geronimo" imposters - Wide Ledge, Sleet and Big Pine - attempt to explain their inability to recognise the Apache warrior who "white people identify as Geronimo" (228). It is this apparent non-identity between subject and photographic image - a reversal of the "primitive" tendency to "mis-read" photography as a fusion of "image and object" that enables them to broach questions around the subject of soul theft: 175

Opinion had been divided over the dangers of allowing a photographic image to be made. Could the face and body that kept appearing in place of the three Geronimos be evidence that at some earlier photographic session, the soul of an unidentified Apache warrior had been captured by the white man's polished crystal in the black box and was now attempting to come back? If so, why did this warrior's soul appear only in connection with the three Apaches white people called Geronimo? Well, there were many interesting questions surrounding the strange polished crystals in the black boxes, Sleet said. (228)

Sleet poses another rhetorical question in relation to soul theft, a question which pointedly addresses the assumption in dominant Western discourses that some Western photographic practices can be non-invasive, particularly if the photographer is able to establish "intimate" relations with his subjects and thus dis-arm their "superstition" and the resistance it generates to photography.

His commentary can also be read as a warning to his compatriots about the dangers of allowing their task of protecting Geronimo from capture

to be deflected by undue speculation about the "intentions" or methods used by the colonial power. He remarks:

Why bother with speculations and arguments over whether the crystal always stole the soul or only did so when white men harboured certain intentions towards the person in front of the camera? The point was, Sleet reminded Wide Ledge and Big Pine, whites on both sides of the border were hunting the Apache called Geronimo... newspapers from Tucson to Washington, D.C, had the biggest headlines in the blackest ink Sleet had ever seen, demanding death for Geronimo. (228)

By yoking the practices of military and photographic capture in this passage through the metaphor of "hunting," the predatory "intentions" of Euro-Americans in this colonial context are foregrounded, and the materiality of both practices are asserted as a counterpoint to the potential distraction produced by purely abstract speculations on photography and its effects.

As the above extracts indicate, the Apache warriors are unable to resolve conclusively the ontological questions raised by photography, capture and soul theft. However, their irresolution cannot be ascribed to a "primitive" fear of Western technology, nor to an incapacity to formulate explanations for phenomena and categories outside of the parameters of their own knowledge systems and experiences. What is important here is the narrative's reflexive engagement with important questions about the ontology of photography, the subjects it produces, the conditions of production and thus the power it wields in relation to subject production. Sleet's qualification about "speculation" decisively reinserts the overriding context of military conquest and colonialism into the debate on photography; in the process, photography's violent collusion with colonialism is named and marked.
The Apache discourse on photography operates as a narrative of resistance by positioning Native Americans as investigating subjects, and the issues it raises in relation to colonialism, photography, power and subjectivity are taken up by the Yaqui elders in another section of the Geronimo narratives. For example, when Mahawahalas's nephew, Calabazas, asks if the Yaquis know the identity of the Apache in the Geronimo photographs, she and the elders deflect his question in order to protect the identity of the subject. Nevertheless, an "old uncle" (232) of Calabazas intervenes and proceeds to broach the question of identity and soul theft in unequivocally Indigenous terms. As a result, a different explanation for the phenomenon of the recurrent image of Geronimo in colonial texts is produced which, significantly, centres on Indigenous relations with ancestral beings.

Thus the superimposition of this particular image onto the photographic frame is construed by the uncle as the trace/soul of a potent and benevolent ancestor: "The face in all the photographs belonged to an ancestor, the soul of one long dead who knew the plight of the 'Geronimos'.... The spirit of the ancestor had cast its light, its power, in front of the faces of the three 'Geronimos" (232). As in Lame Deer's autobiography, the presence of spirit powers is marked by emanations of light. When Calabazas asks the uncle if the spirit of the ancestor had penetrated the being of the Apache warriors, the uncle replies: "Oh no!... The spirit could move in and out easily through a crystal rock, that was all, the old man assured Calabazas" (232). The protective function of the ancestral spirit and its superior flexibility in comparison to the fixity of the photographic mechanism is reaffirmed.

In a sense, the fixity of the camera's light source signifies a limit on its power to entrap souls. By way of contrast, the mobility and mutability of the ancestor attests to his ability to resist and deflect Western photographic "capture" of Native American subjects in colonial contexts. Therefore, in the uncle's narrative, the trope of soul theft is reconfigured to empower the
Apaches and the Yaquis in a textual manoeuvre linking the lengthy Apache resistance to military capture with the resistance posed by the ancestral beings and the tactics of inscription which make their operations visible. After meditating on the uncle’s story, Calabazas draws the following conclusion: “So a camera could not steal your soul as some people fear. A camera could not steal your soul unless you were already letting go in the first place” (232).

In these narratives then, questions of agency, identity, subjectivity, representation and power relations which circulate around the trope of soul theft and photography are reformulated and inserted into a Native American ontological, epistemological and cosmological matrix, a matrix which powerfully articulates cultural difference and which also validates culturally specific ways of reading/viewing. In short, the tactical re-appropriation of this trope stands as an indictment of Western colonial photographic discourses and practices in relation to Native Americans; it also inscribes resistance to Euro-American cultural hegemony through its contestation of the Western anthropo-logic of the "primitive" - an ideology encoded and naturalised in dominant constructions of tropes like soul theft.

What I have articulated in this chapter are the politics within the visual arena which inflect the construction, mapping and contestation of Native American histories and subjectivities by Native American critics, writers, photographers and cultural producers. These issues will now be addressed at the literary level in the next chapter, where I will engage with the politics of genre and historiography in relation to the construction and reception of Native American texts. My departure point for this chapter is Leslie Marmon Silko's text *Almanac Of The Dead*, which deploys the Mayan almanac genre in order to signify a continuous history of resistance to Western colonialism.
Chapter Five
Writing Indigenous Histories: The Politics of Genre and Cultural Difference in Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Almanac Of The Dead.*

Those who can't learn to appreciate the world's differences won't make it.
They'll die. (Calabazas) 176

This chapter examines the politics of rewriting colonial histories of the Americas from Indigenous perspectives which reject the cultural authority of the West in order to re-institute and revalorise cultural discourses, knowledges, and practices that have, in the Foucauldian sense, become subjugated under the universalising and assimilative drive of Western colonial regimes and their discursive formations. 177 It is thus centrally concerned with the persistent Eurocentric inability to acknowledge how cultural difference is marked in Native American texts which challenge Western discursive, generic and epistemological categories, and the ongoing colonial power relations they regulate and authorise. These unequal power relations and the cultural and material hegemony they legitimate enable Western academics to practise what the Anishinaabe writer and critic, Gerald Vizenor, has designated as the "colonial surveillance" 178 of Native American subjectivities and cultural practices. That is to say, Western critics continue to adjudicate on and evaluate the "proper" parameters and forms through which Indigenous subjectivities and cultural productions can be constructed and circulated.

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176 *Almanac Of The Dead,* 203.
178 Gerald Vizenor, *Trickster of Liberty: Tribal Heirs to a Wild Baronage* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1988), x.
With this agenda in mind, I focus on a specific Native American text by the Laguna writer Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac Of The Dead: A Novel*, which stages an imaginative re-mapping of five hundred years of Indigenous histories in the Americas and, with it, a contestation of official colonial histories which produce the Indigene as the West's other. Silko's insistence on the primacy and value of contestatory Native American histories and cultural modes is textually enabled by her re-Indigenisation of the almanac genre and the prophetic mode that it inscribes.  

This practice of re-Indigenisation entails an etymological re-tracing of the word "almanac" to disclose its non-Western origin in the Arabic "almanakh" and its gradual lexical appropriation by the West (*Almanac* 136). It also entails a systematic excavation of a cultural genealogy which links both the almanac genre and prophecy to the pre-Columbian Mayan hieroglyphic codices (76) and to the post-invasion Mayan *Chilam Balam Books* which chart a history of resistance to Western colonialism from its very inception. This mapping out of subjugated Indigenous knowledges and practices forms a crucial part of Silko's textual production of an Indigenous counter-historiography of the Americas.

However, as the generic doubleness of her title, *Almanac Of The Dead: A Novel*, makes clear, Silko also incorporates (and Indigenises) Western cultural practices and genres like the novel in her project, indicating practices of contemporary Native American tactical resistance to neo-colonial domination. Through this tactic of generic double marking, Silko sets up from the outset a challenge to the dominant culture's prescriptions about cultural and textual purity, and thus to the regulatory colonial politics of "authenticity"

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which operate to delimit and to invalidate oppositional texts and cultural practices.

In addition, this tactic enables her to question and destabilise Western hierarchical evaluations of genre by disallowing either genre to assume a privileged position. Thus, as her title makes clear, Silko’s text registers from the outset how the textual production of cultural difference has been effectively regulated and contained by Western colonial hierarchies of genre and discourse and the ideologies of value which they embed. Both in her title and through her textual practices, she initiates an overturning of a series of interlinked colonial binaries such as history/story, orality/writing, fiction/fact, by tactically mobilising and interweaving both traditional and contemporary Indigenous forms and practices in order to reclaim subjugated knowledges and discourses, and to place these in the service of an oppositional political agenda.

I want to begin my analysis by situating Silko’s intervention in colonial discourses on history and Indigeneity within the current political/cultural context of Indigenous access to representation and production. In mapping that context, I will also elaborate on the politics of the almanac genre as a prelude to my engagement with a recent critique of *Almanac Of The Dead* by Giorgio Mariani in his text, *Post-Tribal Epics*. 180 This critique, whose relentless Eurocentrism functions to police Indigenous subjectivities and cultural forms, is one which colonises precisely because it cannot read for cultural difference and because it cannot countenance the notion of a tactical Indigenisation of Western cultural modes and practices.

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The Dakota critic and writer Elizabeth Cook-Lynn has recently addressed the cultural politics of Native American access to representation and textual production by focusing on the Western orientation of literary production in North America; this focus, she argues, results in the policing of culturally different texts through editorial and publishing practices and through the influence of a hegemonic Western critical tradition. 181 She argues that contemporary Native American texts are constrained by a dominant cultural and academic context in which Western aesthetic standards and generic hierarchies determine textual status and marketability. In particular, the invocation of Western aesthetics as the index through which Indigenous texts are evaluated and adjudicated upon, she argues, functions to reproduce a sanitised and generically homogeneous literary product for "mainstream" consumption. This prescriptive reproduction, she contends, is "a function of colonialism" (27), and it militates against the production of culturally different stories, particularly those stories which violate "mainstream" protocols through, among other things, a focus on "tribal nationalism" and "First Nation" political struggles (29-30):

There is, in fact, an existing methodology which asserts a Euro-American cast upon the literary works of American Indian writers.... Native American writers, as a result of editorial and agented assistance in getting their manuscripts accepted, assume that under such strict circumstances their own efforts toward the recovery of memory through writing seem thwarted, selective and narrowly interpreted within the imposed memory of western

knowledge and aesthetics. Perhaps this is always the case in
cross-cultural dialogue but for American Indians whose work
presumably stems from an obscure and "other" tribal perspective,
any kind of post-colonial dialogue seems to be either of little interest
to the mainstream or too strident. (27)

Thus in her examination of the cultural politics of this production context, she
concludes that a colonial standard of value continues to regulate the form and
shape of Native American literary texts in order to ensure that those texts
which are deemed to be generically "authentic" and not too "strident" can be
readily assimilated into the mainstream and therefore published.

In a similar fashion, the Native American historian Donald Grinde Jr.
examines how the West continues to function as a privileged reference point
for historiographical production in relation to representations of Indigenous
cultures and histories in North America. He contends that "historical and
contemporary discourses on Native American history often implicitly and
explicitly assume that western civilisation is the standard by which all people
and cultures should be measured." 182 Grinde's particular focus is on the
nexus between the hegemonic operation of a Western standard of value in
relation to disciplines like history and anthropology and the politics of
exclusion that it mandates. In other words, Indigenous perspectives and the
culturally different discourses, knowledges and practices which underpin
them, are evaluated and filtered through a Western cultural and
epistemological lens which generally finds them to be deficient or to evince
"bias" (212). This leads to the exclusion or marginalisation of Indigenous
voices in the domain of historiographical production, and Grinde cites the
Columbian quincentennial as an event which exemplified the operation of this

182 Donald Grinde Jr, "Historical Narratives of Nationhood and the Semiotic Construction of
Social Identity: A Native American Perspective," Issues in Native American Cultural Identity,
colonial practice of "Non-Indian expert" exclusion of "independent Native American viewpoints" (212). Grinde's summary of the politics which delimit the construction of "multiple perspectives and identities" (204) in relation to historiographical production in North America is worth recounting:

In a very real sense, indigenous people from all over the world feel trapped in the logic and discourse of Western civilisation, which seems to only examine and comprehend the intellectual origins and conceptual constructs of empire. Western academics in anthropology, history, and related social sciences seem to have created a theoretical place that exists as a "rational" explanation for the "other." This intellectual artifice exists in a space adjacent to the history and culture of the "same;" i.e. of the dominant society. (203-204)

He argues that "this adjacent space exists between the experience of Western society and the experience of the 'other.' At the same time, the adjacent intellectual space is considered 'theoretically' independent of ongoing 'same' and 'other' societies" (204), an arbitrary imposition which functions to marginalise or exclude Native American voices and perspectives (204). Grinde concludes that in North America, "current structures of academe" (211) make it difficult for Native Americans as colonised peoples to articulate and construct a "usable past" (211), whilst acknowledging that such a project remains an imperative one for Native American cultures whose identities and histories continue to be constrained by the legacy of Western colonialism. Both Cook-Lynn's and Grinde's analyses of the politics structuring Native American cultural production help to situate Silko's Almanac Of The Dead, a text lauded by Cook-Lynn for "its nation-centredness" and for
its articulation of "the political reality of the imagination." It is, she argues, "the foremost Indian novel in which we see the clear and unmistakable attempt to describe Indian nationalism in modern terms."

Re-inscribing Cultural Difference and the Politics of the Almanac Genre

In *Almanac Of The Dead* Silko constructs a series of contestatory histories - narrated primarily from various Indigenous perspectives - which interrogate hegemonic historiographic discourses, knowledges and practices and, necessarily, the Western colonial standard of value in which they are enshrined. In the process, she tactically assigns a position of privilege to Native American narratives, knowledges and the culturally different values that they inscribe. This tactical reversal marks her recognition of how the Indigene is produced in colonial discourses as the "other" of Euro-America in order to validate the overall project of Western imperialism. It also signals her overturning of the anthropological practice of constituting Native Americans as passive objects of Western enquiry and knowledge production. As such, the textual reversal of coloniser/colonised positions and power relations forms an integral part of this text's tactical de-privileging of the West and its claims to represent and incorporate Indigenous cultures into universalising frames of reference.

Silko's mobilisation of multiple Indigenous voices and histories arguably functions to valorise cultural difference/s by constructing, in Grinde's term, a "usable past" that addresses both the historical and contemporary experiences of Native American resistance to Euro-American material and cultural hegemony. As such, *Almanac*, in its deployment of Indigenous modes of producing history, is attentive to the ways in which dominant discourses are complicit in the silencing, marginalising and/or appropriating of Indigenous subjectivities and histories in a cultural context still marked by

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184 Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, 33.
these struggles over self-representation in relation to entrenched Euro-American academic privilege. Silko herself has recently drawn explicit attention to the crucial issue of representational control and its relationship to the initial and ongoing phases of colonisation in the Americas in a comment made about the destruction of Aztec and Maya codices by the Spanish invaders:

The books were destroyed and the people who knew how to make the books were destroyed. Soon the only books of Native American life were written and made by non-Indians, who continued to portray indigenous people as sub-humans. The U.S. government used books in their campaign of cultural genocide. Thus the representation or portrayal of Native Americans was politicised from the beginning and, to this day, remains an explosive political issue. 185

She also argues that the destruction of these books was an integral part of the Spanish imperial agenda to erase all traces of Maya and Aztec cultures. The very production of these books challenged Western definitions of "civilisation" and cultural superiority based on the perception of a connection between phonetic writing and the existence of an historical consciousness. Indeed, in noting that only four of the Mayan screenfold texts survived the systematic program of destruction instituted by the Spanish, she contends that "the Spaniards feared the political and spiritual power of books authored by indigenous peoples". 186 The systematic erasure of these texts and the complex cultural knowledges and practices inscribed in them fostered the construction of a Western cultural and intellectual hierarchy, which, in positing

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Indigenous subjects as not "civilised" by reference to "writing" and textuality, functioned to rationalise colonial violence and the expropriation of Indigenous lands that accompanied it:

They burned the great libraries [of the Maya and Aztecs] because they wished to foster the notion that the New World was populated by savages. Savages could be slaughtered and enslaved; savages were no better than wild beasts and thus had no property rights. International law regulated the fate of conquered nations but not of savages and beasts. ("Books" 157)

In her analysis of the politics of colonial representations of Native Americans she concludes that "Books have been the the focus of the struggle for the control of the Americas from the start" ("Books" 165), and she endorses Vine Deloria Jr.’s observation about contemporary representational politics that "non-Indians are still more comfortable with Indian books written by non-Indians than they are with books by Indian authors" (165).

Therefore Silko's retrieval of the Mayan almanac 187 genre through her invention of an additional screenfold text crucially foregrounds the cultural specificity and historicity of this genre, enabling her to mark the continuity of a culturally different intellectual tradition which fundamentally contests Western imperial versions of history in the Americas. This construction of a counter-history through the reinscription of an Indigenous textual practice enables Silko specifically to interrogate the colonial politics which accrue around the

187 Jodi Adamson says that "Almanacs have a long history of challenging those who claim the privilege and authority to represent 'reality' from only one perspective" (134). While her analysis focuses on Silko's text and its deployment of a Native American almanac genre, she notes that early colonial American almanacs -although "compiled by elites" - provided an opportunity for "both genders and different races" to take part in their production (134). Jodi Adamson, American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism: The Middle Place (Tucson: Arizona UP, 2001). For an analysis of early colonial American almanacs see Marion Barber Stowell, Early American Almanacs: The Colonial Weekday Bible (New York: Burt Franklin, 1977).
maintenance of the hierarchical and interlinked binaries of writing/orality, history/story.

**The Politics of Orality and Writing**

Silko's articulation of these colonial politics is borne out in a study of the textual properties of various Mesoamerican "scriptlike media" by Gordon Brotherston, and it is to this study that I now turn. Given my own agenda in this chapter, I am unable to engage with the depth, breadth and complexity of the material analysed by Brotherston. Nevertheless, his work provides a valuable exposition of the material specificity of the Mayan texts which provide the cultural departure point for Silko's articulation of resistance; more generally, his contextualisation of the politics of orality and writing echoes Silko's position.

Brotherston observes in his recent study of Mesoamerican texts that the Mayan hieroglyphic screen fold books functioned as "almanacs of daily life and astronomy" in pre-Columbian times, and that their hieroglyphic script constituted the textual "antecedent"of the post-invasion Mayan *Chilam Balam* books. These screenfold texts, in addition to their inscription of complex mathematical and astronomical data in the almanac sections, also incorporated annals which classified time periods into *tuns* and *katuns*, thereby mapping a "historical dimension" to Mayan cultural experience and producing a local historiography that antedated Western invasion. He also notes that the screenfold texts were phonetically based, and that, like other Indigenous "scriptlike media" such as the Inca *quipa*, they were not recognised by the West as graphic systems of representation.

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189 The Mayan word tun refers to the 360 day Mayan year and kun is equivalent to 20 tuns/years (76).
190 The *quipa* was a "form of recording" using pieces of knotted string and "its semantic variables" were signified by the "type of knot and its position on the string, colour of string and its position on the main cord, and the code or program of the main code" (77). Brotherston says that in its complexity it resembled the Mayan hieroglyphic script. For a full account of this mode of writing see Brotherston, 77-81.
Brotherston makes the general point that "jejeune Western pronouncements on what does and does not constitute script, and the categorical binary that separates oral from written, have proved especially inept when applied to the wealth of literary media in Native America"(4). He locates the privileging of Western alphabetic writing and the hierarchical binary between writing and orality that it institutes in the material conditions of colonialism and imperialism, arguing that "alphabetic script has in practice been a main agent of dogma and repression" (42) in the Americas. Through his examination of various Indigenous modes of inscription in Mesoamerica, Brotherston argues that the colonial binary erected between orality and writing cannot be maintained, nor, with it, the evolutionary cultural ideology and cultural hierarchy of Western colonialism. Hence the categorisation of Indigenous cultures as "scriptless" - signifying in Western terms their location outside history and "civilisation" is, he argues, "one of the most persistent errors of ethnology "(41-2), an error which signifies a Western inability to register the nuances and complexities of culturally different modes of signification. He also makes the important points, through reference to Jacque Derrida's notion of grammatology, 191 that orality in some Native American cultures is inflected with graphic traces, and that the encoding of these graphemes in speech operates again to destabilise and overturn the "categorical binary" between speech and writing. The following observations by Brotherston are illuminating in this regard:

First, in texts that are apparently "just oral," the very phrases of human breath affect the all-important concept of the line (literally gramma in Greek), as for example Sherzer has shown in relation once again to the same Cuna tradition to which Mu ikala belongs. Line patterning, with

its implicit spatial and number logic, stands as the major criterion for Dell Hymes and others in their "recovery" of other Anasazi and Turtle Island texts from amorphous transcriptions made up to a century ago for the Bureau of American Ethnology. Tedlock's transcription of Zuni discourse even introduces typographical refinement. Beyond this, the encoding process synonymous with script and visual language may in Derrida's terms operate within speech, that is, an encoding into time-resistant, condensed and poetic forms that stand at the opposite pole to the linguistic norms of Saussure and that lend themselves more readily to systematic analogy with visual language. (43)

He also finds that Western ethnographers generally suppressed or neutralised evidence of scriptlike media in Native American cultures in order to sustain "an overall model of an oral America" (44), that is to say "oral" in the narrow sense of the term.

Brotherston's examination of the intertextual relationship between the Mayan hieroglyphic screenfold texts and the post-invasion Mayan Chilam Balam Books is helpful in situating Silko's construction of an additional codice as a tactic through which the interlinked colonial binaries of speech/writing, history/pre-history, civilisation/savagism are questioned and overturned. In noting this intertextual patterning, Brotherston says of the Chilam Balam Books that they constitute "a speculative history that interweaves forecast with the recollection of identically named katuns from the past. It is the cycles of these perorations that are recorded in Paris (one of the surviving screenfold texts) and in the Chilam Balam Books." (145) Furthermore in their "high

degree of allusiveness," he argues, the *Chilam Balam* texts suggest a "highly developed historical consciousness" (152), and, indeed, they posit the politically central question as to "Who entered whose history?" in the Americas (103). These texts gradually transcribed hieroglyphic script into a Mayan version of the Roman alphabet (48), but they continued to be intertextually framed by their screenfold precursors as evidenced by their reproduction of almanac chapters and by their use of glyphlike designs (148).

This intertextual practice is clearly discernible in the constitution of Silko's manuscript fragment in *Almanac Of The Dead*, which makes use of katun counts and glyphlike designs, as well as marking the transition in scripts from hieroglyphic to Latin, Spanish and, finally, English. In remarking upon the critical and comparative aspects of the *Chilam Balam Books*, Brotherston acknowledges that they mobilised a judicious combination and juxtaposition of traditional and Western discourses and cultural forms, and that this in turn can be read as a political response to Western invasion and colonisation (149). Therefore his analysis of these texts challenges the notion that colonised Indigenous cultures passively adapt Western cultural forms and technologies; it suggests instead that Western forms and practices are subject to processes of Indigenisation and that the resultant texts operate as palimpsests of pre-Cortesian modes of inscription.

This palimpsestic practice is arguably discernible in Silko's invention in *Almanac Of The Dead* of an additional codice whose textuality is suggestive of both the screenfold and *Chilam Balam* texts. In an interview with Laura Coltelli she remarks upon her intention to reference the Mayan screenfold tradition of writing through her use of the almanac genre, although she insists that her invention of another codice ensures her control over the form and content of pre-Columbian history in Mesoamerica (151-52).  

her to politicise the practices of writing/representation, and to demonstrate how, in its various forms and languages, writing by Indigenous cultures has been used to contest Western colonialism. For example, in *Almanac* the Yaqui historian and keeper of the almanac notebook, Yoeme, sanctions the "first entry [into the notebook] written in English" by her grand-daughter Lecha who now occupies the role of cultural guardian and almanac keeper (130). Yoeme's authorisation of Lecha's transcription from the oral to the written in the almanac occurs after Yoeme's narration of a Geronimo story to her granddaughters, Zeta and Lecha. Zeta is anxious about Yoeme's response to Lecha's deployment of English in the almanac, but, Yoeme's cryptic comment on this tactic signifies the political importance of appropriating the coloniser's language as a weapon of resistance to ongoing Western imperialism: 194

They never discussed the story Yoeme had told them on the beach, but Lecha had been careful to write it down in the notebook with the blank pages. After she had written it, old Yoeme had demanded to see it, and it was then they realised it was the first entry written in English. Zeta waited for Yoeme to break into a fury. But she had rocked herself from side to side, sighing with pleasure. Yoeme claimed this was the sign the keepers of the notebooks had always prayed for. (130)

Significantly, the preceding scripts are also named and marked, and include Mayan glyphs, Latin and Spanish. It is important to acknowledge at this point that Silko's recognition of the political necessity of script as a tactic of resistance to colonialism functions to contest the Western tendency to read

194 Silko makes this clear in her interview with Laura Coltelli, when she says that in the aftermath of the Spanish conquest, "the elders saw that the oral tradition could not be maintained, where you have genocide on this scale," and that they came to understand that writing was "a tool" and could be used to resist Western colonialism (152).
Indigenous orality as the only "authentic" mode of representation available to Native Americans, a paradigm which demands ontological fixity and operates to constrain Indigenous deployments of symbolic material from different cultural matrices. Furthermore, her politicisation of script does not reinstitute the Western hierarchical binary between writing and orality whereby writing in its narrowly Western phonetic sense becomes once again the privileged term in the binary, a tactic signalled by Yoeme's reference to the almanac as "the book of mouths and tongues" (142). Instead, in Silko's text, writing and orality are juxtaposed as complementary practices which conjunctively signify the heterogenous modes of Native American cultural production, and the untenability of designating specific constituents of these productions as "foreign."

For instance, Yoeme's narration of the almanac notebook's northward journey with the children exemplifies the non-hierarchical relation between orality and writing in the following ways. To begin with, her retelling of the history of the almanac notebook to her grand-daughters Lecha and Zeta and the story of its journey north to escape the Destroyers is orally transmitted while the interrelatedness of speech and writing is graphically exemplified in a specific story within this story.

The children, who flee north with the almanac to escape the genocidal regime of the Destroyers in the south, are unable to find sufficient food to sustain themselves. The youngest child gives in to temptation and while her companions are asleep she ingests the edges of some almanac pages to assuage her hunger. Although her companions are outraged at their discovery of her sacrilege, the almanac remains intact because the child had consumed "only the edges of the pages" (248). However, on arriving in a

195 The term "Destroyers" as it is deployed in Silko's text refers generally to those who violently colonise, oppress or enslave and as the text's critique of Aztec imperialism demonstrates, it is not confined to the West. Nevertheless, the West and its imperial agents constitute the main focus of critique.
deserted village inhabited only by a hunchback woman, hunger overwhelms the children and the eldest girl "drop[s] a page of the manuscript into the simmering vegetable stew" (249) prepared by the woman. Significantly, the children are nourished by "just one pot of stew" (248), and the sustenance provided by the almanac parchment ultimately ensures the continuation of their journey north and, equally, ensures the survival of the almanac and the people's history which it encodes. As Yoeme remarks to her granddaughters: "[I]t had been the almanac that had saved them. The first night, if the eldest had not sacrificed a page from the book, that crippled woman would have murdered them all right then, while the children were weak from hunger and the longer journey" (253).

Before their departure, one of the children evinces distress at the potential loss of part of their history through their ingestion of the almanac pages, and the eldest girl consoles him with a storytelling performance which affirms the interconnection of speech and writing. She says: "I remember what was on the page we ate. I know that part of the almanac -- I have heard the stories of those days told many times. Now I am going to tell you three. So if something happens to me, the three of you will know how that part of the story goes" (250). Both writing and orality function in this context to preserve the memory of a threatened cultural heritage and history and while "the almanac was what told them who they were and where they came from" (245), it is seen to co-exist with and is shaped by oral cultural practices. In this way, the cultural and tactical value of both practices is asserted.

By way of summation, then, Silko's reconstitution of the Mesoamerican almanac genre through her invention of an additional codice in *Almanac Of The Dead* can be read as fulfilling two main political functions. Firstly, it categorically attests to the priority of "civilised" cultures in the Americas before the inauguration of Western imperialism through reference to a Western index of "civilisation" - writing and textuality. Secondly, in so far as this written text /
codice conforms to Indigenous conventions of the almanac genre - of which prophecy is a significant component - it foregrounds culturally different epistemologies and cosmologies and makes them available for inclusion in an Indigenous historiography which interweaves past and present, the traditional and the contemporary, in order to make visible what has been excluded and devalued in official white histories of the Americas.

I do not at this point want to engage with the cultural politics of prophecy in any detail, given that I address them in the next chapter. However, it is worth remarking that it is through the prophetic strand in this text that Silko is able imaginatively to reconstruct a history of ongoing Indigenous resistance to Euro-American cultural imperialism that takes as its departure point an Indigenous category and practice. Prophecy thus maps and marks out cultural difference, continuity and transformation, as does the genre of the almanac, and it is crucially annexed to one of the political leitmotifs of the text -- namely the dissolution of the arbitrary geo-political boundaries instituted by Western colonial regimes and the return of the Americas to Indigenous control. This leitmotif is encapsulated in the prophetic phrase," the disappearance of things European" (570), a phrase inscribed in the almanac and transmitted orally through various Indigenous storytelling traditions in the novel. Through repetition, this phrase comes to signify the priority of First Nations peoples in the Americas, and, with it, Native American symbolic resistance to material domination and cultural hegemony. What is crucially marked by the iteration of the prophetic prediction of European disappearance is the failure of colonial policies to effect genocide or cultural assimilation. By reversing the positions of coloniser and colonised through an implicit demand that the West must Indigenise or disappear in the Americas, Silko draws attention to one of the governing ideologies of Western colonialism -- that is to say, its failure to value cultural differences and its assumption that the West embodies the apogee of "civilised" attainments and
values. The racist and racialised cultural hierarchy which this colonial ideology has historically buttressed is thus put under interrogation by *Almanacs* tactical re-orientation.

Thus in the revolutionary atmosphere which constitutes the textual foreground for the articulation of Indigenous histories in *Almanac*, Calabazas, one of the Mexican-Indian activists and narrators says: "Those who can't learn to appreciate the world's differences won't make it. They'll die" (203). Calabazas' provocative assertion signals a challenge to Eurocentricism and to the demonisation and erasure of cultural difference which it sanctions. As Silko makes clear in this text and in her commentary on the politics of representation, Eurocentricism -- and, with it, the devaluation and marginalisation of cultural difference -- continues to flourish within the dominant academic and cultural context in North America.

By way of exemplification, I want to examine in some detail a recent critical text on Native American novels entitled *Post-Tribal Epics* by Giorgio Mariani. I argue here that, while Mariani makes some notional concession to the idea of cultural difference and to the impact of colonialism on Native American subjectivities and cultural productions, he is insufficiently attentive to the politics of representation and cultural difference. As such he reinstates the West as the primary index of evaluation of the Indigenous texts in his survey, and in the process reproduces a series of colonial binaries and hierarchies which effectively devalorise texts like Silko's *Almanac* and the political agendas which they inscribe.

**Reading Mariani: The Politics of Genre**

In this section I want to elaborate on the politics of genre and the hierarchies dominant Western discourses use to devalorise Indigenous texts by staging a reading of Mariani's recent critical text. In it he examines a
range of contemporary Native American novels - including *Almanac* - and constructs a theoretical framework primarily through reference to the epic/novel generic distinction articulated by George Lucaks, and to the tradition/modernity dichotomy upon which it turns. These distinctions are buttressed by another pivotal binary opposition drawn by Mariani between "tribal" and "post-tribal" cultures, and this classificatory strategy constitutes the departure point for his theorisation of the Native American novel. Given the centrality of these interlinked categories, and their hierarchical/colonial deployment in his text, I will focus on their theoretical and political imbrication before proceeding with a specific critique of his reading of *Almanac Of The Dead*.

I want to begin by situating the politics of his rigid Western classificatory grid, which implicitly invokes an unstated desire for "authentic" Native American cultural production while at the same time suggesting that Western colonialism necessarily truncates and indeed erases that which he designates as "properly tribal" (3), as distinctively Indigenous. Thus, from the outset, he evinces an anxiety over the proper indices and limits of Indigeneity in relation to subjectivity and cultural modes of production. The binary logic which inflects his theorisation of Native American texts is itself produced out of a reductive Western anthropological understanding of Indigenous socio-cultural formations, an understanding which reads Indigenous cultural appropriations of Western genres and forms like the novel as both contamination and betrayal of some originary "tribal" essence. In spite of occasional references to colonialism, and thus to the conditions under which Native American subjectivities and cultural texts are formed and produced, Mariani refuses to contemplate in any depth the political complexities confronting these producers who must negotiate and construct a post-invasion symbolic matrix in the face of the ongoing colonial regulation of their identities and resources.
In addition, he replicates unequal colonial power relations by failing to adequately question his self-assigned privilege to adjudicate upon what constitutes the "properly tribal," and thereby he participates in the process of colonial regulation by re-inscribing dominant American codes of "authenticity" to which the Indigene must conform. In short, his critical project is one which does not adequately engage with questions of ongoing colonialism and cultural authority, questions which Indigenous writers like Silko regard as imperative in a cultural context still shaped by hegemonic values, discourses and practices.

**Indigeneity, Cultural Production and "Authenticity"**

These questions about the ongoing colonial regulation of Indigenous identities and texts in contemporary contexts have been addressed by many Native American and Indigenous writers and critics in recent times. As a prelude to my engagement with Mariani's analysis of genre and the politics of "authenticity" which it inscribes, I will examine two essays which articulate Indigenous perspectives on these issues. The first essay is by the Aboriginal Australian critic, Ian Anderson, and the second is by the Dakota critic and writer, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. While Anderson's essay is specific to the Australian colonial context, it can be usefully extrapolated to North America in so far as he elaborates upon the politics which underpin the construction of knowledges about the Indigene. In particular, he stages a powerful critique of the categories of the "hybrid" and the "real" which still circulate via the hegemonic culture's regulatory code of authenticity.

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196 In his preface Mariani does acknowledge the history of "translative violence" which has accompanied the West's construction and appropriation of Indianness. In relation to his own text he asserts "I have done my best to avoid this pitfall. At any rate, no amount of protestations of good faith on my part will redeem what may be wrong about my readings," *(Post-Tribal Epics, v).*
In his examination of these politics, Anderson locates the emergence of the figure of the "authentic" Aborigine in the invading colonial regime's need to "manage or control remnant indigenous populations" (10) after the first phases of colonial dispossession. This figure circulated, he argues, "as the reciprocal 'other' to 'civilised' Europe" (10) and functioned to legitimate land expropriation which reinforced the unequal power relations between coloniser and colonised. But he contends: "The realm of authenticity could never be inhabited. It was an imaginary reality - one with internal contradictions and distortions consequent on its origins within colonial relations" (10). Central to this construction was the idea of racial and cultural fixity which, given the violence of the colonial regime and the ensuing cultural fragmentation it produced, effectively required the authentic Indigene to vanish and to be assimilated into the invading socio-cultural formation:

The construction of the "authentic" Aborigine mobilised essentialised notions of race and culture. Certain biological or cultural characteristics were seen to be necessary features, or the essence of, Aboriginal people. At different times, and in different contexts, the essential character of Aborigines was a matter of race, or a feature of culture. However, these two analytical fields have never been completely separate. Notions of race and culture tended to overlay, rather than replace, each other. As exotica, the "authentic" Aborigine is outside history, insulated in a bizarre world of "otherness." Any biological or cultural contamination by the outside world fatally destabilises the existence of authenticity. Consequently, the "authentic" Aborigine was destined to dissolve when confronted by a supposedly superior European culture. (10-11)
Anderson's particular focus in this article is to challenge this notion of Indigeneity with reference to the hegemonic culture's representation of Tru-Gan-Nan-Ner as the so-called "last" Tasmanian Aborigine, a representation, he argues, which is embedded within a "potent discourse of extinction" (10). This discourse of extinction, then, produces an ahistorical Aboriginal subject and mandates a hierarchical binary relation between the categories of "real" and "hybrid" Indigenous subjectivity, a binarism, Anderson argues, which then functions within the dominant discourse of Aboriginality to contain and police contemporary identities and cultural products. "The 'hybrid' inhabited the shifting and ambiguous realm between the white and the black" (11) and the descendants of Tru-Gan-Nan-Ner - denied the "authenticity" which her death terminates - are consigned to an historical and cultural lacunae, "doomed by this discourse to forever be black-bit white-bit people" (11). It is in this context that Anderson contemplates the dilemma regarding how Indigenous Australians "should produce symbolic material in a social context which constructs [them] as either 'real' or 'hybrid" (13), a dilemma also confronting Native American cultural producers who must negotiate and mediate Western prescriptions about authenticity and inauthenticity.

Whilst acknowledging the cultural fragmentation wrought by ongoing colonialism, Anderson rejects the colonial closure signified by the categories of the "real" and the "hybrid." He also challenges the presumption by non-Aboriginal Australia to categorise, determine and legitimate Aboriginal identities and cultural forms (14). Significantly, then, he identifies a double standard encoded by this binarism that operates within the dominant discourse of Aboriginality, a double standard articulated through the demand for Indigenous ontological purity, on the one hand, and on the other, surfacing in critiques of Indigenous essentialism. These demands mask a political and ideological academic agenda which cannot contemplate the strategic use of essentialism as an Indigenous practice which, given the violent cultural
dismemberment produced by colonialism, functions to mediate the "values, conflicts, histories and ambiguities which characterise [contemporary Aboriginal] identities"(13). Anderson makes the crucial point that this practice is fuelled by a specific political agenda and cannot be conflated with Western essentialist representations of Indigenous subjects which are circulated as racist stereotypes.

Finally, Anderson argues that this colonial double standard is also reflected in the refusal of Western academics to acknowledge how their own subjectivities are managed and constructed and are never available "for perusal" (12). Therefore this policing of Aboriginal subjectivities and identities perpetuates the unequal power relations sanctioned by colonialism, and Anderson concludes that self-definition which mobilises notions of identity "as a relation of bodies, practices and past" (14) functions to empower Aboriginal Australians in the face of hegemonic pronouncements about cultural "authenticity" and the dis-abling binaries of "real" and "hybrid," and tradition and modernity which it grounds.

In her essay, "Literary and Political Questions of Transformation," Elizabeth Cook-Lynn also engages with what she regards as the problematic ways in which issues of Native American "authenticity" and "modernity"(47) continue to be posed in relation to the production of contemporary Indigenous literary forms like the novel. 199 She argues that questions of "Who is an Indian?"(47) frequently circulates in dominant non-Indian literary critical circles, and that such questions function inappropriately as criteria through which contemporary Indian texts are evaluated and regulated. For example, she notes, that, the "narratives" of writers like M.Scott Momaday, Louise Erdrich and Silko have been linked to the scrutiny of their "bloodlines" and

that "the ideas and concepts [in their] imaginative work" are read as "examples of fractionated Indianness"(48). She argues that the idea of "mixed-bloodedness" in dominant discourses on Indianness is predicated on a problematic assumption "that there is such a thing as 'purity' of race," and that it consequently gives rise to the belief that "hybridity [is] a contaminant to the American Indian's right to authenticity" (49). As the rest of her analysis makes clear, Cook-Lynn is not re-instituting a Western colonial standard of authenticity, but rather, like Anderson, she is questioning the regulatory force of Western discourses which imply some original cultural/racial purity, and the violent binary couplet "real"/"hybrid" which it gives rise to.

Cook-Lynn rejects this colonialist index of Indianness as blood quantum, and argues that the question of "Who is an Indian?" is inherently political and should be decided by sovereign Indian nations, not by non-Indian literary critics. Indeed, she argues that prescriptions about Indianness and "the Native American literary voice" by literary critics in the American academy function as endeavours "to claim authority over" the construction of that voice (50).

She directly addresses the politics which accrue around dominant formulations of the relationship between "authenticity" and modernity, a politics embedded in what she terms "the discourse on the function of the modern novel in modern tribal life and nationhood" (49). She locates the beginnings of this discourse in Western social science disciplines, and her analysis of the political effects on the assessment of Native American literary productions is illuminating:

The idea of mixed-bloodedness has a strong connection to the Anthropological and Ethnological studies which began by putting in place specific tribal stories which were labelled "traditional," certain storytellers who were described as "authentic," and particular plots,
motifs, and characters which were said to be "known" and, therefore, canonical and static. Following this line of thought, traditional storytelling must come to an end. Almost everything outside of those patterns must be discarded, "fictionalists" cannot be said to exist, and there is no sense of an on-going literary and intellectual life. The new stories, should they somehow emerge, will always be lesser ones. (49).

This demand for ontological and cultural fixity by "non-tribal scholars" (49) is categorically rejected by Cook-Lynn, as is the policing of imagination that an adherence to Western-designated "traditional" modes of storytelling would produce. She also rejects the argument by which Native American deployments of "foreign" genres like the novel are regarded as contaminations of cultural "authenticity," 200 and she stresses that the Indigenisation of the novel genre can ensure the articulation of Native American traditions that foreground political questions of nationhood and sovereignty.

With these two essays in mind, I now return to my analysis of Mariani's text where his use of the tribal/post-tribal dichotomy to ground his theory of the Native American novel implicitly turns on an anthropological reinscription of the code of authenticity as a strategy through which the legitimacy of Indigenous contemporary uses of "foreign" genres like the novel can be established. That is to say, this binary encodes the hierarchical distinction mapped out by Anderson between "real" and "hybrid" categories of Indigeneity and, as I will demonstrate, reinstates the colonial binary between orality and writing in so far as the texts in his survey are measured and evaluated according to their presumed correspondence with the Western

generic categories of epic and novel. In Mariani’s schema, the epic is identified with orality, tradition and a holistic worldview, whilst the novel is associated with writing, modernity and an atomised worldview. How then does the epic/novel distinction - initially theorised by George Lukács - operate in his text to reproduce these interlinked binary categories? Before examining the effects of these linkages in detail, I want to draw attention to Mariani’s formulation of the category of "the post-tribal epic," a theoretically and politically problematic category which he mobilises to mark the "hybrid" status of the Native American texts examined in his book.

"Post-Tribalism": Theorising the Native American Novel 201

Mariani identifies the cultural parameters within which Native American novels are produced in order to address what he identifies as the inherent contradictions confronting writers who must negotiate the divide between tradition and modernity in their production of what he describes as a genre - the novel - "which is radically foreign to the traditional, pre-Columbian, oral cultures of North America " (1). While he wants to argue for the specificity of the Native American novel as a form which mobilises "different values...antagonistic to the ones celebrated in the American novel at large" (iii), and while he also recognises that his critical approach is one that mobilises "foreign literary concepts" (iv), he argues for the validity of his theoretical approach on the basis that these texts are "still novels" (iv). However, in order to account for the various ways in which these texts are crucially shaped by traditional cultural forms and practices, Mariani in a paradoxical manoeuvre classifies them not as novels but as post-tribal epics. Yet, in another prefatorial assertion which contradicts his construction of this

201 For texts by Native Americans which analyse Native American novels see, for example, Louis Owens, Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel (Norman: Oklahoma UP, 1994), and Jace Weaver, That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community (New York: Oxford UP,1997).
problematic category, he declares that, "no matter how traditionally-oriented, post-tribal epics are always novels - the products of an individual imagination which, even though anchored to a (post-)tribal culture, lacks the communal dimension of an oral, epic voice" (iii). If "post-tribal epics are always novels" then, one might legitimately ask, what functional purpose does the prior category serve in Mariani's overall theoretical project? As I later argue in relation to his reading of Silko's *Almanac*, while the category "post-tribal epic" to some extent marks the liminal generic and cultural status of some Indigenous texts, it reads this liminality as debasement. Thus in relation to Silko's project, it circulates as a pejorative appellation, a signifier of devaluation and cultural contamination; the term registers his sense of the disjunction between her appropriation and Indigenisation of Western forms and her use of traditional Indigenous forms like the almanac genre to mark out oppositional sites of cultural difference. I will shortly unpack the ideological and political implications of his use of the category of the "post-tribal", and its correlative term "tribal," through an analysis of a passage in which he attempts to justify his use of the former term. Before I do so, some elaboration on Mariani's understanding of the category of the epic is necessary in order to situate his deployment of the tribal/post-tribal binary and the politics of cultural "purity" which it inscribes.

According to Mariani, a definitive characteristic of the Western epic is totality, and this term is mobilised by him to differentiate it hierarchically from the novel. Totality marks an "integrated" worldview, and, in Mariani's schema, it also signifies the structure and operation of an entity he refers to as "the tribal imagination" (36), an entity ineluctably fractured by Western colonialism. Following Lukács, then, he says of the Western novel form that it embodies a "divided, modern, God-forsaken" worldview (iii), in which an individualistic secularised consciousness prevails over the previous totality of an integrated communal worldview. Hence, the epic is characterised by:
An ability to reason in terms of totality - that is of a complete, integrated world [which]...turns on what I have already identified as the logic of a tribal imagination in which autonomous domains of experience like the ethical, the aesthetic, or the scientific do not exist as such. The rise of the novel coincides with the dissolution of this sociocultural totality. (36)

Whilst Mariani acknowledges that this definition of an epic is grounded in a Western cultural genealogy, he finds that "tribal myths" and "traditional stories" share "the authorless condition of the epic" and also thematise "the epic destiny of the community" (34). This focus on community and collective Indigenous cultural production to signify differences from the Western individualistic consciousness inflecting the construction of the novel genre is in itself uncontroversial. However, in a problematic manoeuvre, Mariani concludes that the "epic status" of a traditional Native American text resides primarily in its capacity to produce "a truth that is not historically contingent, but mythologically grounded" (36). He thereby implicitly re-inscribes Western hierarchical binaries between history/myth and between writing and orality. It is the reproduction of this colonial logic which enables him to establish a generic equivalence between the Western epic tradition and Native American pre-invasion oral literatures. The politics of this logic are also discernible in a passage he approvingly cites from J.M. Bernstein's analysis of Lukács' theorisation of the epic:

Being outside history mythic truth is, and cannot be conceived of as other than it is. But the ground of this feature of epic or mythic thought is its belonging to an oral society, a society which knows no past or future because the practical means of fixing each present into a
moment which can become a past which was open to a different future either does not exist or is insufficiently socially distributed to be effective as a continuous record of difference, of change and innovation. (36)

Read in conjunction, this set of propositions conflates a Western epic worldview with that of a homogenised Native American "tribal" worldview by constituting pre-invasion Indigenous cultures as other in primitivist terms. This otherness is signified by the condition of what Jace Weaver has described as a "supposedly pristine orature," 202 a term here used to mark the Indigene's distance from Western cultural discourses and practices, and to attest to their ahistorical existence before the incursions of the imperialising West. Orality then comes to signal "authentic" subjectivity and cultural production and is inseparable from its narrative corollary, myth. These binaries map out an hierarchical evolutionary cultural schema, in which the West functions as the agent and bearer of History, while the Indigene - entrapped in her/his mythological condition - passively awaits the West's induction into history and textuality. What the myth/history dichotomy subscribed to by Mariani in these passages elides, however, is the notion that orality constitutes a different mode of historicity from that of Western historiography, 203 and it is this elision which initially served to legitimate the violent colonial dispossession of Indigenous peoples in the Americas.

What grounds this reductive construction of Indigeneity in these passages is Mariani's mobilisation of a traditional anthropological notion of tribalism which configures the "traditional" as static and unchanging, a notion at odds with Indigenous understandings of that term. 204 Arguably, it is

202 Jace Weaver, That the People Might Live, xi.
204 See my discussion of the binarism tradition/modernity in Chapter One of this thesis.
Mariani's deployment of tribalism in its traditional Western anthropological sense that requires him to produce the correlative category "post-tribalism" to account for the complexities of contemporary Indigenous subjectivities and cultural productions. How, then, does he rationalise his use of the latter category?

Mariani begins this process by examining the concept of tribalism, primarily through reference to a Western anthropological tradition whose own relation to colonialism remains unexamined in his text. This colonial lineage is reflected in the language he employs to construct his version of pre-invasion tribalism as an entity characterised by an organisation of knowledge which constructs the world as "an unbroken continuum" (7), and which is also marked by an absence of "egocentric individualism, historicism and writing " (9). I have previously critiqued the ideological assumptions underpinning these pronouncements, but it is worth remarking upon that at no point does Mariani seriously engage with competing Indigenous views on the constitutive features of tribalism, other than to reject the Indigenous critic Ward Churchill's arguments against the very use of the category of the "tribal'.

This hegemonic adherence to Western authority takes a curious turn when he concludes that "tribal organisation" is fundamentally a modern phenomenon (on the basis that the number of tribes defined by political unity was "probably quite small") and that, to a certain extent, "the arrival of the whites coincides with the demise of tribalism" (4). Thus 'tribalism' in his usage is properly inaugurated by the 1934 Indian Reorganisation Act, a point he labours in order to address the political dimensions of this phenomenon, that

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205 Mariani's argument is based on his reading of Stephen Cornell's analysis of the shifting politics of tribalism in response to the administration and regulation of Native American communities. Mariani acknowledges the distinction Cornell makes between concepts of tribalism which antedated Western invasion and tribalism as a political institution responding to Federal Government policies. He also states following Cornell that "tribes and tribalism are not immutable or quasi-metaphysical essences" (3).

206 This act provided for "the organisation of formally constituted and federally supported tribal governments and [was characterised] by an effort to resuscitate reservation economies." Stephen Cornell, Return of the Native: American Indian Political Resurgence (New York: Oxford UP, 1988), 12.
is to say, his recognition of how the official administration and regulation of Indigenous cultural formations generates resistances and transformations (3).

But, logically, Mariani’s argument produces the effect of erasing tribalism in its pre-invasion configurations, by reducing it to an arrangement of discrete, politically inert bands united only by kinship and blood lines. Nevertheless, he wishes to retain the term as a signifier of "symbolic-cultural meaning "(5), and in line with this agenda he must defend it against Native American uses of the term "nation". This latter term importantly signifies how Indigenous cultural discourses and practices reflect the interdependence of the traditional and the contemporary in mobilising resistance to the hegemonic culture. It also emblematises the politics of Indigenous self-definition against a history of Western colonial definitional imposition, a point which appears to be lost on Mariani as he seeks to locate the "objective reality" (10) of past and present Indigenous cultures through a relentless adherence to mainly Western sources and hermeneutic traditions.

To jettison the term nation in relation to Native American cultures - and thus to occlude the politics of nomenclature which underly such a tactic - he must resort to yet another act of imposition which relies on a Western etymology, practice and index of value. As such he endorses a specifically Western notion of the nation which enables him to produce the category of the "tribal" as that which is defined through lack, and he cites Marshall Sahlin’s definition of "tribal" entities as those whose "production, polity, and piety are not yet separately organised, and whose society is not yet a holy alliance of market, state and church. The tribal structure...lacks an independent economic sector or a separate religious organisation, let alone a special political mechanism "(6).

207 Mariani notes some of the objections made by Native Americans such as Ward Churchill and Glenn T.Morris to the use of the term tribalism in a footnote (5). He regards these objections as insufficient to jettison the term tribe in favour of nation, a position he partially defends on the basis that Native Americans frequently favour the term tribe.
Through his refusal to validate a Native American conception of nation, as for example articulated by Ward Churchill (Creek/Cherokee/Métis), Mariani exemplifies Churchill's crucial point that Western constructions of and uses of the term "tribalism" have never been a "value-neutral act." 208 In his examination of the colonial ideologies inflecting Western representations of "tribalism," Ward Churchill decisively argues that nomenclature encodes a politics which continues to impact on issues such as land rights in contemporary Native American affairs. He maps out the colonial anthropological provenance of the term "tribal" in the following passage:

No matter which way one twists it, to be addressed by English-speaking people - and by speakers of all other major European language as well - is to be demeaned in a most extraordinarily vicious way. Not only is one's society definitionally restricted from having achieved any level of cultural attainment beyond that of "primitivism" or "barbarism" - both thoroughgoing pejoratives in the Western lexicon - but one is personally reduced to being construed as no more than the product of one's gene pool. Suffice it to say that a more resoundingly racist construction would be difficult to conceive. (295)

While he acknowledges the right of Indigenous peoples to define themselves in whatever terms they see fit, he argues for the use of "nation" over "tribal" because it avoids the evolutionist orientation of the latter and thus the Western racial supremacist ideology that the term sanctions. Nation encodes both pre-invasion autonomy and a complex but different political organisation in Indigenous cultures. It also signifies the ongoing contestation over treaties and land rights, and marks resistance to hegemonic cultural and material

domination (300-304). Of course, for Mariani to validate Churchill's preferred term – nation - a term which incorporates tradition, change and resistance to Western colonialism, would be to destabilise the founding binary off his theoretical project, namely "tribalism"/"post-tribalism." In his schema, this binary purports to signify the violent changes wrought by colonialism, but it simultaneously invalidates Indigenous socio-cultural formations - nations- as embedding changing cultural discourses, values and practices outside of and simultaneously within the framework of Western imperialism and Western history.

What this privileging of Western academic terms and discourses over Indigenous counter-discourses produces is a form of cultural essentialism, which is tellingly encapsulated in Mariani’s frequent recourse to notions of the "proper" and the culturally "pure" as a means of rationalising his construction of the category of the "post-tribal". His primary objective in this text is to account for the historical and cultural processes which shape contemporary "hybridised" Native American subjects and thus to examine how they " project...well beyond their tribal origins to engage in the post-tribal activity of novel-writing" (10) in a context where their "worldviews are no longer purely tribal" (27). Although he acknowledges that these texts are still informed by "communal, non-individualistic ways of looking at reality " (27), he seems oblivious to the ideological and political implications of his adjudication on the "proper" and the "pure" in relation to contemporary "tribalism" or Indigenous nationhood. This blindspot is evidenced in the following passage in which he endeavours to justify his use of the category of the "post-tribal":

Why then resort to the term post-tribalism? Because, to my mind, it is worthwhile stressing that post-tribal cultures, unlike properly tribal ones, are no longer in a position to function as integrated, total systems of the pre-modern era. Post-tribalism is a distinctively modern
condition in which the effort to retain a pre-capitalist, non-individualistic, communally-orientated culture must in one way or another come to terms with the fact that the convergence between multiple levels of human and social experience, highlighted above as the key feature of the tribal/mythological imagination, has been dealt a severe blow by the encounter with the dominant society, and no longer holds. (17)

As this passage demonstrates, Mariani sets up a dichotomy between the tribal and the post-tribal which hinges upon the Western colonial binary of history/mythology, a dichotomy encapsulated in his conflation of tribalism and the mythical in the phrase "the tribal/mythological imagination." Thus he implies that tribalism in its pre-invasion forms is identified by orality, and that orality in turn articulates a mythical as opposed to an historical consciousness. In other words, he resurrects the colonial writing/orality, history/mythology pair of binarisms which implies that the Native American cultural modes he identifies as "tribal" cannot incorporate both historical and mythical elements. By way of comparison, Angela Cavender Wilson (Dakota) says of her own oral tradition that it contains mythical and historical elements, and that these elements can only be meaningfully construed in relation to the whole of which they form a part. 209 Thus the historical and the mythical are not framed as oppositional entities in the oral tradition; rather, according to Cavender Wilson, they co-exist and interpenetrate one another to form a complex "web" of meanings within the whole of the tradition (108).

Moreover, leaving aside Mariani’s often contradictory understanding of tribalism, his use of "post-tribal" in this passage effectively fixes the category of the "properly tribal" in a temporal space prior to colonialism; in the process, the hegemonic regulatory code of authenticity is reinscribed and, with it, the

notions of "real" and "hybrid" subjectivities which are utilised to devalue and
discredit Indigenous cultural productions that challenge these categorical
prescriptions. Consequently, he is unable to contemplate how Native
American cultural producers not only inscribe "traditional" discourses and
practices in their texts, but also reflexively appropriate and Indigenise Western
forms and practices. As Ian Anderson has argued, this tactical interweaving
enables Indigenous subjects - whose identities continue to be regulated by
the hegemonic culture - "to produce symbolic material in a social context
which constructs [them] as either "real' or "hybrid" (13) and to valorise their
cultural difference in politically and culturally meaningful ways.

What is also at stake here are issues about power and knowledge in a
cultural context still dominated by Eurocentric premises and practices, and
pressing questions of cultural authority and colonialism - questions not
adequately addressed by Mariani. Wendy Rose 210 draws attention to the
politics of this practice although her specific focus is on the phenomenon of
white shamanism. She argues that "White shamanism functions as a subset
of a much broader assumption within the matrix of contemporary Eurocentric
domination holding that non-Indians always (inherently) know more about
Indians than do Indians themselves "(406). In practice, this translates into an
often unquestioned privileging of white authority over Indigenous sources in
relation to cultural matters, and, as Ward Churchill has observed, this is
extrapolated to the exercise of citational authority over Indigenous sources
and texts. 211 Rose also argues, in a critique of the ideology of Western
universalism - an ideology which still permeates Western universities - that:

210 Wendy Rose, "The Great Pretenders: Further Reflections on White Shamanism," The
State Of Native America, ed. M.Annette Jaimes (Boston, Mass: South End Press, 1992), 403-
421. See also Laurie Anne Whitt, "Indigenous Peoples and the Cultural Politics of
Knowledge," Issues in Native American Cultural Identity, ed. Michael K. Green (New York:

211 Ward Churchill, Indians Are Us?: Culture And Genocide In Native North America
The "core" of information constituting the essential canon of
every discipline in academe -- from philosophy to literature, from history
to physical science, from art to mathematics -- is explicitly derived from
thought embodied in the European tradition. This is construed as
encapsulating all that is fundamentally meaningful within the
"universal attainment of human intellect." The achievements and
contributions of other cultures are considered, when they are
considered at all, only in terms of appendage (filtered through the
lense (sic) of Eurocentric interpretation), adornment (to prove the
superiority of the Euro-derived tradition), esoteric specialisation (to
prove that other traditions, unlike those derived from Europe, are
narrow and provincial rather than broad and universal. (407)

Eurocentricism, and the unequal power relations it constitutes and
perpetuates, she concludes, facilitate the continued colonisation of Native
American cultures by the dominant power - although that domination is
vigorously resisted (408). Rose's interrogation of the West's assumption of
cultural authority in relation to Indigeneity is illuminating with regard to
Mariani's academic and textual practices, and I return briefly to the extensive
passage cited earlier (on the "proper" and "post-tribalism") in order to further
explore these issues.

It should be noted here that Mariani does occasionally acknowledge
the unequal power relations which structure Indigenous cultural production in
contemporary North America. But, as I have already demonstrated, he
refuses to question his own authority - and that of the West - to debate these
questions of subjectivity, theory and practice with Indigenous critics and
cultural producers in terms which do not automatically position the West as
the matrix of all meaningful knowledge. As such his project constitutes, in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's phrase, a form of "epistemic violence." 212

This violence is also manifested in his reproduction of a colonial lexicon to reinforce his contention regarding the "post-tribal" condition of contemporary Native America. For example, terms like "encounter," (17) and his use of the imperative mode "must in one way or another," (17) embed an ideology which elides the genocidal thrust of Western imperialism and thereby suggests the inevitability of Western historical "progress." This latter term in conjunction with the phrase "it no longer holds" is a familiar colonial tactic. It marks the end of history and, as such, operates to invalidate radical projects like Silko's in Almanac Of The Dead which tactically rebut this ideology and the closure it demands through the inscription of an Indigenous prophetic tradition, and the different temporality this mobilises. As her project demonstrates, the continuing link between material and discursive violence in the Americas has become a focal point for Indigenous resistance to Euro-American cultural and material hegemony, a focus given insufficient weight in Mariani's analysis.

Finally, as a corollary to his argument that the nexus between traditional tribal knowledges and social structures has "been dealt a severe blow by the encounter with the dominant society" (17), Mariani contends that Native American traditional philosophies and epistemologies cannot provide "adequate, or entirely adequate answers" to a range of contemporary problems (18). He also suggests that in this context "traditional Indian views must acknowledge that there are phenomena whose comprehension and interrogation necessitate the contribution of external, non-tribal languages and worldviews "(18). To begin with, this problematic assertion elides questions of

212 This term is used by Spivak to mark the ways in which Western discourses, knowledges and the power relations they support have structured the West's production of non-Western subjectivities. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Postmarked Calcutta, India," The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ed. Sara Harasym (New York: Routledge,1990), 77.
power, knowledge and cultural difference under colonial regimes. Indeed, the underlying assumption in these citations that knowledges and power relations in North America are symmetrically structured is immediately called into question by Mariani's refusal to interrogate his own position of academic privilege - ironically manifested in his demand that Native American writers "must" acknowledge how the West also offers "viable interpretative keys" (18) to the "problems" produced out of ongoing Western colonialism.

This colonialist injunction in relation to questions of knowledge, authority and value, takes on a more sinister resonance in Mariani's thesis when he deploys it as a means of critiquing Indigenous writers' tactical production of cultural difference in terms which are markedly neo-imperialist. I refer here specifically to the spurious slippage he effects between the terms "totality" and "totalising" which he uses to characterise pre-invasion Indigenous worldviews and social formations through analogy with the genre of the Western epic, and the term "totalitarian" (vi), which he deploys to dismiss radical projects like Silko's. I will return to this point in a moment as a means of situating his generally dismissive analysis of Silko's Almanac Of The Dead.

By way of summation, Mariani's own political and ideological project is one which, in its relentless desire to re-institute the West as a primary point of reference for Indigenous cultural productions, demands of the writers in his survey that they minimise their cultural difference on the basis of their bicultural heritage and thus their location in the modernised West. What becomes especially clear through his reading of Silko's Almanac is a Eurocentric inability to contemplate her demand that the West surrender its privileged position as the reference point for other cultures. Such an engagement necessarily generates a political recognition and re-situation of Native American cultural difference as providing a different cultural matrix through which the world can be read - a tactical re-orientation which
fundamentally shapes the cultural productions of a colonised culture, and one that Mariani is unwilling to debate, let alone concede.

**Mariani's Reading of *Almanac Of The Dead* and the Discourse of "Common sense"**

I want briefly to examine the political resonances which accrue around Mariani's classification of *Almanac* as a "world epic" (202) in relation to the concept of totalisation. In so far as *Almanac* maps and reconstitutes five hundred years of history in the Americas from the vantage point of Indigenous knowledges, discourses and practices, the ascription of this epic dimension to the text is uncontroversial in itself. Nevertheless, while he is attentive to how the generic double marking of the title *Almanac Of The Dead: A Novel* "appears to resist its status as a novel," and while he also observes that "the novel itself is an almanac" (199) whose specific cultural configuration can be traced to the Mayan codices and *Chilam Balam Books*, he overrides Silko's explicit marking of this different textual and cultural status by foregrounding its epic properties. This epic ascription, in so far as it is annexed to his evaluation of the prophetic strand in the text, is fundamental to his critique of what he regards as its limitations.

Thus the novel's epic status is signified by its global scope -the projection of a pan-Indian revolution and its dissemination outside of the geo-political borders of the Americas – and by its "totalising vision": the prophetic prediction of "the disappearance of all things European" (*Almanac* 570).

Although he argues that *Almanac* differs from ancient and modern Western epics, in that it lacks an individual heroic figure (mapping instead a collective Native American subject), he also argues that it mobilises a teleological
framework which enables Silko to construct a "totalising vision" (202-3). How then does Mariani articulate the nexus between "epic discourse" and the concept of totalisation, and what ideologies and politics are inscribed by the application of this thesis to Silko’s *Almanac*? In general terms he argues:

> Totalising discourses are often prone to metaphysical abstraction in the realm of theory, and to totalitarian, absolutist politics in the realm of praxis. In so far as epic discourse can exist as such only thanks to its will-to-totality, it runs the risk of imposing on the world a theocratic, positivist consistency that erases all local untotalisable identities (vi)

Leaving aside for the moment the absurdity of containing an Indigenous counter-discourse within a Western colonial epistemic grid, according to Mariani, *Almanac’s* “will-to-totality” resides in its iteration of the prophetic mapping of the end of Euro-American hegemony over Indigenous cultures and lands, a prophecy which, he maintains, constitutes the foundational telos of the text:

> The sense of the ending of the Euro-American civilisation marks the entire text - it is the telos on the basis of which all the book narrates is held together.... Silko’s totalising strategy is the unmistakable sign of Almanac's epic aspirations, but also the site of a problem that is at once aesthetic and political. (203)

These are curiously contradictory pronouncements given his prior recognition that prophecy and the apocalyptic schema it enumerates ground profoundly anti-colonial Indigenous discourses in the Americas and thus historically embed an oppositional politics that challenges European claims to perpetual ownership of the continent. For example he concurs with Louis Parkinson
Zamora's observation 213 that apocalyptic narratives can be characterised as being "radically opposed to existing spiritual and political practices" and that the "apocalyptic mode provides writers belonging to a community that has endured colonial oppression for hundreds of years with a narrative strategy in which the sense of historical crisis is offset by the promise of radical change and renewal" (198). To this extent, he recognises that apocalyptic narratives and prophecy - two categories which he analytically separates and argues are productively imbricated within Almanac - perform at the very least a symbolic function, in so far as they contest the historical closure inscribed in Western historiography and the asymmetrical power relations structuring ongoing colonialism (198). To use Mariani's term, this "telos" - "the ending of the Euro-American civilisation" - also operates as a provocative reversal of colonial ideologies and practices inscribed through the figure of the "Vanishing Indian" and later in policies regulating the enforced assimilation of Indigenous cultures; Almanac's telos is thus driven by a specific political agenda.

It becomes apparent that Mariani's identification of this agenda as the "site of a problem that is at once aesthetic and political" (203) is fuelled by a colonial reading of prophecy as a discourse which is deficient in common sense, a position articulated by the conservative New Republic critic Sven Birkerts. 214 I have already analysed Birkerts' review of Almanac in Chapter Two of this thesis, but given its importance to Mariani's critique, it is necessary to reproduce part of Birkerts' review in this context.

Mariani contends that this "problem" is generated by the failure of the two narrative strands - historical and prophetic - to produce "a meaningful and coherent interface" (203). By way of elaboration, he cites with approval Birkerts' summation of the text, a summation which reinstitutes common sense as the proper index of evaluation: "Silko's premise of revolution is

tethered to airy nothing. It is frankly, naive to the point of silliness. The appeal to prophecy cannot make up the common-sense deficit "(Mariani 204 Birkerts 41). Here Mariani seems oblivious to the ways in which the discourse of common sense mobilises what Terence Martin identified as a "suspicion of the imagination" in early North American cultural discourses, a suspicion which resulted in the hierarchical privileging of fact over fiction and which instituted a dominant historiographical practice grounded in the real. 215 As I have argued in Chapter Two, Martin recognised that the discourse of common sense was inflected by an ideology of containment -- reflected in a range of conservative social and cultural practices and discourses. Hence Mariani’s invocation here of the discourse of common sense as an instrument of critique is not a politically neutral act. Indeed, as Elizabeth Cook-Lynn has argued, one of Almanac’s central achievements resides in its articulation of "the political reality of the imagination," 216 an observation which can stand as a rebuttal of "common-sense" and the hierarchisation embedded in the binary reality/imagination subscribed to by Birkerts and Mariani.

Having endorsed Birkerts’ evaluation then, Mariani concludes that Almanac’s failure lies in its absence of a "satisfactory" explanation as to "how and why “the West should "be brought down" (204). In other words, Mariani demands of the text that it submit itself to the authority of the real as required by Western conventions of rational explanation. He requires of Silko that she delineate a coherent political framework to elucidate and justify precisely what is meant by "the return of the land to indigenous control and what principles of indigenous nation-centred government" (209) would succeed the end of Western political regimes. In a footnote that tellingly encapsulates Mariani’s

anxiety about the different versions of history constructed by Silko and the Indigenous cosmologies and knowledges which underpin her historiography, he explicitly anchors his denigration of both Silko's and Ward Churchill's "indigenism" in the traditional Western fact/fiction binary that I have previously argued is produced out of the reification of common sense in North America. Thus he says of Churchill's exposition of Indigenist perspectives in *Struggle For The Land:* 

While many of Churchill's arguments are accurate and reasonable, like Silko he too projects an indigenist view of history that not only confuses facts with fantasy, but also toys with notions like the "natural" connection between a given land and its people. (210)

Mariani's use of the offensive term "toys" to denigrate Churchill's articulation of Indigenous political struggles over sovereignty and the cosmological connection with the land which anchors it, once again positions Western colonialism's trajectory as historically "inevitable" and beyond question, a position imbued with the very totalising rhetoric which Mariani accuses both Silko and Churchill of subscribing to. Arguably, this delegitimating manoeuvre seems to be based primarily on Mariani's discomfit at being positioned within the oppressive category of European coloniser, a category which he claims is unfairly homogenised and demonised in Silko’s novels, *Ceremony* and *Almanac.* He argues:

The question is whether the anti-colonialist imagination has anything to gain by simply reversing labels, and appropriating the manichean label for its own use...what I find problematic is not the notion that the white race was created by witchery, but the fact that such a notion reifies the category of "whites" and mimics the manichean logic it set out to

While this comment is specifically directed at Silko's novel *Ceremony*, Mariani makes similar arguments about what he regards as the essentialising and homogenising of Europeanness in *Almanac*. As the above passage indicates, he invokes Abdul JanMohamed's "central trope" of the "manichean allegory," a "trope" which structures Western colonial discourses of its "others," and which deploys a series of rigid binary oppositions like "white/black" and "good/evil" to devalue colonised others and their resistance to Western colonialism" (Mariani 103, JanMohamed 63). Mariani argues then, that Silko's reversal of the manichean duality inscribed in colonial discourses, which, in her texts operate to privilege Indigenous subjectivities and discourses, constitutes a form of "reverse ethnocentrism" (105), and is thus politically problematic. In relation to the above extract, what I find problematic is Mariani's assumption - signified through his use of the definite article "the" - that a unified, coherent "anti-colonialist imagination" exists. This phrase tellingly encodes Mariani's inability to acknowledge the specificity of Silko's anti-colonialist intervention, a specificity marked out in various ways, not least in its adoption of Indigenous almanac conventions to construe a politically uncompromising history which stands as a moral indictment of Western colonialism. Moreover, to remonstrate with her on the basis that she homogenises Europeans is to elide the unequal power relations authorising a history of dominant representations of Indigenous cultures against which she writes. By representing Silko's project as a "totalising" one through his recourse to Western discourses and categories of explanation and validation,

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218 I will engage with the notion of witchery in the final section of Chapter Six; suffice it to say that, as part of her contestation of the Western trope of "discovery," one of the narrative strands in *Almanac* produces Europeans as a creation of Native American witchery.

Mariani also participates in the ongoing project of Western colonialism and cultural imperialism, a participation of which he generally seems unaware.

Mariani’s dismissal of Silko’s deployment of prophecy in *Almanac* as that which defies common sense (204) is consistent with a conventional Western tendency to reductively read Native American prophetic discourses as fictionalised responses to the impact of Western colonialism. In the next chapter I examine the politics of Indigenous prophecy which are mobilised in Silko’s text and in that text’s re-presentation of heterogeneous Native American oral prophetic traditions. Through their predictive force - in relation to the appearance and ultimate disappearance of European hegemony in the Americas - these prophecies construct positions of agency for Native Americans which collectively challenge Western colonial histories and the unequal power relations they authorise. In a similar way, in so far as Indigenous prophecies inscribe a different temporality from that naturalised by Western historiography, that difference enables Silko tactically to circumvent the seemingly inevitable trajectory of Western colonial histories and the ideologies of progress which they buttress by providing a different temporality to Western historical linearity and the textual and material closure that it prescribes.
Yoeme and the others believed that the almanac had living power that would bring all the tribal people of the Americas together.... Europeans called it a coincidence, but the almanacs had prophesised the appearance of Cortés to the day. All Native American tribes had similar prophecies about the appearance, conflict with, and eventual disappearance of things European.... Without the almanacs, the people would not be able to recognize the days and months yet to come, days and months that would see the people retake the land. 220

In the Americas the white man never referred to the past but only to the future. The white man didn't seem to understand he had no future here because he had no past, no spirit of ancestors..... No matter what you or anyone else said, history would catch up with you; it was inevitable. History was the sacred text.221

In this chapter I stage a more detailed engagement with Leslie Marmon Silko's tactical re-presentation of Native American prophetic traditions in *Almanac Of The Dead* and the temporal politics which accrue around the re-narrativisation of these traditions in the text. As the epigraphs to this chapter suggest, Native American prophecy as embodied in the almanac and orally reproduced by different Native American narrators in the novel, mobilises an authoritative cultural repository of knowledges and practices. These circulate in Silko's text to critique, indeed to indict, Euro-American imperialism and

221 Angelita La Escapia in *Almanac Of The Dead*, 313-316.
colonialism, and the linear models of temporality which underwrite their cultural practices and their histories, both secular and sacred. As I noted in the previous chapter, the almanac notebooks reconstructed in the novel are based on Silko's reading of the extant Mayan Codices, although she invents an additional almanac fragment which enables her to construct events in Pre-Columbian America from an imagined Native American perspective. 222 Significantly, then, Silko's invention of the almanac fragment and its decoding in the novel provide the basis for a systematic mapping of the ways in which Native American prophecy narratives articulate and privilege histories, temporalities and cosmologies which contest Western colonial and religious discourses and, as a consequence, Western claims to wield spiritual, intellectual and material sovereignty over the Americas.

Therefore, Silko's project in *Almanac* is to situate the deployment of prophecy narratives by Native American cultures as tactics of resistance to ongoing Western colonialism and the cultural hierarchy it mandates. In the process she challenges a dominant Eurocentric epistemological and cosmological discursive regime which assigns Indigenous prophetic traditions to the realm of myth or superstition, while at the same time neutralising the oppositional cultural politics they mobilise by reading them as inadequate responses to the conjoint forces of colonialism and Christianity. Indeed, Silko's identification of and critical engagement with, the violent nexus between colonialism and Christianity functions as a pivotal tactic in the text's arguments about the illegitimacy of Western occupation of Native American territories.

*Almanac*'s political agenda is manifested for instance in the Yaqui historian and almanac custodian, Yoeme's re-articulation of a series of prophecies inscribed in the almanac to her twin granddaughters Zeta and

222 For a discussion of this see Silko's interview with Laura Coltelli in *Winged Words: American Indian Writers Speak*, Laura Coltelli (Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1990), 151-152.
Lecha, who on her death assume the role of almanac custodians and transcribers. These prophecies include the prediction (shared by all "Native American tribes") about the arrival of Cortés in the Americas, and the parallel prediction of the "eventual disappearance of things European" (570). Yoeme directly contests the dominant tradition in relation to Native American prophecies of Western invasion, which devalues their historical and cultural force by reading them as mere "coincidence." Thus: "Europeans called it a coincidence, but the almanacs had prophesied the appearance of Cortes to the day" (569). She invokes the authority of the almanac (" the book of mouths and tongues" [142) in order to re-legitimate prophecy as an Indigenous tactic of resistance to Western hegemony. This tactical resistance is achieved by mobilising the almanac as "a competing form of historical consciousness" about the Americas. 223

The prediction of the re-Indigenisation of the Americas marked out in the almanac and in the "people's stories" ultimately signifies the reclamation of Native American sovereignty at an unspecified time in the future when a series of revolutionary and apocalyptic conjunctions will culminate in the recovery of Indigenous lands by "the people" (570). Crucially, the forecasts about the invasion and re-Indigenisation of the Americas take place "hundreds of years before the Europeans arrived" (570), and, once again, the temporal priority accorded to Native American knowledges and narratives in the text operates as a tactic of Indigenous agency and empowerment which symbolically invalidates the Western discursive tradition rationalising European occupation of Native American lands.

I begin this chapter with an overview of the conventional Western reading of Native American prophecy narratives, and the temporal politics which such readings encode, in order to clarify the discursive contexts against

which Silko writes. I then examine the politics of the Puritan genre of the jeremiad, and the Western eschatological tradition it enshrines, as a means of positioning Silko's critique of the jeremiad's legitimating function in relation to the colonial enterprise, and to contextualise her articulation of a Native American counter-eschatological tradition. This counter-tradition is signified by the Spirit Snake's prophetic prediction "that this world is about to end" (135), and by the text's gradual decoding of the Giant Stone snake's prophetic significance; namely, that it points in the direction of the approaching revolutionary army led by the Twin brothers, which initiates the process of re-Indigenising the Americas.

To clarify these revolutionary politics and their connection to Native American prophecy, I also briefly engage with the text's examination of Marx and Marxism, an examination which leads into an engagement with colonialism, apocalypse and environmental politics as they are enunciated in *Almanac Of The Dead*. Finally, I conclude this chapter with an analysis of two specific Native American prophecies, the Aztec prophecy of Quetzalcoatl's return and the Lakota prophecy of the return of the Buffalo. Both of these prophecies are reinscribed and re-evaluated by Native American narrators in *Almanac* to delegitimate Western colonial discourses of "discovery" and conquest, and to reclaim agency for Indigenous subjects by foregrounding the continuity of Native American material and symbolic resistance to Western colonialism and cultural imperialism.

**Native American Prophecy and the History/Myth Binarism**

Western scepticism about the validity of Native American prophecies, a scepticism which invariably depoliticises their tactical force in colonial contexts structured by unequal power relations, has been articulated in various ways. Generally, these heterogeneous narrative traditions have been categorised as "coincidence," "fabrication," "fiction," the "retrospective argument," 225 or, as in the case of Lakota prophecies of return through the agency of the Ghost Dance, dismissed by commentators like James Mooney as the "primitive" outpourings of a "doomed race." 226 This reductive orientation is exemplified in Jarold Ramsey’s evaluation of Western Native American prophetic traditions, which he inserts into the category of literature/fiction, and whose cultural and political force in colonial times he nullifies by interpreting a belief in prophecy as an effect of the "fundamental conservatism of...[Native American] mythological systems." 227 Ramsey’s consignment of these Indigenous prophecy narratives to the realm of "mythology" is consistent with a dominant Western interpretive tradition that implicitly positions cyclical time as ahistorical and that confers a privileged status on Western linear time as "real" or "historical" time, thus maintaining the Western colonial binary of history/mythology which has functioned to rationalise the West's material and symbolic domination of the Americas. Moreover, Western interpreters of Indigenous prophecies like Mooney focus on their immediate "failure" to realise the prophetic desire for a return to Indigenous political control and the cultural practices which sustain it, a reading which further calls into question the legitimacy of prophecy narratives as an authoritative explanation of the world.


These questions of authority and legitimacy are addressed by Julie Cruikshank in her essay "Claiming Legitimacy: Prophecy Narratives From Northern Aboriginal Women," and while her analysis specifically engages with the cultural politics of prophecy narratives in relation to Yukon women, her argument provides a useful intervention in dominant Eurocentric ways of reading these Native American narratives in both past and contemporary contexts. To begin with, she argues that discourses around the meaning of Indigenous prophecy narratives were contested from the inception of Western colonisation (152), and that this struggle over meaning constituted an important symbolic and cultural site of resistance to Western colonial domination.

Western scholarly debates about the meaning and function of these prophecy narratives, she maintains, have been constrained by an adherence to rigid Eurocentric theoretical frameworks and paradigms which effectively delegitimate the political and cultural force of the prophecies by reading them as simplistic responses to external events like Western colonisation (149). For example, she contends that Western empirical standards of facticity and "historical veracity" (150) are inappropriately applied to narratives which construct culturally meaningful links between past, present and future, and which are, moreover, read out of "the total body of literature in which they appear" (152) by Western scholars and commentators. She also makes the important point that prophecy narratives constitute a part of everyday Native American experience, an observation which undermines the dominant discursive tendency to read them as instances of exotica and superstition, a marginalising strategy that Carol Greenhouse argues functions to disallow readings of them as constituting "counter discourses of time." 228

Cruikshank, in her examination of colonial and contemporary readings (both Western and Indigenous) of Yukon shamanic prophecies, draws the following conclusion:

The contested nature of explanation is very much at issue here. Each of these [Indigenous] accounts is told as a way of making intellectually consistent sense of disruptive changes -- some past, some contemporary, some anticipated -- with reference to an authoritative narrative framework. Each is offered as evidence for the legitimacy of local knowledges and discourse. (156)

This notion of prophecy as an authoritative and intellectually coherent practice provides an Indigenous set of explanations about the world, and it is Silko's polemical deployment of this notion of counter-knowledge which invests *Almanac* with much of its critical force. Therefore, Yoeme's authoritative pronouncements about Western conquest and the West's ultimate "disappearance" in the Americas assert the legitimacy and continuity of prophecy as an Indigenous narrative form, which, to repeat Cruikshank's words, articulates "a competing form of historical consciousness that deserves to be taken seriously" (163). In the context of the novel, prophecy functions to undermine the colonial contours and myths of dominant Western histories (both secular and sacred), and the constructions of nation and sovereignty that such histories engender and sustain.

Cruikshank makes a further point about the temporal aspects of Indigenous prophecy, one which addresses the West's tendency to invalidate it on the basis of a perceived failure of specific predictions to materialise in the present. In other words, the immediate non-materialisation of prophecies like

229 See also Willard Johnson, "Contemporary Native American Prophecy in Historical Perspective," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64.3 (1996), 575-622.
the return of the buffalo and the re-Indigenisation it augurs in Lakota prophecies are read as evidence of a general cultural failure; prophecy in particular is read as a sign of "primitive" incapacity in the face of Western conquest and cultural/symbolic domination. However, as Cruikshank suggests, Indigenous prophecies are often ambiguous (155) and their narrative frameworks resist singular interpretations, particularly when questions of time, cultural difference and legitimacy are invoked:

Even when prophecy does not lead to short term political and social transformations, it nevertheless may reproduce shared cultural meanings and underscore the importance of using familiar narrative frameworks to explain the present, particularly as it is now invoked by indigenous people to claim authoritative interpretations of their past.(152)

This issue is addressed in Almanac when Wilson Weasel Tail, a Lakota lawyer and visionary raised forty miles from the Wounded Knee Massacre site (713), affirms the continuity of the Ghost dance as a metaphor for Native American resistance to colonisation by explicitly refuting the Western idea of its "failure" to produce "results overnight" (722). Wilson's refutation, delivered at the International Holistic Conference convened to debate the global crisis occurring in the present of the novel, functions precisely as a claim for an "authoritative interpretation of [the] past," and it acknowledges a culturally different perspective on time, prophecy and history. Thus he enjoins his audience to: "Listen to the prophecies! Next to thirty thousand years, five hundred years of [colonial occupation] look like nothing. The buffalo are returning" (725). I will engage in more detail with his critical intervention in and reclamation of the Ghost Dance prophecy later in this chapter, but for now I
want to focus on the cultural politics of time as they are mapped out in Silko's text.

**Indigenous Prophecy and the Politics of Temporality**

In order to situate Silko's revaluation of Native American cyclical time and its imbrication with prophecy as a tactic of resistance, I want briefly to elaborate on how dominant Western theorisations of time and history have functioned to legitimate Western invasion and conquest of the Americas by invoking Tzetvan Todorov's commentary on cyclical time in his influential 1984 text *The Conquest of America*. Todorov's lengthy examination of what he perceives to be the inexorable link between Aztec defeat by the Spanish Conquistadors and the Aztec myth of Quetzalcoatl is inextricably bound up with his understanding of what he regards as the limitations of Aztec semiotic systems, and the relationship of these systems to cyclical time. My own focus in this chapter does not permit me to engage in detail with Todorov's extensive analysis of this Aztec myth of return 230 and the assumptions he makes about the Aztec culture's alleged inability to innovate in the face of the unprecedented challenge - material and symbolic - posed by the invading Spanish army. 231 But, as Deborah Root contends, the imperial logic which undergirds Todorov's evaluation of Aztec culture's purported inability to extemporise and innovate in the face of novelty and crisis is linked to a privileging of both Western phonetic writing over Aztec script, and the linear model of time over the Aztec cyclical model (208). Therefore, much of the force of Todorov's argument about the inevitability of Aztec defeat is predicated on a particular understanding of cyclical time as it relates to Indigenous prophecy, and I reproduce below a summation of what he perceives to be the cultural and political effects of their imbrication:

230 I discuss this myth of Quetzalcoatl in more detail in the final section of this chapter.
We cannot believe that there existed, long before the Spaniard's arrival, a drawing representing their ships and their swords, their clothes and their hats.... Again, we are dealing with a prophecy fabricated a posteriori, a retrospective prospection. But that there should be a need to forge this history is revealing; no event can be entirely unprecedented; repetition prevails over difference. In place of this cyclical, repetitive time frozen in an unalterable sequence, where everything is always predicted in advance, where the singular event is merely the realisation of omens always and already present, in place of this time dominated by the system appears the one-directional time of apotheosis and fulfillment as the Christians then experience it.... And the conquest also confirms the Christian conception of time, which is not an incessant return but an infinite progression toward the final victory of the Christian spirit.... (86-87)

Thus, in Todorov's analysis, Mesoamerican (Mayan and Aztec) prophecies of Western invasion are categorised as fabrications or forgeries, a reading which necessarily invalidates both their cultural integrity and their mobilisation as tactical weapons in the face of the Spanish conquest. As the above passage makes clear, Todorov's dismissal of prophecy as a symbolic marker of resistance is wedded to his totalising construction of cyclical time as "repetitive time frozen in an unalterable sequence," and his emphasis on the idea of temporal immutability as embedded in the phrase "incessant return."

Todorov's references to "frozen" time and "incessant return" invoke the Hegelian model of Western historiography that dominates most Western accounts and judgements of Indigenous cultures. 232 As I argued in Chapter One, this Hegelian model underwrites Western evaluations of the "savage,"

"primitive" and "static" nature of Apache culture, and thus provides a
discursive rationale for the violent practices of Western colonialism and the
dispossession of the Apaches from their homelands. It also demonstrates
how the West invariably positions the non-West as static, trapped in an
ontological fixity that can only be transcended through the agency of Western
colonial conquest, a process which in turn inaugurates the beginnings of "real"
history/time. As Deborah Root contends, Todorov's dismissal of Aztec
prophecy as a practice informed by repetition and stasis "suggests that
'Indians' had only a limited conception of 'real' time, that is to say, Western
linear time until they were incorporated into European, Christian history after
their defeat" (202).

Todorov's reductive Eurocentric formulation of cyclical time is
predicated on the assumption that repetition or return is always identical, and
disallows the "progression" and differentiation promised by Western linear
time. Hence the putative stasis of Indigenous cyclical time is aligned with the
symbolic practices of the "primitive," a Hegelian position that necessarily
reifies Western linear time as "real" time, and that unproblematically confers
an evolutionary symbolic advantage upon the Western colonising cultures that
naturalise linear time in the name of progress. Indeed, in the above
passage, Todorov invokes the Christian idea of linear time's redemptive
power, an ideology explicated in the phrases "the one-directional time of
apotheosis and fulfillment" and "an infinite progression towards the final
victory of the Christian spirit" (87).

In her examination of the politics of time and cultural difference in
Western anthropological discourses, Carol Greenhouse argues that
representations of temporality invariably raise "specific questions of power,
authority, legitimacy" (ix) and agency (7). She contends that issues around
temporality and cultural difference within the discipline of anthropology have
been traditionally informed by "a durable and multidimensional
ethnocentrism"(1-2), whose "template...is in the cultural conventions of political self-legitimation in modern nation-states"(2). This ethnocentrism, she argues, structures the binary relationship which has conventionally differentiated cyclical and linear models of temporality within the discipline, the general effect of which has been to naturalise and privilege Western linear time over the cyclical time of the "other." Thus she suggests that assumptions about "linear time -- our time- as 'real' time" are naturalised and universalised with reference to mainly Western practices and are seemingly confirmed by "the temporal discourses of state nationalism"(2). Moreover, linear time is represented as abstract and social, while cyclical time is aligned with nature and the "primitive;" the former is read as "irreversible," a quality which signifies its progressive orientation, while the latter is identified with iterability and a conservative cultural/social orientation (30) - an observation borne out by Todorov's evaluation of Mesoamerican time in relation to prophecy. Thus she contends that "what passes for the natural rationality of linear time is, in fact, a set of cultural claims about the efficacy of [Western] law and specific technologies of social ordering"(4).

Finally, in her re-examination of the myth of Quetzalcoatl, Greenhouse makes an important point about Mesoamerican calculations of cyclical time which effectively refutes Todorov's interpretation of it "as repetitive time frozen in unalterable sequence" (86). She argues that, in general, Mesoamerican conceptions of time entailed "elements of continuity and discontinuity." 233 With regard to the Western tradition of interpreting return as the same or the identical, as elaborated for instance by Todorov, she argues that evidence suggests a Mesoamerican temporal perspective that registers differentiation and transformation, not stasis and homogeneity:

Thus Aztecs and Maya juxtaposed and celebrated their calendrical cycles in a variety of ways, and in neither case were these continuous or repetitive. This observation strikes directly at the conventional post-Conquest meanings of Aztec cyclical time. At the very least, Aztec ritual emphasis appears to have been on depletion and renewal rather than continuity or return. (150)

Change then, as well as continuity, is central to Mesoamerican representations of time, a point reinforced by Silko's engagement with theories of time in her essay, "Notes On Almanac Of The Dead." In this essay, Silko offers the following reflections on Native American cyclical time, which occurs in the context of articulating her childhood memories of the "old-time people"(136) and her interest in the "ancient Maya almanacs":

All times go on existing side by side for all eternity. No moment is lost or destroyed. There are no future times or past times; there are always all the times, which differ slightly, as the locations on the tortilla differ slightly. The past and the future are the same because they exist only in the present of our imaginations. We can think and speak only in the present, but as we do it is becoming the past, which is always present, and which always contains the future encoded in it. Without clocks or calendars we see only the succession of the days...but the succession is cyclic. Without calendars and clocks, the process of aging becomes a process of changing: the infant changes; the flower changes; the changes continue relentlessly. Nothing is lost, left behind or destroyed. It is only changed. (137)

These ideas on time are reproduced in *Almanac Of the Dead* and are encoded in the almanac- a process encapsulated in her assertion that "nothing is lost, left behind or destroyed. It is only changed" (137). Her argument then, dismantles the claims made about linear time's "irreversibility" (Greenhouse 30), its redemptive power (22), and the Western ideology of progress which grounds it. Instead, cyclical time is valorised precisely for its ability to mark out multiple temporal locations and trajectories, a fact that, in the apocalyptic context of the novel, confers an advantage on the Native American subjects who await the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies of return. As Silko's commentary on time and change makes clear, this Indigenous idea of return cannot be reduced to Todorov's Eurocentric emphasis on the static properties of cyclical time; rather the idea of return as it is mobilised in the novel is predicated on the premise that repetition is never the same, thereby challenging Todorov's notion of "frozen time." 235

In *Almanac*, then, the legitimating function of Western linear time is contested and overturned by the text's relegitimation of Native American cyclical time and the violent transformations that it augurs. As a counterpoint to the Western idea of cultural stasis that this temporality customarily evokes, Yoeme declares the Almanac to be a text possessing "living power" (569). It therefore circulates as a prophetic marker of ongoing Indigenous resistance to Western colonial domination by providing a temporal reference point that directly undermines the coherence and "naturalness" of Western linear time.

As Yoeme's comment on the prophecy of Western invasion makes clear, cyclical time as embodied in the almanac also enables the people to decipher impending events - adverse or otherwise - and this level of cultural literacy provides them with a means of resisting the forces of Western colonial invasion. In Yoeme's words:

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235 On the critical difference encoded in the concept of "reiteration" as fundamental to the production of innovation, originality and difference from a different cultural location, see Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* ed. Gerald Graff(Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1988).
The almanacs had warned the people hundreds of years before the Europeans arrived. The people living in large towns were told to scatter, to disperse to make the murderous work of the invaders more difficult. Without the almanacs, the people would not be able to recognise the days and months yet to come, days and months that would see the people retake the land. (570)

Crucially, the kind of cultural literacy inscribed in the above passage is one that remains illegible to the Western historian or critic. It is a cultural literacy that overturns the spoken/written text, and that sets in motion the cosmological power of the Almanac as defying binary categories, whilst at the same time articulating spatio-temporal dimensions and literacies that operate on levels incomprehensible to the West and unassimilable to its reductive, colonising practices. Hence the "living," cosmological power of the Almanac functions powerfully to contest the dominant Western colonial historiographic and critical tradition of silencing and devaluing Indigenous cultural modes and literacies which do not conform to its discursive, generic, epistemological and cosmological parameters and prescriptions.

Time, then, in Silko's text is embodied and cyclical; it thus constitutes a temporality which competes with the ostensible "neutrality" and "reality" of Western linear time, and arguably poses a challenge to the Western colonial ideology of history as progress and to Western secular and sacred models of history like Marxism and American Puritanism which are structured by linear temporal and eschatological frameworks.

But, ironically, the dissertation on time, and the limitations of linear temporalities enunciated in the second epigraph to this chapter, play precisely on the idea of historical "inevitability" to signal the ultimate triumph of a Native American historical imperative -- the re-Indigenisation of the Americas and the
return of the land to "the people." Thus the "inevitability" marked out by Western linear time is appropriated and subverted in Silko's text in order to politicise questions about the relationship between history, spirituality and sovereignty in the Americas, a nexus encapsulated in the epigraphic assertion by the Mayan revolutionary leader, Angelita, that "History was the sacred text" (315).

**The Jeremiad**

I want at this juncture to stage a brief reading of Sacvan Bercovitch's valuable text, *The Puritan Jeremiad*, 236 in which he examines the politics of what he regards as a quintessentially American genre - the jeremiad - and its relation both to the colonial project in New England and the emergence of specifically American discourses of nation. Arguably, Angelita's invocation of Indigenous history as "the sacred text," a history inscribed in the Native American almanac genre, directly addresses, in order to displace, the redemptive history mapped in the jeremiad, and the Puritan claim to spiritual and material ownership of New England which this genre sanctioned.

Bercovitch argues that the genre of the jeremiad and the "Puritan concept of errand" (9) which it inscribed produced a distinctive "fusion" of secular and sacred histories, and that the effect of this fusion was to foster the colonial/Providential goal of transforming New England and its chosen people into "the American city of God". 237 Hence the eschatological vision mapped out in the jeremiads, he asserts, buttressed Puritan claims to sovereignty over Native American lands, and the genre played a pivotal symbolic role in the construction of nation and nationalism in what was to became the United States. He contends that "Only in America has nationalism carried with it the Christian meaning of the sacred. Only America,

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of all national designations, has assumed the combined force of eschatology and chauvinism...." (176).

The jeremiads were articulated in a range of shifting historical contexts and provided a rhetorical foundation for colonialism and the emergent nation. But while the jeremiads incorporated European Christian prophetic traditions and the figurations which structured them, the conditions of colonial America engendered a shift in orientation from "the doctrine of vengeance" inscribed in the Old World jeremiad to a redemptive framework which, Bercovitch argues, symbolically marked "the inviolability of the colonial cause" (7). For example, in his examination of the prototypic colonial jeremiads, he identifies the recurrence of tropes such as "wilderness", "vineyard," "Canaan" and "Zion" (46), but he notes also that they increasingly fuse "historical, moral and spiritual levels of meaning" (46) in order to represent the chosen people and their work of redemption in specifically American terms: "Over and over again the colonial Jeremiahs portray the settlers as a people of God in terms of election, the body politic, and the advancing army of Christ" (46). This militant representation of the colonists in relation to the concept of election as "the advancing army of Christ" functions to legitimate the decimation and dispossession of resistant Native Americans by, as Bercovitch argues, invoking the idea and rationale of a holy war, manifested for example in military engagements with King Phillip's nation and in the French and Indian wars.

Thus, from the inception of colonial occupation, the Puritan jeremiads emphasised the special nature of the Puritan settlers and their Providential errand into the wilderness; Bercovitch also notes that, ideologically, from the period of the Great Migration, the genre shaped a specifically "modern middle-class culture" (18) which facilitated and sanctioned economic
development, a symbiosis of the material and spiritual that he signifies with the phrase "errand of entrepreneurs" (22): 238

In all fundamental aspects, New England was from the start an outpost of the modern world. It evolved from its own origins, as it were, into a middle-class culture -- a commercially oriented economy buttressed by the decline of European feudalism, unhampered by lingering traditions of aristocracy and crown, and sustained by the prospect (if not always the fact) of personal advancement -- a relatively homogeneous society whose enterprise was consecrated, according to its civic and clerical leadership, by a divine plan of progress. (20)

By the eighteenth century, Bercovitch argues, the Providential schema framing the Puritan jeremiads's construction of a "sacred history of the New World" (93) became increasingly attatched to a more general ideology of human progress, which nevertheless - as exemplified in the sermons of Jonathan Edwards - wedded "eschatology and self interest" (108), and "made the spiral of redemption synonomyous with the advance of mankind" (108). In the context of Westward expansion and, with it, the violent conquest and dispossession of Native Americans, the jeremiads identified "progress with biblical prophecy as [a specifically] American [form of] millenialism" (114), thus providing a rhetorical legitimation for imperialism and the assertion of sovereignty in the so-called New World.

Bercovitch notes that initial attempts by some Puritans to incorporate Native Americans into the figural modes of Puritan eschatology, namely the belief (also entertained by the Spanish conquistadors) that they "were descended from the ten lost tribes" (75) of Israel and were thus capable of

conversion to Christianity, were rapidly displaced by the realities of Native American resistance to conversion and to territorial appropriations. By the time of King Phillip's War, they were effectively slotted into the category of demonic other, and according to Puritan theology their extermination could be viewed as a crucial aspect of God's divine plan. As Bercovitch observes, "by the time King Phillip's War broke out the Indians were unequivocally identified with the doomed 'dark brothers' of Scripture -- Cain, Ishmael, Esau, and above all the heathen natives of the promised land, who were to be dispossessed by divine decree of what really belonged to God's chosen" (75).

In New England, in the aftermath of the American Revolution, which was interpreted as the culmination of God's divine plan of progress (153), "the ritual of the jeremiad" (159), utilising the rubric of "continuing revolution," generated the proliferation of a series of "self-appointed committees on un-American activities" (159), including "progressive societies for eradicating the Indians" (159). Bercovitch argues that the Revolution, and its symbolic construction of Americanness, engendered "an extraordinary cultural hegemony" (155) which authorised extermination or assimilation to dominant American practices or values: "Blacks and Indians too could learn to be True Americans, when in the fullness of time they would adopt the tenets of black and red capitalism" (160).

This focus on extermination and righteous dispossession with its anchoring in scriptural authority became a commonplace of colonial discourses and reached its apogee in the nineteenth - century doctrine of Manifest Destiny. 239 As Cheryl Walker notes, the term Manifest Destiny was

"coined by the influential Democrat John L. Sullivan in an editorial in 1845" 240 during a period of vigorous Westward expansion into so called "open lands" (186), and it provided a rhetorical and ideological justification for the increasingly violent and genocidal expulsion of Native Americans from their homelands. To Sullivan this imperial project of aggressive Westward annexation of Native American lands was sanctioned "by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative self government entrusted to us." 241

As Walker and others have argued, this doctrine reinforced dominant ideologies about the existence of an evolutionary cultural hierarchy between Euro-Americans and Native Americans, a hierarchy which produced a "belief in the inexorable force of history and the inevitable recognition of the superiority of white models of social organisation" (188). Thus the ideology of Manifest Destiny and the American imperialist/nationalist project that it invested with legitimacy came to naturalise and accelerate the violent displacement and decimation of Native American cultures through a series of what the colonising culture regarded as Providentially sanctioned "just wars" (186).

As the following quotation from Bercovitch demonstrates, Manifest Destiny, in so far as it re-articulates the workings of a divine Providence, invested colonial American claims of territorial sovereignty with a "sacred significance" (163), which effectively conferred on those claims the status of divine law:

Contrary to general opinion, the Puritans neither hated nor feared their environment. By 'promise,' they believed, the land belonged to them

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241 Cited in Walker, 187.
before they belonged to the land, and they took possession, accordingly, first by imposing their own image on it, and then by seeing themselves reflected back on the image they had imposed. The wilderness/garden became their mirror of prophecy. They saw themselves revealed in it as the New Israel that would make the desert bloom as the rose. They also discerned in it those who did not belong to the land: Indians....(162)

In effect, the yoking of the historical, spiritual and prophetic in the genre of the jeremiad invalidates prior Indigenous claims to New England by appropriating or erasing the ancestral/spiritual relationship between Native Americans and the land. This appropriative agenda, and the legal/spiritual framework which undergirds it, is challenged by the Indigenous prophetic tradition in *Almanac Of The Dead*. This counter-tradition buttresses contemporary Native American claims to sovereignty in the Americas through its articulation of a sacred matrix which functions as a counterpoint to that "divine" law enunciated in the Puritan jeremiads. As Silko's text makes clear, no Euro-American law, whether sacred or profane, can disguise the illegal usurpation of Native American land, nor invalidate the latter's special relationship to that land.

I will discuss Native American perceptions about the illegality of Western imposed geo-political borders and the untenability of Western legal title in relation to "stolen land" (*Almanac* 133) later in this chapter. I want to focus now in more detail on the ways in which Indigenous prophecy - as a conduit to the ancestors and their knowledges and laws - is specifically mobilised in Silko's text to undermine the authority of the Puritan jeremiad and its redemptive mission. The critique of Christianity, both Puritan and Catholic, in *Almanac* foregrounds the inherent violence and spiritual poverty inflecting Western Christianity in so far as it relates to colonialism in the Americas, a
relationship encapsulated in the observation that "Christianity had repeatedly violated its own canons, and only the Indians could still see the Blessed Virgin among the December roses, her skin colour and clothing Native American, not European" (478).

**History, Indigenous Law and Authority**

In *Almanac Of The Dead*, then, Silko deploys the Indigenous almanac to stage a militant dismantling of the rhetorical foundations of nation and sacred mission as enunciated in the genre of the Puritan jeremiad. This tactical delegitimation of the colonising culture's spiritual claims to ownership in the Americas implicitly contests the Puritan prophetic/eschatological tradition by reinscribing an Indigenous counter-eschatological tradition which unequivocally vests ownership in Native American hands. Moreover, while *Almanac Of The Dead* can itself be categorised as an eschatological text, in that it engages with the idea of final causes (as exemplified for instance in the Spirit Snake's prophetic inscription in the *Almanac Notebooks* that "this world is about to end") (135), it also mobilises a different cosmological and temporal matrix to that enshrined in the Puritan jeremiad in order to delegitimate the very idea of colonial America as moving towards "the American city of God" (Bercovitch 9). Indeed, Western Christianity's future orientation, and the colonial telos of material/spiritual progress it gives rise to in the Americas, is represented as "unnatural" because it lacks the authority of the ancestors, an authority demonstrated by a cyclical temporality which necessarily links past, present and future to assert the inviolability of Indigenous ownership and connection to the land. As I have already argued, Silko's privileging of Indigenous prophecy as a counterpoint to the "apocalyptic history of the Americas" (Bercovitch 68) woven into the Puritan jeremiads and the claims to spiritual sovereignty they symbolically instantiate, also functions as a critique of Western reading practices which reduce Indigenous prophecy to the realm of "myth" and "superstition" - the
"ahistorical" - and thereby invalidate its legitimacy as a discourse reiterating the history, law and wisdom of the ancestors. This Eurocentric invalidation, which is buttressed by a violent binary logic equating the West and its symbolic/cultural technologies with the "historical," while aligning those of Native American cultures with the realm of "mythology," is vigorously overturned and reversed by Silko in her text. As the following quotations from the text make clear, Euro-American claims to wield sovereignty in the Americas are rendered illegitimate precisely because, unlike Native Americans, they are "without history," a condition produced by their lack of ancestral/spiritual connection to the land. Indeed, in response to a question framed by the text as to "Who had spiritual possession of the Americas?" (717), Lecha, one of the almanac's custodians in the present, replies "Not the Christians"(717). Lecha's dismissal of Christianity is based on her grandmother, Yoeme's, assessment of the "precarious spiritual health" (718) of the Europeans from the very beginnings of colonisation. According to Yoeme, the European "outsiders had sensed their Christianity was somehow inadequate in the face of the immensely powerful and splendid spirit beings who inhabited the vastness of the Americas" (718). Lecha's observations of contemporary Christianity (exemplified by the commodifying imperative of tele-evangelism) and spirituality (epitomised for instance by white shamans) 242 affirm this sense of alienation and dislocation, a condition she attributes to their "loss of connection with the earth" (718).

The interconnections between "history," spirituality, law and ownership are also unequivocally asserted by Angelita, a Mayan revolutionary leader, in her disquisition on the limitations of Marxist theory. She declares, "The white

man didn't seem to understand that he had no future here because he had no past, no spirit of ancestors here" (313). Conversely, "The stories of the people or their 'history' had always been sacred, the source of their entire existence. If the people had not retold the stories, or if the stories had somehow been lost, then the people were lost; the ancestor's spirits were summoned by the stories" (315 -316). The continuity of the ancestors' presence and protective function in the Americas is thus guaranteed by their descendants' reiteration of their stories, and it is the generative capacity of Indigenous story telling which Angelita foregrounds in her use of the term "sacred text" (316). This term is also a signifier for the processes of Indigenous history, processes animated by the "powerful spirits" (316) of the ancestors whose "relentless" drive for justice is prophetically articulated as the "inevitable" return of the land to the people and as the gradual decline of "things European" (316) in the Americas. 243

The inviolability of Native American spiritual connections to the land - in spite of the violent incursions and displacements of Western colonialism - is thus anchored in, and legitimated by, a continuous history of ancestral possession of the Americas, a history which, in the text, Puritan or Catholic theological rationalisations of violent Western occupation can never erase. This history is contrasted with that of the invading Europeans, whose abandonment of their ancestral lands is ascribed by an Indigenous elder to their having incurred the displeasure of their God. The elder, Menardo's grandfather, declares them to be "the orphan people" (258), a categorisation which affirms their lack of genealogical linkage with the Americas and which foregrounds his perception of how their exile from ancestral lands has effectively transformed them into spiritual amputees. As his speculations on

243 For an interesting analysis of the nexus between American constructions of self and nation as informed by the omnipresence of Native American spectres and of Native American deployments of spectres which contest those hegemonic histories and power relations see Renee L. Bergland, The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects (Hanover: New England UP, 2000).
the peripatetic ways of colonising Europeans make clear, this severance, and the spiritual inanition it has historically generated, are directly linked to their lack of connection to "mother earth" (258):

That old man had been interested in what the Europeans thought and the names they had for the planets and the stars. He thought their stories accounting for the sun and the planets interesting only because their stories of explosions and flying fragments were consistent with everything else he had seen: from their flimsy attachments to one another and their children to their abandonment of the land where they had been born. He thought about what the ancestors had called Europeans: their God had created them but soon was furious with them, throwing them out of their birthplace, driving them away. The ancestors had called Europeans "the orphan people" and had noted that as with orphans taken in by selfish or coldhearted clanspeople, few Europeans had remained whole. They failed to recognise the earth was their mother. Europeans were like their first parents, Adam and Eve, wandering aimlessly because the insane God who had sired them had abandoned them. (258)

The old man's narrative directly undercuts the jeremiad's representation of the Puritan concept of election inscribed under the rubrics of the chosen people and their errand into the so-called "wilderness." It also displaces the initial Puritan figuration and co-optation of Native Americans as remnants of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Instead, Europeans and their "Providential" ventures to the Americas are constructed as illegitimate not only because of their lack of ancestral linkage to the earth, but also because they lack cosmological/spiritual authority, a condition marked by their violent expulsion from the places of their birth. Thus from a Native American perspective,
colonisation in the Americas from its inception lacks the sanction of divine law and the authority of the ancestors, deficiencies which, in line with the almanac's predictions, have already guaranteed the disappearance of Europeans at "the spiritual level" (511) in the present of the novel - a disappearance which augurs the end days of what the text categorically posits as a period of illegitimate Western custodianship of the Americas.

**Prophecy, Palimpsest and Legitimacy**

In Silko's text, the concept of palimpsest is deployed tactically to refute the legality and validity of the Western colonial imposition of geo-political borders in the Americas, borders which write over Native American habitations, trade routes, sacred sites and places of cultural exchange. The concept of the palimpsest operates at the intersection of time and space, and works in the context of the almanac genre and its prophetic orientation critically to reconfigure time/space relations within specific Indigenous cosmological matrices. In effect, it enables the reinscription of an elided Native American history of continuous occupation of the Americas, an occupation whose palimpsestic traces resurface in Silko's text to mock the validity and continuing viability of five hundred years of violent Western colonial occupation, and the "reality" of the Western linear model of history which sustains the West's discourses and ideologies of progress.

Thus, within the text, geo-political borders, and the linear Western temporal model which authorises both Western occupation and the legal systems which sustain nation states in the Americas are not recognised by Indigenous people. Their illegitimacy is signified in the following passage by the Yaqui smuggler and resistance leader, Calabazas:

> We don't believe in boundaries. Borders. Nothing like that. We are here thousands of years before the first whites. We are here before maps or quit claims. We know where we belong on this earth. We have always
moved freely. North-south, East-west. We pay no attention to what isn't real. Imaginary lines. Imaginary minutes and hours. Written law. We recognise none of that. And we carry a great many things back and forth. We don't see any border. We have been here and this has continued thousands of years. (216)

Calabazas's dismissal of the reality of Western "lines," "minutes" and "law" constitutes an explicit rejection of the colonial violence of Western cartography and the regulative regimes underpinning the colonial administration of the Natives. But his critique also functions to mock and overturn the Western binary history/fiction which I interrogated at the beginning of this chapter in relation to Western evaluations of Native American prophecy as "fictions" or "fabrications." In this passage Calabazas' deployment of the terminology of the coloniser -"imaginary" and "real"- operates to re-egitimize and reprivilege Native American cultural discourses on time and space, and to reaffirm the inalienable sovereignty of Native American peoples in the Americas. He does so by reversing the violent hierarchies inscribed in the Western binaries fact/fiction, real/imaginary, binaries which I critiqued in Chapter Two in the context of the politics of Western historiography and the production of Native American anti-colonialist histories. While Calabazas's discourse operates from a different vantage point to the Native American critiques of these binaries that I explored in Chapter Two, it similarly constitutes a categorical refusal of the category of the real as constructed by Western colonial discourses and practices.

Calabazas's disquisition on time and space is part of a story he tells about colonial Spanish massacres of Sonoran Yaqui Indians at a particular site. His narrative stresses how Indigenous knowledge of the landscape provided a refuge for the fleeing Yaquis and thus averted the possibility of genocide. It is this ancient knowledge of place and trade routes which
enables Calabazas and his colleagues to smuggle people, drugs (sold to raise money for the revolution) and arms across the Mexican/U.S border with impunity: "Because it was the land itself, that protected native people. White men were terrified of the desert's stark, chalk plains that seem to glimmer with the ashes of planets and worlds yet to come" (222). Zeta, his fellow smuggler who uses the proceeds from her border operations to assist the Indigenous revolutionary army that will ultimately accompany the twin brothers (the spiritual leaders of the revolution inspired by the prophecies) in their retracing of the ancient journey from south to north, also comments on the protective function of these ancient trails, and, by implication, the inability of the colonisers to read their ancient traces in the landscape. She observes that "the trails were far older than the ranching and mining that had gone on in the mountains. The trails themselves were extended out of another time" (177).

As these two quotations make clear, these ancient trade routes and maps cannot be erased by Western occupation, and Indigenous knowledge of their existence facilitates the subterranean movements and activities of the resistance fighters. Crucially, these routes remain illegible to the gaze of Western colonisers, a fact which protects the Indigenes from the possibility of reprisals.

In the context of prophecy, the narrative of the re-emergence of the giant stone snake at a uranium mine at Paguate Village in Laguna Pueblo takes on special significance in the text. The uranium mine, located over the sacred emergence site of the Laguna Pueblo Indians - a source of discord in the village - produces what the "old time people" regard as the desecration of mother earth (34), and yet, ironically, if "there hadn't been the mine, the giant stone snake would not have appeared" (35). The irony of this confluence is not lost on Sterling, who is appointed as the giant stone snake's custodian for the duration of a visit by a Hollywood film crew. However, the initial violation produced through the overwriting of the sacred site by the uranium mine is
repeated when the snake is filmed without permission by the Hollywood crew.

While Sterling realises that "The film crew had not understood what it was they were seeing and filming" (35), which "To [his] thinking...meant the secret of the stone snake was intact" (35), as custodian he is punished for the transgression and sent into exile, where his experiences in the outside world ultimately lead him by the end of the novel to a knowledge of the stone snake's prophetic significance. 244

As I have already stated, that significance is partially inscribed in a section of the almanac notebooks, and the Spirit Snake's Message in this text functions as a forewarning to the people to prepare themselves for the apocalyptic ending of this particular world (135). However, this knowledge is available only to the almanac keepers, Lecha and Zeta, until, near the end of the novel, the Barefoot Hopi translates the Spirit Snake's message into the following terms:

In Africa and in the Americas too, the giant snakes, Damballah and Quetzalcoatl, have returned to the people. I have seen the snakes with my own eyes; they speak to the people of Africa, and they speak to the people of the Americas; they speak through dreams. The snakes say this: from out of the south the people are coming, like a great river flowing restless with the spirits of the dead who have been reborn again and again all over Africa and the Americas, reborn each generation more fierce and more numerous. Millions will move instinctively; unarmed and unguarded, they begin walking steadily north, following the twin brothers. (735)

244 Sterling recognises however that his failure to protect the sacred snake from the Hollywood crew compounds a history of white colonial disrespect for the sacred objects of the Laguna Pueblo, a history dramatically signified by the theft of the stone idols from a kiva altar eighty years ago and their reappearance in a museum.
The Barefoot Hopi's decoding of the message reaffirms the ancient prophecies of return, whereby the people, led by the twin brothers - "the chosen ones" - retrace the old Mesoamerican trade routes from south to north in a spiritual pilgrimage which symbolises the dismantling of Western colonial geo-political borders, thus inaugurating the re-Indigenisation of the Americas. On his return to Paguate Village at the end of the novel, Sterling finally realises the significance of the giant stone snake: "[He] knew why the giant snake had returned now; he knew what the snake's message was to the people. The snake was looking south, in the direction from which the twin brothers and the people would come" (763).

**Indigeneity, Marxism, Prophecy and Revolution**

As part of its engagement with the politics of prophecy, history and revolution, *Almanac Of The Dead* interrogates the relevance of Marxist theory and praxis in the context of an Indigenous revolutionary agenda which prioritises the restoration of Native American land, cultural values and practices, and which also demands both an acknowledgement of the violent colonial history of Indigenous dispossession from the Americas and the concerted resistance which it inspired. This interrogation is conducted by the Mayan revolutionary leader, Angelita La Escapia, whose reflections on what she regards as the prophetic insights of Marx and Engels in relation to colonialism and capitalism are counterbalanced with the experiences of her colleague, Bartolomeo, a Cuban Marxist who is on trial for what she describes as crimes against Indigenous history: "the crimes were the denial and attempted annihilation of tribal histories" (515).

Her denunciation reflects Bartolomeo's relentless Eurocentric privileging of Western models and trajectories of history in the prosecution of the revolution, and his failure to acknowledge the continuing history of Indigenous resistance in the Americas. This resistance is exemplified in his own country by the rebel leader Hateuy who was "burned alive" (314) by the
Spanish Conquistadors and who refused to convert to Catholicism before his death on the basis that "he did not want to go to heaven if Europeans might also be there" (315). Bartolomeo also refuses to contemplate the central issue of Indigenous land rights and Angelita says of the Cuban revolutionary group represented by Bartolomeo and their exclusionary agenda, which reproduces the very colonial politics historically disenfranchising Native Americans: "When they denied indigenous history, they betrayed the true meaning of Marx" (314). However, she qualifies her assertion to conclude that "Not even Marx had fully understood the meaning of the spiritual and tribal communes of the Americas" (314).

This qualification instantiates a series of reflections on Marx and his theories which function, on the one hand, to mark out his and Engel's indebtedness to certain Native American communal social organisations in the formation of the idea of communalism/communism; and, on the other, to reverse this appropriation by inserting Marx into an Indigenous cosmological, temporal, and political framework, a tactic signified by Angelita's categorisation of him as a "tribal man and storyteller" (520). In addition, the text's engagement with and ultimate rejection of Marxism as an appropriate revolutionary model for Indigenous cultures in the Americas is based on its history of violence towards the people liberated in theory from the political regimes which preceded it; to Angelita, "European communism had been spoiled, dirtied with the blood of millions" (291), an historical fact which implicitly aligns it with the violent practices and effects of Western colonialism on Indigenous cultures in the Americas.

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Angelita's reading of Marx is predicated from the outset on her understanding of the symmetry between his theories/stories of capitalism, history and oppression, and the experiences of Native American peoples under Western colonial regimes. She declares:

Tribal people had had all the experiences they would ever need to judge whether Marx's stories told the truth. The Indians had seen generations of themselves ground into bloody pulp under the steel wheels of ore cars in crumbling tunnels of gold mines. The Indians had seen for themselves the cruelty of the Europeans toward women and children. That was how La Escapiía had satisfied herself Marx was reliable; his accounts had been consistent with what the people already knew. (312)

Marx's recognition and indictment of the collusion between the violent practices of capitalism and colonialism is endorsed by Angelita, while his idea of the "tidal wave of history" (518) and the forces which animate it is reconfigured by her to buttress Native American prophecies about the inevitability of the disappearance of "things European" (315) and the re-Indigenisation of the Americas: "The man Marx had understood that the stories or histories are sacred: that within 'history' reside relentless forces, powerful spirits, vengeful, relentlessly seeking justice" (316). 246

Angelita's co-optation of Marx thus grounds an Indigenous theory of history and revolution which reverses the common colonial strategy of appropriating Indigenous histories and cultural practices as raw material for the construction of Western theories like communism. Furthermore, while Angelita's revaluation of Marx is generally favourable - in so far as it is seen to correspond with Native American epistemologies, cosmologies and

experiences - Marx's understanding of Native American community and spirituality is ultimately seen to be constrained by his Europeanness: "Marx had been inspired by reading about certain Native American communal societies, though naturally as a European he had misunderstood a great deal" (519). For Angelita, that cultural limitation is manifested by his inability to recognise that the specific power of story/history resides in its capacity to resurrect the spirit of the ancestors: "Poor Marx did not understand the power of the stories belonged to the spirits of the dead" (521). Angelita recognises that a powerful component of the Indigenous revolutionary movement and its demand for justice lies in its marshalling of "the exploding fierce energy of all the dead slaves and dead ancestors haunting the Americas" (518), an ancestral energy that in turn unleashes "natural forces" (712). Ultimately these forces collude to protect the spiritual leaders of the revolution, the twin brothers, and their followers as they march north on the pilgrimage which signifies the beginnings of a revolutionary process that the text emphasises may take hundreds of years to fulfill its goals. The twin brothers, El Feo and Wacah, are named as "the chosen ones", and their assumption of spiritual leadership in the apocalyptic context of the novel's present marks a cosmological and cultural continuity. For in "the old days the Twin Brothers had answered the people's cry for help when terrible forces or great monsters threatened the people" (475). Like the Barefoot Hopi, the Twin Brothers' special status and power resides in their ability to communicate with the ancestors and to translate the ancient prophecies of apocalyptic upheaval and return for the people.

It is important to note that, in contradistinction to the exclusionary concept of revolution inscribed in the Puritan jeremiads, a concept that Sacvan Bercovitch has argued produces a patriarchal middle class white hegemony in the U.S.A, the cultural and political dynamics of this revolutionary movement emphasise inclusiveness, and at the same time, as
Angelita asserts, its ambit is international and not parochial (515). While the movement itself is necessarily grounded in an Indigenous cosmological and political framework, its focus on justice for the violated and dispossessed encompasses the poor, the homeless, the descendants of African-American slaves, and all those who suffer under the tyranny of a decadent democracy and the capitalist /corporatist ideologies which structure it. For example, at the International Holistic Healers Conference held in Tucson, a video of the Twin Brothers and their pilgrimage north is played, and in it Wacah issues an invitation to the conference participants:

Wacah had proclaimed all human beings were welcome to live in harmony together.... It was only necessary to walk with the people and let go of all the greed and the selfishness in one’s heart. One must be able to let go of a great many comforts and all things European; but the reward would be peace and harmony with all living things. All they had to do was to return to Mother Earth. No more blasting, digging or burning. (709-710)

This injunction, and the values of reverence for the earth inscribed in it, mobilise the construction of an anti-colonialist coalition of different forces in the text, a coalition dedicated to "the retaking of ancestral lands by indigenous people" (737). Wacah's declaration also invokes the thematic of eco-politics examined in *Almanac*, and it is to these politics that I now briefly turn. The text specifically links the ecological crises currently confronting the earth to the ravages of Western colonialism and capitalism. These crises manifested in the present of the novel signify the failure of Western colonial regimes to fulfil their duties as custodians of the earth, a failure which reinforces the illegality of their continuing possession of the Americas. This situation is further compounded by their refusal to heed the Indigenous prophecies which
predict the ecological consequences of their inaction. Towards the end of the novel, Lecha specifically connects these ecological ravages with Yoeme's interpretation of the ancient prophecies: "As the prophecies had warned, the earth's weather was in chaos; the rain clouds had disappeared while terrible winds and freezing had followed burning, dry summers" (718).

**Eco-Politics and a "New Heaven on Earth"**

The desecration of the earth and its resources in *Almanac* is viewed as the culmination of Western colonialism's dedication to "the Moloch of avarice"(313), and the global crisis which unfolds in the text is manifested in a series of "natural" cataclysms whose intensity is directly linked to human practices. Thus Calabazas observes:

> The whole world had gone crazy after Truman dropped the atomic bombs; the few old-time people still living then had said the earth would never be the same. Human beings could expect to be forsaken by the rain clouds, and all the animals and plants would disappear. All over the world Europeans had laughed at indigenous people for worshiping the rain clouds, the mountains, and the trees. But now Calabazas had lived long enough to see the white people stop laughing as all the trees were cut and all the animals killed, and all the water dirtied or used up. (628)

The fulfillment of the "old-time" people's predictions is literally etched into the landscape, whose apocalyptic contours are represented in the text as a parodic shadow of the Puritan's desire to construct a "New heaven on earth."

As Angelita observes: "This was the end of what the white man had to offer the Americas: poison smog in the winter and the choking clouds that swirled off sewage treatment leaching fields and filled the sky with fecal dust in early
This end process is directly linked in the text to the illegality of Western colonial occupation and to the coloniser's inability to recognise their obligations to the earth. But European attempts to circumvent the effects of this history of violation are represented in the text as constituting another phase of colonialism. For example, Leah Blue's plan to irrigate the deserts of Arizona in order to construct a series of luxurious condominiums for the rich is contingent upon her subversion of Indian water rights. Moreover, the illegitimate riches of the "space station and biosphere tycoons" (728) enable them to pillage the remaining resources of the earth for their new projects - the construction of "space colonies" which will "protect" them from the pollution of the earth" (728).

Silko also interrogates the politics that inform the positions and interests of different environmental groups in the text, groups that in various ways seek to redress the environmental devastation generated by Western economic ideologies and practices. While eco-terrorist groups like Green Vengeance are embraced as warriors by the revolutionary movement because of their economic resources and commitment to the cause, their philosophical commitment to "deep ecology" is seen to be underpinned by a fundamental racism which reproduces the very colonial values that operate to dispossess and disenfranchise the Indigenous inhabitants of the earth. This critique is enunciated by Clinton, an African-American Vietnam veteran, who as leader of the army of the homeless forms part of the revolutionary coalition:

Clinton did not trust the so-called "defenders of Planet Earth." Something about their choice of words had made Clinton uneasy. Clinton was suspicious whenever he heard the word pollution. Human beings had been exterminated strictly for "health" purposes by
Europeans too often. Lately Clinton had seen ads purchased by so-called "deep ecologists." The ads blamed the earth's pollution not on industrial wastes ---hydrocarbons and radiation --- but on overpopulation. It was no coincidence that the Green Party originated in Germany. "Too many people" meant "too many brown skinned people." Clinton could read between the lines. 'Deep ecologists" invariably ended their magazines with "Stop immigration!" and "Close the borders!" (415)

Clinton's intervention into debates on ecology functions as a critique of one aspect of the environmental racism 248 which circulates around issues of environmental policy, Indigenous rights, and the ideological incommensurability of culturally different attitudes and relationships to the land. As Clinton's critique suggests, that racism is often masked by a Western moral emphasis on what Maria Mies and Vandina Shiva have identified as a "third phase of colonization," 249 in which the colonial idea of "the white man's burden" is reframed to encompass the "white man's burden to protect the environment." In their analysis of the imperialist ideology which underpins this salvation ethic they argue:

We are now on the threshold of the third phase of colonisation, in which the white man's burden is to protect the environment --- and this too involves taking control of rights and resources....The salvation of the environment cannot be achieved through the old colonial order based on the white man's burden. The two are ethically, economically and epistemologically incongruent. (264-265)


Mies and Shiva argue that the consequences of this neo-colonial Western "burden is that the earth and other peoples carry new burdens in the form of environmental destruction and the creation of poverty and dispossession" (265), and these effects in Silko's text are marked out as the continuing residue of unequal colonial power relations, power relations which, for example, allow the construction of a uranium mine over a sacred Native American site at Paguate Village. 250

Crucially, while Almanac stages a critique of the ecological impact of Western colonialism and its economic models, it also posits the possibility of the earth's ability to resist annihilation, a possibility implied in the old prophecies which foretell the ecological chaos generated by Western invasion in the first instance. Yoeme, the almanac keeper, predicts the earth's gradual return to ecological balance in a passage which affirms its inviolability in spite of the excesses of recent human interventions:

Old Yoeme had always said the earth would go on, the earth would outlast anything man did to it, including the atomic bomb. Yoeme used to laugh at the numbers, the thousands of years before the earth would be purified, but eventually even the radiation from a nuclear war would fade out. The earth would have its ups and downs.... Yoeme said humans might not survive. The humans would not be a great loss to the earth.... Dust to dust...the energy of the spirit was never lost. Out of the dust grew the plants; the plants were consumed and became muscle and bone; and all the time, the energy had only been changing form, nothing had been lost or destroyed. (719)

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250 For an excellent analysis of the environmental politics elaborated in Almanac Of The Dead see Joni Adamson, American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice and Ecocriticism (Tucson: Arizona UP, 2001), 162-179.
Yoeme's vision of the future mobilises an Indigenous conception of time based on an understanding of return as embodying both difference and continuity. In light of the symbolic/political resonance that this notion of return acquires in Silko's text, I want to examine in further detail two different Native American prophecies that have in the dominant Western historiographical tradition signified the triumph of Western historical progress/conquest and the closure/completion of the Indian Wars in the U.S.A.

**Oral Prophecy and the Re-inscription of the Politics of "Return"**

I conclude this chapter with a brief analysis of Silko's interrogation of the dominant Western discursive constructions of two Indigenous prophecies which, in white histories, mark the inauguration of Western "discovery"/invasion/conquest and the ultimate triumph of Western imperialism in the Americas. I examine her reinscription of Aztec defeat at the hands of the Spanish Conquistadors, a defeat which is conventionally associated with the Aztec prophecy of Quetzalcoatl's return in dominant Western discourses. Secondly, I flesh out some of the details of her reclamation and re-Indigenisation of the Lakota prophecy of the return of the Buffalo and its embodiment in the Ghost Dance, a cultural practice which became historically linked to the massacre of Lakota at Wounded Knee in 1890. 251 As Native American commentators like Jace Weaver have observed, this event has been read in official white histories as signifying the end of the Indian wars, and thus as symbolically marking colonial closure and the triumph of Western military and cultural domination in the U.S.A.

The apparent fulfillment of the first prophecy, foretelling the return of Quetzalcoatl within an Aztec narrative tradition, coincided with the arrival of the invading Spanish, and its impact on diplomatic negotiations between

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Cortés and the Aztec emperor, Motecuhzoma, was seen as instrumental in facilitating the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire. Specifically, Western colonial readings of this "myth" focus on Motecuhzoma's alleged misreading of the prophecy, an "error" which enables Cortés and the Spanish to be inserted into an Aztec narrative in which they are read as literal incarnations of the prophecy of Quetzalcoatl's return. Carol Greenhouse's precis of the myth and the traditional Western reading of it is useful in situating Silko's counter-articulation of it in her novel:

The emperor was said to be dismayed but not altogether surprised by the message [of Cortés' landfall]. He was, in a sense, expecting he arrival of an alien from the great lake to the east, for the legend of the god-king Quetzalcoatl, exiled from ancient Tula, prophesied that he would one day return from the east, in a One-Reed year of the Aztec calendar. The year 1519 was such a year. That this strange individual arriving from afar should have followers was not inconsistent with expectation, Motecuhzoma having been raised in the Aztec cult of the god Quetzalcoatl. Thus, according to the conventional telling, Motecuhzoma mistook Cortés for Quetzalcoatl and prepared to deliver the empire to him as if he were its rightful lord. (145)

An early version of this interpretation is provided by the colonial ethnographer, James Mooney, who utilises W.H.Prescott's histories of Peru to reproduce the idea of "deliverance" embedded in this Western reading of return. He avers:

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252 There are numerous orthographic variations of the Emperor's name. This one is used by Carol Greenhouse in her essay, "Time and Sovereignty in Aztec Mexico," A Moment’s Notice, Carol Greenhouse (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996), 144-174. Silko uses a different version which I retain in her text's engagement with these politics of return.

253 Greenhouse also argues that the "attributes of Quetzalcoatl are also relevant in this conventional rendering of Motecuhzoma's downfall" (145). Considerations of space do not permit me to engage with Greenhouse's detailed discussion and refutation of this conventional reading. See Carol Greenhouse, "Time and Sovereignty in Aztec Mexico," Carol Greenhouse, A Moment's Notice, 144-174.

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"This faith in the return of a white deliverer from the east opened the gate to the Spaniards at their first coming alike in Haiti, Mexico, Yucatan, and Peru. The simple native welcomed the white strangers as the children or kindred of their long-lost benefactor, immortal beings whose near advent had been foretold by oracles and omens...." 254 While this traditional explanation for Aztec defeat, encapsulated under the rubric of the "white God myth," 255 has more recently been discounted by historians and critics like Robert Wright, Francis Jennings 256 and Carol Greenhouse, it nevertheless inaugurates a Western colonial tradition in relation to the reading of Native American prophecies. On the one hand, this tradition privileges Western interpretations of Indigenous narratives and discourses, and on the other, it invalidates the deployment of prophecy narratives as a tactic of resistance to Western cultural hegemony and the counter-explanations of the world which they inscribe. Silko's re-examination of the Spanish invasion and Aztec defeat in _Almanac Of The Dead_ functions precisely to disrupt and deprivilege hegemonic explanations by valorising Indigenous epistemological and cosmological explanations for Western invasion and Aztec defeat.

_Almanac_ stages a critique of the colonial politics inscribed in the dominant white interpretative tradition which circulated around the production of the "white god myth" in relation to the Spanish invasion. To begin with, the text implicitly acknowledges another Western historiographic tradition which recognises that the Spanish defeat of the Aztecs was generated by shifting political alliances and by antagonism to Aztec imperial policies and practices. As David Stannard argues, in this increasingly unstable context the Spanish were "simply another group, albeit an alien one, seeking to gain political

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256 In his refutation of the white god myth Francis Jennings provides an interesting comment by the historian Nigel Davies: "Davies calls it 'a purely post-Conquest invention' and, according to Sahagón's informants, Quetzalcoatl was a mountainous black man." Francis Jennings, _The Founders Of America_ (New York: Norton, 1993), 138.
dominance in central America." 257 In Silko's text, this position is rearticulated by the Mexican Indian Calabazas in a critique of what the text constructs as Western "myths" of "exploration" and "conquest":

From the first moment Spanish ships scraped against the shore, they had depended on the native Americans. The so-called explorers and "conquistadors" had explored and conquered nothing. The "explorers" had followed Indian guides kidnapped from coastal villages to lead them as far as they knew, and then the explorers kidnapped more guides. The so-called conquerors merely aligned themselves with forces already gathered to strip power from rivals. The tribes in Mexico had been drifting towards political disaster for hundreds of years before the Europeans had ever appeared. (220)

Calabazas's assessment of the political dynamics of invasion is complemented later on in the text by an extract from the Almanac Notebooks, and by Yoeme's and Tacho's narratives which deploy an Indigenous epistemological framework to construct parallels between Spanish and Aztec imperialism, a tactic which functions to undermine the agency implied in Western exploration and conquest and to re-invest it in Indigenous hands. To begin with, the almanac extract refutes the apparent synchronicity between Quetzalcoatl's return on katun, "11AHU"(572), the day of the Spanish arrival, by describing it as an "Error in translation of the Chumayel manuscript' (572) and by recoding it as "the return of Death Eye Dog" (572), an epoch which heralds the inauguration of a lengthy period of violent Western imperialism/colonialism.

However, this epoch is rendered as a "return" in the sense that it replicates the prior invasion of the Aztecs and the violent imperial practices that characterised their reign. Hence both the Aztec and Spanish regimes are made partially homologous in the text through their insertion into the clan of the Destroyers, a category which, according to Tacho, was constituted of "humans who were attracted to and excited by death and the sight of blood and suffering" (475). The Destroyers are also designated as "sorcerer-cannibals" (475), and Tacho reads the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and its symbolic repetition in the ritual of the Eucharist as a parallel cultural ritual to that embodied in the Aztec practice of human sacrifice. This tactic serves to undermine one of the Spanish rationales for their genocidal expansion into Mesoamerica (the "barbarism" and absolute cultural difference signified by the practice of human sacrifice) by constructing both cultural groups in similar terms. In the process of recounting the political and cultural divisions produced by the practice of human sacrifice and the ascendancy of the Aztec empire which it marked, Tacho reinforces Aztec complicity in the invasion of the Americas by relating it directly to the machinations of Indigenous sorcerers. He contends that:

The people who went away had fled north, and behind them Dynasties of sorcerer-sacrificers had gradually taken over the towns and cities of the South. In fact, it had been these sorcerer-sacrificers who had "called down" the alien invaders, sorcerer-cannibals from Europe, magically sent to hurry the destruction and slaughter already begun by the Destroyers' secret clan. (475)

This Indigenous perspective, which destabilises the idea of Western "discovery" of the Americas is rearticulated by Yoeme, who "alleged the Aztecs ignored the prophecies and warnings about the approach of the
Europeans because Montezuma and his allies had been sorcerers who had called or even invented the European invaders with their sorcery" (570). Yoeme's position goes further than Tacho's by suggesting that Europeans are, literally, the products of Aztec sorcery. By reconfiguring the Spanish invasion in Indigenous epistemological and cosmological terms, *Almanac* maps out positions of agency for Indigenes, and, in the process, tactically undermines Western "myths" of discovery, exploration and conquest and, especially, the idea of cultural effeteness and passivity embedded in dominant white constructions of the "white God myth."

Finally, *Almanac* stages a militant re-reading of the phenomenon of the Ghost Dance and the eschatological prophecies which inspired it in order to challenge the conventional Western interpretations of its cultural signification exemplified in James Mooney's influential text, *The Ghost-Dance Religion And The Sioux Outbreak of 1890*. 258 Mooney's explanations of this phenomena were originally published in 1896 as a section of a Bureau of Ethnology Report, and his text forms the basis of *Almanac*’s engagement with the colonial cultural politics which underpin his evaluation. Mooney's text maps out a genealogy of Native American prophecy movements, but its special focus is on the Ghost Dance movement inspired by the visionary experiences in 1889 of the Pauite prophet, Wovoka, and the dissemination and interpretation of his prophecies by various Native American Nations which culminated in the massacre of Sioux at Wounded Knee in 1890.

Wovoka's prophetic vision - experienced after an ascent into the spirit world (Cornell 62) - prescribed particular conditions under which Indigenes

would be reunited with their dead in a world of peace and harmony. These conditions, according to Mooney, foregrounded hard work and a peaceful co-existence with white colonisers (62), and the fulfillment of Wovoka's vision was to be facilitated by the ceremonial practice of the Ghost Dance. But, as Stephen Cornell has noted, this injunction to live in harmony with the whites was actively refuted by cultures like the Sioux and the Pawnees, and their interpretations of Wovoka's prophecy were more militantly anti-colonial. For example, both cultural groups envisaged the annihilation "of the Whites...in a massive whirlwind" (62), and the Lakota emphasised the return of the Buffalo (62), a feature of their interpretation that Mooney recognised was linked to the official proscription on buffalo hunting and ceremonies relating to this practice. Cornell also makes the important point, in contradistinction to Mooney, that the supernatural agency embodied in the Ghost dance was inherently political and signified an appropriate tactic of resistance to white cultural hegemony in colonial contexts where military engagement would result in physical annihilation (67).

While Mooney's analysis to some extent recognises the resistant values embodied in the prophecies and the Ghost Dance, it is nevertheless couched in a Eurocentric colonial lexicon which reads that resistance as illegitimate and as confirming the inadequacy of Indigenous cosmological discourses to engage with the challenges posed by white "civilisation." For example, he observes that "The Ghost dance promised spiritual renewal in the Indian's own terms" (xxiii), but he qualifies that observation in a series of comments which undermine the cultural agency implicit in his original statement. Thus he refers to the "fantasies and delusions of the Ghost Dance" (xxiv), categorises its cosmological basis as "the primitive messiah belief" (654), and generally foregrounds the "mythology of the doctrine"(782). Moreover, his interpretation of the Sioux leader Sitting Bull's understanding of the Ghost dance phenomenon reinscribes the Vanishing Race thesis and,
implicitly, discredits the cosmological inscription of sovereignty articulated in the Ghost dance prophecies. He declares:

Their power, prosperity, and happiness had gone down, their very race was withering away before the white man. The messiah doctrine promised a restoration of the old conditions through supernatural assistance. If this hope was without foundation, the indian [sic] had no future and his day was forever past. (913)

Mooney's evaluation completely erases the violent practices of colonialism and the unequal power relations it gives rise to; indeed, in his analysis, resistance to white colonialism is read as opposition "to every advance of civilisation" (844), and the influence of leaders like Sitting Bull who affirmed the values of Indigenous cultures and resistance to colonisation are seen as "incompatible with progress" and unable to foster "the civilisation of the Sioux" (861). In the context of the Ghost Dance, Mooney accuses the Sioux of perverting Wovoka's original doctrine, which emphasises co-operation with white "civilisation." Their more militant stance, he argues - signified by the adoption of ghost shirts - embodies a departure from the spiritual teachings of Wovoka and the pacifism they inscribe (786). Mooney notes that the ghost shirts were "believed to be impenetrable to bullets and weapons of every sort" (790), a belief seemingly invalidated by the massacre of "Big Foot and one hundred and forty-four Ghost Dance worshippers at Wounded Knee"(Almanac 724) in 1890. It is this apparent failure of deliverance from white domination promised by the Ghost Dance movement and dramatically symbolised by the massacre at Wounded Knee that *Almanac* contests in order to repoliticise questions of spirituality, interpretation and sovereignty in the contemporary context of the novel's unfolding revolutionary scenario.
Mooney's interpretation is directly contested by Wilson Weasletail, a Lakota born forty miles from the massacre site at Wounded Knee, in a poetic performance delivered at "The International Healing Conference" convened to debate the global crisis occurring in the present of the novel. Wilson's oratory foregrounds the illegality of Western colonial occupation of the Americas, and his denunciation of the "barbarian invaders" (714) and their "bastard governments" (714) includes a catalogue of various court cases around Native Title rights, the treaty breaches which have historically eroded Native American land bases in the U.S.A, and the tally of genocide which has accompanied Western colonial occupation of the Americas. Wilson concludes this catalogue with the declaration, "We are at war" (715), a rhetorical tactic which effectively reverses the colonial closure to the Indian Wars conventionally symbolised by the Wounded Knee massacre. As part of his performance, he specifically undermines Mooney's assertion about the essentially pacifist orientation of Wovoka's "messiah doctrine"(Mooney 776) by producing a letter from Wovoka to President Grant. This letter constitutes a fictional reinscription of letters given to Mooney by Native American agents to take to Washington which, according to Mooney, represented Wovoka's desire "to convince the white people that there was nothing bad or hostile in their religion" (776). However, Wilson's "translation" refutes this benign interpretation and invests Wovoka's doctrine with a militant anti-colonial thrust: "You are hated /You are not wanted here / Go away,/ Go back where you come from./ You white people are cursed!" (721).

Wilson further erodes Mooney's ethnographic authority by challenging the Western anthropological idea of the Ghost Dance's "failure to produce results overnight" (722) and by reinterpreting the meaning of the Ghost Dance shirts in Indigenous cosmological terms. He declares "Mooney and other anthropologists alleged the Ghost Dance disappeared because the people became disillusioned when the ghost shirts did not stop bullets and the
Europeans did not vanish overnight" (722). Rather than guaranteeing inviolability from white bullets, Wilson argues that the ghost shirts provided "spiritual protection" (722) and that their agency is located in the "realm of spirits and dreams" (722). The Ghost dance enables a reunion between "living people" and the "spirits of the ancestors lost in the five-hundred year war" (722), and this spiritual linkage constitutes a crucial component in the text's revolutionary agenda to decolonise and re-Indigenise the Americas. Therefore, the Ghost Dance functions as a potent symbol of continuing political resistance to Western colonialism and its violent practices, a point dramatically made by Wilson towards the end of his oration in which he also celebrates the return of the Buffalo (725) as foretold in the prophecies:

The truth is the Ghost dance did not end with the murder of Big Foot and one hundred and forty-four Ghost dance worshippers at Wounded Knee. The Ghost dance has never ended, it has continued, and the people have never stopped dancing; they may call it by other names, but when they dance, their hearts are reunited with the spirits of beloved ancestors and the loved ones recently lost in the struggle. Throughout the Americas, from Chile to Canada, the people have never stopped dancing; as the living dance, they are joined again with all our ancestors before them, who cry out, who demand justice, and who call on the people to take back the Americas. (724)

This passage, in conjunction with Wilson's prior declaration of war, constitutes a categorical refutation of the colonial closure to the Indian wars conventionally symbolised in dominant Western discourses by the massacre of Lakota at Wounded Knee. It powerfully reaffirms Zeta's initial rejection of Western colonial occupation of the Americas in a statement which similarly articulates Almanac's political stance on the continuity and integrity of Native
American resistance to Euro-American domination. Zeta asserts: "War had been declared the first day the Spaniards set foot on Native American soil, and the same war had been going on ever since: the war was for the continents called the Americas" (133). But, as Wilson's passionate pronouncements make clear, the war between Native America and Euro-America as it is enacted in *Almanac Of The Dead* also operates at the symbolic level and includes the demand for Native American self-representation in the production of discourses on history, spirituality and ecology which emphatically privilege Native American epistemologies, cosmologies and narrative modes. As I have already noted, in *Almanac* this discursive resistance to Western cultural hegemony is rendered material through the storage of the ancient almanac in an ammunition box under Zeta's bed. Thus Wilson's reinterpretation of the Ghost dance and his call for justice in relation to stolen Native American land function as unequivocal assertions of Native American sovereignty which reject colonial closure, and, instead, provide an opening onto the unfinished business of colonialism.
Conclusion

Books have been the focus of the struggle of the control of the Americas from the start. (Leslie Marmon Silko) 259

It is appropriate that my summation of the representational politics of Indigeneity and historiography in this thesis is initiated by my re-citation of Leslie Marmon Silko’s incisive comment on the nexus between Western material and discursive colonisation of the Americas. These issues about colonial power relations and the discursive production of the Indigene, issues forcefully addressed by Silko in Almanac Of The Dead, remain contentious ones in the contemporary U.S cultural and political arena. As Silko argues in her introduction to Yellow Woman "the representation or portrayal of Native Americans was politicised from the very beginning, and, to this day, remains an explosive political issue" (22). In order to broach these politics in the contemporary context, I will stage a brief return to Silko’s Almanac in order to foreground the importance of her intervention in issues of ongoing colonialism/cultural imperialism, an intervention which has crucially informed the representational politics that I map in the body of this thesis.

As I have argued in this thesis, traditional Western histories and the historiographic tenets and practices which have rendered them authoritative and entrenched a Western representational privilege in relation to the construction of its Native others, have operated to silence and/or marginalise Native American cultural discourses and practices which embody resistance to Western colonialism. This Eurocentric disciplinary exercise of power produces a cultural, epistemological and institutional hegemony which functions to inhibit the representation and valorisation of Native American cultural difference/s and to reinforce the unequal material power relations of

colonialism. Given the infrastructural continuities of colonialism, then, dominant representations of Native Americans as the undifferentiated and vanquished other continue to circulate within mainstream U.S culture, and this ongoing symbolic violence provides an ideological rationale for the violence of the Euro-American colonial project.

But I have also argued in this thesis that, in spite of this institutional and cultural hegemony, Native Americans such as Leslie Marmon Silko are increasingly intervening in various disciplines and cultural sites within the dominant cultural arena and are thus actively resisting their inscription and discursive colonisation by the dominant culture. As such, Silko's *Almanac Of The Dead* embodies a significant intervention in the politics of speaking, writing and photography by reinscribing a counter-history of the Americas which derives its authority from a Native American epistemological and cosmological matrix. This counter-history emphasises the continuity of Native American resistance to material and discursive colonisation, a continuity encoded through Silko's deployment of the almanac genre and the prophetic discourse that it inscribes. As the Mayan revolutionary Angelita declares in *Almanac*: "Each day since the arrival of the Europeans, somewhere in the vastness of the Americas the sun rises on Native American resistance and revolution" (527). This assertion of Indigenous agency in relation to ongoing Western colonialism and imperialism is articulated by Angelita as a response to the ways in which Western historical discourses function to erase Native American resistance to colonialism and its oppressive material and symbolic practices. By re-presenting the histories of the Americas from a variety of Indigenous perspectives in *Almanac*, Silko, both in the writing of her text and in the text's valorisation of Native discourses and voices, challenges the West's privilege to represent its others and thus brings into focus positions of agency for Native American subjects in the past and in the present.
This exercise of agency within Silko's text encompasses Indigenous engagements with questions of historiography, knowledge and the medium of photography which, on the one hand, privilege Native American epistemological and cosmological discourses in their analysis of the cultural politics raised by these issues, and, on the other, demonstrate the cultural specificity of all knowledge production by denaturalising Western conceptions of the "real" and the regimes of truth which underpin them. Moreover, by tactically situating Native Americans as investigating subjects in relation to these issues, Silko reverses the traditional Western anthropological positioning of the Indigene as a passive object of knowledge to be constructed, viewed, and consumed by the practitioners of Western disciplines. Through this reversal of colonial subject/object positions, Silko simultaneously acknowledges and contests the unequal and objectifying colonial relations of power which authorise and reproduce homogeneous and static representations of Native Americans in Western disciplines like anthropology and history.

I have emphasised in this thesis that Silko's critique of Western colonialism and history is crucially facilitated by her construction of the almanac fragment which, through its invocation of Native American prophecy, mobilises a counter-discourse of history affirming the legitimacy of Native American ownership of the Americas, and, conversely, predicting the eventual end of what Silko's text categorically posits as a period of illegal Western occupation of Native American territories. As "the book of mouths and tongues" (142), the almanac rearticulates a series of Native American oral histories which map the continuity of Native resistance to Western colonialism and cultural hegemony, a continuity symbolically and tactically marked by Silko's use of the Mayan almanac genre and the prophetic mode it inscribes. In this way, Silko is able to reaffirm a Native American tradition of writing which predates Western invasion and colonialism and, simultaneously, to
revalidate Native American oral traditions and the stories/histories they transmit as epistemologically and cosmologically powerful modes of cultural/historical representation.

In addition, her use of the almanac genre to transmit living, embodied, agentic Native American histories/stories also marks out and overturns the colonial hierarchical binary erected between writing and orality. This potent binarism has functioned to privilege Western written discourses of history over Indigenous oral models on the basis of an apparent fixity which has traditionally secured its truth claims. In *Almanac*, orality and the epistemological and cosmological traditions which structure it are revalorised and placed in the service of an anti-colonial Native American political agenda, which ultimately forecasts the re-Indigenisation of the Americas and the return of stolen land to its original inhabitants. But, equally, writing is affirmed in Silko's text as a necessary political weapon of resistance to ongoing Euro-American colonialism and cultural hegemony, and so speaking and writing within the framework of Silko's novel are situated as complementary practices, practices which signify the continuity of Indigenous tactical interventions in the hegemonic representational economy.

Similarly, Silko's Indigenisation of the Western novel genre also constitutes an important challenge to dominant cultural prescriptions about textual and cultural purity, prescriptions which surface in dominant discourses about Native American "authenticity," tradition and modernity. In Jimmie Durham's terms, Silko's deployment of Western symbolic modes in her novel exemplifies a "continuous Native American tradition" of appropriating Western technologies to contest Western colonial ideologies, discourses and practices. 260 Thus Indigenous appropriations of Western symbolic technologies like writing and Western genres like the novel are represented by Silko not as

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accommodations or capitulations to the dominant culture and its modes of interpellation but as important tactics in the struggle over self-representation in a context still structured by unequal relations of power. Therefore, in spite of those unequal power relations and the institutional hegemony they support, Silko's intervention in debates on history, colonialism and the politics of representation illustrates Laurie Anne Whitt's contention that the cultural perspectives and productions of peoples "whose identities have been devalued by the dominant culture are 'epistemologically powerful"("Indigenous Peoples" 240), and must be circulated in order to counter the West's production and circulation of its own culturally specific discourses and practices as "universal," "objective," and "true."

In recent years, the production of texts in different fields about and by Native Americans suggest that the representational politics raised by Silko in Almanac continue to play out in the contemporary cultural and political arena. In order to demonstrate these continuities I will make some brief comments about a text which examines popular literary representations of Native Americans. This text, Shape-Shifting, authored by Andrew Macdonald, Gina Macdonald and MaryAnn Sheridan was published in 2000, and explicitly engages with and attempts to overturn the colonial representational politics that I have mapped in this thesis.

Shape-Shifting, examines these politics in a range of popular literary genres and includes chapters on Native American cosmologies and on literature produced by Native Americans like Silko. This text foregrounds how the homogenisation, appropriation and commodification of Native Americans in mainstream literatures has produced and continues to produce a unitary "Indian" figure which erases the complexity and heterogeneity of Native American cultures and their political struggles in contemporary contexts (xi). It also acknowledges the importance of Native American deployments of cosmologies and epistemologies which inscribe cultural difference in their
texts, thus challenging the hegemonic culture’s worldviews and their reductive representations of Native Americans. However, in the conclusion to Shape-Shifting, the authors, offer some contradictory comments in relation to these politics. On the one hand, they rightly recommend the imperative of greater Native American participation in the area of literary production as a means of countering mainstream cultural representations which construct them as undifferentiated others. But, on the other hand, in their assessment of the impact of modernity on Native American subjectivities and cultural productions, they unwittingly invoke a colonial lexicon which functions to disempower Native Americans as agents in relation to their engagement with the hegemonic culture and its symbolic technologies.

In a passage which reflects on the function of generic "Indianness" in the context of national identity, they argue: "Native Americans themselves have changed, and must accommodate the modern world which has encircled them, at least in being able to communicate with it" (285). To begin with, this passage re-inscribes those unequal colonial power relations which position Native Americans only in terms of their perceived powerlessness to contest the colonial culture. It also resurrects the tradition/modernity binary by implying that Native American appropriations of English and the novel genre are merely accommodations and not political tactics of resistance to mainstream interpellation. As such, Native Americans are constructed in this passage as both ontologically fixed and recalcitrant subjects who must comply with dominant cultural modes of "communication" in order to limit the impact of the dominant culture’s "encirclement" of their traditional discourses and practices. In effect, the injunction to modernise reduces them to a subaltern status, a space from which they cannot speak and which requires them to assimilate to the linguistic, discursive and generic norms of the hegemonic...
culture. This assimilative logic, and the symbolic violence that it gives rise to, elides the violent colonial history of domination in which Native Americans have been subjected to enforced assimilation at every level - legislative, administrative and cultural. Thus, in spite of their good intentions to challenge the representational politics which inform mainstream constructions of Indigeneity, the authors of Shape-Shifting reassert, however unwittingly, the hegemonic power of colonial ideologies to frame discourses about Native Americans.

In contrast, Silko’s project in Almanac maps a history of ongoing Native American networks of communication which articulate dynamic Native American subjectivities and cultural practices in the face of the censorship exercised through the dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies and discourses. But her text also registers the continuity of Euro-American colonialism and cultural imperialism in relation to the treatment and representation of Native American and minority cultures in the U.S.A. Arguably, the issues she speaks to in her text have become more urgent in a context which bears witness to a reinvigorated imperial America. Situated within this contemporary context, the importance of her project lies in its articulation of questions about colonial economies - material and symbolic- and the unequal relations of power that these economies enforce and naturalise. As such, Almanac constitutes a significant intervention in the politics that I have mapped in this thesis; but it also suggests that these issues, and the power relations they structure, still need to be addressed in the contemporary U.S cultural arena.
Appendix


The use of dominant photographic representations to construct, homogenise and regulate Native American subjectivities and identities, has been increasingly challenged in the last few decades. That is to say, Native American photographers have to some extent, intervened in the colonial representational economy by seizing control of the visual technologies mobilised against them, deploying them as a means of critiquing, mocking, deconstructing and refiguring their own imaging. This contestation over visual imaging by Native American photographers and critics, and the shift in power relations which it suggests, is addressed by Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie (Seminole/Creek/Navajo) in her curatorial statement to the exhibition of Native American photography, *Compensating Imbalances*. Tsinhnahjinnie declares: "Photography is not the instilled idea of traditional marketable 'Indian' art. Images created by Native photographers do not follow the established image of the 'vanishing race.'" 262 She also argues:

No longer is the camera held by an outsider looking in; the camera is now held with brown hands opening familiar worlds. We document ourselves with a humanising eye, we create new visions with ease, and we can turn the camera and show how we see you. The power of the image is not a new concept to the Native photographer.... What has changed is the process. 263

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Tsinhnahjinnie's statement suggests that by the early 1990s, an important transformation in the contemporary power relations and practices structuring photography of Native Americans had occurred. Indeed, Theresa Harlan, writing in 1993, notes that in the last decade there has been a "renaissance of Native American photographers" ("A Curator's Perspective" 15). Addressing the increased visibility of Native American photographers at this moment, Jennifer Scoda and Rick Hill (Tuscarora) have in different ways posed the question as to why Native Americans did not systematically deploy the camera against dominant imaging prior to this "renaissance." Jennifer Scoda suggests that this "delay" can be ascribed to the effects of colonial policies like the reservation system, which contained and constrained the possibilities for intervention (6). Various twentieth-century policies like termination, relocation and forced removal -- embodiments of the colonialist drive to assimilate Native Americans in the dominant culture -- and the dispersal of communities they engendered also constrained the adoption of photographic technology to counter dominant representations and stereotypes.

Rick Hill suggests that it is the very history of Euro-American abuse of the camera in relation to Native cultures, that is to say Indigenous perceptions of it as "system of oppression" (9), which engendered a reluctance to appropriate it for their own use: "The camera was an intrusion on Indian life. The photographs were taken for outside interests, by outside people, outside the needs of Indians themselves" (9). By marking the persistence of this intrusiveness through the example of tourist photography and its commodifying imperative, Hill emphasises that issues of trust, sensitivity and responsibility to Native communities confront contemporary Native photographers and must be negotiated in their specific practices. He asserts:

265 Rick Hill, "In Our Own Image: Stereotyped Images of Indians Lead to New Native Art Form," *Exposure* 29 (Fall 1993), 6-11.
“Native photographers have to be careful to protect the trust shared by their people, a trust that the images will not fall into the abuses of the past. At the same time they have a responsibility to reflect the realities of Native lifestyle” (11).

This cautious approach to photography by the Native American photographer, and the violent colonial history - material and symbolic - it invokes, is powerfully articulated by the Hopi photographer, Victor Masayesva Jr. in his preface to *Hopi Photographers/Hopi Images* in 1984:

> As Hopi photographers we are indeed in a dangerous time. The camera which is available to us is a weapon that will violate the silences and secrets so essential to our group survival. A missionary may find our group secrets harmful and destructive, which they may well be, to the individual. That is the essential distinction. We as Hopis, as Hopi clans, have guarded our tribal and clan secrets, perfecting our idea of what is good for sustaining group harmony, often at the expense of the individual. When the camera itself becomes a missionary, it becomes a weapon. When it is used as an individual foray into group values, it can destroy what the group has arrived at as being good. 266

Masayesva later qualifies this remark by saying that if the photographer looks to the "culture for guidance" (11), then photography as a practice can be Indigenised and used for the benefit of the community: "I believe we would not be far off the mark if we were to take photography as ceremony, as ritual, something that sustains, enriches, and adds to our spiritual well-being" (11).

Rick Hill suggests that the relatively recent appropriation by Native Americans of photography has paralleled a resurgence of overt political activity, and he illustrates this through reference to the 1973 Wounded Knee seizure by activists whose agenda was to publicise Native American rights and claims. Observing that this event came to symbolise "the new [Indian] resistance" (7), he argues that it also became a site for the self-conscious manipulation of dominant images of Native Americans by those involved. Photography of this event - although most of it was taken by non-Native supporters - then helped to foreground Indigenous political issues and to challenge dominant control over their representation (8). Speaking to the historical silencing by the colonial culture of Native voices and images, Hill articulates their significance in the following terms:

The photographs [of Wounded Knee] have a sense of political history, of Native people making history, of defending themselves. One is left wondering: What if Sitting Bull's warriors had had a camera? What would those photographs be of? How would they change our image of Indians of the period? (8)

In 1979 the first "fine-art" exhibition deploying photography to critique dominant representations of Native Americans in "the media and advertising" (Scoda 6) was held. This exhibition by the Indian artist Fritz Scholder, entitled "Indian Kitsch: The Use and Misuse of Indian Images" inaugurated the entry of Native American artists and photographers into the dominant cultural site of the exhibition space/gallery. Rick Hill makes the point that Scholder's agenda was not to mimic the conventions of fine art photography but to politicise those dominant representational sites and practices which reduced Native Americans to caricature and stereotype (8). Thus, from its inaugural moment, the practice of exhibiting outside the community context politicised questions
of representation and identity in the face of the continuity of hegemonic control over the production of visual images of Native Americans. Considerations of space do not permit me to map in detail the historical emergence of photography as an Indigenous practice. Instead, I briefly examine the political orientation of some contemporary Native American photography, its marking of cultural differences and its mobilisation of a counter-discursive stance towards colonialism and racism. In the process, I will engage with the following questions in order to gauge the differences and continuities inflecting the production of photographic representations of Native Americans by the early 1990s: How in this contemporary context do Native Americans challenge the residual legacy of that colonial visual economy which has historically structured, appropriated and commodified their images? In spite of their increased visibility and access to dominant sites like the gallery, what institutional and cultural constraints shape their production of an Indigenous “visual history”? 267 To what extent does the construction of a counter-discursive visual history succeed in displacing what John Rapko calls that "violent symbolic history" (4) of dominance fostered by the hegemonic culture’s deployment against Native Americans of visual technologies like photography? 268

To this end, I will focus primarily on Native American critical responses to the conditions shaping photographic production, exhibition and cultural/critical reception. Then I examine the politics of representation mapped in the volume Strong Hearts: Native American Visions And Voices, published in 1995. This special Aperture edition of photographs and texts by Native Americans arguably embeds written and visual practices which work in

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tandem to construct that specifically Native American "visual history" (20) which Theresa Harlan argues is crucial to the process of decolonisation.

Harlan broaches the politics of contemporary Native American photographic production in two essays which map a history of photography and the Indigene from a Native American perspective. The first essay is published in a special issue on Native American photography in the photography journal *Exposure* in 1993, and the second constitutes her contribution to *Strong Hearts*. In the first essay, she raises questions about the politics of exhibiting and publishing Native photography, arguing that, Native American "visions" and "voices" ("A Curator's perspective" 20) are still marginalised in the U.S.A. This is in spite of the relatively increased visibility of contemporary Indigenous photography over the last decade, a visibility enabled through a series of exhibitions and "symposia on Native Americans and photography" (12). She says of the 1992 exhibition of photography curated by Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, *Compensating Imbalances*, that it was the only Native American exhibition in Santa Fe in that year, a fact that mocks Santa Fe's self-proclaimed status as "the heartland of contemporary Native American art" (13). This exhibition set out to mark the disjunction between the cultural spaces and sites available to Native photographers and critics and non-Native artists "working with Native American subject matter":

The title of the exhibition, *Compensating Imbalances*, calls attention to the fact that too few Native American photographers are provided with opportunities to exhibit and publish imagery of Native Americans, compared with the number of non-Native American artists working with Native American subject matter. This same imbalance occurs in written documentation of Native photography; there are too few sources for critical analysis of the complex relationship of Native Americans and photography. Sources on photography and Native
Americans written by non-Natives far outnumber sources by Native artists and writers. (13)

While she notes that this exhibition was more or less ignored by the dominant visual arts community (13), her own essay and the portfolio of photographs with which it is juxtaposed marks her intention to contest this scenario by using a dominant cultural site - a mainstream photography journal - to articulate a Native American cultural and intellectual perspective on photography.

In the second essay published in *Strong Hearts*, Harlan reiterates some of these concerns about the politics of exhibiting and publishing, and the marginalisation of Native American critical perspectives on the politics and practices which inform the production of Indigenous photography. She critiques the tendency by "mainstream" cultural texts and sites to ghettoise minority cultural practices by classifying them into categories such as "artists of colour," "multicultural artists," or "ethnic artists" ("Creating a Visual History" 20). This classificatory practice effectively reproduces and consigns them to the familiar Western colonial category of "the other" (20). As such, the texts and art of these "others" are delimited by "discussions of 'their art,' 'their people,' and 'their issues" (20).

Implicitly, in this scenario mapped by Harlan, art by the West's "others" lacks the "universal" qualities seen to inhere in "fine art" or "photo-art" as defined through traditional Western aesthetic grids and practices. As "others," then, a distance is generated between the cultural producers and the institutions which classify and display their work, a distance which enables those in positions of institutional power to disavow their own neo-colonial positioning in the contemporary visual arts culture. Harlan argues that this ghettoisation is compounded by a tendency at the exhibition site to avoid an engagement with the "intellectual and critical" aspects of the works:
"Contemporary Native art is often characterised as angry, created by the voices of the defeated, and confined to the realm of the emotions" (20). This characterisation works to homogenise Native American differences and to occlude the colonial and neo-colonial contexts which inflect Indigenous interventions in the hegemonic visual community: "Native survival was and remains a contest over life, humanity, land, systems of knowledge, memory and representations" (20). Harlan contrasts the reception of much Native American art with that of the "sentimental portraits depicted by Marcia Keegan" (20) in an anthology which emulates the Curtis genre through its techniques and through its commitment to representing "the traditional Indian way of life" (20). 269 This essentialising of Native American subjectivity and culture, argues Harlan, "reduces Native survival to a matter of nostalgia, and precludes discussion of the political strategies that enabled Native American survival" (20).

Harlan's critique of the contemporary visual economy, and the call she makes for Indigenous sovereignty over knowledge and representations of Native Americans, is echoed and buttressed by Joelene Rickard (Tuscarora) in her contribution to Strong Hearts. 270 Her essay is framed by her narrowing of the moment in 1924, when the Cayuga Chief, Deskaheh mounted a challenge to the imperial might of the U.S.A. in front of the League of Nations in Geneva: "Deskaheh presented an official proclamation from the Iroquois Confederation to the League of Nations in Geneva, documenting our independence and sovereignty as recognised in treaties with the Dutch, British and American governments" (51).

Rickard remarks on the seeming futility of Deskaheh's act, given that, at the time, centuries of colonial dispossession had reduced the Native American land base to less than 5% of the U.S.A. total. She likens it to

269 Marcia Keegan and Frontier Photographers, Enduring Culture: A Century of Photographs of the Southwest Indians (Santa Fe: Clear Light, 1990).
"drawing a line in the sand" (51), a tactic which she then validates by positioning it within a history of Native American resistance to U.S. imperialism and cultural hegemony. In her argument, sovereignty is not an abstract concept or a telos marked off in some ideal future. Crucially, sovereignty is "the border that shifts indigenous experience from a victimised stance to a strategic one" (51). This tradition of resistance is now located tactically in cultural practices like photography, and her essay is framed through a set of photographs by George Longfish (Seneca/Tuscarora), Zig Jackson (Mandan/Hidatsat/Arikara), Pamela Shields Carroll (Blackfoot), Ron Carraher (Colville Confederated Tribes) and Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, which in different ways mobilise questions of Indigeneity, resistance and sovereignty.

Given this focus on sovereignty Rickard suggests an important caveat to non-Native viewers when contemplating contemporary Native art and photography. She argues against interpretations which reduce its heterogeneous practices to that of "victimised stances" (51) against colonialism and its various neo-colonial permutations. She also, like Harlan, questions the politics of the dominant visual arts establishment which classifies Native American art and photography under the rubric of "identity politics" (51) or consigns it to the "official" category of the "Other" (51). Instead, she asserts, questions of "sovereignty and self-determination" (51) are more appropriate loci for engaging with contemporary Native American photography. The categories marked above operate as modes of neo-colonial regulation, she contends, in so far as they form the limits of recognition by the "Western-based art world" of "indigenous visibility" (51). She argues that: "As part of an ongoing strategy for survival, the work of indigenous artists needs to be understood through the clarifying lens of sovereignty and self-determination, not just in terms of assimilation, colonisation and identity politics" (51).
Harlan further problematises the notion of identity politics by designating it "the invention of the United States Government" (22). Her seemingly provocative comment is made in the context of the racialised politics around Native American art and identity which have been generated by the passage of US Public Law 101-644 - *The Indian Arts and Craft Act* - passed in November 1990. This act regulates the meaning of "Indian" - the index being tribal status - and of "Indian product" (McMaster 74), a statutory enactment ostensibly designed to protect the interests of "real" Native Americans who were disadvantaged by the appropriative practices of non-Native Americans selling "Indian" art. Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree) says that the policing of this legislation devolves to tribal organisations: "In the United States the state encodes different Aboriginal groups as 'federally recognised tribes,' thereby empowering them to determine who is a member of their tribe. In this way, the state assumes a position of seeming neutrality and removes itself from centre stage in any controversy over individuals' tribal status" (77). Notwithstanding the complex politics which devolve around the passage and mobilisation of this act, it has produced division within Native American communities by re-instituting the colonial binary between "real" and "hybrid" in relation to the production of "Indian" art.

Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, says Harlan, "is one of the few artists to take a public stand on the 1990 *Indian Arts and Crafts Act"* ("Creating A Visual History" 22). The exhibition, *Nobody's Pet Indian*, staged at the San Francisco Art Institute include an installation called "Are Your Native Artifacts Racially Pure?" (Rapko 4). This confrontational title, argues John Rapko, places the viewer in a position where they must "consider the relation of one's viewing pleasure to still-operative ideas of purity and authenticity" (4). This contestation of the legislative deployment of racialised notions of identity to

authorise and regulate the conditions of artistic production is also embodied - literally - in the series *Would I Have Been a Member of the Nighthawk, Snake Society or Would I Have Been a Half-Breed Leading the Whites to the Full-Bloods*, 1991. 272 The photographs, a series of black and white self-portraits, encode these politics by literally inscribing identity on the body of the artist. Thus Tsinhnahjinnie’s tribal enrolment number - the artist's "signature" - is emblazoned on her forehead.

Speaking to the divisive effects of this legislation on Native American communities in an interview with Steven Jenkins in 1993, 273 Tsinhnahjinnie makes the point that it reflects "colonialistic ideas about blood quanta" (4) and has the potential to stifle creativity. She articulates the politics of her photographic practice as follows: "I produce work that confronts identity and asks questions of Native communities.... I consider it necessary to create art for Native people. I consider it necessary for art to engage issues. I enjoy instilling a complex meaning to the label 'Native Photographer." 274

This complexity is manifested in, *Strong Hearts*, which, through its interweaving of written texts - critical essays, poems, stories - and photographs by Native Americans maps a counter set of representational practices which exemplify Theresa Harlan's demand for Indigenous "ownership of strategic and intellectual space for our works" ("Creating a Visual History" 20). 275 The photographs encompass a variety of styles and genres, which include intimate portraiture by Lee Marmon (Laguna), Horace Poolaw (Kiowa), David Neel (Kwagiutl) and the more confrontational series by Richard Ray Whitman (Euchee/Creek) and Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, which

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272 These photographs are reproduced in *Strong Hearts*, 59.
274 This quotation is from the textual accompaniment to the exhibition and exhibition catalogue, *Image and Self in Contemporary Native American Photoart* (Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, September 9-November 26, 1995), 14.
deploy the genre of portraiture to politicises it and to raise questions about racism and neo-colonial practices impacting on Native American subjects and communities.

The anthology also includes photographs from the series *Shooting Back From The Reservation* (photographs by Native American children), Zig Jackson's critique of the ubiquitous tourist gaze directed at Native Americans as well as the more abstract photography exemplified by the work of George Longfish, Pamela Shields Carroll and Larry McNeil (Tlingit/Nishgaa). This range of genres and the different communities and viewers it addresses refutes the kind of hierarchical classification and differentiation which structures Western visual arts sites and institutions. The children's project is thus implicitly given the same value as that of more well known Native American photographers.

Crucially, the viewing/reading of these photographs is mediated by Native American critics and photographers like Theresa Harlan, Joeline Rickard and Paul Chaat Smith (Commanche). In addition, many of the issues raised in their texts are buttressed by and elaborated on in additional texts (spanning a range of genres) from Native American writers like Leslie Marmon Silko, James Welch (Blackfoot), Lucy Tapahonso (Navajo), and a statement asserting sovereignty by the Blackfeet Tribal Elders to the U.S. Congress in 1977 (100-101). While these texts, juxtaposed with different sets of photographs suggest a commonality of interests, they also map specific histories and practices which disarticulate the colonial homogenisation experienced by Native American communities. What these written mediations of viewing practices challenge and undermine is the assumption that the meaning of Indigenous representations and the complex issues they raise are somehow transparently available and intelligible to the non-Native viewer. This issue of intelligibility is addressed by Theresa Harlan in both of her
essays, and her summation of the questions it raises is an appropriate way to end this appendix. She argues:

The impulse to relay on authorities who are outside the culture must be abandoned and Native Americans used as primary resources and interpreters. In order for non-Natives to be educated about Native American art, they must look to Native American artists and curators for their education. The significance of photographic works by Native Americans is that they allow all of us -- Native and non-Native -- to experience Native American communities from a Native viewpoint. The rise of Native photographers gives new life to the "Native image." ("A Curator's Perspective" 20)
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