

**Toward a Dakota Literary Tradition:
Examining Dakota Literature through the Lens of Critical Nationalism**

by

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Abstract

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Toward a Dakota Literary Tradition:

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Thesis Directed by Professor Penelope Kelsey

Dakota literature is often regarded as an extinct and thus irrelevant oral storytelling tradition by EuroAmerican, and at times, Dakota people. This dissertation disputes this dominant view and instead argues that the Dakota oral storytelling tradition is not extinct, but rather has been reimagined in a more modern form as print literature. In this dissertation, I reconstruct a genealogy of the Dakota literary tradition that focuses primarily (but not exclusively) upon the literary history of the Santee Dakota from 1836 to present by analyzing archival documents – Dakota orthographies, Dakota mythologies, and personal and professional correspondences – to better understand how this tradition has evolved from an oral to a written form. In addition to reconstructing elements of a Dakota literary tradition, I also examine the various literary strategies and rhetorical devices used by five different writers and scholars to imagine and reimagine the Dakota nation. Specifically, I analyze the published and unpublished writings of Gideon Pond, Samuel Pond, Stephen Riggs, Ella Cara Deloria, and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. Each of these five writers has used his or her translations and/or literary representations to engage in what I frame as acts that colonize and/or decolonize the Dakota nation. In this dissertation, I contend that tracing the evolution of the Dakota literary tradition will help re-conceptualize this tradition, shifting thinking away from one that configures Dakota literature as an extinct oral tradition intended for study by anthropologists toward more critical discourse that accounts for the interplay between orality, literacy, and translation, thus legitimizing the rich and complex Dakota literary tradition for future generations of writers and scholars.

To Mom and Dad

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Chapter One: An Overview of Dakota Literature

*Our language
is like those prairie grasses
surviving the fires
of missionaries and their gods,
floods of English words
drought, growing
in unexpected places
as if it had never
been gone.*

– Gwen Nell Westerman, “Root Words”

Dakota language and literature are part of a rich and complex literary tradition that has existed for ages. Gwen Westerman describes many of these complexities in her recent poem, “Root Words,” which compares Dakota language to prairie grasses with “roots twice as long as their height” (40). She suggests that these long and complicated roots have allowed these otherwise delicate blades of grass to withstand harsh weather conditions year after year, decade after decade, century after century. This metaphor is fitting for several reasons. First, prairie grasses are a symbol of a physical landscape that is innately familiar to Dakota people. It represents their homelands which originate at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers.¹ Second, deep roots emphasize that Dakota people have occupied these lands since time immemorial. Finally, these roots allude to the messy, and, at times, tumultuous history of Dakota writing.

Westerman references the complexities of Dakota language and literature in both the content and structure of her poem. The speaker of the poem points out that Dakota language has

¹ According to the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, Bdote is “the Dakota place of genesis” (Westerman and White 15).

been impacted by a number of people and circumstances that colonized and nearly destroyed Dakota literature. The poem primarily focuses upon the devastation caused by missionaries and educators, but hints that the language has also been shaped and influenced by a number of other factors as well. Despite these efforts to colonize Dakota language, the speaker of the poem firmly maintains that Dakota literature has survived and even thrived into the twenty-first century, as more modern Dakota writers and scholars learn how to engage in decolonizing Dakota writing. She concludes her poem in the Dakota language: “Daḡota wicoie/ k’a iapi/ teuḡhiṇdapi./ Maka kiṇ etaṇḡaṇ/ uṇhipi. Ikce/ wicaṣta teuḡhikapi.” (lines 34-37). Westerman translates this phrase to: “We treasure our words and language. We come from this land. We are mighty” (pg. 69).² These three verses emphasize the power and resilience of Dakota language and literature which Westerman reiterates in the structure of her poem. “Root Words” is a concrete poem arranged as a single blade of grass that branches out to form a dense, tangled root. The purpose of this dissertation is to untangle that root and start to examine how different writers and scholars have helped create and continue to perpetuate a Dakota literary tradition.

A Dakota Literary Tradition

The five writers, translators, and scholars included in this dissertation are part of a rich and complex Dakota literary tradition, an ever-growing body of print literature based upon both the content (i.e., subject matter of ancient and modern oral stories) and structure (i.e., oral storytelling techniques) of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. The Dakota literary tradition delineated in this dissertation emerged from an earlier oral storytelling tradition, which has

² Westerman translates this poem in the glossary of her 2013 book of poetry *Follow the Blackbirds*. According to Westerman, the glossary translation is slightly out of order. She confirmed via email on July 6, 2015 that the translation included in this dissertation is, in her opinion, the correct order of this translation. (“Your Poem: Root Words” 1).

existed for ages. Traditionally, says Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, Dakota oral stories were intended to “teach the young and remind the old [of] appropriate and inappropriate behavior . . . provide a sense of identity and belonging, situating community members within their lineage . . . [and] serve as a source of entertainment as well as a source of bonding and intimacy” (35). Although the Dakota literary tradition still serves a similar function today, it is often regarded as an extinct and thus irrelevant tradition by EuroAmerican, and in some cases, Dakota people alike. This dissertation disputes this view and argues that the Dakota oral storytelling tradition is not extinct, but rather has been reimagined in a more modern form as print literature. As indicated by Westerman’s poem, the Dakota literary tradition been subjected to several dramatic and, at times, traumatic changes over the past two hundred years. It has not simply been handed down from generation to generation – from ancient Dakota storytellers to more modern Dakota writers and scholars. In the mid-nineteenth century, as I will show, Christian missionaries intercepted and manipulated Dakota language and literature – in ways I refer to in this dissertation in shorthand as “colonize” – in the process of transforming them from an oral to a written form based upon an English alphabetic script.

Between 1836 and 1881, missionaries translated the Old and New Testaments into Dakota to help “christianize and civilize the Dakota Indians” (“New Suit” 4).³ Additionally, they also helped Christianize several traditional Dakota oral stories that they translated from Dakota to English. According to Reverend Stephen R. Riggs, who helped lead these efforts, the “labor of writing the language was undertaken as a means to a greater end. To put God’s

³ Thomas Williamson began studying the Dakota language under the tutelage of Joseph Renville, a Dakota-French fur trader, in 1835. He officially began translating the scripture – “extracts of the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John” – into Dakota in November 1836 (Willand 96). For a timeline on the missionary translation process, see Willand, p. 279 -90.

thoughts into their speech” (*Mary and I* 31). Riggs believed that Dakota people lacked God and morality; and thus, it was his responsibility to share the gospel with them and save their souls. He and his missionary colleagues decided to use the Dakota oral storytelling tradition to help them deconstruct the Dakota language and reconstruct it with a new Christian understanding. In short, they used the Dakota oral storytelling tradition as a linguistic tool to help them learn the language and fulfill their evangelical mission – as opposed to viewing and approaching it as literature. The missionaries firmly believed that there “was nothing in the language, composed by [the Dakota], that could properly be called a poem” or any other literary genre (Pond *Dakota Life* 81). In other words, it did not match the aesthetic, linguistic and/or stylistic expectations that the missionaries often associated with “literature.” Immediately, then, from the very first moment it appeared in print, missionaries objectified the Dakota oral storytelling tradition and denied it of its literariness. This approach helped delegitimize this tradition and reduced it to a static cultural artifact suitable for study by anthropologists.

Often, anthropologists are more preoccupied with uncovering the earliest or most “authentic” representation of indigenous oral storytelling traditions. For example, Douglas Parks and Raymond DeMallie, two anthropologists who specialize in the cultural history of Plains Indians, assert that early missionary translations are “the only truly *authentic* voices that document the American Indian past come to us in native languages accessible solely through *translation*” (my emphasis 106). The notion of an authentic translation is, in many ways, an oxymoron. Many translation theorists observe that translation is a complex process that “inevitably alters the semantics and pragmatics of the [translated] language” (Hanks and Severi 9). Indeed, the earliest and most authoritative representations of this tradition (i.e., missionary translations) are often based upon an English alphabetic script that reinforces the tacit

assumption that the Dakota oral storytelling tradition is an inferior knowledge system rapidly nearing extinction. These biases or “Christian influences” are still evident in the language today observes Lakota language instructor Albert White Hat, Sr. (*Lakota Language* 8).⁴ This observation reiterates that it is problematic to label missionary translations – or in fact, any translation – as “authentic” because translation is a complex process that ultimately alters the integrity of the text. Additionally, it is also limiting to assume that an original representation of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition exists because, as Wilson points out, it is “continual and always expanding” (41). By its very nature, then, the Dakota oral storytelling tradition is vibrant, dynamic, and fluid, meaning that capturing a pure or untouched representation of this tradition is highly unlikely. The field of anthropology – which primarily focuses upon “captur[ing] *real* [representations] of Indians” – is not necessarily the best space to critically interrogate these issues of authenticity or engage with this “ever expanding” tradition (Deloria *Custer* 81).⁵

Literary studies is a much more appropriate space to examine transcribed/translated Dakota oral stories, because the tools of literary analysis can be used to help illuminate the unique linguistic and literary features of the Dakota literary tradition. Literary studies has the potential to re-conceptualize this literary tradition, shifting thinking away from the dominant view of Dakota literature as an extinct oral tradition intended for study by anthropologists toward

⁴ Although this dissertation focuses primarily upon the Dakota language, I have decided to cite Lakota writers and scholars as well because of the lack of information available on both traditions. Most Dakota and Lakota scholars agree that the Lakota language emerged from the Dakota language. For more information on the similarities and differences between the Dakota and Lakota languages, see White Hat pg. 3 and Red Shirt p. 83-87.

⁵ For more information on the potential dangers and limitations of anthropology, see Deloria’s *Custer*, p. 78-100.

more critical discourse that accounts for the interplay between orality, literacy, and translation. Overall, this dissertation uses the tools of literary analysis to examine four traditional Dakota oral stories – Fallen Star, Mni Sosa, Ite Waste Win, and the Corn Wife – that have been translated and re-translated numerous times by different writers and scholars to serve various, and at times, opposing cultural and/or political agendas.⁶ This dissertation examines how these translations and/or literary representations have helped shape and influence the Dakota literary tradition and its' readers.

According to Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, “a lot of people don’t think that there really is a Dakota literary tradition” (Bruchac 63). In fact, Cook-Lynn is the only scholar, to the best of my knowledge, to ever use this phrase to describe Dakota literature. To date, only two literary scholars have composed full-length academic studies that focus upon Dakota literature, including: Ruth Heflin’s 2000 book *I Remain Alive: The Sioux Literary Renaissance* and Penelope Kelsey’s 2008 book *Tribal Theory in Native American Literature: Dakota and Haudensausnee Writing and Indigenous Worldviews*.⁷ These two literary scholars analyze

⁶ The five writers and/or scholars included in this dissertation used similar, but often different titles for their translations and/or literary representations. I used the writer’s title when discussing his or her specific translation. However, when I reference these translations collectively, I categorize them by the main character (i.e., mythic figure) in the story.

⁷ Admittedly, some literary scholars have composed essays that examine the work of individual Dakota/Lakota writers including Ella Deloria, Zitkala Sa, Charles Eastman, or another writer with a Dakota and/or Lakota background. However, only two literary scholars – Heflin and Kelsey – have written books that focus on more than two Dakota and/or Lakota writers at the same time.

For more on Deloria, see Cotera’s *Native Speakers*, “All My Relatives,” and “Ella Deloria;” Gardner’s “Speaking of Ella Deloria,” “Assimilation,” and “Broke My Heart;” Finn’s “Ella Delora” and “Walls and Bridges;” Medicine’s “The Emic Voice” and “Newly Discovered Novelist;” Miller’s “Mediation.”

Dakota literature using two seemingly different literary theories, thus yielding two opposite and at times contradictory interpretations of Dakota literature. For example, Heflin seems to approach Dakota literature through the lens of Western literary criticism, while Kelsey reads Dakota literature through the framework of tribal theory. The former is an exogenous method that tends to emphasize the similarities between EuroAmerican and Dakota literatures. Meanwhile, the latter study is an endogenous one that focuses upon their cultural differences and stresses Dakota culture and language.

Although Heflin and Kelsey's literary approaches are diametrically opposite, both literary methodologies are important and valuable, because each reading offers a unique and insightful perspective on Dakota literature. For example, Heflin insists that books written by Dakota and Lakota authors are literature. This particular approach is rare given that most scholars tend to approach these texts as static cultural artifacts that help illuminate the tribal past. According to Heflin, early Dakota and Lakota writers are similar to modernist writers such as William Faulkner, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce, because, both groups of writers tend to experiment with narrative form and structure, thus disrupting the American literary canon. Although Dakota and Lakota writers do, indeed, help challenge Western literary conventions, Heflin's argument is potentially problematic because it tends to attribute the unique writing style of early Dakota and Lakota writers to Western (as opposed to Dakota) literary influences, thereby reinforcing the misguided, stereotypical assumption that Dakota and Lakota people are without a literary tradition of their own.

Admittedly, many early Dakota and Lakota writers were, as students during the boarding school era, in all likelihood exposed to and influenced by literature and poetry within the

American literary canon.⁸ However, Kelsey points out, readings like Heflin's are problematic because they tend to overestimate the impact of Western literary influences and downplay and/or ignore tribal epistemologies and worldviews. Instead, Kelsey argues that Dakota writers drew (and continue to draw) much of their literary power from traditional Dakota lifeways such as early Dakota writing practices (i.e., "pictographic records"), gender roles (i.e., *wi* and *hanwi*), and the kinship system (i.e., *tiospayé*).⁹ Kelsey's book, which focuses upon many of the same writers as Heflin (i.e., Zitkala Sa, Eastman, and Deloria), "stands in contrast to other scholarship that focuses on non-Native frameworks and/or glosses over the individual traits of authors from specific tribes" (9). In responses to these limiting and potentially misguided frameworks, Kelsey stresses the importance of situating Dakota literature into a tribally-specific context to better understand how Dakota culture shapes and influences Dakota writing. Kelsey's decision to consciously and deliberately read Dakota literature through a "larger Native cultural framework" is empowering because it helps emphasize the power and potential of traditional Dakota lifeways (10).

Overall, these two theories focus on two different aspects of Dakota literature, with Heflin stressing the literary and Kelsey emphasizing the cultural. These two diametrically opposite approaches reflect, in many ways, a growing schism in Native American literary studies that tends to examine indigenous literatures from one of two perspectives, either a literary

⁸ Dakota author and poet, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, recalls learning how to write in boarding school by hand-copying or writing out word-for-word canonical poems (Bruchac 62). Many indigenous writers were first exposed to the American literary canon in boarding school. For more information on the boarding school experience, see Child.

⁹ Heflin's book focuses on both Dakota and Lakota writers. Meanwhile, Kelsey's book centers on Dakota and Haudensausnee writers. For the purposes of this dissertation, I specifically examined their criticism on Dakota writers.

framework that is often conflated with Western modes of thinking, or a cultural lens that highlights tribal knowledge. This either/or approach is potentially limiting because, as a genealogy of Dakota literature demonstrates, the Dakota literary tradition has, for better or for worse, been impacted by both Dakota and non-Dakota influences over the past two hundred years.

Reconstructing a Genealogy of Dakota Literature

This dissertation reconstructs a genealogy of Dakota literature (i.e., what I am calling a Dakota literary tradition) by analyzing archival documents – Dakota orthographies, Dakota mythologies, and the personal and professional correspondences of writers and scholars who have contributed to this literary tradition – to better understand how Dakota literature has evolved from an oral to a written form. It focuses explicitly upon print literature and implicitly upon oral stories, because handwritten and/or published resources can be read and re-read multiple times, making them easier to analyze, organize, and compare and contrast information. The spoken word, on the other hand, changes rapidly, making it difficult to assess and evaluate Dakota literature in its oral form. Simply put, it is more effective to conduct a comparative literary analysis by looking at two stories side-by-side rather than hearing them back-to-back. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, this dissertation focuses explicitly upon the written word and implicitly upon the spoken one, because some oral stories are simply not meant to be written down and studied for academic purposes. In an attempt to respect tribally-sensitive information, this dissertation will only focus upon oral stories that have already been published and/or handwritten and thus are available for public consumption.

Although there are many advantages to focusing explicitly on print literature and implicitly on oral stories, this approach is also potentially problematic for two reasons. First and foremost, it implies that the Dakota literary tradition originated in 1836 when it first appeared in print.¹⁰ In fact, this tradition existed well before that time in its oral form and still continues to exist as oral literature today. The tacit assumption that Dakota literature did not exist before 1836 is problematic because it tends to elevate the written word over the spoken one, thus reinforcing “the great divide between oral and literate modes of communication” (Baynham 294). Often, this divide suggests that the written word is more sophisticated and advanced than the spoken one. This dissertation attempts to mitigate this divide by using the tools of literary analysis to highlight the interplay between the oral and the written, emphasizing their equivalence, and thus dismantling the linguistic hierarchy that helped delegitimize early Dakota writing.¹¹

Second, and perhaps, the most obvious limitation of this dissertation is that it focuses exclusively upon English – as opposed to Dakota – translations of Dakota literature. As Dakota writer and scholar Elden Lawrence explains, this limitation is problematic because “the English language [often] falls short when attempting to describe or explain Native American cultures. . . . More than one traditional elder has experienced the frustration of losing the context and strength of a story when unable to use his native tongue” (6). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge

¹⁰ According to John Willand, 1836, marks the year that “the first Dakota translation, Samuel Pond’s spelling book, was published” (281).

¹¹ According to Clemmons, in the early nineteenth-century, most “theorists’ likened Indian speech to infant babble. Indians were seen as being like children, capable of thinking only in terms of their immediate wants. English, on the other hand, was the language of civilization” (10). For more information on this linguistic hierarchy, see Clemmons p. 9-11 and 47-54.

that the English translations contained within this dissertation are limited and inherently flawed. As demonstrated in this dissertation, the Dakota literary tradition has been subjected to approximately two-hundred years of colonization and forced assimilation. These translations are merely a starting point. It is the responsibility of fluent Dakota speakers – and perhaps, translation scholars – to elaborate further on the discrepancies and consequences of these translations. Despite these shortcomings, however, this dissertation is still significant because it helps celebrate and honor the Dakota literary tradition, and represents an important step toward working to decolonizing Dakota literature.

Analyzing Dakota Literature

This dissertation uses the interpretive tools of literary analysis to critically evaluate the work of five writers and/or scholars that were pivotal to the development and growth of a Dakota literary tradition. These tools promote a closer examination of the rhetorical devices and literary strategies used by writers to imagine and reimagine the Dakota nation. Specifically, this dissertation focuses upon the translation efforts of missionaries stationed at Lac Qui Parle Mission, the first of nine mission stations established in Dakota Territory in the late-nineteenth century. Often, these early missionary translations are regarded as the earliest and most authentic representations of Dakota writing. This assumption is problematic because it tends to elide the fact that a Dakota literary tradition existed before the missionaries began studying and experimenting with the Dakota language. Furthermore, this issue of authenticity is problematic because it tends to promote “an aura of sacred untouchability” that hinders analysis and critical discourse (Hermanns 7). Indeed, few scholars have critically interrogated these early missionary translations or challenged the authority of these translations, because they are often regarded as

the earliest and thus least spoiled representations of the Dakota language. Further analysis of these early translations, however, demonstrate that they are actually a paradox that helped preserve Dakota language and literature, while also simultaneously altering and nearly destroying them beyond recognition. A closer examination of this paradox helps challenge the assumption that these early missionary translations are the purist representation of the Dakota literary tradition. This dissertation, by challenging these notions of authenticity, opens up a critical space to examine the work of other writers and scholars who have also contributed to the Dakota literary tradition, but who have often been pushed to the margins by these early missionary translations.

In addition to examining how early missionary translations colonized Dakota literature, this dissertation also explores how more modern Dakota writers and scholars have responded to these efforts by penning their own translations and/or literary representations. Specifically, this dissertation examines how two female Dakota writers, Ella Cara Deloria and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, composed their own literary representations to challenge these early missionary translations. Unfortunately, very little of Deloria's work was actually published during her lifetime and much is still buried in her archive at the Dakota Indian Foundation in Chamberlain, South Dakota.¹² Meanwhile, Cook-Lynn's literary work is often regarded as contentious and

¹² Most of Deloria's published work was co-written with Franz Boas and his colleagues. During her lifetime, Deloria published two books on her own: *Dakota Texts* and *Speaking of Indians*. She dedicated *Dakota Texts* to Boas and states in the introduction: "I am most deeply indebted to Dr. Boas, who first made it possible for me to take up this study, and has wisely directed my efforts and patiently corrected my mistakes" (xi). This statement reiterates that Boas had a strong impact on Deloria's published research.

Indeed, Deloria struggled to publish on her own after Boas passed away. Agnes Picotte, Julian Rice, and most recently Joyzelle Gingway Godfrey published some of her work posthumously, including: *Waterlily*, *The Buffalo People*, *Ironhawk*, and *The Dakota Way of Life*. However, Deloria still has a tremendous amount of work buried in an archive at the Dakota Indian

polemic, at best, and disorganized and inconsistent, at worst. Today, her largest and most ambitious work of fiction, *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy*, is out of print. This dissertation argues that Deloria and Cook-Lynn's inability to publish is due, in large part, to these early missionary translations, which are considered the earliest and thus the most authentic representations of the Dakota literary tradition. As the authority on this tradition, these early missionary translations helped ossify and delegitimize Dakota language and literature, and thus helped silence Dakota voices within their very own literary tradition. For example, these early missionary translations have been published and re-published multiple times, while much of Deloria and Cook-Lynn's work fails to receive the recognition it deserves even though it provides substantial evidence of the resilience and resonance of the Dakota literary tradition.¹³

The purpose of this dissertation, then, is to conduct a comparative study to examine the various translation methods and interpretive skills used by both EuroAmerican and Dakota writers and scholars as they use their writing to produce work I view as having the power to empower and disempower the Dakota nation. Overall, this analysis examines how missionary translations were used in manners to ossify and delegitimize Dakota literature, lives and the very nation itself. More importantly, it explores how more modern Dakota writers and scholars have

Foundation in Chamberlain, SD. Most notably, this archive includes the unpublished manuscript *Dakota Legends* as well as an untitled ethnographic manuscript, several unpublished Lakota stories and an incomplete Lakota dictionary. Recently, more scholars have started to analyze this archive including Cotera, Gardner, and Godfrey.

¹³ The earliest translations of the Dakota oral storytelling first tradition appeared in Gideon Pond's newspaper *Dakota Tawaxitku Kin or The Dakota Friend* in 1852. After this newspaper ceased publication, Reverend Stephen R. Riggs began publishing his own translations of these stories in his newspaper *Iapi Oaye or The Word Carrier*. These translations have been re-published numerous times in Riggs' classical book *Dakota Grammar with Texts and Ethnography*. For more information on Riggs' publishing history, see Murray, p. 340.

started to de-ossify and legitimize Dakota language, literature, and life. Hopefully, this analysis will inspire a greater conversation on how to use Dakota language and literature to further strengthen the modern Dakota nation.

The Dakota Nation¹⁴

Broadly stated, the word nation denotes a group of people who share similar backgrounds and/or interests. However, the connotations associated with this term are nuanced, and underscore some of the divisions that exist within the field of Native American studies. According to Stephanie Nohelani Teves, et al., “what nation represents . . . and how that nation envisions a future for itself and how it should be treated by other nations [is] robustly debated” by Native American studies scholars (157). Some scholars use the term nation to describe the political and legal status of tribes, while others argue that it refers to cultural and linguistic traits. Scott Richard Lyons convincingly suggests that tribal nationhood is a combination of: 1.) traditional Native American culture and language that is “as old as the hills” (*X-Marks* 121); and 2.) federal Indian policy that is as modern as tomorrow (123). Likewise, the Dakota nation is founded upon a rich body of oral stories that define the tribe’s origins, history, traditions, and values. Additionally, the modern Dakota nation is also a sovereign entity with the legal right to govern their tribal members. This dual definition is problematic to some scholars who reason that federal Indian law and policy tends to limit tribe’s sovereign power and reinforces colonialism.¹⁵ However, this dual definition is useful in the context of this dissertation because

¹⁴ For further discussion on tribal nationhood, see Lyons’ *X-Marks* p.111-164; Lyons and Teves, et al, p. 157-198.

it reiterates that the Dakota nation and their knowledge systems have been shaped by two different, and at times, contradictory cultural influences. This dissertation asks: how have these writers and/or scholars negotiated these differences and with what degree of success?

This dissertation not only examines intercultural tensions between Dakota and non-Dakota people, but it also examines intracultural differences that exist within the Dakota nation. For example, the Dakota nation, who refer to themselves as the Oceti Šakowiŋ or “the Seven Council Fires,” consists of seven tribes including the Bdewakaŋtuŋwaŋ or Mdewakanton; Sisseton; Wahpekuŋ or Wahpekute; Wahpetuŋwaŋ or Wahpeton; Ihaŋktuŋwaŋ or Yankton; Ihaŋktuŋwaŋ or Yanktonai; and Tituŋwaŋ or Teton.¹⁶ These two different names represent the Dakota and English spellings of each tribe (Westerman 22). Some writers and scholars use the latter spelling, while others use the former. These differences emphasize that each writer and/or scholar emerged from a different background and thus possesses different tribal beliefs, customs, languages, homelands, and values. Wakiŋyaŋ Zi Sapa explains that every Dakota/Lakota/Nakota tribe embodies “different types of values . . . different types of histories . . . and creation stories. . . . [that] are all equally important” (qtd. in Westerman *Mni Sota* 16). In many ways, this statement implies that it is potentially limiting to interrogate the authenticity or accuracy of these differences, as they are often a reflection of the writer’s own unique tribal

¹⁵ Some scholars disagree with Lyon’s dual theory of nationalism because “articulating cultural and political difference in the ways that Lyons does . . . [tends to] recapitulate the terms of the settler state” (Teves, et al. 165). For more discussion on the potential limitations and impositions of federal Indian law and policy, see C. Anderson and Alfred.

¹⁶ These seven tribes can be divided even further into several tribal bands spread out across reservations in North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and even Canada. Likewise, each tribal band and tribal member differs in their decision to use either the traditional or modern spellings of their name. For more information on these different tribal bands, see Westerman and White, p. 22.

background and/or experience which inevitably vary. Instead of simply questioning the accuracy of these translations and/or literary representations, then, this dissertation seeks to understand how different writers and scholars have imagined the Dakota nation and consider the long-term impact that these representations have had on Dakota language, literature, and life.

Like Wakiyaŋ Zi Sapa, Ella Deloria also argues that every tribal community within the *Oceti Šakowin* is “equally valid and acceptable” (*Dakota Way of Life* 1). Although Deloria’s assertion is correct, this dissertation primarily focuses upon print literature produced for and/or by the Mdewakanton or Santee Dakota (as opposed to the six other bands that form the *Oceti Šakowin*).¹⁷ According to White Hat, the Santee Dakota “were the first Sioux tribal group encountered by missionaries and anthropologists. Consequently, Dakota was the earliest dialect to be transcribed into written form” (3). Missionaries lived and worked among the Santee Dakota for more than forty years publishing approximately fifty religious and secular texts that helped establish the material foundation of the Dakota literary tradition (i.e., published and/or handwritten materials). During this time, missionaries also assisted with treaty negotiations that resulted in the loss of 35 million acres of Dakota land and increased the US government’s control over tribal affairs (Clemmons 128). Robert Craig points out that “the Protestant missionary enterprise took place amidst the continual interaction between the Dakota people and the United States government, which centered on issues of sovereignty over land and the future of the Dakota people” (10). Eventually, this tension led to a conflict between missionaries and their converts, which resulted in the Dakota War of 1862, an armed struggle between the United

¹⁷ I have decided to use the name Santee Dakota because it is the name that all five writers included in this dissertation use to describe the Mdewakanton. Furthermore, the tribe tends to use both names interchangeably.

States and the Dakota nation that culminated in the mass hanging of 38 Dakota men and the closure of Lac Qui Parle Mission.¹⁸ Following this battle, the Santee Dakota were expelled from their homelands in Minnesota and relocated to the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation in eastern South Dakota. According to Cook-Lynn, during that time, the tribe was “also dispersed [to] Flandreau, Sisseton, Niobara, Nebraska . . . [and] Canada” (*Notebooks* 48-49). Much of the Dakota literary tradition is set amidst this conflict. Despite these efforts to dismantle the Santee Dakota nation, this dissertation firmly maintains that the Dakota people have continued to use their literature – in both its oral and written form – to defend the Dakota nation and sustain the Dakota way of life.

Definitions and Spellings

The phrase “Dakota literary tradition” is, in some ways, simple and self-explanatory, as it denotes the literary canon written by Dakota people. In other ways, however, this phrase is incredibly complex because this tradition has been shaped and influenced by both Dakota and non-Dakota writers and scholars. Several early Dakota storytellers translated traditional Dakota oral stories for non-Dakota people who often transcribed them. This dissertation contends that the Dakota literary tradition has been shaped by both Dakota and non-Dakota people. It examines the similarities and differences between these two perspectives/worldviews and attempts to understand how these writers have contributed to our current understanding of and interaction with the Dakota nation.

The word Dakota is also difficult to define because, as demonstrated in the previous section, it refers to multiple tribes with similar and interrelated, yet different cultural beliefs,

¹⁸ For more in depth information on the Dakota War of 1862, see Canku and Simon; Clemmons, p. 153-217.

customs, and values. Additionally, Dakota also refers to the Dakota language which is composed of three separate dialects – Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota – which impact the definitions and spellings of certain words. Some writers use certain orthographies and their associated diacritical marks in their writing, while others do not use any at all. Some writers and/or translators choose to italicize Dakota words and phrases in their representations, while others do not. Individual writers determine how they will use Dakota language and literature to represent their tribal community (Westerman *Mni Sota* 16). This dissertation does not focus on the accuracy of these definitions and spellings because, as discussed earlier, these issues of authenticity tend to hinder critical discourse and analysis. Therefore, instead of debating the definition and/or spelling of certain Dakota words, this dissertation retains the writers’ original definition and/or spelling to explore how he/she understands and conceptualizes this tradition. The various Dakota definitions and spellings used in this dissertation are highlighted in the table below. The words in this table represent the order in which they appear throughout the dissertation, which is organized chronologically from the moment the Dakota literary tradition appeared in print to present. Additionally, footnotes are used to indicate spelling changes and explain the significance of these spelling choices.

Figure 1: Dakota Definitions and Spellings
Dakota or Dakotah is used by all five authors to describe both the Dakota nation and the Dakota language.
Dakota nation, Dakotapi, or Dakota Oyate is the collective tribe. The missionaries and Deloria tend to use the phrase Dakota nation, while Cook-Lynn uses Dakotapi and Oyate interchangeably.

ohų'kakq, ***o-hun-ka-ka***, or ***ohunkakan*** refer to the oldest stories within the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. According to Deloria and Cook-Lynn, these stories often pertain to ancient supernatural figures. Deloria argues that there are two types of *ohų'kakq* tales. She describes these as real or novelistic tales. The latter are the older, more familiar story while storytellers tend to take more liberties with the novelistic tales.

Cook-Lynn does not mention that there is more than one type of o-hun-ka-ka tale. However, both writers seem to agree that these stories are told to impart a moral lesson.

Missionary translators use the word ohunkakan which they define as a story or myth.

keya'pi' or ***ke-ya-pi*** tales are more modern stories within the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. According to Deloria, "the gods step out of the picture" in these stories implying that they focus on actual people. Once again, Deloria divides these stories even further and mentions that there are both *keya'pi'* and *local keya'pi'* tales. *Local keya'pi'* tales tend to focus on a specific geographic region or homeland.

Cook-Lynn does not distinguish between these two types of stories, instead suggesting that all ke-ya-pi tales are local stories.

Early missionary translations do not make any mention of modern stories, reiterating that they only perceived the Dakota oral storytelling tradition as a static cultural artifact from the distant past.

Overall, this dissertation uses the word "Dakota" as a blanket term to describe both the Dakota nation and their language and literature. There are both advantages and disadvantages to using this word as a hypernym. On the one hand, the obvious advantage of this broad umbrella term is that it allows scholars to examine the seven tribes that comprise the *Oceti Šakowin* collectively and equally. As Deloria points out, "there is no 'pure' or classical Dakota . . . they are all equally valid and acceptable" (*Dakota Way of Life* 1). Therefore, a hypernym has the potential to diffuse any hierarchy that might suggest that one tribe and/or dialect is superior to the others. Additionally, it helps synthesize a broad range of information, thereby making it easier to discuss and examine the Dakota nation and their language and literature. On the other hand, however, a blanket term is also potentially problematic because it tends to conflate the "distinguishing features" of each tribe and/or tribal band (1). In an attempt to acknowledge these

differences, this dissertation retains each individual writer and/or translator's unique spelling and definition of the Dakota literary tradition to emphasize his/her own understanding of Dakota literature. Specifically, this dissertation focuses upon the translations and/or literary representations compiled by the following five writers: Samuel Pond, Gideon Pond, Stephen Riggs, Ella Deloria, and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. Before examining the work of these five writers, however, this dissertation first considers the different literary methodologies that have been used to analyze and critically engage with various indigenous literary traditions.

Chapter Two, "Analyzing the Dakota Literary Tradition," weighs the strengths and limitations of American Indian literary nationalism, and several other literary approaches to Native American literature. As explained earlier, only two literary scholars have conducted full-length academic studies on Dakota literature to date. Therefore, this chapter primarily focuses upon how other indigenous literary scholars have analyzed and critically engaged with their own traditions, before outlining a new approach that might be useful for Dakota literature.

Chapter Three, "Claiming the Dakota Literary Tradition," traces the evolution of the Dakota literary tradition from an oral to a written form. This chapter delineates the translation methods used by three missionaries – Samuel and Gideon Pond and Reverend Stephen R. Riggs – to colonize the Dakota literary tradition. Specifically, it examines how they helped reduce these rich, vibrant, and dynamic stories to static cultural artifacts that helped delegitimize and ossify traditional Dakota knowledge systems. This chapter argues that these early missionary translations left an indelible imprint on Dakota language and literature that remains today.

Chapter Four, "Reclaiming the Dakota Literary Tradition," demonstrates how modern Dakota anthropologist, linguist, and author Ella Deloria corrected and re-translated these early missionary translations, while also developing an innovative literary translation method that

empowered her to incorporate tribally-specific beliefs, values, and worldviews into her literature. Unfortunately, Deloria was unable to publish many of these translations during her lifetime. This chapter firmly maintains that Deloria, despite her lifelong struggle to publish, helped lay the groundwork for future literary decolonization efforts.

Chapter Five, “Revitalizing the Dakota Literary Tradition,” examines how Deloria’s efforts have impacted future Dakota writers and scholars including, Dakota author and poet Elizabeth Cook-Lynn. This chapter argues that Cook-Lynn’s 1999 book, *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy*, is based upon the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, specifically two oral stories about the Corn Wife and Mni Sosa (or Missouri River). This chapter explicates the content, style, and structure of Cook-Lynn’s trilogy to illustrate how contemporary Dakota writers and scholars have started to reimagine the Dakota oral storytelling tradition in a more modern form as print literature and considers how they can use these literary representations to help further strengthen and empower the modern Dakota nation.

In all, the purpose of this dissertation is to reconstruct a genealogy of the Dakota literary tradition, while simultaneously examining how it functions as literature. By reconstructing and critically engaging with the Dakota literary tradition as literature, even more than two literary scholars alone can start to acknowledge and treat it as the legitimate knowledge system that it is.

Chapter Two: Analyzing Dakota Literature

Literary Nationalism and Other Critical Approaches to Indigenous Literatures

Dakota literature, like most indigenous writing, is a colonized literary tradition. According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “the colonial past is embedded in our political discourses, our humor, poetry, music, storytelling, and other common sense ways” (19). This legacy of colonialism permeates many indigenous literatures, so much so that Penelope Kelsey says, “nearly all Native texts that we have access to are influenced by the process of colonization” (8). This dissertation does not dispute the idea that the Dakota literary tradition is a colonized canon. In fact, it embraces the idea that Dakota literature is a rich and complex tradition based upon oral stories that have been translated and re-translated into written form by many different writers and scholars to serve various, and at times opposing, political agendas. Given that Dakota literature, like most indigenous literature, has been colonized, this dissertation asks two pressing questions: 1.) how do scholars analyze and critically engage with this colonized literary tradition; and 2.) what steps are necessary to decolonize this canon?

As discussed in the previous chapter, only two literary scholars have conducted full length academic studies on Dakota literature. These two scholars include, Heflin, who conflates Dakota literature with American literary modernism, thus emphasizing the effects of colonization; and Kelsey, who “uses tribal knowledge as a theoretical framework” to analyze and interpret Dakota literature, thereby focusing mainly on moments and strategies of decolonization (Kelsey 13). Admittedly, there is merit to both studies, as Dakota literature has been influenced by both processes over the past two centuries. However, the fact that Heflin predominantly relies upon the tools of Western literary theory, and Kelsey “intentionally excludes scholars who emphasize EuroWestern theory and dialogue,” seems to suggest that colonization and decolonization are two separate, often independent processes (7).

Admittedly, at first blush, colonization and decolonization do seem like diametric opposites, as the former disempowers and exploits, while the latter empowers and strengthens. However, several Native American studies scholars have recently started to suggest that colonization and decolonization are two interrelated, interconnected ideas. For example, Kiristina Sailiata argues that decolonization has “become an extractive process whereby we remove all ‘colonial impulses’ that shape us today, as if this is even possible” (301). She further reasons that “this is problematic because our sense of what we were before colonization is inevitably shaped by the way we think now, which is inextricably shaped by colonialism” (302). Sailiata’s observation suggests that it is limiting and potentially misguided to approach colonization and decolonization as two distinct processes, because they often exist in tandem, as a dialectic system.

Waziyatawin Angela Wilson and Michael Yellow Bird, provide an example of this unique connection in their 2012 book, *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*, which suggests that “the first step toward decolonization, is to question the legitimacy of colonization” (3). Wilson and Yellow Bird argue that decolonization is a two-step process that includes: 1.) critically interrogating the colonial system; and 2.) challenging and resisting it. (4). This dissertation is based upon this two-step model, as it: 1.) critically examines how early missionaries and anthropologists colonized Dakota language and literature; and 2.) explores how more modern Dakota writers and scholars have responded to these efforts. This dual literary approach, in effect, combines Heflin and Kelsey’s theories, because it focuses upon both colonized and decolonized representations of Dakota literature. This method is a form of critical nationalism, a new literary lens that examines the interplay between different cultures,

languages, and literary traditions to better understand how Dakota writing has been used over the past two hundred years to impact our knowledge of and interaction with the Dakota nation.

Colonization and Decolonization

In order to reconstruct and fully engage with the Dakota literary tradition, it is first necessary to define colonization and decolonization. Simply put, colonization is a power imbalance in which one group dispossesses and subjugates another; decolonization attempts to rebalance this skewed power relationship. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang suggest that colonization and decolonization, especially as they pertain to indigenous peoples and communities, is even more complicated than this simple definition, because settler colonialism (i.e., an ongoing process of colonization that continues to impact indigenous people and communities today)¹⁹ tends to occur at two different levels and exist across multiple generations thus complicating decolonization processes.²⁰ Tuck and Yang reason that settler colonialism transpires internally and externally. Internal colonization involves “supplanting indigenous laws and epistemologies” with Western beliefs and values (8). External colonization “denotes the expropriation of Indigenous . . . land/water/air/subterranean earth” (4-5). Although these two forms of colonialism affect different aspects of indigenous life and well-being, Tuck and Yang

¹⁹ According to Patrick Wolfe, colonization, especially as it pertains to Native people and communities (i.e., settler colonialism), “is not an isolated event” (399). Instead, he argues that it is an ongoing process that exists “across time” (399). For more information on settler colonialism, see Wolfe.

²⁰ I refer to the process of decolonization as plural (i.e., processes) because there are many and multiple processes of decolonization.

insist that they are often connected and interrelated, reiterating that colonization is a complex process that impacts many different facets of tribal life.

The Dakota literary tradition is a prime example of both internal and external colonization, and the inextricable link between these two similar yet different forms of colonialism. In the mid-nineteenth century, missionaries compiled and distributed more than fifty religious and secular texts that were used to diminish and devalue “indigenous laws and epistemologies,” and educate and assimilate Dakota people to Western society thus internally colonizing Dakota people (8). According to Vine Deloria, Jr., “many Indians” – due, in large part, to the efforts of early Indian experts such as missionaries and anthropologists – have “begun to parrot the idea” that some indigenous knowledge systems, like Dakota literature, were non-existent and/or irrelevant in modern society (*Custer* 82).²¹ As a result, some scholars, especially in the fields of anthropology and history, fail to acknowledge the continuation of the Dakota literary tradition, an ever-growing body of print literature based upon both the content (i.e., oral stories) and structure (i.e., storytelling techniques) of the traditional Dakota oral storytelling tradition. One of the first steps toward decolonization, then, is to debunk this myth by reconstructing a genealogy of Dakota literature that critically interrogates and challenges settler colonialism, at both levels.

²¹ Cook-Lynn, Red Shirt, and White Hat also suggest that Dakota and Lakota people internalized these colonized representations. For additional examples, see Bird, p. 58; White Hat, p. 8-9; and Red Shirt, p. 120.

It is important to note, that while colonization has caused some Dakota people to underestimate the power and potential of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, many other tribal elders and leaders are fiercely committed to protecting and perpetuating traditional Dakota knowledge systems like Dakota literature.

The Oak Lake Writers Society, an organization for Dakota/Lakota/Nakota writers, has published several books and essays that speak to these efforts. For specific examples, see the Oak Lake collective including Lawrence and Howe.

In addition to internal colonization, many Dakota and non-Dakota scholars point out that missionaries also helped externally colonize the Dakota nation. Some scholars argue that missionaries were indirectly involved in external colonization, while others firmly maintain that they were involved consciously and willingly. For example, Neal Salisbury argues that “missionaries followed, rather than preceded, white settlement,” referring to the fact that French explorers and fur traders settled in Dakota Territory more than a century before missionaries and their families arrived (34). This statement implies that missionaries did not initiate land theft or contribute to it directly. However, Salisbury concedes that missionaries “help[ed] clear the few Indians who remained, thus opening up still more land and assuring the settlers' safety” (34). Although missionaries were not directly responsible for removing Dakota people from their land, they helped displace them and benefited from their eventual removal by the U.S government. For example, as soon as missionaries and their families arrived at Lac qui Parle, they started building churches, homes, and schools in Dakota Territory, and also exploited other indigenous resources such as land for growing food and water for drinking and bathing (Craig 10). According to Tuck and Yang, external colonization involves anything that “build[s] the wealth, the privilege, or feed[s] the appetites of the colonizers” (4). This definition suggests that missionaries indirectly helped perpetuate the colonial system when they decided to utilize Dakota land and resources for their personal welfare.

Missionaries were not only indirectly involved in the external colonization process, argues Linda Clemmons, but they were also directly involved with the colonial system, as “many Dakota missionaries played prominent roles in the development” of the state of Minnesota (13). For example, Riggs negotiated several treaties between the Santee Dakota and the U.S. government because he believed that a reservation system would accelerate Christian

indoctrination, as it would allow him and his colleagues to work with the Santee Dakota more closely, and also provide funding for additional churches and schools (Clemmons 126). Gideon Pond also assisted with treaty negotiations and was eventually elected “as a representative for the first territorial legislature, worked in various government positions . . . and started the first Presbyterian church for white settlers” (13). Riggs, the Pond brothers, and other missionaries who worked for and/or with the U.S government helped contribute to the external, as well as internal colonization, of Dakota people. The next chapter of this dissertation examines in more detail how missionaries helped internally and externally colonize the Dakota nation, thus negatively impacting how Dakota language and literature are perceived and critically engaged with today.

Although it is important for scholars to consider how Dakota language and literature have been colonized, the bigger question is: what is decolonization and how might it be obtained? Decolonization is a lengthy, complicated process that many Native American Studies scholars, across several different disciplines, are still struggling to articulate. According to Stephanie Nohelani Teves, Andrea Smith, and Michelle Raheja, decolonization “can take many forms . . . and there is certainly no consensus on how decolonization can be achieved” (281). In the field of Native American literary studies, many literary scholars, especially in the early 1990s and 2000s, borrowed the lens of American literary nationalism to help decolonize indigenous literatures, by reading these texts from a tribally-specific perspective that often privileged indigenous lifeways and elided Western ways of knowing. On the one hand, these nationalist literary approaches have been empowering, because they emphasize the legitimacy and sophistication of indigenous epistemologies, which have long been dismissed as inferior and uncivilized. On the other hand, these nationalist literary methodologies are potentially problematic, because they tend to

downplay and/or ignore the inextricable link between colonization and decolonization, by isolating these two connected, interrelated processes. The following sections examine the strengths and limitations of American Indian literary nationalism, and advocate for a more critical form of literary nationalism that highlights the complexities and nuances inherent in many indigenous literary traditions.

American Indian Literary Nationalism

The authors of *American Indian Literary Nationalism* – Jace Weaver, Craig Womack, and Robert Warrior – trace the origins of literary nationalism to Simon Ortiz’s 1981 essay, “Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism,” which focuses upon “the creative ability of Indian people [to] gather in many forms . . . [and] celebrate the human spirit and the Indian struggle for liberation” (*AILN* 254). This short essay inspired numerous articles and books on literary nationalism in the late-1990s and early 2000s that helped draw attention to numerous indigenous literatures and criticisms, including: Abenaki, Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Dakota, and Hawaiian to name a few.²² Additionally, several literary scholars have also used this nationalist literary methodology to explicate pan-tribal literatures, as well as other indigenous literatures from across North and South America.²³

²² This list is based upon alphabetical, and not chronological order. The text on this list include the following books and essays: Brook’s *The Common Pot* (Abenaki); Justice’s *Our Fires Survive the Storm* (Cherokee); Weaver’s *That the People Might Live* (Cherokee and Creek); Womack’s *Red on Red* (Creek); Cook-Lynn’s book, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*, and essay, “American Fiction Writers: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, the Third World, and First Nation Sovereignty” (Dakota); Silva’s *Hawaii Betrayed* (Native Hawaiian); and Teuton’s *The American Fiction Writer* (Ojibwe).

²³ Pan-tribal nationalist literary criticism often focuses upon multiple tribes and tribal writers. For examples, see Acoose, et, al’s *Reasoning Together*; Kelsey’s *Tribal Theory*; C. Teuton’s *Deep*

According to Weaver, Womack, and Warrior nationalism “is a legitimate perspective from which to approach Native American literature and criticism. . . . and that such a methodology is not only defensible, but crucial to supporting Native national sovereignty and self-determination” (xxi). Without a doubt, these nationalist literary studies have helped draw attention to countless unanalyzed and unappreciated indigenous literary traditions; and, as this dissertation demonstrates, this list is still growing as more and more indigenous literary scholars start to insist on the legitimacy of their traditional knowledge systems. Indeed, nationalism is a legitimate literary methodology that has the potential to enhance our knowledge of many different indigenous literatures. This potential, however, is limited by the realization that only a handful of scholars (often just one or two) are usually in the position to articulate and define these literary traditions, thus often engendering a sense of authority and authenticity that tends to promote a hegemonic nationalism that is misguided and potentially dangerous.

According to Benedict Anderson’s theory of nationalism, hegemonic nationalisms are “centripetal and hierarchal,” meaning that they have the potential to marginalize and exclude (36).²⁴ Anderson argues that hegemonic nationalisms are often “challenged by ‘sub’-

Waters; S. Teuton’s *Red Land, Red Power*; and Warrior’s *Tribal Secrets* and *The People and the Word*.

²⁴ According to some Native American studies scholars, Anderson’s theory of nationalism is culturally-inappropriate with regard to Native American literature. Danika Medak-Saltzman argues that “Anderson’s privileging of the printed word, over other equally significant and reliable manners of documentation,” especially oral traditions is “deeply problematic” because it tends to “indict many non-western communities” as incapable of modernity and nationhood (25). Medak-Saltzman’s argument refers to a major gap in Anderson’s study that tends to privilege printed texts at the expense of oral ones.

Medak-Saltzman’s recent essay makes an excellent point that helps further complicate my understanding of Anderson’s theory of nationalism. For the time being, however, I intend to use Anderson’s theory, because this dissertation primarily focuses upon Dakota literature in its’

nationalisms within their borders – nationalisms which, naturally, dream of shedding this sub-ness one happy day” (3). In other words, his theory suggests that nationalism is not homogenous, but rather it is heterogeneous and autonomous, consisting of multiple, often competing sub-nationalisms.²⁵ These nationalist tensions are the subject of Scott Richard Lyons’ aptly titled essay, “Battle of the Bookworms,” which focuses upon the work of two nationalist literary scholars, Craig Womack and David Treuer, that exemplifies two sub-nationalisms, cultural and linguistic nationalisms, that have the potential to marginalize and exclude.

Cultural nationalism is a sub-nationalism that refers to Native American literature and criticism that is rooted in tribally-specific traditions, ceremonies, and practices. Craig Womack’s 1999 book, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*, offers an example of cultural nationalism as he uses his knowledge of “Creek history, culture, and politics” to construct a representation of the Creek nation that he views as real or authentic (165). Furthermore, he does not allow any other literary scholars to contribute to his representation of the Creek nation. In fact, when Elvira Pulitano attempts to critique his representation, he responds by saying: “Lest, I am not making myself clear: I think there are a helluva lot of Creek people who know much more about Creek perspectives than does Elvira Pulitano” (133). Womack’s response is territorial and implies that only Creek literary scholars (i.e., Womack) have the ability to construct and promote a “real” representation of the Creek nation. Womack’s ability to

printed form. It is important to note, however, that I plan to rethink my use of this theory as this project progresses, because the Dakota literary tradition is inextricably linked the Dakota oral storytelling tradition.

²⁵ Therefore, I will now start to refer to American Indian literary nationalism as nationalisms, plural.

adamantly reject non-Creek interpretations of his book is an attempt to establish a hegemonic nationalism.

Linguistic nationalism is very similar to cultural nationalism; however, linguistic nationalism tends to focus upon tribally-specific languages, stories, and moral codes – as opposed to tribally-specific traditions, ceremonies, and practices. The outcome, however, is virtually the same as this knowledge, often results in the marginalization and exclusion of non-indigenous language speakers. David Treuer’s 2006 book, *Native American Fiction: A User’s Manual*, illustrates a form of linguistic nationalism, as he uses his knowledge of the Ojibwe language to challenge existing translations of traditional Ojibwe stories provided by non-Native writers and scholars.²⁶ Treuer argues that many of those early interpretations are deeply flawed, questions their validity, and ultimately concludes that “interpretation is always a risky business” (22). Despite this risk, however, Treuer argues, that he himself is capable of providing an “original” translation of these stories (23). Treuer’s claims imply that only he has the potential to construct and promote an authentic representation of the Ojibwe nation, thus eliding the fact that all translations, even those by fluent language speakers, are subjective.

²⁶ Although Treuer is a literary scholar and writer, he is not typically associated Native American literary nationalism, primarily because he argues that “Native literature . . . published in English by non-Indian presses and mostly read by non-Native – doesn’t represent Native culture so much as a longing got a culture found in the realms of heritage, language and ceremony” (Lyons “Bookworms” p. 2). In other words, he suggests that “real” Native American literature is not written in English, thus implying that “authentic” Native stories are spoken/written in traditional languages. In many ways, then, he advocates for a specific definition of language and literature that marginalizes, excludes, and engenders a sense of cultural authenticity and authority that is, in many ways, reminiscent of nationalism.

It is important to note that David Carlson, in addition to Lyons, also groups Treuer with other nationalist literary scholars including Womack. Therefore, at this point, I intend to use him as an example of linguistic nationalism. For additional information on Treuer’s linguistic concerns and literary nationalism, see Carlson, p. 89-91.

Although Womack and Treuer's approaches are both potentially flawed, they are also empowering because they seek to protect and defend Native cultures and languages that have been exploited and misrepresented for approximately two centuries. Lyons reasons that Womack and Treuer are "on the side of traditionalists who draw hard and fast lines between authenticity and assimilation" (Lyons "Bookworms" 2). Admittedly, Womack and Treuer's nationalist approaches are rare and insightful and can help illuminate our understanding of Native American language and literature. Unfortunately, however, their potential to enhance our knowledge of and interaction with Creek and Ojibwe literature is also, at times, hindered by their ability to use Native American culture and language to construct nationalisms that marginalize, exclude, and elevate them to a position of authority over their respective tribal nations. This policy of marginalization and exclusion promotes a hegemonic nationalism that – intentionally or unintentionally – tends to limit our interpretation of contemporary Native American literature and ossify our understanding of tribal culture.

The two most common criticisms leveled against cultural, linguistic, and indeed most other American Indian literary nationalisms are that these methodologies are essentializing and ossifying. Even Robert Warrior, a renowned nationalist literary scholar, admits in his 1996 book, *Tribal Secret: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions*, that literary nationalisms often "appeal to essentialized worldviews . . . [that] risk ossifying American Indian existence" (*AILN* xvii-xviii). Warrior directs most of this criticism to early radical nationalist critics such as Ward Churchill and M. Annette James whom, he suggests, idealize and romanticize tribal culture. However, Pulitano is quick to point out that many contemporary American literary nationalist scholars also "continue to ossify Native American literary production, as well as Native identity, into a sort of museum culture" (my italics 9). Consensus

amongst these two opposing scholars (i.e., Warrior is pro-nationalism and Pulitano is anti-nationalism) emphasizes the need for a new literary methodology to, as Warrior argues, “temper” and “challenge” the “excesses of nationalism” (181).

Other Critical Approaches

Recently, some contemporary literary scholars have attempted to address these limitations by embracing methodologies that place less emphasis on “epistemic markers” such as culture and language and more emphasis on approaches that attempt to analyze Native American literature across disciplines and in various contexts (O’Neil and Braz 4). To date, four approaches have emerged to augment, and in some cases supplant, Native American literary nationalisms. These approaches include methodologies rooted in: 1.) textual and literary analysis; 2.) interdisciplinary literary analysis and interpretation; 3.) postnationalism; and finally, 4.) transnationalism. These four approaches are linked together by the common themes of literary analysis and critical discourse. As demonstrated below, there are strengths and limitations to each one of these approaches that can be used to help establish and clarify the parameters of a more critical nationalism.

The first approach – textual and literary analysis – is the methodology that writers and scholars tend to visit and re-visit the most often. According to Womack, the first scholars to advocate for a literary approach to Native American texts are early cosmopolitanist literary scholars (i.e., late 1990s to early 2000s) who tend to emphasize literary analysis and high critical theory. These approaches, Womack observes, have a tendency to marginalize and elide the Native voice. In fact, he notes, that Native American literary nationalisms arose in direct response to these marginalizing cosmopolitanisms and since then literary nationalisms have

dominated the field of Native American literary studies (*AILN* 10-14). Approximately, two years ago, however, Angeline O’Neil and Albert Braz attempted to resuscitate these literary theories by arguing that nationalist critics have overcorrected and begun placing more emphasis on reclaiming and preserving the Native voice than on critically examining *how* Native American literature functions. They argue that American Indian literary nationalisms “does not really focus on what it purports to be its main interest, Indigenous literature or literatures” and that nationalist critics need to shift their attention from “epistemic markers to literary ones” (4). These attempts – in the past and at present – have been met with much resistance by Native American writers and scholars who tend to view these literary approaches as anti-nationalist. Much of this resistance stems from the tacit assumption that literary markers – often interpreted through the lens of high theory – are modes of Western thinking. Kimberly Blaeser theorizes, for example, that some nationalist critics associate the interpretive tools of literary analysis with early “boarding school teachings . . . [that were] destructive . . . to the Native lifestyle” (1). This statement suggests that the tools of literary analysis are problematic because they – intentionally or unintentionally – have a tendency to subsume and extinguish the Native voice.

The second approach – interdisciplinary literary analysis and interpretation – is a fairly new methodology that explores Native American literature across disciplines. Such approaches, according to Christopher Teuton, “tend to borrow from mainstream notions of criticism . . . and from theories of Native communities” (208). He cites Cheryl Suzack’s indigenous feminism as a prime example of this type of interdisciplinary approach, because she merges “mainstream feminism” with indigenous ideas about “gender relations” (208). Suzack is among a growing number of indigenous feminist scholars, including Paula Gunn Allen, Shari Huhndorf, Mishuana Goeman, and Dorothy Nason, that “seek to intervene in the gaps of literary nationalist

approaches” (Nason1). According to Nason’s overview of Indigenous feminism, early feminist literary scholars seemed to perceive indigenous feminism and literary nationalism as diametric opposites, while more modern feminist scholars tend to argue that feminist concerns are critical to the nationalist movement (3-4). Although these two arguments seem contradictory, they both reinforce the long-standing criticism that literary nationalisms are limiting. Early indigenous feminists, who often distanced themselves from the nationalist movement, seem to suggest that the school of American Indian literary nationalism is irretrievably broken.²⁷ Meanwhile, contemporary feminist scholars seem to suggest that literary nationalism is still a legitimate perspective. However, it simply needs to be more inclusive of other indigenous experiences (i.e., cultures, languages, and genders).

The third methodology – postnationalism – is a decidedly non-nationalist literary approach that tends to focus upon “popular cultural presences within contemporary Native American texts” (Herman 110). According to Herman, this methodology first emerged in the late nineties with the publication of Arnold Krupat’s book *The Turn to the Native: Studies in Criticism and Culture*, which argues for “a shift in Native American fiction away from roots and recuperation . . . toward more transnational arrangements and solidarities” (109-110). The phrase “roots and recuperation” hints that Krupat is advocating for a turn away from the epistemic markers of literary nationalism and a move toward markers that are more literary and interdisciplinary. Herman attempts to build upon Krupat’s theory of postnationalism by arguing that the opposite of “roots and recuperation” (i.e., early Native American culture and language) is popular cultural references. He says that popular culture is “an ensemble of recognizable

²⁷ Nason cites Huanani Kay Trask and M. Annette Jaimes as examples of early indigenous feminists, and Shari Huhndorf, Andrea Smith, and Joyce Green as more modern indigenous feminist scholars (p. 4-5).

moments and spaces” in Native American literature that “readers [can] enter into or identify with” (104). The “familiar imagery” of popular culture that Herman and Krupat tend to gravitate toward, however, is “recognizable” precisely because popular culture often mirrors Western thinking. Therefore, Herman’s postnationalism – consciously or unconsciously – tends to emphasize the familiar (i.e., Western culture and language) and ignore or disregard the unfamiliar (i.e., Native American culture and language). On the one hand, postnationalism is potentially useful because it attempts to re-situate Native American literature, which is, often relegated to the tribal past, into the tribal present. On the other hand, this approach is also flawed because postnationalism is not a self-reflexive or introspective literary theory and thus attempts to place contemporary Native American literature in a modern *Western* context as opposed to a modern *tribal* framework.

The final methodology – transnationalism – is perhaps the newest and most recent approach to emerge from the field of Native American literary studies in the past decade.²⁸ Transnationalism, like indigenous feminism, emerged in response to the limitations and shortcomings of American literary nationalism. According to Shari Huhndorf, “nationalist criticism” is problematic because it tends]to “disregar[d] global social dynamics and colonial critique” (11). First, Huhndorf argues that “national boundaries [are] colonial impositions” that often limit tribal sovereignty and self-determination (4). Therefore, she advocates for a new literary methodology that critically interrogates the colonial system by “situating indigenous cultural production within . . . broader historical and political [i.e., global] frameworks” (4).

²⁸ Admittedly, all four of the approaches mentioned in this section are fairly new – emerging in just the past two decades. Transnationalism, however, is the most recent approach to appear in Native American literary studies, emerging in just the past seven years.

Although Huhndorf makes a convincing argument, Warrior points out that most nationalist scholars tend to steer clear of transnationalism because they fear that globalism will distract from local (i.e., tribally-specific) concerns – whether these concerns are valid or not remains to be seen as transnationalism is still a relatively new literary methodology (“Transnational Turn” 126). Huhndorf’s second point of contention (i.e., colonial critique) is related to her first concern. Additionally, she observes that most “nationalist approaches cohere around the conviction that Native literary studies must be shaped by indigenous perspectives, especially those rooted in traditions and campaigns for tribal sovereignty” (3). This criticism reinforces my earlier argument that literary nationalisms are problematic, because they tend to neglect the inextricable link between colonization and decolonization. This shortcoming reiterates the need for a new nationalist literary methodology to examine these two processes in tandem.

In sum, these four new critical approaches, demonstrate that many literary scholars still have many lingering questions about the legitimacy of literary nationalism that nationalist scholars still have a responsibility to address. Furthermore, these four approaches indicate that a shift is currently taking place in the field of Native American literary studies, away from literary nationalisms that tend to emphasize epistemic markers (i.e., cultural and linguistic nationalisms), toward alternative methodologies that tend to focus upon literary analysis and interdisciplinary research. The intent of this move is to address the limitations inherent in American Indian literary nationalism. More often than not, however, these alternative approaches tend to sidestep – rather than explicitly address – the shortcomings of American Indian literary nationalism. Even more troubling, many of these new methodologies are potentially problematic, because they tend to silence the Native voice in favor of these new interpretive tools. The purpose of a

more critical nationalism, then, is to explicitly address these weaknesses (i.e, issues of authority, authenticity), while simultaneously identifying and promoting a modern tribal voice.

Issues of Authenticity and Authority

In many ways, recurring issues of authenticity and authority seemed to motivate Anderson's seminal book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, which denounces the notion of a hegemonic nationalism, and instead argues that nations are imagined political communities (6).²⁹ According to Anderson, nationalisms are "not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness," but rather nationalisms "*invent* nations where they do not exist" (6). Anderson's argument suggests that all nationalisms or imagined communities are constructed deliberately and self-consciously to promote a specific political agenda. These political agendas, he argues, are captured in the national novel, newspaper, and/or other versions of the printed word, which can then be read and analyzed to understand: 1.) why nationalisms arouse such "deep [emotional] attachments;" 2.) how nationalisms came into being; and finally, 3.) how their meanings have changed over time (4). Anderson's emphasis on *how* nationalisms function help diffuse the tacit assumption that nationalisms are "centripetal and hierarchal" (36). Instead of using nationalisms to create a hierarchy that focuses upon the "falsity/genuineness" of imagined communities, Anderson's theory encourages scholars to examine nationalisms critically and self-consciously (6). Anderson's theory of nationalism has

²⁹ Anderson's theory of nationalism is admittedly problematic in the context of Native American literature. See footnote 22.

been understudied and underutilized by Native American writers and scholars who tend to focus upon the “falsity/genuineness” binary.³⁰

The “falsity/genuineness” binary makes its first appearance in the field of Native American (Literary) Studies with the publication of Deloria’s 1969 book: *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. Deloria posits in his book that two separate and distinct representations of tribal culture exist: “the real and the unreal” (1). The real is a representation delineated by Native American scholars, while the unreal is a false, socially-constructed representation promoted by EuroAmerican scholars, bureaucrats, and missionaries. Much of Deloria’s manifesto focuses upon the unreal, which he terms Indianness. An example of Indianness cited in Deloria’s manifesto is the “mythical super-Indian of stereotype-land” constructed by early anthropologists and other social scientists – and eventually internalized by Native American writers and scholars themselves (82). He argues that the “mythical super Indian” is a member of a false, socially-constructed tribe (i.e., imagined community) that “never existed except in the eye of the beholder” (265). Deloria’s contempt for Indianness suggests that a real representation of tribal culture exists and that Native American scholars have the potential to uncover this authentic representation. Deloria first published his manifesto in 1969 and since then many Native American scholars have attempted to use Native American literary nationalism to capture a real definition of Indianness. As Anderson’s theory predicts, however, the quest for

³⁰ I suspect that the reluctance to apply Anderson’s theory to Native American literature in the past stems, perhaps, from the misinterpretation of the phrase “imagined communities.” Anderson acknowledges that there is much confusion over the word imagined, which is often “assimilated to ‘fabrication’ and ‘falsity,’ rather than ‘imagining’ and ‘creation’” (6). This observation is especially true in the field of Native American (Literary) Studies, where scholars often view imagined communities pejoratively as representations that are imaginary, false, or inauthentic.³⁰ For more discussion on the potential limitations of “imagined communities,” see Womack’s “Theorizing.”

an authentic definition of Indianness has given rise to multiple nationalisms and “sub-nationalisms – nationalisms which, naturally, dream of shedding this sub-ness one happy day” (*Imagined Communities* 3).

In fact, the “dream of shedding this sub-ness” has aroused many intense emotions in the field of Native American literary studies, which have culminated in several vicious debates. Matthew Herman documents one of these arguments in his 2010 book *Politics and Aesthetics in Contemporary Native American Literature: Across Every Border*. According to Herman, the “Silko-Erdrich Controversy” is one of the first debates to highlight the intracultural tensions that exist between Native American literary scholars. He observes that much of the argument centers upon the linguistic differences that exist between two popular, contemporary Native American writers/literary critics: Leslie Marmon Silko and Louise Erdrich. “The controversy,” he says, stems “from Leslie Marmon Silko’s unflattering review of Louise Erdrich’s 1986 novel *The Beet Queen*. Silko’s main line of complaint [is] the novel’s political quietism, which Silko associate[s] with Erdrich’s stylistic and linguistic tendencies” (Herman 44). This statement hints that Silko views Erdrich as her “stylistic and linguistic” opposite. Indeed, Herman argues that Silko adopts a form of linguistic nationalism that focuses upon the collective Native voice and is politically overt, while Erdrich embraces a linguistic nationalism that is “self-referential” and so subtle that she has been accused by her critics of being “politically mute” (53). Much of the debate, then, focuses upon which form of linguistic nationalism is more real or authentically Native American – Silko’s collective Native voice or Erdrich’s “linguistic self-referentiality” (49). Herman reasons that this question is impossible to answer and notes that literary scholars tend to fall on both sides of this debate. He, himself, is so troubled and confused by these questions of authenticity that he dismisses nationalism “as a legitimate perspective” and instead

advocates for a “postnationalism” that focuses upon representations of popular culture in contemporary Native American fiction (109). Ultimately, Herman’s frustrated response to the “falsity/genuineness” binary demonstrates that questions of authenticity often prevent scholars from fully examining the parameters of Native American literary nationalism.

Further evidence that the “falsity/genuineness” binary is a hindrance to the development of Native American literary nationalism is the Pulitano-Womack Debate. The debate originated in 2003 with the publication of Pulitano’s book, *Toward a Native American Critical Theory*, which similarly implies that Native American literary critics fall into one of two categories – either the real or the unreal. According to Womack, Pulitano creates a “hierarchy” comparing and contrasting Native American literary critics based upon their Indianness (*American Indian Literary Nationalism* 98-99). Womack’s angry and lengthy response to Pulitano’s book suggests that she places him fairly low on that hierarchy. Indeed, she claims that Womack is simply “voic[ing] simulations of tribal identity” (Pulitano 85). The word simulation connotes false or inauthentic – accusations, of course, which do not sit well with Womack or his colleagues, who are also ranked according to Pulitano’s hierarchy of Indianness. The preface of *American Indian Literary Nationalism* indicates that Pulitano’s hierarchy “galvanized” Weaver, Womack, and Warrior’s “resolve” to write their own book about Native American literary criticism which they published in 2005 (xx). Additionally, their preface also indicates that the purpose of their book is to “articulate and deploy the methods and parameters of . . . Native American literary criticism” (xxi). Although Warrior (and to some extent Weaver) attempts to define this criteria, Womack composes lengthy and defensive rebuttals to Pulitano’s book. Womack is so angered and offended by Pulitano’s accusations of simulation that he devotes approximately 85 pages of his 90 page essay to “attacking” Pulitano, which Christopher Taylor notes continues throughout

various points of *Reasoning Together: A Native Critics Collective* (28). Ultimately, this debate – based primarily upon questions of “falsity/genuineness” – spans across three books. This observation is disappointing because Native American literary studies is a small, relatively new field³¹ and these three books could have – and indeed, should have – been used to expand and legitimate that field.

The two previous examples indicate that cultural and linguistic nationalisms are two methodologies deeply entangled in the “falsity/genuineness” binary, with different writers and scholars arguing for specific definitions of their culture or language. These arguments often lead to intercultural, and at times, intracultural tensions that tend to hinder critical discourse. These types of entanglements are potentially problematic, as questions of authority tend to be counterproductive and short-sighted. In brief, questions of authenticity, as demonstrated by the intense scholarly debates described above, often help literary scholars weave a strong emotional web that prevents them from fully interrogating the legitimacy of nationalism as a literary methodology. This sentiment is echoed by Cook-Lynn who reasons that:

The endless argument over Who is an Indian? [i.e., authenticity] is the poorest coin we trade with as responsible scholars . . . because it is not our question to answer, not our commodity to buy or sell. It is a question that belongs to the First Nations of America. (*Anti-Indianism* 39)

According to Cook-Lynn, questions of authenticity and authority are irresponsible. Instead, she, like Warrior, advises literary scholars to construct the parameters of Native American literary nationalism responsibly by investigating critically and carefully “how the Indian narrative is told, how it is nourished . . . [and] the consequences of its telling” (“American Indian Intellectualism”

³¹ This “newness” is evident when compared to other fields of literary studies.

57). The emphasis on *how* Native American literature functions is an important question that few scholars – including Cook-Lynn herself – have attempted to answer. One of the main purposes of this dissertation, then, is to address these questions of *how* in more detail. The shift in focus from *who* to *how* is important for several reasons. First, according to Anderson, this shift is important because it has the potential to diffuse the “falsity/genuineness” binary. Second, diffusing this binary encourages Native American literary scholars to dismantle the hierarchies of Indianness that have prevented them from fully analyzing how Native American literary nationalisms function. Third, this type of critical analysis allows scholars to reflect upon the consequences of their various nationalisms. Finally, and most importantly, the goal of this type of analysis is to help Native American literary scholars think critically and carefully about their methodologies and the potential that their methodologies have to colonize and decolonize indigenous languages, literatures, and lives.

Toward a More Critical Nationalism

The notion of a critical nationalism is not entirely new as Anderson’s theory of nationalism seems to sit, implicitly, at the center of nationalisms advocated by Cook-Lynn (mentioned in the previous section), Simon Ortiz, and Robert Warrior, all of whom are less concerned with instituting a hierarchy based on the “falsity/genuineness” of American Indian literary nationalism and instead are more concerned with asking *how* these nationalisms function. Huhndorf seems to suggest that literary nationalism, which (as mentioned earlier) the authors of *American Indian Literary Nationalism* trace to Simon Ortiz, was initially much more critical and thoughtful than it is now. She says: “Theirs is . . . a partial interpretation that neglects the breadth of Ortiz’s political engagement. The gaps between cultural production and nationalist

critical paradigms call for approaches that scrutinize the limits of nationalism” (5). The word “scrutinize” alludes to the need for a literary methodology that is more self- reflexive and introspective. Huhnforf’s criticism suggests that Weaver, Womack, and Warrior misinterpreted Ortiz’s definition of nationalism, thus impacting how nationalism functions as a literary methodology. This observation suggests that it is important to revisit, and reconsider Ortiz’s foundational essay.

According to Weaver, Womack, and Warrior, Ortiz’s “remarkable essay . . . is central to any consideration of Indian literary nationalism” (xix). This statement indicates that each author has been deeply influenced by Ortiz’s essay, which focuses upon issues of authenticity in Native American literatures. Typically, the word “authentic” denotes genuine, original, pure, unadulterated. In his essay, Ortiz expands this definition of authenticity to include colonization, which connotes violence, corruption, and subjugation, and thus seems contradictory to the dictionary definition of authenticity. However, Ortiz reasons that “throughout the difficult experience of colonization, Indian women and men have struggled to create meaning of their lives in very systematic and definite ways . . . [that] struggle against colonialism” (*AILS* 256). He reasons that, for better or for worse, colonization is an integral part of the authentic Indian experience. However, many scholars tend to ignore these colonial influences. Sailiata notes: “Decolonization [has] become an extractive process whereby we remove all ‘colonial impulses’ that shape us today, as if this is even possible. Such moves quickly lead to a politics of purity whereby we must remove any colonially-impure thoughts that we have in order to regain a prelapsarian sense of innocence” (301). Sailiata argues that it is impossible for scholars to simply undue two-hundred years of colonization. Instead of ignoring these colonial influences, Ortiz suggests that “we have to acknowledge and face historical facts; there is no use or sense in

denying colonialism has affected us in very serious ways” (AILS xiii). Once we face these “historical facts,” he reasons, we can focus on the “challenge of regenerating our indigeneity” or decolonization (xiv). This acknowledgement is, in many ways, the first step toward the decolonization process. Clearly, Ortiz recognizes the inextricable link between colonization and decolonization. However, somewhere along the way, nationalist literary scholars began to downplay this dialectic system, and instead began to focus primarily upon methods of decolonization, often eliding colonization.

This dissertation suggests that it is time for nationalist literary scholars to take a proverbial step back and critically interrogate the colonial system, *before* evaluating the decolonization process. Accordingly, this dissertation examines how early non-Dakota writers colonized the Dakota literary tradition, and considers how more modern Dakota writers and scholars have responded to these efforts by using “tribal strategies and value systems (i.e., tribal theory)” to decolonize Dakota literature (Kelsey 8). The decision to include both Dakota and non-Dakota perspectives in this history of the Dakota literary tradition is controversial, especially given that Western literary theories have long dominated and suppressed Native American literature and criticism. In fact, American Indian literary nationalism emerged in direct response to this troubling trend, with many literary nationalist scholars actively challenging Native American stereotypes and inaccuracies, often by downplaying non-Native or Western influences. However, it is important to understand how the colonization process functions, so that indigenous writers and scholars can better understand how to challenge and resist it.

The decolonization process is a multi-step process that also includes strong critical analysis and discourse. This idea is shared by Warrior, who firmly states: “Nationalism is worth

engaging in only insofar as concomitant institutions of criticism arise to challenge its excesses and temper its corrupting power. Some of the most important of those institutions,” he theorizes, “arise within the nationalist struggle itself” (192). This statement suggests that the key to tempering and challenging some of the excesses of nationalism (i.e., issues of authority and authenticity) is a nationalist methodology that not only critically interrogates other (i.e. non-nationalist) scholars, but one that is also self-reflective and introspective, measuring its’ own strengths and limitations to improve upon future literary decolonization efforts. Warrior’s argument suggests that colonization and decolonization are two ongoing, interrelated processes. Linda Tuhiwai Smith echoes this sentiment, stating: “Decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels” (20). This dissertation attempts to critically engage with this process by examining the evolution of the Dakota literary tradition across nearly two centuries. Consequently, the scope of this project is admittedly large, as it traces the ebbs and flow of Dakota literature, across multiple cultures, languages, disciplines, and times. However, this broad approach is necessary to better understand the ongoing and processual nature of the Dakota literary tradition, which has been shaped and influence by a number of writers and scholars, to serve various and at times, opposing political agendas that helped colonize and decolonize the Dakota nation.

Acknowledging the inextricable link between colonization and decolonization, helps complicate literary nationalism by revealing many of the paradoxes and nuances inherent in indigenous literary traditions, like Dakota literature. For example, Dakota writing has been shaped and influenced by multiple cultures, languages, disciplines, and times. This dissertation starts to examine the meaning of these differences, thus expanding our definition of Dakota literature, which has been limited by a number of preconceived notions. For example, early

missionaries denied that Dakota literature was literature, because it did not match their aesthetic, linguistic, or stylistic, expectations, thus dismissing it as a legitimate knowledge system. More modern Dakota writers and scholars have also struggled to define Dakota literature. A recurring issue for many indigenous writers, observes Ortiz, is whether literature written in English as opposed to an indigenous language is an authentic representation of tribal life. Some scholars, like Treuer deny such a possibility (Lyons “Bookworms 2), while others like Ortiz firmly maintain “while English and other colonial languages – maybe the “enemy’s language,” it can be helpful and useful to use just like other languages . . . Although we have to make sure we do not compromise ourselves by inadvertently speaking-writing what we do not mean (because English carries a lot of Western social-cultural baggage)” (xiv). This dissertation, by examining the devastating effect of colonization, strives to better understand the limitations imposed on Dakota people and their traditional knowledge systems.

Although it is important for scholars to critically examine colonization, it is perhaps even more important to start to consider decolonization and how it might be achieved. This dissertation examines how Ella Deloria and Elizabeth Cook-Lyn struggled to decolonize Dakota literature, with varying degrees of success. Their ability to reclaim and revitalize the Dakota literary tradition depended, in large part, on their ability to be critical nationalists themselves, often using both Western and Dakota tools to address tribal concerns. For example, many scholars point out that Deloria merged her tribal knowledge with her anthropological and linguistic training to help preserve and protect Dakota language and literature. Similarly, Cook-Lynn uses her knowledge of Dakota culture and language along with her training as a literary/political scholar to draw attention to a number of tribally-specific concerns and issues. Both scholars have had to think critically and carefully about their translations and/or

literary representations, and their effect on their respective communities. According to Cook-Lynn, “an American Indian writer . . . is not an artist unless he knows the myths, mores, experiences of his tribal society and knows how to depart from those record in the fashioning of his own artistic vision” (*Anti-Indianism* 51). This dissertation starts to examine the unique ways that Dakota writers and scholars have started to depart from these records in the fashioning of their own vision, and asks how can future generations learn from and improve upon these early literary decolonization efforts?

Chapter Three: Claiming Dakota Literature

Early Missionary Translations of *Mni Sosa* and Other Stories

In 1834, Christian missionaries established Lac qui Parle Mission, the first of nine mission stations in Dakota Territory (Willand 43). Over the next two decades, nearly a dozen missionary families settled in western Minnesota alongside “the lake that speaks” to “aid in civilizing and christianizing the Dakota Indians” (“New Suit” 4). Upon their arrival, missionaries developed the first systematic Dakota orthography to proselytize to the Santee Dakota in their own language.³² During this process, they relied heavily upon the printing press to publish and disseminate the earliest representations of Dakota language and literature, including: a Dakota alphabet, dictionary, grammar, gospel, and two bilingual newspapers, as well as dozens of other religious and secular texts (Fear-Segal 78). Scholars have labelled these fifty-plus books and periodicals: “the first Dakota library” (Blegen 278). In many ways, this library is a paradox that simultaneously altered Dakota language and literature, while also helping preserve and perpetuate it for future generations. This chapter investigates this paradox by first critically examining how early Christian missionaries colonized the Dakota literary tradition by ossifying and delegitimizing the Dakota oral storytelling tradition; and then exploring how more modern Dakota writers and scholars have responded to these efforts by decolonizing this literary tradition.³³

³² For more information on the first Dakota orthography, see Parks and DeMallie.

³³ Elise Boxer examines this type of paradox in a historical context that focused upon the LDS Church. She argues that Mormon missionaries helped colonize indigenous people, starting in 1830 throughout the 20th century, and also considers how Mormon Native students adjusted when they returned to the reservation and their ability to negotiate their two identities: Mormon and Indigenous” (p. 22).

Although nearly a dozen missionary families helped transcribe and translate the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, three men, in particular, helped lead these efforts: Samuel Pond, Gideon Pond, and Stephen Riggs.³⁴ These three men helped deconstruct the Dakota language letter by letter, word by word, and eventually story by story. In 1836, the two Pond brothers improvised a Dakota orthography based upon an English alphabetic script that allowed them to write in the Dakota language. Over the next two decades, they worked closely with their missionary colleagues to refine their alphabet and compile the first Dakota dictionary and grammar based upon their translations of the Old and New Testaments.³⁵ This process, according to Barry O'Connell, helped imbue indigenous languages with a "Holy Writ" that ultimately Christianized their context and meaning. In many ways, this translation method is a form of colonization because it involves "supplanting indigenous laws and epistemologies" with Western beliefs and values (Tuck and Yang 8). This chapter examines how the Pond brothers and Riggs filtered Dakota language and literature through a Western, largely Christian, lens that helped reimagine traditional Dakota oral stories as Christian parables. The Pond brothers and Riggs initiated this practice in their two bilingual Dakota-English periodicals: *Dakota Tawaxitku Kin* or *The Dakota Friend* (1850-52) and *Iapi Oaye* or *The Word Carrier* (1871-1932).³⁶ Both

³⁴ For additional demographic information on the first ten families that settled at Lac Qui Parle, see Clemmons' table, p. 26.

³⁵ For more information on the initial meeting between the Pond brothers and the other missionaries, see Blegen's "Two Missionaries."

³⁶ For a comprehensive overview of indigenous periodicals in the United States, see Littlefield and Parin.

missionary editors used these bilingual newspapers to devalue traditional Dakota oral stories, such as “Mni Sosa” and “Fallen Star,” and reimagine them in a more Christian context.

Missionaries hoped to preserve the Dakota oral storytelling tradition before it faded from living memory as a result of assimilation and integration to Western society. Riggs writes: “When the Dakota race . . . ha[s] passed away, as their own buffalo of the prairie – shall we not retain an adequate memorial of them? . . . Shall we not hand down posterity the means of knowing what the Dakota language was” (“The Dakota Language” 82)? Riggs use of the past tense emphasizes that he and his colleagues perceived the Dakota oral storytelling tradition as an extinct cultural artifact. They never imagined that more modern Dakota writers and scholars would eventually reappropriate this tradition and reimagine it in a more modern form as poetry, short stories, novels, and essays, to name a few literary genres. The last section of this chapter starts to explore how more modern Dakota writers have responded to these efforts by critically interrogating these early “Christian influences” and decolonizing their language and literature by reaffirming their power and potential at both the academic and grassroots levels (White Hat 3).

Improvising the First Dakota Alphabet:

“New Names and Powers”³⁷

Missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle literally deconstructed the rich and complex Dakota language: they tore it apart phoneme by phoneme to reduce it to an English alphabetic script (see Figure 1). The first

FIGURE 2: THE POND ALPHABET AS PUBLISHED IN GIDEON POND’S NEWSPAPER *THE DAKOTA FRIEND*. (PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY).

PRO.		PRO.		PRO.		PRO.	
A	ah	H	he	O	o	U	oo
B	be	I	e	P	pe	W	we
C	che	J	zhe	Q	qe	X	she
D	de	K	ke	R	re	Y	ye
E	a	M	me	S	se	Z	ze
G	ge	N	ne	T	te		

³⁷ Samuel Pond quote from Blegen’s “Two Missionaries,” p. 25.

Dakota alphabet was designed by Samuel and Gideon Pond, a farmer and a carpenter from Connecticut who journeyed westward to share the gospel with “the wild and roving Indians” (*Two Volunteer Missionaries* 17). Eventually, they set their sights on the Santee Dakota in southwestern Minnesota. They arrived at Fort Snelling in 1834, approximately one year before the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions formally established a mission station in Dakota Territory (Pond and Anderson viii). The Pond brothers quickly realized that their efforts would be more successful if they could communicate with their potential converts in their own language; and thus, they improvised a new system that allowed them to write down and memorize the Dakota language. They accomplished this goal by borrowing 23 letters (5 vowels and 18 consonants) from the English alphabet to develop the first Dakota orthography.³⁸ In his narrative, Samuel Pond recalls this process:

We were ever on the alert to catch some new word or phrase from the mouths of the Indians, and though our memories were retentive *we made assurance doubly sure*, by writing down what we learned, but here we met with a serious difficulty for want of a suitable alphabet. With the vowels we had no difficulty, for there are in Dakota but five vowel sounds, and they are common to the English, but with the consonants it is different, for there are sounds in the language which no English letter or combination of letters can be made to express. To meet this difficulty we took such letters from the English alphabet as are not needed in Dakota, and gave them new names and powers (“Two Missionaries in the Sioux Country” 25).

³⁸ For more information on the Pond alphabet, see Folwell, p. 447-449.

On the one hand, this statement illustrates Samuel and Gideon Pond's ingenuity and resourcefulness. As Linda Clemmons points out, the Pond brothers "were not linguists, they were not trained in transcribing and learning a new language;" and yet, they managed to devise a new system that allowed them to teach and preach to the Santee Dakota in the Dakota language (48). However, on the other hand, Samuel Pond's narrative also emphasizes the potential risks and challenges of transforming an oral language to a written one.

The Pond brothers' innovative new system was problematic because it failed to capture some of the linguistic traits that are special and unique to the Dakota language. For example, Pond observes in the previous passage that "there are sounds in the language which no English letter or combination of letters can be made to express" ("Two Missionaries in the Sioux Country" 25). Instead of addressing these issues, Samuel Pond simply boasted: "We took such letters from the English alphabet as are not needed in Dakota, and gave them new names and powers" ("Sioux Country" 25). This admission emphasizes that it is virtually impossible to match the rich and complex Dakota language word by word, syllable by syllable, or even letter by letter to the English language. Nevertheless, Samuel and Gideon Pond continued to alter, and in many ways reduce, the Dakota language to make it conform to the English language. They called their new alphabetic script: the Pond Alphabet. In other words, the two Pond brothers named the first Dakota alphabet after themselves, rather than the community that it purported to represent. The label – the Pond Alphabet – is problematic because it helped empower the missionaries and disempower their converts by eliding and/or nearly erasing the Santee Dakota from their very own orthographic representation. This erasure signifies colonization, the dominance and control of one nation over the other. According to Walter Mignolo, it is not uncommon for Christian missionaries to use the written word to colonize indigenous peoples. In

fact, he traces this practice back to the early fifteenth century, when Christian missionaries used the Roman alphabet to “appropriate[e] . . . languages and cultures outside the realm of the Greco-Roman tradition” to colonize the Aztec, Maya, and Quechua nations (66). Although much of Mignolo’s research focused upon early indigenous people in Mesoamerica, Ellen Cushman argues that his theory of language as “part and parcel of colonization” can also be extended to North American tribes (258-59). The Pond brothers and their new missionary colleagues used language as a tool of colonization when they decided to superimpose an English alphabetic script on to the Dakota language to assert dominance and control of the Dakota literary tradition.

In effect, missionaries used the Pond Alphabet to elevate themselves to a position of authority and superiority over the Dakota language. Often, they raised themselves to this position by dismissing Dakota language and literature as a legitimate knowledge system. O’Connell argues that “possession of written language became one of the means by which Europeans assured themselves of superiority to all forms of human culture hitherto unknown to them” (498). Indeed, Gideon Pond seemed to reassure himself of this position when he said: “But though the philologist may find much in the Indian languages that is interesting, and even admirable, he must at once perceive their great inferiority to the language spoken by civilized nations” (“The Indian Languages” 4). According to Clemmons, missionaries like Gideon Pond adhered to polygenesis, a theory that “posited that different races had separate (and inferior) origins” (10). This theory helped delegitimize Dakota language and literature, often replacing the Dakota literary tradition with a new “Dakota library” that helped internally (and eventually externally) colonize the Dakota nation. According to Jacqueline Fear Segal, once the missionaries delegitimized the Dakota literary tradition, they were able to take “full control over what the Dakota Indians read” and thought (89). Often, these printed texts told the Dakota that

they and their traditional knowledge systems were inferior, and that the Dakota nation was nearing extinction.

According to Samuel Pond, the missionaries continued to use the flawed Pond Alphabet “without material alteration until the publication of the dictionary” in 1890 (“Sioux Country” 25-26). Even then, John Willand argues, the dictionary was “only published with minor changes from the Pond Alphabet (212). For nearly half a century, missionaries used a colonized alphabet to produce even more colonized literary representations that would allow them to perpetuate a colonial system that Patrick Wolfe says, simply “destroys to replace” (388). According to Wolfe, settler colonialism often involves a “logic of elimination” that “strives for the dissolution of Native societies” at nearly every level (388). Likewise, the missionaries carefully deconstructed Dakota language and literature, replacing them with English and the American literary canon. According to Riggs, “The labor of writing was undertaken as means to a greater end. To put God’s thoughts into their speech” (*Mary and I* 31). This statement emphasizes that missionaries consciously and deliberately manipulated the Dakota language to reflect their own Christian beliefs and values, thus using the Dakota language as a site of colonization. Their first and longest project: translating the Old and New Testaments from Hebrew and Greek, respectively, to the Dakota language.

Translating the Dakota Bible: “To Put God’s Thoughts into Their Speech”³⁹

Samuel and Gideon Pond had been living and working among the Santee Dakota for nearly a year when two new missionaries arrived: Thomas Williamson and J.D. Stevens. In 1835, the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions hired Williamson and Stevens

³⁹ Riggs quote from *Mary and I*, p. 31.

to formally establish the first of nine mission stations in Dakota Territory (Willand 43). “When the [new] missionaries arrived,” recalls Samuel Pond, “we submitted the alphabet to their inspection” (“Sioux Country” 25). According to Samuel Pond, Williamson seemed to notice some potential flaws with the Pond Alphabet, but he agreed to “use it for the present till they could have time to discover what alterations were required” (26). Despite these flaws, Williamson decided to use the Pond Alphabet for almost thirty years to translate the Christian Bible to the Dakota language. Additionally, he invited the two Pond brothers to join him at Lac qui Parle Mission to assist with these efforts (Willand 76). John Willand describes Williamson’s Bible as “a monumental work . . . a life-time project and contribution” that spanned nearly three decades and involved several other missionary and non-missionary translators (72).

In 1836, Williamson recruited Joseph Renville and Gideon Pond to help him translate “extracts of the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John” (96). Joseph Renville, a local fur trader born to a Dakota mother and French father, translated the French language to the Dakota language for Williamson and Riggs. Gideon Pond acted as scribe, using the Pond Alphabet to transform Renville’s spoken words to written ones. The translation process has been largely romanticized by modern scholars, including Minnesota historian Thomas Hughes, who writes:

“The big room in Renville’s home was the place of Bible translating, Renville sat in his chair in the center of the room, and Dr. Williamson sat in front of him, with Renville’s big French Bible, resting on a table before him. The doctor would read the sentence in French and promptly Renville would render it into the Dakota, and Riggs and Pond, seated at tables on either side, would write down the Dakota words and then read them over carefully, to make sure they have been correctly written. (76)

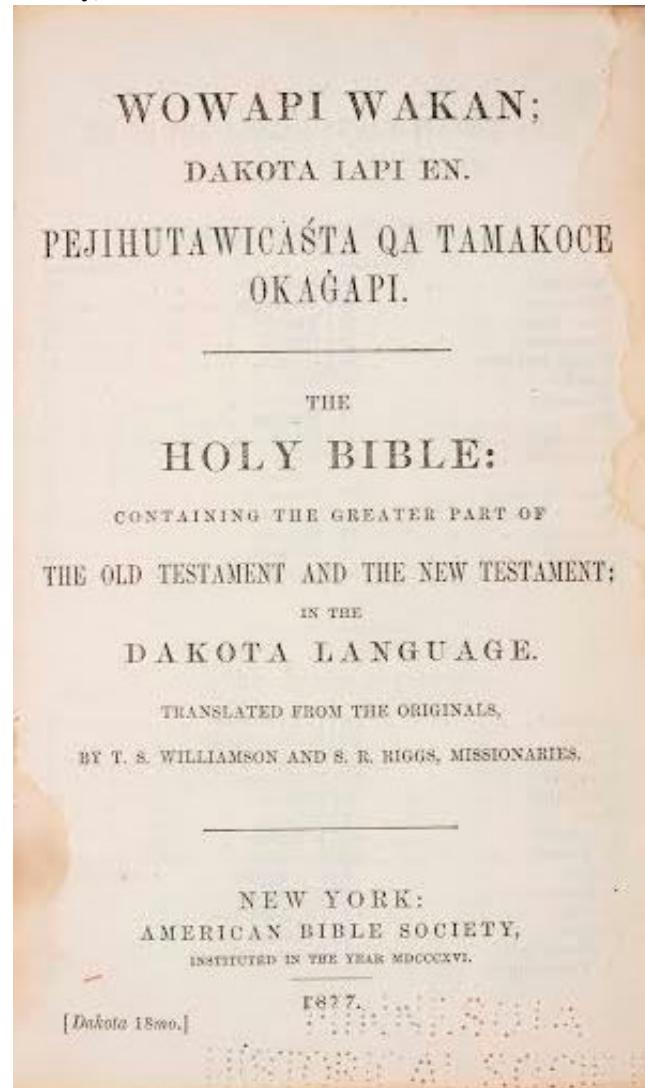
Hughes description suggests that the translation process was relatively simple: **French (written)** → **French (spoken)** → **Dakota (spoken)** → **Dakota (written)**. Furthermore, it suggests that the translation process was methodical and precise with very few mistakes or errors. However, more contemporary scholars, like Willand and Linda Clemmons, point out that several different language barriers helped complicate this simple, four-link chain of translation.

According to Hughes' nostalgic description, missionaries simply needed to translate French to Dakota. However, none of the missionaries actually spoke French, making it difficult to communicate with their French-speaking Dakota interpreter: Joseph Renville (Clemmons 48). In an attempt to learn French, Williamson decided to translate the Old and New Testaments from Hebrew and Greek to the French language (45).

Unfortunately, this long and tedious task failed, as it did not have the desired affect: it only slightly decreased the

language barrier between Williamson and Renville. Initially, Williamson intended to read his French translations out loud to Renville, who would then translate each passage to the Dakota

Figure 3: The First Dakota Bible Published in 1877
(Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society).



language. The only problem was that Williamson studied European French and Renville spoke Canadian French. At first blush, these two dialectal differences seem relatively minor and inconsequential; however, they actually made it quite difficult for Williamson and Renville to communicate (Willand 73). To accommodate the difference between these two dialects, Williamson and Renville attempted to communicate through Renville's English-speaking clerk (72). However, the clerk's English-speaking skills were rudimentary at best. As a result, says Willand, "the correct thoughts were not always conveyed to Renville" (73). Obviously, if the Bible was not translated accurately to Renville, then he could not properly re-translate it to Gideon Pond, who himself was already limited by a flawed, potentially colonized alphabetic script.

This complicated series of steps indicate that Hughes' nostalgic, historical description – a simple four-link chain of translation – was nearly twice as long and much more complicated than he had imagined: **Hebrew or Greek (written) → European French (written) → Canadian French (spoken) → English (spoken) → Canadian French (spoken) → Dakota (spoken) → Dakota (written)**. This long and complicated chain of translation had a tremendous impact on the Dakota language: it helped alter and, in many ways, colonize the language. This idea is supported by translation theorist Ian Mason, who points out that the "translator's decisions may . . . result in the (dis)empowerment of other parties, whose text has been re-entextualised in a different cultural environment in which it no longer has voice" (50). Indeed, this long and complicated chain of translation helped disempower the Dakota nation by reducing Dakota language and literature to a written form that failed to capture many of the nuances inherent in the rich and complex Dakota literary tradition. According to Willand, Ella Deloria, a Dakota anthropologist and linguist who corrected and revised these early translations of the Old and

New Testament, only used one word to describe these missionary translations: “awful.”⁴⁰

Although Deloria does not elaborate further, her criticism is not surprising because translation is a sensitive and tricky process that is inevitably subject to errors and misunderstandings. This process seemed to be even more challenging for Williamson and his team of missionary translators because they had the extra burden of translating the Dakota language across several different languages and dialects. In addition to these language barriers, the missionaries’ translation efforts were also hindered by several cultural misunderstandings.

In 1836, Williamson wrote to the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions to request additional assistance with this long and complicated translation process. Specifically, he requested the assistance of Reverend Stephen R. Riggs, a former acquaintance “with a good mind” and shrewd business skills (Willand 80). In June 1837, Riggs and his new bride, Mary, arrived at Lac Qui Parle Mission to assist with the translation of the first Dakota Bible.

Immediately, Stephen and Mary Riggs seemed to notice several cultural misunderstandings that had the potential to impact the translation of the Dakota Bible. They alluded to several of these cross-cultural misunderstandings in their personal correspondence. For example, in one letter, Stephen Riggs recalls Mary unintentionally insulted her students by calling them her “little lambs” (Willand 95). For the missionaries, lamb is a term of endearment; however, according to Stephen Riggs, it was an insult to Mary’s students because “Indians disliked sheep” (95). To address this cross-cultural misunderstanding Stephen Riggs advised his wife to “refer to them as her little pigs” (95). He reasoned that “the Indians disliked sheep but thought well of pigs . . . [so there] would be no insult” (95). Presumably, Stephen Riggs’ play on words was meant as a

⁴⁰ John Willand interviewed Deloria for his 1964 book *Lac Parle and the Dakota Mission*, a comprehensive study of the first mission station in Dakota Territory. He notes Deloria’s reaction to the missionary’s translation in a footnote on p. 96.

clever joke; however, in many ways, this joke is insulting because Stephen and Mary were simply laughing at the Santee Dakota's tentative grasp of a language that was forced upon them. Furthermore, it is insulting because Stephen and Mary's personal letters often reflect their poor opinion of the Santee Dakota. In Western society, pigs are viewed as unclean, which is how the missionaries viewed their potential converts. Mary, reflecting upon the first time that she laid eyes on the Santee Dakota, writes: "Their indolence and filthiness are enough to make the heart sick, but their ignorance and degradation enough to make it bleed" (Letter to parents, dated May 25, 1837). This description reveals Mary's negative, stereotypical attitude toward Dakota people, and helps explain why she and her husband were so amused at the idea of likening Dakota people to pigs. Obviously, the Riggs' family had a poor opinion of the Santee Dakota and felt that it was their responsibility to save them by "putting the words of God into their speech" (*Mary and I* 31). It did not seem to matter to them that they often struggled to find the correct words or phrases to accomplish this task.

The inability to translate the word "lamb," a Christian term of endearment, is but one example of the cultural/linguistic barriers the missionaries faced as they attempted to transform the Dakota language from an oral to a written form. Perhaps, the most difficult idea that the missionaries had to translate to the Dakota language was the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Stephen Riggs documents this challenge in his 1880 essay, "The Theogony of the Sioux." He writes:

When we came to preach the gospel, and give the Bible to the Sioux in their own language we simply claimed our own, in using Wah-kon-ton-ka for God. . . . [Similarly,] we found no word . . . to represent holy. . . [so we] designated . . . Wo-ne-ga Wah-kon . . . breath holy . . . as the Holy Spirit. (266)

According to Riggs, the Dakota phrase Wah-kon-ton-ka does not exactly translate to the Christian word God, nor does the Dakota phrase Wo-ne-ga Wah-kon exactly translate to the Christian phrase the Holy Spirit. He points out that Wah-kon-ton-ka translates to “Great Spirit,” a relatively vague term that alludes to both natural and supernatural phenomena in Dakota culture. Meanwhile, Wo-ne-ga Wah-kon represents another vague concept that denotes breath rather than a spiritual entity.⁴¹ Therefore, Riggs and Williamson simply “designated” new words and “claimed [their] own.” Like the Pond brothers, they simply invented new words and phrases and gave them “new powers.” Monica Siems reasons that this method of translation is problematic because these translations tend to reflect the missionaries’ personal biases. She firmly maintains that the missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle were unable “to see that the Dakotas possessed a full, integrated religious system” and thus were unable to appreciate how “different [it was] from their own” (169). Instead of trying to understand these differences, missionaries simply replaced these words and forced their potential converts to conform to their own ways of knowing. The act of forcing the Santee Dakota to compromise their beliefs and knowledge systems is a form of colonization. Vine Deloria, Jr. emphasizes this point when he observes: “One of the biggest problems of the Indian people is the missionary. It has been said that when they arrived they had only the Book and we had the land. Now we have the Book and they have the land” (*Custer* 101). Deloria’s dry observation links Bible translation to dispossession and the colonial system, which seeks “the dissolution of native societies . . . [to] erect a new colonial society on the expropriated land base” (Wolfe 388). Furthermore, this statement reiterates that language can be, and often was, used by missionaries to colonize the Dakota people, both internally and externally.

⁴¹ The spellings of these three concepts (i.e., the Holy Trinity) seem phonetic as Riggs uses slightly different spellings of these words in his Dakota-English dictionary.

The missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle were not the first or only missionaries to use the Christian Bible as a tool of colonization. William Smalley points out that the Bible has been translated to countless languages worldwide, often reflecting the personal biases and beliefs of missionary translators.⁴² This practice began in the United States in 1653 when Puritan John Eliot translated the Bible to the Algonquin language (J. Martin 337). According to Joyce Martin, the Algonquin Bible was the very first book published on American soil (336). She estimates that this one Bible was used to convert more than 2,500 Algonquin people to Christianity (337). Since then, missionaries have translated portions of the Bible to approximately 46 indigenous languages (336). The Dakota Bible translated by the missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle is notable because it is one of only six complete editions of the Bible published worldwide in an indigenous language (336). This accomplishment underscores the diligence and tenacity of the missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle, especially Williamson, who launched these efforts in 1836 and continued them until his death in 1879.

As Williamson and his colleagues translated the Christian Bible to the Dakota language, they kept word lists that eventually became the basis for the first Dakota dictionary (Willand 99). According to O'Connell, this practice meant that "Holy Writ became the primary dictionary and grammar for most Native American languages" (499). This statement emphasizes that many of the words contained in the first Dakota dictionary and grammar were based upon the missionaries' knowledge and understanding of Dakota language and literature, which were largely shaped by their personal biases and cultural misunderstandings. As a result, the first Dakota dictionary, which was used to codify and standardize the Dakota language, was largely shaped by a Christian worldview that helped further colonize Dakota language, literature, and

⁴² For additional examples of how the Christian Bible has been translated to numerous languages worldwide, see Smalley.

life. According to O'Connell, "the creation of a written version of virtually every North American Indian language occurred in the context of evangelization . . . most English evangelists came to believe that no Indian could be readily converted until fluent in EuroAmerican cultural practices, none more important than English itself. Christian missionaries thus seemed the inevitable apostles of civilization and nationalism" (O' Connell 499).

Publishing the Dakota Dictionary: "The translation of the Bible . . . has given the language an unction and power unknown to it before"⁴³

The process of transforming Dakota language and literature from an oral to a written form was a collective effort. The Pond brothers improvised the first Dakota alphabet. Williamson used that alphabetic system to translate the first Dakota Bible. Finally, Riggs used those biblical words to publish the first Dakota dictionary. This first Dakota dictionary, published under the auspices of the Minnesota Historical Society, was used to help codify and standardize the Dakota language (*Mary and I* 80). The dictionary was first published in 1868, with new editions published in 1871, 1886, and 1902 (Murray 340). Riggs observes that these dictionaries often sold out quickly and could usually "only be bought for fancy prices" (*Mary and I* 80). This observation emphasizes the popularity of the first Dakota dictionary, which was often perceived as the most "authentic" representation of the Dakota language. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft says: "Mr. Riggs, who is the editor [of the Dakota dictionary], has been one of the earliest, most efficient, and most successful missionaries among that people. He has studied the language, with the care, enthusiasm of a student, and describes it with the precision of a scholar" (547). This statement, like Hughes nostalgic description in the previous section, downplays any

⁴³ Riggs' quote from *Mary and I*, p. 80.

potential flaws or errors in the missionaries' translation of the Dakota language. However, Ella Deloria's mentor, Franz Boas, points out that indigenous dictionaries and grammar books that evolved from Bible translation often "produce[d] many unidiomatic forms of the language" (Murray 341-42).⁴⁴ This statement reinforces the idea that missionary translations do not always capture the cultural and linguistic nuances inherent in the Dakota language. Instead, these unidiomatic forms of the Dakota language tend to reflect the translators' – in this case, the missionaries' – beliefs, values, and worldview.

Stephen and Mary Riggs reflect upon the differences between a Western and tribal worldview in their correspondence home. For example, Mary, upon her arrival at Lac qui Parle Mission, pens a letter to her sister that speculates on the name of the nearby lake. She entertains two possible explanations for Lac qui Parle or "the lake that speaks." Mary attributes the name to two sources: 1.) the haunting echo of Dakota voices from "the spirit land;" or 2.) the audible sound of water lapping against the shore (Letter to Alfred Longley dated May 10, 1838). Regardless of its origins, she notes that the lake's name is appropriate given the linguistic nature of her husband's missionary work. She says: "The name perhaps will be sufficient to evoke the muse" (Letter to Alfred Longley May 10, 1838). This muse is presumably Hermes, the God of Translators and Interpreters, who Mary hopes to summon to assist her husband in his effort to translate the Dakota language from an oral to a written form. However, Eagle Help, a recent Dakota convert, chastises missionaries for misinterpreting the Dakota name of the nearby lake (*Mary and I* 43). According to Stephen Riggs, "the romance was all taken out of the French

⁴⁴ Boas hired Deloria to help revise the Dakota dictionary and several oral stories to reflect a more idiomatically correct translation of the language. However, as chapter four demonstrates, he, ironically, prevented her from publishing her findings to reflect a more idiomatically correct translation of the language.

name,” Lac qui Parle, when Eagle Help “pointed out that the Dakota name” for the lake, ““Mdaeyaydan,”” did not mean “lake that talks, [but rather] lake that connects” (43). This simple, and seemingly innocent, mistranslation reiterates that cultural perspective helps shape and influence language translation.

The missionaries who attempted to decipher the meaning of the lake interpreted it from a Western perspective, while the Dakota people approached it from a tribal one. For Mary Riggs, the “lake that speaks” connotes muses and Greek gods. For Eagle Help, the “lake that connects” likely denotes the lake’s physical properties, as it is a natural reservoir that connects the Minnesota and Chippewa rivers.⁴⁵ These differences suggest that each interpretation is rooted in a specific mythology and worldview. Riggs’ interpretation is rooted in a Western worldview that privileges Greek mythology, such as Hermes the God of Translators and Interpreters, while Eagle Help’s interpretation reflects “an indigenous worldview” that Elizabeth Cook-Lynn observes is often located in “a specific geography . . . mythology . . . language” (Cook Lynn “Nationalism” 31). This simple mistranslation demonstrates that cultural perspective plays an important role in the translation process. Nevertheless, missionaries were always trying to force Dakota language and literature to fit into a Western Christian framework.

This practice is perhaps most obvious in Riggs’ 1883 article, “The Mythology of the Dakotas,” where he attempts to argue that Dakota mythology bears a “striking resemblance to that of the Greeks and Latins” (148). He makes this argument by comparing eight Dakota gods to various Greek and Latin gods. Although there are some similarities between these myths, there are many more differences that Riggs tends to downplay or elide as he manipulates these

⁴⁵ I would like to thank Dr. Craigmile for providing geographical and historical insight into Lac qui Parle and first pointing out the difference between the Dakota and non-Dakota translations of the lake’s name.

stories and forces them to fit into a Western mythological framework. For example, he argues that Inyan (Dakota) “corresponds” to Mars (Latin) because “they are both the greatest gods” in their respective cultures. However, Ella Deloria insists that this hierarchy does not exist in Dakota culture (*The Dakota Way of Life* 1). Furthermore, Inyan is a creation myth and Mars is a god that connotes war or destruction, suggesting that they are diametric opposites because Inyan focuses on birth and construction, while Mars emphasizes death and deconstruction. The similarities between these two mythic figures, then, are relatively slim, with each reflecting a different worldview. Nevertheless, missionaries insisted on conflating these mythic figures – like many Dakota words and concepts – to fit a Western Christian framework that did not necessarily reflect the Dakota way of life. They extended this practice to several other publications as well.

Distributing the First Dakota Newspaper: “Because those white men who reside among you, have kind feelings toward you, and desire for your welfare, they are publishing a newspaper for you.”⁴⁶

The first Dakota dictionary enabled the missionaries to write and publish their own religious and secular texts in the Dakota language. According to Jacqueline Fear-Segal, the missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle published “dozens of religious texts, volumes of hymn and prayer books as well as dictionaries, grammars, and an ever-growing number of schoolbooks” (86). Additionally, they also used the print press to launch the first Dakota-English newspapers: *The Dakota Friend* and *The Word Carrier*. Scholars tend to disagree on the nature and function of these two bilingual newspapers, particularly on *The Dakota Friend*.

⁴⁶ Quote from M’Lean, p. 3.

Gwen Westerman argues: “Though influenced by missionary attitudes and language, [*The Dakota Friend*] offer[s] a Dakota view of history not as an abstraction but within the context of the worldview and values of the Dakota people themselves” (201). Westerman firmly maintains that these representations reflect a largely Dakota worldview. However, Willand describes *The Dakota Friend* as “the official propaganda organ of the Dakota Mission” (206). The word “propaganda” denotes information used to promote a specific position or point of view. In this case, says Willand, it is the worldview of the Dakota Mission, which is based primarily upon Christian beliefs and values. Indeed, these newspapers often contained articles and editorials that were intended to diminish and delegitimize the Dakota worldview, while simultaneously replacing it with the missionaries’ Christian worldview.

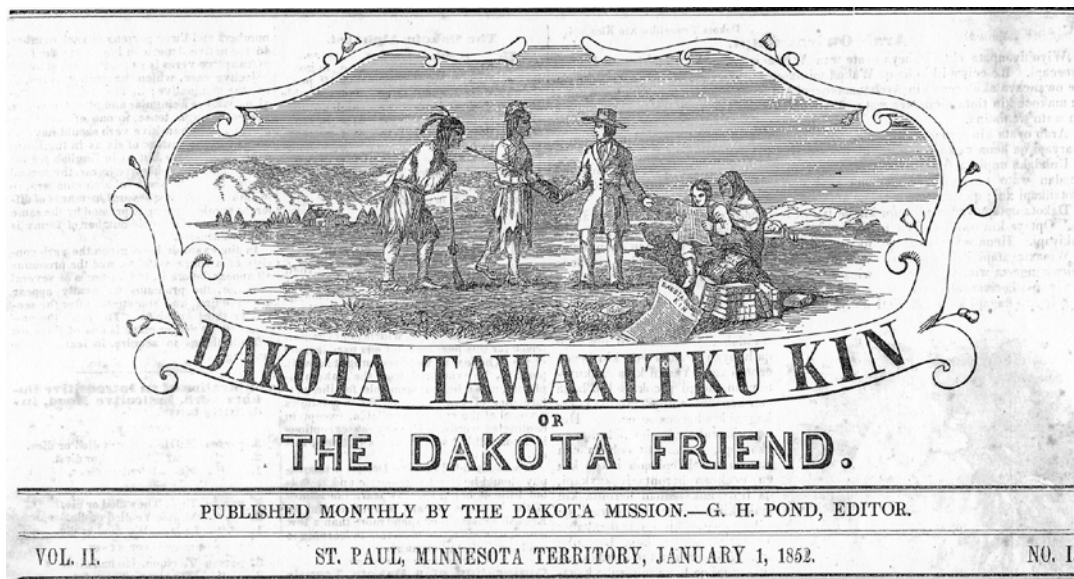
In November of 1850, missionaries stationed at Lac Qui Parle officially appointed Gideon Pond to edit and publish *Dakota Tawaxitku Kin* or *The Dakota Friend*. *The Dakota Friend*, a four-page monthly, is notable for several reasons. It is the first bilingual newspaper printed in both Dakota and English; it is the “first religious periodical published in the state of Minnesota;” and it is the second publication printed in an indigenous language in the United States (206). All of these early accomplishments suggest that *The Dakota Friend* was the most accessible printed resource to readers during those crucial formative years when Dakota Territory transitioned into the state of Minnesota. As a result, this small, short-lived newspaper had a tremendous impact on the local population ultimately shaping how both Dakota and non-Dakota readers perceived themselves and their respective nations. The purpose of *The Dakota Friend* was two-fold. For the Santee Dakota, the newspaper was intended to “excite in them a taste for reading . . . and to bring before the Indian mind such items of news as will interest them, and any such matter that is believed that will be calculated to improve their physical, mental and

moral condition” (“Prospectus” 4). In short, its main purpose was to accelerate assimilation and Christian indoctrination among the Dakota nation. For the rest of the American public, it was intended to help shed light on traditional Dakota lifeways, preserving them before they faded from living memory.

In May of 1851, Gideon Pond added a masthead to the newspaper that further emphasized “its primary object . . . to lead the poor Dakota youth to the love of reading, of civilized habits, and of the Christian doctrine” (“Prospectus” 4). The masthead depicts the image of a missionary – the Dakota friend – situated between two male Dakota youth and two female Dakota youth. The missionary’s animated face and gesticulating arms suggest that he is speaking. He is trying to persuade the two young men, who are dressed in buckskin and feathers, to lay down their weapons and join the two young women, who are sitting on a bench wearing calico dresses and reading. The men’s clothing implies that they are uncivilized; the women’s attire suggests that they are civilized and have integrated into Western society. The missionary’s gesture toward the reading women signals that they are a successful example of assimilation and education. In addition to reading newspapers, it is also important to note that the two young women appear to be sitting on a stack of books. The missionaries firmly believed that reading was the key to “civilizing and christianizing the Santee Dakota (“New Suit” 4). According to Clemmons, “missionaries taught their students to read so that they could contemplate the Bible” (88). In other words, missionaries deliberately used the act of reading as a tool to indoctrinate the Santee Dakota with Christian beliefs and values. These books and newspapers, which helped Dakota people “conform to Christian ways and values,” also “led to the loss of Dakota

culture and religion,” thus helping perpetuate the colonial agenda embedded in the “first Dakota library (Canku and Simon xiv).⁴⁷

FIGURE 4: THE MASTHEAD FOR *DAKOTA TAWAXITKU KIN OR THE DAKOTA FRIEND*, THE FIRST BILINGUAL DAKOTA-ENGLISH NEWSPAPER EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY GIDEON POND FROM 1850-1852. (PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY)



The Dakota Friend is characterized by large sections of scriptures, prayers, and hymns. It also includes local news stories and editorials as well as several articles on Dakota culture and language. The newspaper is perhaps most notable because it contains several translations of traditional Dakota oral stories, marking the first time that these stories ever appeared in print. Gideon Pond reasons that it is important to capture these stories in print because “the Indian mind is so absorbed with present affairs . . . [that] if neglected a few years longer, nothing will be known of their past history . . . unless white men, half-breeds, and educated Indians volunteer

⁴⁷ Although this masthead, as well as many of the stories included in *The Dakota Friend*, are “repositories of colonial privilege,” Danika Medak-Saltzman argues that it is still possible to read these colonized cultural artifacts for echoes of Indigenous experiences—mediated/interpreted by colonial agents though they may be” (596). For additional examples, see Medak-Saltzman’s “Transnational Indigenous Exchange.”

to collect and preserve these traditions another half century will not have passed over before the Dakota who may thou remain, will scarcely be able to tell where his grandfather lived, and fought, and died” (“Traditionary History” 3). Gideon’s rationale is problematic because it is based upon the tacit assumption that the printed text is the only legitimate preservation system. It ignores that the Dakota nation already had a preservation system in place: the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. Instead of respecting this tradition, Gideon insists on translating the oral form to a written one because he “cannot reasonably expect any improvements in the Indian languages, and the sooner they are supplanted by the English the better” (“Indian Languages” 4). Although Gideon Pond believes that the Dakota oral storytelling tradition can only benefit from transcription and translation, his brother warns that “a literal translation into English” would “civilize” the stories and “spoil them” (*Dakota Life* 84). Samuel does not specifically say how translation will spoil the story. However, Monica Siems’ previous argument suggests that it will “spoil” them by filtering them through the missionaries biased, Christian worldview.

Indeed, Gideon Pond “spoils,” Mni Sosa, a Dakota creation myth, when he attempts to “civilize” or reimagine it for his essay, “Gatherings from the Traditionary History of the Mdewakanton Dakotas.” He writes:

The mouth of the Minnesota River lies immediately over the centre of the earth and under the centre of the heavens. Believing this, it is quite natural that the Dakota should infer that their own tribe, among the savages who wander over the face of the earth, is the tribe which is the peculiar favorite of the great natural disposer of all things; and that other Indians are inferior; and it is equally natural that the Mdewakantonwan division of the Dakotas should infer that they are the most favored family of the tribe. This idea makes them proud. We often hear it

expressed in their speeches on important occasions, with evident self-satisfaction.
("Mdewakanton Dakotas" 3).

Gideon acknowledges that Mni Sosa is an important origin myth when he states that "it makes [the Dakota nation] proud." However, his tone, diction, and overall lack of details suggest that he either does not believe this traditional story or he does not understand it. Instead, he argues that the Dakotas simply use this oral story as an excuse to enhance their standing among other tribes. Gideon's interpretation is potentially problematic because it delegitimizes this ancient and sacred myth; and even more troubling, it is this delegitimized tradition that is printed over and over again. Most recently, this interpretation of Mni Sosa re-appears in Westerman's 2012 book *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota*. This interpretation also appears in Edward Duffield Neills' 1881 *History of Washington County and the St. Croix Valley*, and Stephen Riggs' 1893 *Dakota Grammar with Texts and Ethnography*, which is often considered the premiere book on Dakota language and literature. Riggs' book, which includes Pond's interpretation of Mni Sosa, has been published several times, including 1893, 1941, 1977, 2004, and most recently 2015 (Murray 340). The fact that Gideon Pond's interpretation of this story has been re-printed at least a half dozen times over the past 165 years (1851-present) underscores the power of the press, which has helped circulate this misinterpretation for nearly two hundred years.

Obviously, Neills and Riggs did not quote Gideon Pond's interpretation of Mni Sosa verbatim. Instead, they expanded upon his interpretation, further disputing the Dakota's claim that they emerged from the river and thus are the original inhabitants of the country. Neills writes:

The Dakotahs, called by the Ojibways, Nadowaysioux, or Sioux (Soos, as abbreviated by the French) used to claim superiority over other people, because

their sacred men asserted that the mouth of the Minnesota River was immediately over the centre of the earth, and below the centre of the heavens.

While this teaching is very different from that of the modern astronomer, it is certainly true that the region west of of Lake Superior, extending through the valley of the Minnesota, to the Missouri River, is one of the most healthful and fertile regions beneath the skies, and may prove to be the centre of the United States of America” (*History of Fillmore County* “Explorers and Pioneers” 1).

Neills, an American author and educator, published numerous historical books on the colonial period, often focusing upon the state of Minnesota. Neills defines the American nation by delegitimizing the Dakota nation’s sacred origin myth, which he points out has already been debunked by “the modern astronomer,” a scientist, and thus he is a more knowledgeable (i.e., legitimate) source of information (1). It is important to note that once Neills’ delegitimizes Mni Sosa, he appropriates this myth and renames it the Missouri River, shifting its location from Dakota Territory or “over the centre of the earth, and below the centre of the heavens” to “the centre of the United States of America.” The decision to appropriate this myth is ironic and, in many ways, hypocritical, since Neills accuses and then criticizes the Dakota for using this myth “to claim superiority over other people,” and then he himself uses it to elevate the American nation over the Dakota nation and other nations as well (1). According to Benedict Anderson’s theory of nationalism, writers often compose these types of printed texts “to define [their communities] as nations” (48).⁴⁸ It is unclear if Neills or other nationalist writers are consciously aware of their actions. However, Fear-Segal argues that this is a commonly

⁴⁸ For further discussion on the strengths and limitations of Anderson’s theory of nationalism with relation to Indigenous subjects, see Medak Saltzman’s “Empire’s Haunted Logics” p. 25-26.

recurring trend among early American writers and scholars. She firmly maintains that “the construction of American nationality involved the destruction – geographical, legal, political, and cultural – of Indian nationalities” (xii). Often, missionaries relied upon the power of the press to praise the American nation and denigrate the Dakota nation (and other indigenous nations).

In addition to using the printed text to deconstruct the Dakota nation, missionaries also used the printed texts to reconstruct or reimagine the Dakota nation as a new colonized community that assimilated to the American nation. This idea is supported by Fear-Segal, who argues that “the missionaries consciously used their knowledge of Dakota language to penetrate and inscribe new parameters on the Dakota people in an unremitting campaign to establish their own version of an “imagined community” of Christian Dakota” (90). Intentionally, Gideon Pond imagines this community in an essay titled, “The Dakota Christian.” This essay is published in the same issue of *The Dakota Friend* as his re-interpretation of Mni Sosa. In fact, the two stories appear side-by-side on the same page, which might have been considered an odd coincidence – except for the fact that Gideon Pond mentioned in the very first issue of his newspaper that all of his stories were “calculated” (*The Dakota Friend* “Prospectus” 4). “The Dakota Christian” is an essay about a Dakota convert who was “ridiculed and abused for her religion” (*The Dakota Friend* “The Dakota Christian” 3). Gideon Pond says: “She was turned out of doors by her sister, in whose family she resided, because she would not work on the Sabbath” (3). The missionaries praise her commitment to the Christian faith and tout her (like the two Dakota women on their masthead) as a successful example of assimilation and education.

Intentionally or unintentionally, Gideon Pond used *The Dakota Friend* to deconstruct the Dakota nation and delegitimize their traditional knowledge systems, while simultaneously using it to perpetuate the colonial system and elevate the American nation. Gideon Pond did not

realize the tremendous impact that his contribution had on the Dakota Mission. In fact, Clemmons argues that Gideon Pond “wanted to halt production on *The Dakota Friend* because it was expensive and time-consuming to publish without any discernable results” (146). Although Gideon Pond did not seem to witness an increase in religious patrons, Stephen Riggs praised Pond and “touted the publication’s success to the Board” (145). In fact, he paid Gideon Pond and his publication the highest form of flattery by borrowing the unique format of *The Dakota Friend* to launch the second Dakota-English bilingual newspaper, *Iapi Oaye* or *The Word Carrier*, which ran for more than six decades from 1851 to 1939. Like Gideon Pond’s four-page monthly, Riggs’ newspaper also helped deconstruct the Dakota nation and delegitimize their traditional knowledge system, while simultaneously promoting the colonial system and elevating the American nation. Riggs’ newspaper is discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this dissertation.

Colonizing the Dakota Literary Tradition

The missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle did not perceive themselves as agents of the colonial system who strip the Dakota people of their culture and dispossessed them of their land. In fact, Clemmons argues that the private diaries and personal correspondence of these missionaries reveal that many of them “did not agree with federal policies and criticized the character of federal agents and soldiers” (45). However, she admits that missionaries rarely voiced these concerns out loud because they relied upon government funding to pay their wages and support their growing education system. It is not necessarily their silence that suggests that missionaries were complicit in the colonial system. It is their decision to impose their Christian worldview on every facet of Dakota language and literature – from the most miniscule (i.e., the

Pond Alphabet) to the deep (i.e., Bible and dictionary) and thought-provoking (i.e., oral storytelling tradition) – that aligns them with the colonial system. Further linking the missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle to the colonial system is the tension that existed among them – and other religious sects – as they fought for control over Dakota language, literature, and life.

Although the missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle worked collaboratively to transcribe and translate the Dakota literary tradition, they did not always agree on the same translation methods to document and record Dakota language and literature. Clemmons explores these tensions in her 2014 book, *Conflicted Mission: Faith, Disputes, and Deception on the Dakota Frontier*, which points out that tensions often ran high among the missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle because of opposing views on Dakota language and literature, among other internal and external conflicts. Often, Riggs and the two Pond brothers were at the center of these debates, with each struggling to stake his claim on the Dakota literary tradition. Samuel and Gideon Pond began translating Dakota language and literature from an oral to a written form three years before Stephen and Mary Riggs arrived at Lac qui Parle. Although Riggs helped translate the language for approximately five years, he eventually grew restless, often leaving the mission to help increase the public’s awareness of Dakota language and literature (Willand 285). As a result, Riggs became known as the leading expert on Dakota language and literature, while the efforts of his colleagues who remained behind at Lac qui Parle performing all of the hard work were largely ignored. According to William Folwell, these tensions came to a head when Riggs “placed his name on the title page [of the Dakota dictionary] as editor” and only vaguely referred to his missionary colleagues, implying that the dictionary “grew up in his hands” (449). This implication angered Samuel Pond, who points out in his narrative that he and his brother began

informally gathering material on the Dakota language even before any of the other missionaries set foot in Dakota Territory (Folwell 499). Neither Samuel Pond nor Stephen Riggs ever fully resolved this tension, with Pond eventually distancing himself from the project altogether (450).

Historians often dismiss the conflict between Riggs and the two Pond brothers as one of simple jealousy. John Nichols observes that Samuel Pond's memoirs "reveal resentment at Riggs for taking top billing" of the first Dakota dictionary and grammar (5). Nichols' observation hints that Samuel's claims are little more than a petty dispute over authorship. Furthermore, he argues that these accusations are unfounded because "little of Pond's work [actually] appeared" in Riggs' dictionary or grammar (5). However, Folwell points out that a comparison of Riggs' dictionary and Pond's unpublished manuscript reveals that Riggs' dictionary only "contains about six percent more words than Pond's . . . [and that] the additions are mostly reduplications or other variants on root words" (452). Like Riggs and Pond, anthropologists and historians also largely disagree over who to cast as the leading authority over the Dakota language. In many ways, it is futile to argue over who was the leading authority on the Dakota language. A better question, which scholars have yet to answer, is how did Riggs and the Pond brothers approaches to the Dakota language differ?

These arguments remain largely unsettled, with scholars on both sides arguing that the Pond brothers or Riggs is the leading "pioneer" in the field.⁴⁹ Indeed, "pioneer" is a fitting word to describe all three men, who each developed a new method to convey Dakota language and literature. They are indeed "pioneers" in the academic study of Dakota language and literature. The word is also appropriate because "pioneer," especially the early American pioneer (i.e.,

⁴⁹ For additional examples of scholars likening Riggs and the Pond brothers to pioneers in the field of Dakota language, see Blegen, p. 18 and Willand, p. 246.

white settlers), tends to connote colonization. The Pond brothers colonized the Dakota language, as indicated by the name given for their interpretation of Dakota letters: the Pond Alphabet; and Riggs colonized Dakota literature as he forced it to fit into a Christian, Western framework. In many ways, then, the missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle fought to colonize and control Dakota language and literature, just like the federal government fought to colonize and control Dakota land.

Benedict Anderson theorizes that these types of libraries or “printed languages laid the basis for national consciousness [by] . . . creat[ing] languages of power” that helped privilege one community and marginalize the others (44). The first Dakota library is a prime example of Anderson’s theory of nationalism because it helped elevate the English language – and with it, the American nation – to a position of power; while slowly and systematically dismantling the Dakota language – and with it, the Dakota nation. This argument is supported by several scholars,⁵⁰ including Laura Stevens, who firmly maintains that “America as we know it would hardly exist, territorially or culturally, without visions of Indian death” in early missionary writings (161). This statement links Indian death imagery – a recurring trope in early nineteenth century American literature known as the myth of the “Vanishing Indian” – to the colonial system by emphasizing the growth of the American nation and the decline of indigenous nations.⁵¹ Moreover, it reiterates that missionaries were often a part of this system as they penned numerous newspapers and books that allowed them to imagine and promote an American nation based on Christian beliefs and values, while simultaneously using these printed texts to deconstruct and eventually censure the Dakota literary tradition.

⁵⁰ Other scholars who support this theory include Fear-Segal, O’Connell, and Martin.

⁵¹ For more information on the nineteenth century myth of the Vanishing Indian, see Stevens.

Missionaries worldwide often fought for control of Indian souls just like explorers fought for control over Indian land. Vine Deloria, Jr. observes: “Churches began lobbying early in the 1860s at the Indian Bureau in Washington, D.C. for franchises over respective reservations. Thus one reservation would be assigned to the Roman Catholics, one to the Lutheran, one to the Methodists, and one to the Episcopalians” (*Custer* 108). The missionaries who staked their claim on the Dakota nation were Presbyterian, and they took great pains to ensure that other religious sects stayed far away from their community. Their biggest threat during the early years of the mission was the Roman Catholics. Joseph Renville, who helped missionaries translate the Dakota language from an oral to a written form, was raised in the Catholic Church. His decision to invite a Catholic priest for a visit sent the missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle into a panic. They assumed that they had angered Renville, and that he was using the priest as a tool to undermine their authority and claim on the Dakota literary tradition. It is unclear if this was an actual threat or simply the result of paranoia, but the missionaries’ reaction reinforces the idea that missionaries often treated Indian souls as parcels of land or some other material good to be divvied up. Deloria says: “It always bothered me that these churches who would not share pulpits and regarded each other as children of the devil, should have so cold-bloodedly divided up tribes as if they were choosing sides for touch football” (*Custer* 106). This statement emphasizes that the Santee Dakota – and many other tribes – initially had very little say over their religion or other important aspects of their lives. They simply had these beliefs and values imposed on them. Today, however, they have much more say on how – or if – they will incorporate these Christian values into the Dakota way of life. The next section of this chapter examines how modern Dakota people have started to negotiate these opposing beliefs and values into their everyday lives.

Decolonizing the Dakota Literary Tradition

The missionaries stationed at Lac qui Parle had a tremendous impact on Dakota language and literature. Admittedly, this impact was largely negative, as it altered the Dakota literary tradition, infusing it with Christian beliefs and values that helped delegitimize and devalue Dakota language, literature, and life. However, more recent Dakota writers and scholars suggest that it is possible to re-appropriate Dakota language and literature and use it to strengthen and empower the Dakota nation. O'Connell points out that it is important to remember that missionaries were often aided by Dakota people who also believed that it was important to their communities to learn how to read and write. He notes: "Indians . . . were essential collaborators in [the translation] process [of] any Indian language" (499). Indeed, even missionaries admit that they would have been completely lost without the assistance and guidance of their first translator Joseph Renville, who helped them translate the first Dakota Bible and lay the groundwork for the first Dakota dictionary (Clemmons 78). Additionally, Renville's sons (as well as other storytellers) were also responsible for helping transcribe and translate several of the traditional stories that Gideon Pond and Stephen Riggs published in their newspapers (*Santee Dakota Legends* (138). This realization emphasizes that Dakota people were also eager to learn how to read and write; however, it was often for reasons very different from that of the missionaries. According to Clemmons, many Dakota people viewed these tools as a necessary resource to help strengthen and empower the modern Dakota nation. She says, "Dakota students used a missionary practice – writing – to strengthen a traditional one – gift giving. . . . letters [also] opened up a new way to keep each other informed about everyday affairs, work our disputes, and discuss important issues affecting their communities" (89). This statement indicates that tools

meant to disband and colonize the Dakota nation also helped unite and decolonize that Dakota nation.

For example, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn traces her knowledge of the Dakota literary tradition to her grandmother and namesake, Eliza Grey Shawl Renville, whom she describes as “a traditional woman” who “wrote in the Dakota language for some of the early Christian newspapers” (Bruchac 63). At first blush, this statement seems like an oxymoron: Cook-Lynn’s grandmother attempted to preserve Native culture and language by writing for a non-traditional publication printed by Christian missionaries intent on extinguishing traditional Native lifeways. Nevertheless, Cook-Lynn’s grandmother, a descendant of Joseph Renville, who helped translate the first Dakota Bible and dictionary, used her writing to preserve traditional Dakota lifeways by: 1.) contributing bilingual stories to the newspaper for both Dakota- and English-speaking tribal members; and 2.) focusing on religious events and social gatherings that helped unite these tribal members during a time of great change and upheaval (Bruchac 65). These actions suggest that Cook-Lynn’s grandmother cleverly used this Christian newspaper as a nation-centered space to reclaim and revitalize Dakota culture and language. These efforts suggest that it is possible to use a colonized language to decolonize....

For example, Ella Deloria, encourages modern Dakota writers and scholars to “bow gratefully to those Congregational and Presbyterian missionaries who first reduced Dakota speech to writing, and put years of work into the preparation of the text” (*Speaking of Indians* 102). In this statement, Deloria admits that Christian missionaries altered and/or reduced the content and structure of the rich and complex Dakota oral story telling tradition. However, she also seems to be thankful to them for providing future Dakota writers and scholars with the tools they need to preserve Dakota language and literature. Ella, herself, used these tools to publish

three books on Dakota language, literature, and life. Additionally, she used these tools to collect countless stories from the early Dakota oral storytelling tradition that still have yet to be published. Ella's published and unpublished accomplishments imply that Native writers and scholars can use the colonial system to reclaim and revitalize the Dakota literary tradition.

White Hat, a Lakota language instructor, makes a similar observation when he says: "These people [i.e., missionaries] attempted to put our language into a written form. Through their work, they gave [future Lakota and Dakota language instructors] the tools to develop and formulate a written version of the language" (*Lakota Language* 7). White Hat concedes that these representations are, at times, flawed, but warns against simply dismissing or discarding them altogether (5). Instead, he advises modern Dakota and Lakota writers and scholars to adapt these colonized representations to reflect a more indigenous (as opposed to a Christian or Western) worldview (8-9). In the late 1980s and 1990s White Hat and several other tribal college language instructors held a convening to revise the Lakota alphabet and discuss methods for teaching the language in the classroom. These discussions continue today at both the tribal college level as well as through several grassroots initiatives. Furthermore, Martin points out that many indigenous Bibles, including the Dakota Bible, continue to be used and re-translated today, meaning that many tribes have incorporated Western Christian religions into their traditional way of life (343). Additionally, more contemporary Dakota and Lakota writers such as Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Joseph Marshall, Westerman, and Red Shirt, to name a few, have started to reimagine the Dakota oral storytelling tradition today in a more modern form as poetry and literature. Their literary contributions demonstrate that Dakota literature – like the Dakota nation – is resilient. The Dakota literary tradition has not only survived the potentially

devastating effects of colonization. It has actually continued to thrive in the face of this adversity.

Conclusion

This chapter documented the very first moment that the Dakota literary tradition appeared in print, tracing the colonization of Dakota literature to 1836, when members of Lac qui Parle Mission first began transcribing the Dakota language from an oral to a written form. “For many years,” recalls Reverend Stephen R. Riggs, “we collect[ed] and arrang[ed] vocabularies . . . and reduce[d] to form the principles of the language” (“Dakota Language” 105). The terms “arranged” and “reduced” reiterate that Riggs and his colleagues altered the Dakota language, often condensing it to fit an English linguistic framework. According to Riggs, the Dakota and English languages are similar because they are both based upon Greek root words. Although Riggs seemed to observe some similarities between the Dakota, English, and Greek languages, he admits that “many of [his] definitions [were] imperfect and a few of them [were] wrong” (105). This admission seems to suggest that there is less agreement between these three languages than Riggs was willing to admit.⁵² He downplayed many of these discrepancies, often insisting that “it was not [his] business to make the language. It was simply the missionary’s work to report it faithfully” (*Mary and I* 30). However, Riggs and his colleagues did not provide verbatim translations of Dakota language or literature, as they often filtered them through a Western, Christian theological lens. According to Riggs, the missionaries’ main goal was to

⁵² Clemmons argues that Riggs “resisted accommodation” and, unlike several other missionaries, never compromised his negative attitudes about the Dakota people and their language (7). She says: “Indeed, Riggs never doubted ‘the righteousness of [his] decision’ to become a missionary; he remained devoted to converting the Dakota from his arrival in Minnesota in 1837 until his death in 1883” (17). For more discussion and example of Riggs’ intractable nature, see both Clemmons’ and Willand.

“engraft [God’s] living words into their [i.e., the Santee Dakotas’] living thoughts” (*Mary and I* 31). In many ways, the missionaries succeeded at this goal because they imbued the Dakota language with a Holy Writ; transformed several traditional Dakota oral stories to Christian parables; and converted countless Dakota people to Christianity. Ultimately, Riggs and his missionary colleagues helped Christianize and colonize the Dakota literary tradition, leaving an indelible imprint on Dakota literature that still exists today.

Although missionaries helped colonize this tradition, they are not necessarily the villains in this history of the Dakota literary tradition, as they also helped establish the tools and resources that future Dakota writers needed to reclaim and revitalize Dakota language, literature, and life. This paradox underscores the complexity of indigenous literary traditions, like Dakota literature, which have been impacted by the intertwined, interconnected processes of colonization and decolonization, which often span multiple generations. The rest of this dissertation will start to explore how more modern Dakota writers and scholars have continued these efforts to decolonize the Dakota literary tradition and strengthen and empower the modern Dakota nation.

Chapter Four: Reclaiming Dakota Literature

Ella Deloria's Literary Translations of *Fallen Star*, *Ta-te*, and *Ite Waste Win*

In 1927, Franz Boaz hired Ella Deloria to correct and translate Dakota and Lakota texts collected by several missionaries and ethnologists, including Reverend Stephen R. Riggs and the Pond brothers. This collaboration culminated in the publication of two books – *Dakota Texts* (1932) and *Dakota Grammar* (1941) – which were intended to standardize Dakota language and literature. According to Bea Medicine, this attempt to standardize Dakota language and literature was not well received by some Dakota scholars and students, who dismissed these books as “too technical” (“Ella Cara Deloria” 260). She observes that many scholars and students, specifically at the tribal college level, were “disenchant[ed] with ethnological work” that often reduced the Dakota language to a scientific form (260). Ironically, Ella Deloria's nephew, Vine Deloria, Jr., points out that his aunt also felt that these texts, especially *Dakota Grammar*, were problematic because they helped reduce the Dakota language to a series of abstract rules. He says, “Ella did not like this kind of translation, which suggested that words and ideas could be easily matched across complex linguistic traditions” (*Speaking of Indians* xiv). This statement suggests that Deloria and Boas, like the missionaries who had preceded them, produced literal translations that would allow them to analyze and study Dakota literature word by word.⁵³ However, according to Delphine Red Shirt Shaw, Dakota and Lakota languages “cannot be compared to single terms in English,” but rather must be translated as “word-units with traditional meanings encoded in them” (73 & 199). This theory suggests that Deloria and Boas books were not only “too technical,” but that they also failed to account for the

⁵³ For examples of these literal and free translation methods, see Riggs' *Dakota Grammar*, p. 83-152.

cultural and linguistic nuances inherent in the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. As an emerging anthropologist and linguist, Deloria often worked with problematic methods of analysis that altered the cultural context of Dakota language and literature. However, as a creative writer, she developed new and innovative methods that allowed her to reclaim the Dakota oral storytelling tradition and reimagine it in a more modern form as print literature.

As a creative writer, Ella Deloria helped reclaim the Dakota oral storytelling tradition by grounding her work in the “common literary stock of the people” (*Dakota Texts* ix). According to Deloria, the Dakota oral storytelling tradition is composed of four different literary genres: real *ohų’kakq* tales; novelistic *ohų’kakq* tales; *keya’pi* tales; and local *keya’pi*’ tales.⁵⁴ In brief, real *ohų’kakq* tales are ancient and sacred myths about an “order of beings different from ourselves” (x). Novelistic *ohų’kakq* tales are also ancient myths, but this time “the gods have stepped out of the picture” (x). Finally, *keya’pi*’ and local *keya’pi*’ tales are more modern stories that focus upon a specific tribal band or homeland. Although these genres often focus upon different people, settings, and time periods, they share one common feature: “constant allusion is made to them” (x). In other words, these oral stories are often used to convey a moral lesson or important message that helps perpetuate the Dakota way of life. Medicine theorizes that Deloria still believed in the importance and value of these stories and thus dedicated her life to preserving them in written form for future generations (“Emic Voice” 27).

⁵⁴ Deloria uses these specific spellings and format in her 1932 book *Dakota Texts*. Although her definition of these four literary genres is brief (less than two pages), her description is substantially longer and more in depth than her predecessors (i.e., early missionary translators). This short, but important reference helped lay the groundwork for the Dakota literary tradition. Since Deloria’s publication, the words *ohų’kakq* and *keya’pi*’ have appeared in many other references to Dakota literature. For example, see Cook-Lynn’s “Sacred Myth,” p. 98; Jahner’s *Lakota Myth*, p. 23-27, Rozelle p. 208-209.

This chapter examines how Deloria transformed two *ohų'kakq* tales – Fallen Star and Itē Waste Win – from an oral to a written form by using an innovative translation method that allowed her to capture many of the cultural and linguistic differences that her predecessors and colleagues tended to ignore. Specifically, this chapter examines Deloria's unpublished manuscript, *Dakota Legends*, which contains nineteen real and novelistic *ohų'kakq* tales that were clearly prepared for publication. Deloria carefully organized these nineteen stories to include a table of contents, artwork for nearly every story, and several handwritten notes and edits that help provide further insight into Deloria's dual roles as translator and creative writer. Unfortunately, few scholars have analyzed or critically evaluated this unpublished manuscript. In fact, Susan Gardner, a literary scholar who has published extensively on Deloria's life and work, is the only scholar to even mention *Dakota Legends*, and she largely dismisses it “as an unpublished manuscript . . . intended for a younger mainstream audience” (“Assimilation” 9). Gardner seems to be disregarding this manuscript because she perceives it as children's literature akin to Charles Eastman's *Wigwam Nights* and Zitkala Sa's *Old Indian Legends*. According to Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, it is potentially problematic to immediately conflate the Dakota oral storytelling tradition with children's fairy tales because it tends to “trivialize the rather sophisticated notions that the [Dakota nation] has held about the universe for thousands of years” (“Intellectualism” 58). In other words, this label helps delegitimize a rich and complex knowledge system that has helped guide the Dakota people since time immemorial. A close reading of Deloria's unpublished, unanalyzed manuscript, *Dakota Legends*,⁵⁵ emphasizes the importance of this traditional knowledge system and provides further insight into Deloria's

⁵⁵ This unpublished manuscript is now available online through a partnership between The Dakota Indian Foundation, University of Indiana, and First Nations Development Institute at http://zia.aisri.indiana.edu/deloria_archive/browse.php?action=viewcontainer&id=13.

unique methods of translation, which empowered her to incorporate tribally-specific beliefs, values, and worldviews into her literature.

The Origins of Deloria's Literary Translation Method: "I can't just consult native informants, translate their contribution, and let it go at that."⁵⁶

Born on January 31, 1889 to Mary and Reverend Philip J. Deloria on the Yankton Sioux Reservation, Ella Cara Deloria spent much of her life deeply immersed in the Dakota and Lakota oral storytelling traditions.⁵⁷ As a member of the Dakota nation, Deloria was familiar with both storytelling traditions because shortly after she was born, her family moved to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, where she was exposed to the Lakota dialect. She writes: "I have been steeped in Dakota lore and seen and felt it around me ever since childhood, it is in fact the very texture of my being" (Dorsey qtd. Cotera 257). Many scholars theorize that this early experience helped spark Deloria's future interest in anthropology and linguistics. Deloria, like many Native children during that period, attended missionary boarding school. In 1910, she graduated from All Saints Boarding School and continued her education at the University of Chicago, Oberlin College, and Columbia College. Scholars tend to disagree on when Deloria and Boas first crossed paths – either in the classroom or later through a mutual acquaintance (Whitten 162).

⁵⁶ All of the subject headings in this chapter are comprised of quotations from both Ella Deloria's personal and professional correspondence as well as her scholarship. These headings allow Deloria us to hear her own thoughts and methods in her own words, a privilege that was denied to her throughout much of her lifetime as much of her literary work was only published posthumously. Although she often published with Boas and his colleagues, several scholars point out that several anthropologists and linguists used Deloria's research without giving her credit. For more information on these accusations, see Medicine, p. 261-263; Cotera p. 48; and Finn, p. 136.

⁵⁷ For a biographical sketch on Deloria, see Picotte.

Regardless, Boas contacted Deloria twelve years after she graduated from college, to ask for her assistance translating several “Sioux texts collected by George Bushotter for James Dorsey” (162). This initial collaboration led to a number of other projects that required Deloria to translate Dakota and Lakota texts collected by early nineteenth-century missionaries and ethnologists who felt responsible for preserving these languages before they faded from living memory.⁵⁸ In addition to translating these transcripts, Boas also asked Deloria to conduct her own research and interview Dakota and Lakota storytellers to verify the content of these early missionary translations. During her lifetime, Deloria interviewed forty-nine traditional Dakota and Lakota oral storytellers, both under the direction of Boas and of her own accord (Gardener “Broke My Heart” 681). Between 1927 and 1974, Deloria collected more than thirty file-boxes of interviews, reports, and notes on the Dakota literary tradition. Many of these resources are now housed in the Ella Cara Deloria Archive at the Dakota Indian Foundation in Chamberlain, South Dakota and the Franz Boas Collection at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. However, the Deloria family suggests that these thirty-plus boxes represent only a small portion of her life’s work. Vine Deloria, Jr. notes that his aunt “left a few trunks and boxes stored in different locations, and although [our family] did [our] best to collect them, we were never certain that there were not treasures of manuscripts somewhere” (*Speaking of Indians* xix). The materials that exist today indicate that Deloria noticed some discrepancies between the oral stories she heard and the printed transcripts she read.

⁵⁸ Riggs says: “In a century more [the Dakota language] probably will not be spoken. Nor is it desirable that it should continue as a living language. The question is when it is dead – when the Dakota race, as such, shall have passed away, as their own buffalo of the prairie – shall we not retain an adequate memorial of them?” (107). For more information on the missionaries’ perspective on this “dying” language, see Riggs’ “The Dakota Language,” Clemmons, p. 9-10.

These discrepancies are evident in Deloria's field notes on the Minnesota manuscript, forty-one hand-written *ohu'kaka* tales collected by Samuel and Gideon Pond between 1837 and 1840. Approximately one century later, Deloria corrected the Dakota interpretations of these stories and translated them to the English language.⁵⁹ Her letters suggest that she corrected and translated this manuscript off and on for nearly a decade. According to Deloria's field notes, these translations were potentially problematic because they tended to neglect some of the subtler details in the story. For the most part, she acknowledges that the content of these stories was correct. However, she observes that the Pond brothers also neglected small but important details in the story. For example, she labels one untitled story in the Minnesota manuscript: "An Ambiguous Paper." She elaborates more on this label with a handwritten note in the margins of her translation that says: "I translate it as it is in the Dakota; but it is impossible to say who 'they,' 'them,' 'he,' 'him' are. *eyá heyápi* etc." (Deloria "Minnesota Manuscript" 1). In other words, the Minnesota manuscript lacked pronouns that helped indicate who was speaking or acting in the story. Often, the storyteller helps shed light on these subtle but important details through a change of tone, facial expression, or various hand gestures. However, the Pond brothers did not attempt to capture these details for two apparent reasons: 1.) this type of body language is difficult to document in written form; and/or 2.) they were less concerned with preserving the content of the story and more concerned with studying its linguistic and grammatical structure. Regardless of their motivations, their failure to preserve the cultural and linguistic nuances inherent in these stories suggests that the Pond brothers and their missionary colleagues did not perceive these stories as literature, but rather that they viewed them as objects of study. The missionaries, in many ways, approached Dakota language and literature as static

⁵⁹ This date is based on Boas' "Recommendation Letter for Ella Deloria."

cultural artifacts that had the potential to: 1.) memorize them the language so they could proselytize to the Santee Dakota; and 2.) keep a record of the past as they believed that the Dakota oral storytelling tradition provided insight into the lives of an unlettered, uncivilized people from the distant past.

Deloria, on the other hand, seemed to believe that these stories had tremendous literary value. She attempted to express this idea to Boas; however, as John Prater and Jozelle Gingway Godfrey argue, he tended to downplay her observations. In 1937, Boas hired Deloria to “verify and correct the mythological content” of James Walker’s manuscript by interviewing modern Lakota storytellers (Prater 41). Walker, a physician and amateur ethnologist living on the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation, compiled several Lakota myths for publication, but he passed away before completing his manuscript. According to Godfrey, Boas was determined to verify these myths and use them to help him further standardize Dakota language and literature (Gardner “Conversations” 464). Prater observes that Deloria’s inability to verify George Sword’s myths for Boas resulted in some tension between the two colleagues (41-42). Specifically, Prater cites three letters as evidence of this tension. On June 1, 1938 “a frustrated Boas question[ed] Deloria’s efforts” to verify Walker’s manuscript (Prater 41). Less than a month later, on June 28, 1938, an exasperated Deloria retort[ed]: “I cannot find any of it, what can I do?” (42). Approximately one year later, Deloria, still unable to verify Walker’s manuscript, attempted to explain to Boas that Walker’s stories were quite simply “the work of a clever storyteller” (42). However, Boas seemed to largely ignore her observation (42). Prater attributes the “conflict” between Boas and Deloria to the “accuracy of the written record of Sioux culture” (42). In other words, he surmises that they disagreed on the function and nature of these stories. Boas, like his missionary predecessors, approached them as static cultural artifacts intended for study, while

Deloria seemed to insist that it was impossible to capture an authentic representation of these stories because Dakota literature – even in its seemingly fixed written form – is vibrant, dynamic, and fluid. In short, Boas studied these stories as historical documents that shed light on the Dakota past, while Deloria perceived them as living art that held the key to Dakota future. This reading is supported by Penelope Kelsey who argues that Dakota oral stories “without question . . . have a transformative power that attests to decolonization and Dakota understandings of how one incorporate knowledge” (89). However, Deloria’s colleagues did not seem to share this sentiment.

Boas seemed to dismiss Deloria’s beliefs and observations. According to Godfrey, Deloria did not pursue this matter any further because she did not want to “rock the boat” or challenge her mentor’s authority (Gardener “Conversations” 464). However, Deloria’s professional correspondence and unpublished manuscript, *Dakota Legends*, suggests that she did indeed pursue this matter further by developing her own unique method of literary translation that challenged her predecessors. Initially, Deloria and Boas, like the missionaries before them, relied upon two specific methods of analysis: literal and free translations. First, they translated traditional Dakota oral stories word by word and then they paraphrased them. Roseanne Hoeffel suggests that a literal translation method allowed Deloria and Boas to study “invaluable data on Lakota semantics,” while a free translation method was a bit more flexible, allowing them to “more clearly evoke Lakota thought patterns, customs, and metaphors” (190). As noted earlier, however, Deloria and other Dakota scholars firmly believe that these free translations often failed to capture the cultural and linguistic nuances inherent in the rich and complex Dakota and Lakota literary traditions.

According to Gardner, Deloria attempted to address these shortcomings by using “astericks, parentheses, and postscripts” in her work with Boas to elaborate on Dakota culture and language (“Assimilation” 26). As a result, Gardner reasons, Deloria was a “literal voice in the margins – and that’s where her true feelings lay” (26). This statement reiterates that Deloria, while working under Boas and his colleagues, was often forced to separate her scholarly training from her cultural knowledge. This schism seemed to frustrate Deloria, who confided to her friend Virginia Lightfoot Dorsey that:

“I can’t just consult native informants, translate their contribution, and let it go at that. Almost always I know something in addition, or some more of the same thing not touched on by [other anthropologists]. And I must include that too” (qtd. in Cotera “Story of Her People” 257).

Slowly but surely, Deloria learned how to merge these two seemingly opposite, and at times contradictory, knowledge systems. In an attempt to merge her anthropological training and cultural knowledge, Deloria adopted a third method of translation that she pursued on her own, without assistance from Boas or his colleagues. She adopted a method of literary translation that allowed her to combine the methodical process of translation with the art of literary production.

This method is especially unique because, according to Brian Nelson and Bridget Maher, nineteenth century translators often approached translation as either a scientific process that is neither a “creative art or an imitative art” or as an artistic craft (17). In other words, early translators perceived translation studies and literature as diametric opposites. Nelson and Maher argue that this “nineteenth century legacy” also helped shape and influence the work of early twentieth-century scholars (17). Indeed, Boas’ methods of analysis bear a strong resemblance to the missionaries and ethnologists who preceded him, as they also relied upon a strict method of

literal and free translations. Deloria, however, did not perceive translation and literature as contradictory. Rather she seemed to assume that these two seemingly different fields had the power and potential to complement and enhance one another. In many ways, then, Deloria was ahead of her time. According to Translation Theorist Cees Koster, “literary translations . . . is one of the most prestigious forms of translation and the one with the highest cultural significance” (140). He theorizes that translators who adopt this approach rarely see “translation as merely [the manipulation of] texts,” but also as a site of “cultural mediation” (141) that allows the translator to experiment with language and its rules. Indeed, Deloria’s literary translation method allowed her to play with two different languages, perspectives and worldviews. In many ways, this literary translation method empowered her because it enabled her to correct and re-translate (i.e. reclaim) the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, which early missionary translators had already staked their own claim on a century earlier.

Deloria’s professional correspondence with Boas seems to indicate that she started contemplating this unique method of literary translation shortly after wrapping up her work on the Walker manuscript. In a letter dated June 30, 1938, Deloria tells Boas that since her work on the Walker material is winding down, she has decided to accept a new teaching position on the Flandreau Sioux Indian Reservation. Deloria’s letter suggests that she was excited about this position because it provided her with the opportunity to live and work among the Santee Dakota, the same tribe that Riggs and the Pond brothers studied and preached to in the nineteenth century. In addition to teaching, Deloria tells Boas she has started to informally interview storytellers about some of Riggs’ early translations, specifically his translation of the myth “Fallen Star.” Her storytellers observe that Riggs mistranslated this oral story in subtle but important ways that altered the context and meaning of this traditional oral story. As

demonstrated in the next section, this conversation seemed to inspire Deloria to correct and re-translate “Fallen Star,” which is the first story in Deloria’s unpublished, unanalyzed manuscript *Dakota Legends*. The contents of this letter indicate that Deloria pursued this project on her own as opposed to some of her earlier tasks, which were largely directed by Boas and his colleagues.⁶⁰ A close reading of *Dakota Legends* helps further illuminate how Deloria adapted and modified Boas’ strict translation methods to capture the cultural and linguistic nuances that seemed to elude other translators.

Implementing Deloria’s Literary Translation Method: “Thus little Fallen Star was born.”⁶¹

Fallen Star is an ancient and sacred *ohų’kakq* tale that has been translated and re-translated multiple times, in both its oral and written forms. According to Ronald Goodman, Fallen Star is “not literature, not myth, not folklore . . . [it’s] scripture” (142). He observes that Dakota and Lakota oral storytellers have often compared Fallen Star, the personage, to a “Messiah,” “Savior,” and “Holy One” (142). These comparisons emphasize how important and sacred these stories are to the Dakota nation. Many variations of the Fallen Star myth exist and they vary from tribe to tribe. Wakiŋyaŋ Zi Sapa explains: “So depending on where you live or how you’ve grown up, each place had their own creation story. There were different types of values that came out of these different histories . . . they’re all equally important. And there’s no right way or wrong way among them” (16). Although the meaning and context of these

⁶⁰ For a list of the other anthropologists and linguists who often published Deloria’s work, both with and without giving her credit for her research, see Cotera’s *Native Speakers*.

⁶¹ Quote from Deloria’s “Fallen Star,” p. 3.

stories might change, the content remains largely the same. Typically, the Dakota version of this myth begins with an explanation of Fallen Star's birth: his mother marries a star, becomes pregnant, falls through a hole in the sky, and plummets to the earth, where she gives birth to a baby boy who ages quickly into a young man. This young hero embarks on a series of adventures that allow him to assist

several different tribal camps in peril. Often, the members of these camps are terrorized by supernatural forces that threaten their physical and emotional well-being.

According to Goodman, this story is so important in Dakota society that it is often one of the first oral stories shared among the Dakota people (142). As a result, it was also one of the first stories relayed to missionaries, ethnologists, and other translators.

Fallen Star first appeared in print in 1881 in Reverend Stephen

R. Riggs' bilingual Dakota-English newspaper *Iapi Oaye* or *The Word Carrier*⁶² It appeared as a two-part free translation titled "The Star Born – A Dakota Myth." In 1893, Riggs re-published

Figure 5: The cover of Ella Deloria's *Fallen Star* in her unpublished manuscript *Dakota Legends*. (Photo courtesy of the Dakota Indian Foundation).



⁶² See Riggs' translation of "Fallen Star" in Appendix I.

his translation of Fallen Star as *Wićan̄hpi Hih̄hpaya* in his classic book *Dakota Grammar with Texts and Ethnography*.⁶³ This new translation, published posthumously, provided both a literal and free translation of Fallen Star to emphasize the form and structure of the Dakota language. Approximately four decades later, in the 1930s, Franz Boas hired Ella Deloria to correct and re-publish Riggs' literal translation of Fallen Star as *wic`a`h̄pi h̄h̄pa`ya* for their own book *Dakota Grammar*, which was published in 1941.⁶⁴ According to their footnotes, Boas asked Deloria to correct and re-publish Riggs' literal translation of Fallen Star because Riggs' "grammar . . . [was] not always consistent" (179). Boas concern with Riggs' grammar underscores the famed anthropologists desire to standardize the Dakota language by carefully documenting and studying its morphology and syntax. Although it is important to help preserve and protect indigenous languages, Boas' approach, which was similar to the missionaries' literal translations methods, were problematic. It is important to note that Boas did not ask Deloria to compose a free translation of Fallen Star, suggesting that he was satisfied with Riggs' initial interpretation of this well-known *ohu`kaka* tale. Deloria herself, however, was less than satisfied with Riggs' translation, as demonstrated by her personal correspondence and her decision to include a literary translation of "Fallen Star" in *Dakota Legends*.

On June 28, 1938, Deloria wrote to Boas to mention a conversation with several storytellers on the Flandreau Sioux Indian Reservation that seemed to hint at some discrepancies between the oral and the printed representations of several *ohu`kaka* tales, including Fallen Star. In this letter, Deloria observes that several of her storytellers had complained that their stories were often confused with "Greek mythology . . . independent of the Dakota" literary tradition

³⁸ Translation appears on p. 83-94.

⁶⁴ For updated translation, see Riggs' *Dakota Grammar*, p. 179-182.

(Letter to Boas 06/30/1938). This criticism is legitimate as missionaries often conflated the Dakota oral storytelling tradition with Greek and Latin mythology. Indeed, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, Reverend Stephen R. Riggs likens eight Dakota *ohų'kakq* tales to both Greek and Latin myths in his 1883 essay, “Mythology of the Dakotas” because, he reasons, that is “what [he] is more familiar with” (147). This statement demonstrates that missionaries were less concerned with using their linguistic research to capture the Dakota perspective and more concerned with using it to promote a Western worldview. In fact, they often downplayed the Dakota worldview. For example, Riggs ends his essay by saying:

In conclusion, we would say that tradition, similarity of race, and mythology shows a very strong case in favor of the Dakotas coming from Europe. (149)

Riggs attempted to make this “strong case” because he wanted to prove that Dakota people had the intellectual ability to read and write; specifically, he wanted to prove that they had the ability to read the Bible and learn the Christian way of life. In many ways, proving this point was important because it helped Riggs justify his mission, which was to “carr[y] forwar[d] the work of evangelizing the Dakota people” (Riggs *Mary and I* 2). Riggs and the Pond brothers also weaved many Christian beliefs and values into their translation of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. Although Deloria tried to point this out to Boas, he dismissed her concerns and those of her storytellers. Deloria, on the other hand, seemed to take them to heart and developed a literary translation method that allowed her to incorporate tribally-specific beliefs, values, and worldviews into her own translation of Fallen Star and other *ohų'kakq* myths.

The following paragraphs compare and contrast Riggs' free translation (i.e., paraphrases of his literal translations) with Deloria's literary translation⁶⁵ to emphasize the differences between these two approaches and to demonstrate how these two different methodologies impact the context and meaning of *Fallen Star*, with one representation ossifying and the other de-ossifying the Dakota nation. Both Riggs' and Deloria's translations open up with the image of a tribe. Riggs' simply says: "A people had this camp" (90). This statement is generic: it fails to specify the tribe. Meanwhile, Deloria describes "a certain Dakota village" (1). This detail implies that this tribe is special to Deloria and that she is knowledgeable about it. This opening scene sets the tone for the rest of these two translations. Riggs' descriptions are often vague, lacking in detail. They contain the basic elements of the story, but otherwise are cold and largely detached. As a result, Riggs' translation of "*Fallen Star*" is less than five pages long, while Deloria's translation is nearly twenty pages long because she uses more modifiers and descriptive words. In addition to being much more detailed, Deloria's literary translation is also much warmer and more empathetic, suggesting that she is intimately connected to the community that she describes. The difference between Riggs' ossified and Deloria's de-ossified translation is, perhaps, most evident in their descriptions of *Fallen Star*'s parents.

Fallen Star is the son of a human mother and a not-so-human father. Both translations introduce *Fallen Star*'s mother as one of two females lying under the night sky gazing at the stars. Riggs' suggests the two females are grown women (90); Deloria describes them as "two girl-cousins" and adds that they "exchange confidences as young girls will" (1). The women in

⁶⁵ See Deloria's literary translation of "*Fallen Star*" in Appendix II. This typed excerpt is the first chapter of Deloria's unpublished manuscript *Dakota Legends*. This manuscript is housed at the Ella C. Deloria Archive at the Dakota Indian Foundation, who generously allowed me to use materials from this archive for this project.

Riggs story, whom he suggests later are disobedient, are older and more mature. Meanwhile, Deloria suggests that the two females are younger and more innocent. These differences hint that Riggs and Deloria approach this story from two different worldviews. For example, the disobedient woman in Riggs' free translation bears a striking resemblance to Eve and thus reflects Riggs' strong Christian worldview. Alice Ogden Bellis points out that out of "all the stories of women in the Hebrew Bible, the story of Eve has been used more than any other as a theological base for sexism" because of its emphasis on "women's sin and inferiority" (45 & 47). These female stereotypes are evident throughout Riggs' translation of *Fallen Star*.

Deloria's literary translation, on the other hand, embodies her firm belief in the Dakota kinship system. According to Deloria, "the ultimate aim of Dakota life, stripped of accessories, [is] quite simple: One must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative." (*Speaking of Indians* 25). Deloria is adamant about the importance of the Dakota kinship system and discusses it both directly and indirectly in much of her life's work. She discusses the Dakota kinship system explicitly in her book *Speaking of Indians* as well as in her ethnographic book *The Dakota Way of Life*. Several literary scholars also point out that it is a major theme in her posthumously published novel *Waterlily*. The Dakota kinship system is also undeniably present in her re-translation of *Fallen Star*, which emphasizes how the two females in this story are related (i.e., they are cousins) and how they are expected to behave toward one another (i.e., as close friends and confidantes). This small but important detail emphasizes that Riggs and Deloria approach these translations from two very different perspectives.

Further evidence of these two different perspectives is Riggs' and Deloria's description of *Fallen Star*'s father. Both stories suggest that *Fallen Star*'s father is one of the stars that the two females are gazing at in the night sky. Riggs' likens the star to a man. He says:

“The star which shone most brightly was a large man, while the other was only a young man. So they (i.e., the two women) each had a husband and one became with child.” (90)

Although Riggs describes Fallen Star’s father as a man, the storyteller that Deloria interviewed to clarify this story suggests that “man” is an inaccurate term. The storyteller tells Deloria: “All I ever heard about the stars being people is that the girls expressed a desire to marry two of them, and their wish was fulfilled” (Letter to Boas 06/30/1938). In other words, he suggests that “man” is not an accurate description. Deloria attempts to address these inaccuracies in her literary translation when she writes:

“They were especially near tonight, almost human, those stars.” (2)

This description emphasizes that a single word in English is not sufficient to capture the cultural and linguistic nuances inherent in the Dakota language, nor is two words. Deloria suggests that Fallen Star’s father is not quite human, not quite a god, and yet not quite a star either. What, then, is the best word or phrase to describe him? Deloria uses the phrase “almost human” to describe Fallen Star’s father. Deloria’s literary translation is still somewhat vague and insufficient, reiterating the challenges of translating Dakota to English (or in fact, any language to another language). Despite these shortcomings, however, Deloria’s literary translation is still much more successful at capturing the cultural and linguistic nuances than her storyteller mentions than the literal and/or free translations that have been published elsewhere.

Although such references seem small, subtle and largely insignificant, when examined collectively they have the power and potential to alter the context and meaning of the story. For example, Riggs’ translation mirrors the biblical story of Genesis, as a woman (i.e., Fallen Star’s mother) causes the downfall of man. In Riggs’ translation, Fallen Star’s father explicitly

“forbids” his mother from picking a wild turnip. She disobeys, picks the forbidden turnip, and is immediately expelled from the star world. The forbidden apple from the biblical story of Genesis is replaced with a verboten turnip in Riggs’ translation of the Fallen Star myth. For this transgression, Fallen Star’s mother is expelled from the star world, just like Eve was ultimately banished from the Garden of Eden. Similarly, their male counterparts are also exiled and forced to wander the Earth. In effect, Riggs’ translation casts Fallen Star’s mother and father in the role of Adam and Eve. This parallel is not surprising, as Riggs, an Episcopalian minister, observes in his memoir that he was determined to “put the word of God in their [i.e., the Santee Dakota’s] speech” (Riggs *Mary and I* 31). In many ways, Riggs succeeded at this mission because his biblical interpretation of Fallen Star has been published and re-published numerous times: 1881, 1883, 1941, 1977, 2004, and most recently 2015.⁶⁶ In other words, Riggs translation has been published and re-published half a dozen times in the past 134 years. Thus, it is often regarded as the earliest and most authentic, “example of North American oral literature written by Native speakers” (Nichols 6-7). This distinction is troubling because Riggs’ translation tends to reflect a Christian worldview and downplays the Dakota perspective, which has largely been silenced despite Deloria’s best efforts to compose a new translation of Fallen Star which, unfortunately, has never seen the light of day.

In many ways, Riggs’ translation, which is filtered through a Christian lens, condemns Fallen Star’s mother for precipitating the fall of man. For example, his translation suggests that Fallen Star’s mother is punished for deliberately disobeying her husband. He says: “immediately the country opened” and she violently plummeted to the earth. Riggs’ description implies that

⁶⁶ For a publishing history of Riggs’ *Dakota Grammar*, see Murray, p. 339-340.

Fallen Star's mother deserved her punishment. He seems to emphasize this point when he describes her death. He bluntly states:

“Her belly burst open. And so the woman died, but the child did not die, but lay there stretched out” (90).

This description is cold and unfeeling. Clearly, Riggs does not have any sympathy for Fallen Star's mother. Deloria, on the other hand, is much more sympathetic and forgiving, suggesting that Fallen Star's mother accidentally fell through an “opening in the sky” that she unintentionally created (3). Furthermore, Deloria, unlike Riggs, portrays the death of Fallen Star's mother as tragic. She writes:

“There she lay dead, her young body broken by the fall. And, nearby, her infant son lay kicking and crying, still linked to his lifeless mother” (3-4).

Deloria's description of the lifeless body of Fallen Star's mother is tragic because she is young and her death is violent and untimely. Even more tragic is the image of a newborn baby without his mother. In addition to being tragic, this image also reinforces the power of the kinship relationship, because even in death the child is still linked to his mother, both literally by an unsevered umbilical cord and symbolically by the unbreakable emotional bond between mother and child. Riggs' description fails to capture this bond. He does not mention any link between the mother and child – physical or otherwise – emphasizing his disinterest in the Dakota way of life.

Riggs and Deloria approached Fallen Star from two very different perspectives that altered the context and meaning of the story. He relayed the story of Fallen Star through a Christian lens that very nearly erased the Dakota perspective. In effect, he used this story to impose his religious views on Dakota people, thus colonizing them. One final piece of evidence that confirms that Riggs altered the Dakota elements of this story is his portrayal (or lack thereof)

of women in his translation. Aside from a brief allusion to Eve, females are noticeably absent in Riggs' translation, while Deloria's literary translation includes two girl-cousins and their mothers who "finish a fine new teepee and set it up and inspect its proportions" (2). The teepee is a symbol of Dakota culture that the women construct with pride and great care. This small and seemingly insignificant detail emphasizes that women play a very important role in preserving and protecting traditional Dakota lifeways including Dakota language and literature. Riggs's representation, however, displaces women from this role – both in the story and in real life.

Penelope Kelsey and Maria Cotera argue that Deloria used her writing and research to fulfill the traditional Dakota role of culture bearer. Kelsey explains, "Among the Dakota, women are traditionally seen as carriers of the culture and the primary figures responsible for imparting Dakota values to children and others" (26). In many ways, Riggs helped displace Deloria from her traditional role in Dakota society as culture bearer because his Christianized translation of *Fallen Star* has been published and re-published so many times that he is often regarded as the leading authority on *Fallen Star* and the Dakota literary tradition in general. For example, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft observes that "Mr. Riggs . . . [is] one of the earliest and most successful missionaries among [the Dakota] people. He has studied the language with the care and enthusiasm of a student, and describes it with the precision of a scholar" ("Indian Languages" 547). Therefore, Riggs is not only regarded as an expert on Dakota language and literature, but his translations are often perceived as the most authentic examples of the Dakota literary tradition. Anthropologists Douglas Parks and Raymond DeMallie assert that Riggs' translations represent "the only truly authentic voices that document the American Indian past" (106.). This position of authority and authenticity is potentially problematic because it silences the Dakota voice. Why publish or study Deloria's literary translations if an authentic or

authoritative translation of the Dakota literary tradition already exists? Indeed, few scholars have even tried to study these translations. Although Deloria's work has experienced a revival since the 1988 publication of her book *Waterlily*, many of her literary translations are still buried in an archive at the Dakota Indian Foundation, which helps explain why her innovative literary translation method has been largely unstudied.

Implementing Deloria's Literary Translation Method: "Because Ite Waste Win was a universal favorite, she was also the object of too much interest."⁶⁷

Deloria also applied her unique literary translation method to several other *ohu'kaka* tales in her unpublished and unanalyzed manuscript *Dakota Legends*, which she first encountered in print form while working on Walker's manuscript. The Walker manuscript contains hundreds of notes, interviews, and essays on early Lakota culture and language. Although Boas hired Deloria to correct and re-translate Walker's materials, they did not attempt to publish any of their corrections to his manuscript. In the late 1980s, anthropologists Raymond DeMallie and Elaine Jahner published the Walker manuscript as three separate volumes: *Lakota Belief and Ritual*; *Lakota Society*, and finally *Lakota Myth*. The last volume in this series focuses specifically on Walker's translation of several stories that he translated and re-translated multiple times. According to Jahner, Walker "worked and re-worked [this] material . . . prepar[ing] a dramatization of all he learned while at Pine Ridge" (*Lakota Myth* xxi). In effect, she argues that "he transformed Ogalala lore into literary epic" (xxi). This statement hints that the Lakota oral storytelling tradition was not literature, at least not until Walker imagined it as such.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Quote from Ella Deloria's "Tate," p. 9.

Furthermore, it suggests that Walker, like Deloria, also used a literary translation method to analyze and interpret the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. However, Deloria was deeply unhappy with the results of Walker's literary translation method. According to Jahner, Deloria's field notes address "three major concerns [with Walker's materials]: "mythic appellations . . . Christian idioms . . . and the personification of natural phenomena" (22). These three concerns allude to the fact that Walker reimagined his Dakota mythic figures as humans, while simultaneously filtering these stories through a Western Christian, often patriarchal, lens that elided a tribal worldview. As demonstrated earlier, several scholars believe that Boas often prevented Deloria from addressing these concerns in their research together. However, Deloria did attempt to address them in two myths included in *Dakota Legends* about the mythic figure Ta-te, and his human wife, Ite Waste Win, the most beautiful woman of the tribe.⁶⁹ Specifically, these two myths focus upon the couple's courtship and marriage. This section compares and contrasts Deloria's unpublished translation with Walker's published representation to emphasize the difference between these two different literary translation methods.

Walker's description of the courtship is brief, less than a paragraph long. He says: "*Tate* courts *Ite* . . . erotic love is depicted as an experience that is not accessible to the gods. *Tate* must set aside his divine attributes in order to learn of romantic love" (198). In his translation, Walker shortens Ite Waste Win's name to a single word *Ite* or face. Her name, like her presence,

⁶⁸ Thanks to Penny Kelsey for first making this point in an earlier draft of this dissertation.

⁶⁹ Both Deloria and Walker spell the names of these mythic figures differently. For example, Walker tends to italicize and shorten the names of the husband and wife in his two stories: *Tate* and *Ite*. Meanwhile, Deloria does not italicize or shorten name and instead uses the following spellings: Ta-te and Ite Waste Win. Instead of arguing that one spelling is more accurate or authentic than the other, I have preserved the spelling of both name and tried to match them to their corresponding translator.

in his “literary epic” is reduced significantly. He portrays her as a one-dimensional character who lacks agency. Walker does not explain Ite’s actions or motives. His translation is significantly different than Deloria, who pens a literary translation of Ta-te and Ite Waste Win’s courtship that she entitles: “Ta-te, the Wind God’s Wooing.”⁷⁰ Although the story is named after Ta-te, the main focus is Ite Waste Win, which Deloria translates as “The-woman-of-the-beautiful-face” (9). In fact, Ta-te never even speaks in Deloria’s translation of this story. Instead, Deloria’s translation opens with Ite Waste Win’s birth and naming ceremony and her initial encounter with Ta-te. According to Deloria, one morning, Ite Waste Win and her girlfriends stumble across a “luscious choke cherry bush” that leads them to the top of a mountain that represents a middle ground between humans and the supernaturals. At the top of the mountain, “a delicious coolness enshrouded [her], a pleasant influence which she could feel but could not see” (11). Deloria explains that it was “the Supernatural Wind who had caressed her and revived her . . . [and] soon after that he came in human guise, in the shape of the handsomest man that was ever seen, to offer rare gifts for the privilege of marrying the chief’s daughter” (11). Deloria describes Ite Waste Win’s hand in marriage as a privilege, while Walker suggests that it is a sacrifice that cost *Tate* his “divine attributes” (198). Deloria rejects this idea of sacrifice and insists that Ite Waste Win is “a model wife, loving and dutiful and industrious” (13). These positive attributes make her subsequent downfall that much more tragic.

In Deloria’s literary translation, Ta-te and Ite Waste Win live “contented with their lot,” which includes four “fine healthy sons” (13). During the course of their marriage, however, Iktomi, the trickster, disrupts Ta-te and Ite Waste Win’s happiness when he tempts her with the promise of immortality. In the second part of Deloria’s interpretation, entitled “The Feast of the

⁷⁰ See Deloria’s translation of “Ta-te. Wooing of the Wind God” in Appendix III.

Supernaturals,” Iktomi convinces Ite Waste Win to join her husband for a feast among the Sun, the Moon, and his other supernatural relatives.⁷¹ Initially, Ite Waste Win refuses because she “has no right; [she] is mortal. Those feasts are for the supernaturals . . . and she cannot associate with them” (15). However, Iktomi convinces her that she associates with them every day because she is married to a supernatural and bore him four children. Ite Waste Win adamantly refuses to participate in this scheme. Therefore, Iktomi decides to trick the Sun into inviting Ite Waste Win to join the festivities, an invitation which she cannot turn down, as it is from a higher authority. In Deloria’s translation, then, Ite Waste Win is an innocent pawn in Iktomi’s game, which is to “play a trick on the high and mighty, and to laugh at them at last” (14). In Deloria’s translation, Iktomi is the scheming villain; however, Walker places much of the blame on Ite, a woman, whom he portrays as vain and negligent of her family.

In Walker’s translation, he specifically describes *Ite*’s behavior as “evil” and explains that her actions reflect those of “a weak woman . . . tempted beyond the endurance of womankind” (*Lakota Myth* 295). According to Walker, *Ite* consciously and deliberately plans to shame and laugh at the moon (54). As described in the previous section, the image of a weak woman tempted by evil forces is all too common in the Christian Bible.⁷² Deloria, on the other hand, attributes Ite Waste Win’s poor behavior to other, less gendered forces in her re-translation of this particular *ohu’kaka tale*. In Deloria’s translation, the Moon arrives at the feast late, suggesting that Ite Waste Win took the Moon’s seat unintentionally, as it was the only one available. In Walker’s translation, *Ite* and the rest of the attendees laugh at the Moon because *Ite* intentionally deprived the Moon of her seat; however, Deloria observes, Ite Waste Win only

⁷¹ See Deloria’s translation of “The Feast of the Supernaturals” in Appendix IV.

⁷² For more information on female stereotypes in the Old and Testaments, see Bellis.

“laughed thoughtlessly . . . [while] Iktomi laughed harder and louder than all the rest . . . pleased that he could upset the gods as well as men” (21). Deloria portrays Ite Waste Win with less malice than Walker, who suggests that *Ite*’s actions are volitional.

Deloria’s translation challenges the stereotypical role of woman as the temptress who precipitates the fall of man. She not only challenges this stereotype, but she also reverses it, as Iktomi is the cause of Ite Waste Win’s downfall, whose life was largely idyllic until the trickster interfered. Deloria’s translation ends abruptly before anybody is punished for intentionally or unintentionally shaming the moon. According to the table of contents, pages 23-31 are missing from this manuscript. Therefore, it is unclear who – man or woman – received the bulk of the punishment in Deloria’s translation.

Deloria’s manuscript reflects a tribal worldview that emphasizes a much more equal relationship between the two sexes. In *Speaking of Indians*, Deloria argues that “the simple fact is that woman had her own place and man his; they were not the same and neither inferior nor superior” (39). Although a tribal worldview does not acknowledge this gender hierarchy, Jahner argues that Walker often reinforces this binary in his translation. For example, she observes that “the Lakota language has several words for moon . . . [that] all characterize [it] as a nighttime sun. Walker, however, called the moon Wi-win, meaning feminine sun” (28). A nighttime sun connotes a diminished sun, which Walker conflates with femininity. Intentionally or unintentionally, then, Walker superimposes his patriarchal mindset onto the Dakota language. As demonstrated in the previous two paragraphs, it is a mindset that permeates much of his literary translations. Bellie argues that this is a mindset that can be traced back to the Old Testament (45). In many ways, then, Walker’s translation method tends to mirror that of the missionaries that preceded him. Jahner observes that “Walker’s manuscripts were in all

likelihood reflections of his own intuitive sense” (34). It is an intuitive sense that Deloria attempted to correct and re-translate in *Dakota Legends*. Unfortunately, she struggled throughout much of her lifetime to publish much of her anthropological, linguistic, and literary work independent of Boas and his colleagues.

Ella Deloria’s Inability to Publish

Typically, scholars attribute Deloria’s inability to publish much of her literature to three factors: 1.) her lack of credentials; 2.) her literary (as opposed to anthropological) representations; and finally 3.) sexism and racism. According to Prater, Deloria often blamed her inability to publish her writing and research on her lack of credentials, which “counted for so much” (42). In addition to her lack of credentials, Maria Coteria and Janet Finn also point out that Deloria did not publish much of her own research because many of Deloria’s own colleagues had already used her “ethnographic and linguistic research . . . to advance their own careers in anthropology” (Coteria *Native Speakers* 48). Although Deloria’s lack of credentials certainly impacted her ability to publish her own anthropological work, it should not have affected her ability to publish her literature, which was nevertheless rejected by several publishers. Gary Slingh theorizes that publishers during Deloria’s time were simply not “looking for positive images of Indian culture for public consumption in the 1940s and 1950s” (91). He argues that publishers rejected Deloria’s literature because it challenged many of the negative Native American stereotypes that dominated the American literary canon. In particular, Slingh’s observation suggests that Deloria’s literature challenged the damaging and pervasive nineteenth century myth of the “Vanishing Indian,” which suggested that tribes and their traditional knowledge systems were rapidly nearing extinction. As demonstrated in the previous chapter,

the early American literary tradition promoted ossified representations of tribes, while Deloria's literary representations focused on de-ossified representations of the Dakota and Lakota nations, thereby making her literary translation unfamiliar and, at times, perplexing to modern readers who were often influenced by the damaging and pervasive myth of the "Vanishing Indian." Cotera points out that Deloria's novel *Waterlily* offered an alternative view of tribal life, because it was a "female-centered narrative," that emphasized "continuance rather than extinction" ("All My Relatives" 64 & 65). In other words, Deloria could not secure a publisher for her novel *Waterlily* because it challenged "the patriarchal elements of colonialist discursive and legal practices" that sought to erase Indian people from modern society (63). *Waterlily* was not published until nearly two decades after Deloria's death. Furthermore, Cotera contends that Deloria's position as a Dakota woman had the potential to undermine the work of missionaries, ethnologists, and anthropologists who had already staked their claim on Dakota language and literature more than a century before. Therefore, it was difficult and, at times, nearly impossible for Deloria to reclaim the Dakota literary tradition on her own terms. The inability to access Deloria's complete body of work limited many scholarly efforts to analyze, study, and fully appreciate her valuable contribution to the Dakota literary tradition.

Deloria's innovative method of literary translation is often overshadowed by her rich cultural background, which has intrigued scholars across many different disciplines for approximately thirty-five years. Between 1985 and 2015, scholars have labelled Deloria a cultural informant, a cultural mediator, and most recently a cultural activist. Together, these three labels constitute a hierarchy that tends to measure Deloria's personal commitment and dedication to the Dakota nation rather than evaluate the merit of her writing and research. According to Bernard Perley, "Ella Deloria's most important contribution to anthropology was

the role of cultural informant,” a passive role that allowed her to assist anthropologists in their “salvage operations to save what was left of the vanishing race” (104). In Perley’s view, Deloria did little more than gather cultural and linguistic data on her tribe for anthropologists and linguists to dissect and study. Labelling Deloria a cultural informant, Perley suggests that Deloria lacked agency and thus allowed herself to be used as a mere pawn in the game of anthropology. However, Medicine points out that Deloria did not just mindlessly gather data for anthropologists and linguists, but actually “developed the skills of an anthropologist [and linguist] herself” (“The Emic Voice” 23). Ultimately, these skills allowed Deloria to develop her own research methods that allowed her to promote the Dakota kinship system in the content of her literary translations, and even practice it as these representations often emphasized the importance and value of Dakota lifeways, thereby helping sustain the Dakota nation for future generations. It is for this reason that Medicine, along with Janet Finn and Carole Miller, labelled Deloria a cultural mediator, a person who negotiates a compromise between two opposing parties or positions. Although these three scholars have labelled Deloria a cultural mediator, they often disagree on her commitment and loyalty to the modern Dakota nation. For example, Medicine firmly argues that Deloria used her anthropological research to preserve Dakota culture and language for future generations (27). However, Finn contends that Deloria did not always do enough with her writing and research to adequately defend the modern Dakota nation. According to Finn, Deloria often used an “uncomfortable . . . conciliatory tone . . . to engage a white readership (“Against the Grain” 141). These two observations question Deloria’s intended audience as well as her commitment to the modern Dakota nation. This debate is potentially problematic because it has sidetracked scholars from fully investigating Deloria’s unique method of translation. This debate among scholars who have labelled Deloria a cultural mediator is

ironic, because it has also helped serve to widen the gap between the two cultures that Deloria worked so hard to unite.

More recently, scholars have labelled Deloria a cultural activist who has used her writing and research to advocate on behalf of the modern Dakota nation. The word “activist” denotes an individual who campaigns for social change. Indeed, Janet Finn points out that Deloria used her anthropological research to publish *Speaking of Indians* (1944) and expose “reader[s] to the harsh realities of the devastation wrought by federal Indian policy” (“Walls and Bridges” 171). However, she also suggests that these efforts were not well-received because Deloria was unable to use her future work, specifically her novel *Waterlily*, to advocate on behalf of the modern Dakota nation (173). Cotera suggests that Deloria’s novel was not well-received because it challenged the patriarchal power structure (“All My Relatives” 69). She argues that “Ella Deloria utilized the feminine art of storytelling to reverse the impact of colonization that created chaos in all the old systems” (79). Kelsey, building upon Cotera’s argument, suggests that Deloria “explored [the] important role [of camp historian]” in a modern tribal context through “her writing and research” (79). This observation suggests that Deloria, the cultural activist, used her literary translations to advocate on behalf of the entire Dakota nation. The label “cultural activist” is a stark contrast to the label cultural informant because it suggests that Deloria possessed agency that allowed her to strengthen and empower the Dakota nation. Although Deloria tried to use her innovative literary translation method to reclaim the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, it is also important to remember that Deloria often lacked the power and opportunity to fully accomplish this goal.

Although Deloria played each of these roles – cultural informant, cultural mediator, and cultural activist – at least once during her lifetime, these three labels are potentially dangerous

because they tend to place more emphasis on Deloria's cultural identity (i.e., authority) and presumed loyalties (i.e., authenticity) than on her methods of translation and interpretation which helped successfully capture the cultural and linguistic nuances that have eluded so many other scholars studying the Dakota language. Deloria spent decades modifying and adapting the translation methods that she learned from Boas and his colleagues so that she could reclaim the Dakota oral storytelling tradition and reimagine it in a more modern form as print literature for future generations of Dakota writers and scholars. Instead of simply relying on the literal and free translations that her predecessors used to deconstruct the Dakota language, Deloria composed a series of new literary translations that allowed her to reconstruct the Dakota oral storytelling tradition in written form – and ironically in the English language. In some ways, it seems contradictory to say that Deloria reconstructed the Dakota oral storytelling tradition in English, especially given earlier arguments that it is often difficult to find an English equivalent for many Dakota words. However, I suspect Deloria preserved her translations in English instead of Dakota because English, as a result of the boarding school era and its assimilationist policies, was quickly becoming the dominant language among more and more Dakota youth. Furthermore, it is important to note that even though Deloria used the English language to reimagine the Dakota oral storytelling tradition as literature, it does not make her translations less authentic, especially because she developed a method of translation that allowed her to incorporate cultural context and meaning into many of her unpublished stories.

Deloria's Impact on the Dakota Literary Tradition: "Rooted plants thrive and grow; cut flowers wither and die. Which will you be?"⁷³

Ella Deloria had a tremendous impact on the growth and development of the Dakota literary tradition. For more than six decades, she studied Dakota language and literature with methodical detail and precision, in an attempt to preserve and reclaim the Dakota literary tradition for future generations of Dakota writers and scholars. She has directly and/or indirectly shaped and influenced nearly every single facet of this rich and complex tradition. For example, under Boas and his colleagues, she analyzed and studied the earliest translations of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. As this chapter demonstrates, she also corrected and re-translated these stories of her own accord through her own unique method of literary translation. Although she did not succeed in publishing these innovative literary translations during her lifetime, much of her other previously unpublished work has started to be published posthumously. In 1988 and 2001, for example, the University of Nebraska Press published *Waterlily*, selling more than 95,000 copies of the beloved novel over the past twenty years (Gardener "Introduction" viii). In the mid- to late-1990s, Julian Rice published three translations that Deloria worked on with Franz Boas, including *The Buffalo People*, *Deer Women and Elk Men*, and *Ironhawk*. Most recently, in 2007, Mariah Press published *The Dakota Way of Life*, a collection of Deloria's previously unpublished anthropological research. This renewed interest in Deloria's previously unpublished research lends hope that *Dakota Legends* will be published in the near future and paid the critical attention that it deserves. In fact, it was recently made available online through a partnership between the Dakota Indian Foundation, the University of Indiana, and First Nation's

⁷³ Ella Deloria quote from Picotte, pg. 8.

Development Institute, making it accessible to more Dakota writers and scholars than ever before.

Conclusion

This chapter helped illuminate Ella Deloria's innovative literary translation method, which she tried to use to decolonize the Dakota literary tradition, which had been appropriated by missionaries and anthropologists, who helped displace her from her traditional Dakota role as keeper of the tale. This type of dispossession is a form of colonization. Shari Huhndorf and Cheryl Suzack argue: "For indigenous women, colonization has involved their removal from positions of power, the replacement of traditional gender roles with Western patriarchal practice" (1). Beginning in 1836, white males staked their claim on the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, appropriating a role traditionally reserved for Dakota women. During her lifetime, Deloria tried to reclaim the Dakota oral storytelling tradition by correcting and re-translating the work of colonizers, like Riggs and Boas, who helped ossify and delegitimize traditional Dakota oral stories.

Deloria's literary decolonization efforts were both successful and unsuccessful. On the one hand, she reimagined several missionary translations to emphasize the power and resilience of the Dakota way of life. On the other hand, she often failed to secure a publisher (especially when she was working on her own) to help her correct these early misrepresentations and further develop her unique literary translation method. Even though Deloria was unable to publish much of her independent writing and research during her lifetime, she still left behind a valuable legacy that has the potential to inspire many future Dakota writers and scholars for generations.

In fact, Dakota author, poet, and scholar Elizabeth Cook-Lynn cites Deloria as a major influence on her poetry, prose, and scholarly research. Elaine Jahner observes that Deloria's published and unpublished work "is part of a pattern of intertextuality to which Cook-Lynn's belongs" ("Review" 135). Although Jahner does not explain this pattern in detail, this statement reiterates that the Dakota literary tradition is indeed the result of a long tradition of various storytellers, writers, and scholars building upon the work of their ancestors. In 1994, Cook-Lynn decided to emphasize this tradition by teaching Deloria's work and her own work side-by-side at the South Dakota Humanities Reading Council. During this workshop, Cook-Lynn praised Deloria's novel *Waterlily*, labelling it "required reading" for any Dakota writer or scholar because "it [represented] the first example of the living literary expression of the people." In other words, Cook-Lynn reasoned that Deloria is the first writer to compose a vibrant, dynamic, and fluid (i.e., de-ossified) representation of the Dakota literary tradition. The next chapter of this dissertation examines how Cook-Lynn has built upon both Deloria's anthropological research and creative writing – as well as the work of numerous other Dakota storytellers, writers and scholars – in her own attempt to ensure the survival and continuance of the rich and complex Dakota literary tradition.

Chapter Five: Revitalizing Dakota Literature

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's Modern Adaptation of *Corn Wife* and *Mni Sosa*

In 1991, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn published "From the River's Edge," a novel that focuses upon John Tatekeya, a traditional Santee Dakota storyteller who lives on the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation. Nearly a decade later, Cook-Lynn expanded this novel into *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy*, a collection of three novellas that shifts attention from John to his much younger lover, Aurelia Blue, an emerging storyteller herself. Cook-Lynn composed this trilogy in response to early Dakota writers who simply "documented and recorded" the Dakota oral storytelling tradition ("Discussion Paper" 1). As demonstrated in the third chapter of this dissertation, early missionaries helped transcribe and translate these stories to preserve them. However, they also delegitimized these stories by treating them as an inferior knowledge system that was rapidly nearing extinction. Ella Deloria attempted to correct and improve these translations by retranslating them from a tribally-specific perspective that had the potential to legitimize and de-ossify the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. However, as indicated in the third chapter of this dissertation, her literary decolonization efforts were largely ignored by her colleagues and thus she never really had an opportunity to fully challenge these flawed translations. Intentionally or unintentionally, these early translations transformed these vibrant, dynamic, and fluid stories into static cultural artifacts. According to Cook-Lynn, these early translations were problematic because they often required less "creativity" than "what is expected of the genre today" (1). In other words, these early translations stripped the Dakota oral storytelling tradition of the unique literary and cultural features that are distinctive of Dakota literature. Although these early translations were potentially flawed, Cook-Lynn reasons that these early translators and writers, nevertheless, "provide[d] a literary tradition for" future Dakotah writers and scholars to build upon (1). In effect, they helped establish the material foundation of the Dakota literary

tradition, which Deloria, Cook-Lynn, and other Dakota writers and scholars have attempted to improve and build upon.

According to Cook-Lynn, “a fairly long list of Dakota/Lakota writers and storytellers as well as a huge body of ritual and ceremony” helped influence her literature and scholarly work (*Wallace Stegner* 84-85). Therefore, Elaine Jahner reasons that any critique of Cook-Lynn’s writing should acknowledge a history of Dakota/Lakota/Nakota writing” (“Review” 137). The purpose of this chapter, then, is to examine how the Dakota literary tradition has shaped and influenced the content, style and structure of Cook-Lynn’s trilogy. In brief, the content of the trilogy is a modern adaptation of two traditional Dakota oral stories – Corn Wife and Mni Sosa – that early missionaries suggested were extinct and irrelevant. Corn Wife is a recurring mythic figure that delineates the woman’s traditional role in Dakota society; meanwhile, Mni Sosa is a creation myth that describes how the Dakota nation came to be and still helps guide tribal members behavior today. Cook-Lynn reimagines these two oral stories in a modern tribal context to emphasize that these stories have survived and even thrived into the twenty-first century. Further evidence that Cook-Lynn consciously modernized these two stories is her decision to employ an innovative code-switching style that merges both the Dakota and English languages, thus mirroring the interplay between the two most common languages spoken in modern Dakota society today. This code-switching style emphasizes that the Dakota literary tradition – whether relayed in Dakota or English – still has the power and potential to perpetuate the Dakota way of life. Finally, Cook-Lynn modernizes the Dakota oral storytelling tradition by basing the structure of the trilogy upon a “formless” framework that often transcends temporal and spatial boundaries (*Anti-Indianism* 54). Early literary critics dismissed this structure as disorganized and illogical (Houston 1-2). However, a closer examination of the trilogy’s

structure demonstrates that Cook-Lynn purposefully used this framework to mirror the processual nature and function of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. Overall, Cook-Lynn's conscious and deliberate use of these three literary devices indicate that she has reimagined the Dakota oral storytelling tradition in a more modern form as print literature. This strategy allowed her to reclaim and revitalize this tradition for future generations of writers and scholars; thus ensuring the survival and continued development of the Dakota literary tradition.

***Aurelia*: “Every story is connected to the next one”⁷⁴**

Aurelia is a collection of three novellas that focus upon “a unique modern Indian woman character (reservation-based)” named Aurelia Two Heart Blue who matures into a modern Dakotah⁷⁵ historian and storyteller (*Anti-Indianism* 134). In the preface of Cook-Lynn's trilogy, Aurelia stands at the top of a hill watching “the flooding waters of the Missouri River Power Project unleash the river's power from banks which had held it and guided it” since time immemorial (5). This project, a series of man-made dams, disrupted the natural flow of the river, which swelled and flooded approximately 16,000 acres of the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation, destroying 75 percent of its natural resources and displacing 40 percent of the tribe's population (Danker 88). The first novella in Cook-Lynn's trilogy, “From the River's Edge,” is set shortly

⁷⁴ Quote from *Aurelia* p. 383.

⁷⁵ In this section, I have chosen to use Cook-Lynn's spelling of the word Dakotah (for both the Dakota people and language) and Dakotapi (for the Dakota nation) because this essay focuses upon her specific understanding of her tribal culture, language, and literature. The purpose of this essay is not to suggest that one translation is more accurate or authentic than the next. It is simply to examine how each writer imagines his or her nation so that scholars can start to consider the implication of each representation. These variations in spelling are meant to emphasize each writer's individual understanding of their community.

after this devastation occurs; and thus, many characters in the novel are stunned and grieving this tremendous loss in unhealthy and self-destructive ways that threaten the survival of traditional Dakota lifeways (i.e., Dakota culture, language, history, etc).

To cope with their grief, John Tatekeya and Aurelia Blue, at ages sixty and seventeen, respectively, start a ten-year affair that allows them to ignore the changes that have occurred in their community. They isolate themselves from their family and friends, and “with great arrogance, dr[i]nk whiskey and laug[h] and ma[ke] love” until their affair is exposed (188). Their affair has a detrimental effect on both their family and community. The affair shames John’s family and prevents Aurelia from starting one of her own. Perhaps most troubling, it prevents both of them from fulfilling their responsibility in the community as a tribal historian and storyteller. Traditionally, these roles have had tremendous power because the Dakota oral storytelling tradition is a legitimate knowledge system that was used to help preserve and perpetuate Dakota culture and language. Eventually, John realizes that he cannot simply ignore the devastation caused by the man-made dam and he decides to end his affair with Aurelia so he can resume his responsibility in the community and help sustain the Dakota way of life.

In the second novella, “Circle of Dancers,” John reunites with his family, accepts his role as tribal historian, and fades into the background of the trilogy. Meanwhile, Aurelia, who is still struggling to understand her place in the community, starts to explore a new relationship with Jason Big Pipe, a much younger man who eventually fathers her two children. Initially, Aurelia resists Jason’s romantic advances because she is torn by her desire to both stay and leave the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation. She reasons that if she leaves the reservation, she can get a good job and escape a life of poverty and the other social problems caused by the devastating effects of colonization. However, she also risks losing her connection to her family and tribal

community. Even more troubling, she realizes her decision to leave the reservation will also prevent her from passing her knowledge of Dakota culture and language on to her children, grandchildren, and extended family, thus threatening the future survival of the Dakotapi (*Aurelia* 182-187). Eventually, Aurelia decides to start a family with Jason and embrace a traditional role that will empower her to keep Dakota culture and language alive. This role is based upon the Corn Wife, a recurring mythic figure in the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, who is the “bearer of children, feeder of the people, companion to men, and keeper of the stories” (254). In brief, she is responsible for sustaining the Dakotapi. However, Aurelia quickly discovers that she has to continually adapt and modify this traditional role to meet the ever-changing needs of modern society, which includes challenges such as poverty, violence, discrimination, and inequality, to name a few.

In the third novella, “Circle of Dancers,” Aurelia continues to reimagine this traditional role in a modern tribal context and uses her knowledge and wisdom to help guide a new generation of Dakota people. In particular, she acts as a mentor to her young nephew, Philip Big Pipe, who seems destined to follow in his aunt’s footsteps as a modern-day storyteller. Philip, like the tribal historians and storytellers before him, struggles to find a place for himself in society, eventually deciding to leave the reservation with the hopes of studying politics and defending the sovereign rights of his tribe by simultaneously working within and challenging the parameters of the U.S. legal system. Although Aurelia is saddened by Philip’s decision to leave the reservation, she seems to realize that he also needs access to Western academic tools to help him protect their tribe and preserve their traditions. She is hopeful and, at the same time,

uncertain that he will be able to uphold his traditional beliefs and values off the reservation and away from their people.⁷⁶

Although much of the trilogy focuses upon Aurelia's experience as a modern storyteller, Cook-Lynn uses John Tatekeya and Philip Big Pipe to demonstrate that the Dakota oral storytelling tradition is a continuous process with one storyteller handing his/her knowledge and wisdom down to the next. In the first novella, John initiates Aurelia into the Dakota oral storytelling tradition by teaching her the old stories. In the second novella, she continues her training, sharing the old stories and memorizing new ones to share with future generations. Finally, the third novella comes full circle, as Aurelia is now the mentor who passes her knowledge on to a new generation of people. In effect, these three storytellers reiterates the ongoing and processual nature of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, which has existed for ages and will continue to do so until the end of time.

The Critical Reception of *Aurelia*: “Literary criticism . . . clarif[ies] things you might not have thought about”⁷⁷

Over the past two decades, less than a dozen literary scholars have critically examined *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy*. They often used resources from either the school of literary or cultural studies to explicate the trilogy. As expected, these methods of analysis tend to yield different, and at times, opposing interpretations of these three novellas. For example, Cook-

⁷⁶ Last year, in late 2014, Cook-Lynn published a new novella, *That Guy Wolf Dancing*, based upon the struggles Philip experiences off the reservation. Cook-Lynn's decision to expand upon Philip's story underscores the processual nature of the Dakota literary tradition.

⁷⁷ Cook-Lynn quote from Bruchac, p. 61.

Lynn's earliest critics, who relied upon the tools of literary analysis to measure the literary merit of her writing, often dismissed the trilogy as incomplete. Meanwhile contemporary scholars, who tend to situate the trilogy in a more culturally-specific context, praise its artistry and ingenuity. For example, Robert Houston of the *New York Times Book Review* says that Cook-Lynn "launched herself out in a craft that she had not yet learned to sail" (2). This criticism suggests that Cook-Lynn has not yet mastered the basics of "good writing." Houston does not articulate or define this criterion, but implies that it is universal and not culture-specific. Conversely, Woody Kipp of the *Lakota Times* firmly maintains that Cook-Lynn "writes with a confidence that Indians will recognize" (qtd. in Cook-Lynn "American Indian Fiction" 29). These opposing views suggest that these literary critics read the trilogy from two diametrically opposite perspectives, and two seemingly different sets of expectations.

Early critics tend to read the trilogy from a Western perspective that is based upon the myth of the "Vanishing Indian," or the misguided assumption that tribes and their traditions are extinct or rapidly nearing extinction. For example, Houston described the first novella in Cook-Lynn's trilogy as overly "polemic" and "heavily flawed in its execution" (1). In particular, he takes offense at her "pedantic narrative voice" and "unconvincing dialogue" (2). Similarly, Carol Kino of the *Times Literary Supplement*, refers to Cook-Lynn's dialogue as "lumpish" and complains that the "Sioux [characters in the novel] are burdened with unbelievable thoughts" (22). The adjectives "unconvincing" and "unbelievable" suggest that both Houston and Kino initially approached this novel with certain aesthetic expectations about Native American literature. In many ways, their critiques seem to assume that Native American literature is supposed to stereotypically be about *early* "Sioux" culture and language. However, Cook-Lynn's novel is not about early Sioux culture, but rather is about modern Dakota culture.

Overall, the main purpose of her trilogy is to challenge the myth of the “Vanishing Indian.” The possibility exists, then, that Houston and Kino critically panned the first novel in Cook-Lynn’s trilogy because they were unfamiliar with – and perhaps, even perplexed by – Cook-Lynn’s representation of modern tribal life.

Although early literary critics failed to understand or appreciate Cook-Lynn’s trilogy, more modern literary scholars decided to use a different set of tools to analyze and interpret these three novellas. According to Catherine Blow, most of these negative reviews stemmed, in large part, from the fact that they were based upon the “aesthetic criteria” of Western literary criticism rather than the standards of Native American literary theory (1). She reasons that literary scholars and critics need a new methodology to analyze and interpret contemporary Native American literature (2-3). In an attempt to “renegotiate the aesthetic expectations assumed in Houston’s criticism,” James Stripes and other modern literary scholars decided to approach the novel through the lens of law, history, and/or politics (165). For example, Stripes approached the novel as a thinly-veiled metaphor about the U.S. justice system, specifically “the largest, longest-running Indian land claim in U.S. history, the Sioux claim to the Paha Sapa, or the Black Hills” (167). Meanwhile, Kathleen Danker suggests that the trilogy is about broken treaties and the construction of the Fort Randall Dam. Without a doubt, both of these themes are at the heart of the trilogy. Stripes and Danker provide tremendous insight into the historical/legal/political context of this trilogy and offer valuable information on “an aspect of history not widely known by non-Indian readers” (Danker 86). However, these interpretations are also potentially problematic because Stripes and Danker spend so much time describing the legal history of both of these events that they tend to elide the content, style, and structure of the novel. As a result,

they tend to neglect the literariness of *Aurelia* and instead seem to approach it as more of a historical and/or legal document.

More contemporary literary scholars, influenced by the school of Native American literary nationalism, have started to situate Cook-Lynn's trilogy in a tribally-specific context. In other words, they use Dakota culture and language to help them analyze and interpret these three novellas. These interpretations often help illuminate certain aspects of Dakota culture, language, or lifeways that might otherwise be ignored. For example, Page Rozelle provides an anthropological explanation of several Dakota "myths and mythic characters," including the Corn Wife, Inyan, and unktechis. Furthermore, she emphasizes that Cook-Lynn's trilogy has been largely influenced by the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. However, Rozelle seems to encounter the same challenge that Stripes and Danker faced in their interpretations of the trilogy. She spends more time describing or explaining Dakota culture and language and less time examining the rhetorical strategies that the author uses to mirror the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. Similarly, Pdraig Kirwan primarily focuses on the *tiospaye* or Dakota kinship system, while Penelope Kelsey examines articulations of the feminine and masculine principles of the trilogy. Without a doubt, all three of these topics are important themes that merit further inquiry; unfortunately, however, these readings provide less insight into how *Aurelia* functions as a literary text. Angeline O'Neil and Albert Braz suggest that this potential shortcoming is a major limitation of American Indian literary nationalism, which "does not really focus on what it purports to be its main interest, Indigenous literature or literatures" (O'Neil and Braz 4). O'Neil and Braz argue that this literary methodology tends to place more emphasis on "epistemic markers" such as culture and language and less on literary ones such as the content, style, and the

structure of the text (4). As discussed in chapter two, these observations hint at the need for a new literary methodology to analyze Native American literature.

In many ways, Cook-Lynn seems to concur with this call for a new literary methodology to explicate Native American literature. Ironically, she issues this call despite the fact that she herself was one of several scholars who helped lay the groundwork for American Indian literary nationalism. For example, she expressed the urgent need for a nation-centered literary methodology to analyze and interpret Native American literature in her 1993 essay, “The American Indian Fiction Writer: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, the Third World, and First Nation Sovereignty,” which expresses the urgent need for a nation-centered literary methodology to analyze and interpret Native American literature. Although Cook-Lynn once advocated for this literary methodology, she now denounces the “disastrous effects” that American Indian literary nationalism has had “over the study of Native languages and tribally-specific literary theory and aesthetics,” which begs the question: how does Cook-Lynn’s nation-centered methodology differ from American Indian literary nationalism (“Who Stole NAS?” 14). Similar to O’Neil and Braz, Cook-Lynn firmly maintains that this literary methodology is problematic because it tends to focus more attention on identity politics and less attention on how Native American literature functions (*Anti-Indianism* 41). She says: “The endless debate concerning ‘Who is an Indian?’ or ‘How much Indian is an Indian?’ is not a literary question. It is a political matter” (41). These identity concerns, she laments, detract from literary questions that shed light on the unique linguistic and literary features of the Dakota literary tradition. Cook-Lynn – as well as O’Neil and Braz’s criticism – underscores the need for more literary analysis and critical discourse within the field of Native American literary studies. In her 2001 book, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*, Cook-Lynn challenges future literary scholars to develop this new method,

and use it to consider the following question: “How do [Indian writers] generate Indian (native/tribal) history within the structure, style, plot of the novel?” (43). This chapter accepts that challenge and uses the lens of critical nationalism to examine the content, style, and structure of *Aurelia* to illuminate the methods and processes that Cook-Lynn employs as she attempts to add her voice to the long list of Dakota storytellers and writers that comprise the rich and complex Dakota literary tradition.

The Content of *Aurelia*: “The old traditions and myths have fused with the new.”⁷⁸

The content of *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy* is based upon two separate yet “intertwined and interconnected” myths (“Sacred Myth” 98). These two myths include the Corn Wife, a recurring mythic figure in the Dakota oral storytelling tradition who helps preserve and perpetuate the Dakota way of life and Mni Sosa, a creation myth that suggests that the Dakotapi emerged from the waters of the Missouri River. This creation myth helps guide the actions and behaviors of Aurelia Blue, a modern adaptation of the Corn Wife. In “A Reading Guide to *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy*,” Cook-Lynn instructs her readers “to do some research on the female mythic figure called Corn Wife or Yellow Woman and discuss Aurelia’s role as a contemporary Indian woman in the context of the mythology” (53). These instructions emphasize that Cook-Lynn consciously and deliberately based her trilogy on this mythic figure, meaning that she fully intended to reimagine this traditional oral story in a more modern context.

Although Cook-Lynn strongly encourages her readers to conduct research on the Corn Wife to enhance their knowledge of her trilogy, this request is challenging because the Corn Wife appears intermittently throughout several different Dakota oral stories. Simply put, there is

⁷⁸ See “Sacred Myth,” p. 99.

not one specific oral story dedicated solely to the Corn Wife (also called the Yellow Woman or Corn Woman in Dakota mythology), but many. As a result, it is often challenging to conduct research on this mythic figure. Perhaps the most detailed information about the Corn Wife is James Walker's "The Buffalo Woman" in his 1917 book, *The Sun Dance and other Ceremonies of the Oglala Division of the Teton Dakota*. It is important to note, however, that the Corn Wife only plays a supporting role in Walker's translation, as his interpretation focuses primarily upon the Buffalo Woman. The Corn Wife only appears in the first and last couple of paragraphs in Walker's translation. Ella Deloria's unpublished manuscript, *Dakota Legends*, also contains a literary translation of the Corn Wife in an incomplete, untitled story. These challenges underscore the difficulty non-Dakota (and even Dakota) readers face when conducting research on the Corn Wife. In an attempt to overcome these challenges, this chapter focuses upon Cook-Lynn's interpretation of the Corn Wife, which she provides through the eyes of several characters in her trilogy. For example, Aurelia succinctly describes the Corn Wife as the "bearer of children, feeder of the people, companion to men, and keeper of the stories" (*Aurelia* 254). This chapter examines how Aurelia both adheres to and departs from each of these roles as she navigates her way through modern tribal society.

In "A Reading Guide to *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy*," Cook-Lynn also points out that "Dakota mythologies concerning the river and women . . . are essential to [understanding] her trilogy" (52). Mni Sosa or the Missouri River is a recurring symbol that appears numerous times in both Cook-Lynn's literature and scholarship. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Mni Sosa is a creation myth because the Dakota people believe that their ancestors, the Star People, emerged from the river's water. Like the Corn Wife, there is very little unbiased, published information available on this myth. The missionaries who published the first translation myth downplayed its

significance in Dakota society, and even suggested that it was a false story that the Dakota nation simply told themselves to claim superiority over other tribes. As a result of these biased translations, this chapter once again turns to the author herself for guidance. Perhaps, the most comprehensive information available on Mni Sosa is the 2006 book, *This Stretch of the River*, a collection of sixteen essays that underscores the significance of the river to the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota nations.⁷⁹ In this collection (which includes Cook-Lynn), Lydia Whirlwind Soldier writes the following description about the river:

In those buffalo days,
Mnisose was the Grandfather river
It was, still is an artery to the paradise
we call home. (30)

This poem emphasizes that the mythical river – Mnisose or Mni Sosa – has existed for ages and plays a substantial role in both traditional and modern Dakota society.⁸⁰ The word “artery” reiterates Kelsey’s point that the river is “a lifeline of Dakota people” (*Tribal Theory* 104). In other words, the river affects every facet of Dakota life. According to Cook-Lynn, the river “shares its destiny with the people who have survived hard winters, invasions, migrations, and transformations unthought of and unpredicted” (6). As a result, Aurelia, and many other characters in the trilogy, often turn to the river for guidance and reassurance because it represents the cultural knowledge and experience of all those who came before them. Cook-Lynn reaffirms

⁷⁹ The writers in this collection belong to the Oak Lake Writers Society, an organization for Dakota/Lakota/Nakota writers. Charles Woodard and Cook-Lynn helped co-found this group at South Dakota State University in 1993.

⁸⁰ Once again, two writers use different spelling to describe the same myth. Presumably, these spelling differences stem from the fact that Whirlwind Soldier is Lakota and Cook-Lynn is Dakota.

the power of the mythic river in this trilogy by reimagining this creation story in a more modern tribal context. This innovative strategy helps emphasize that the Dakota oral storytelling tradition is a legitimate knowledge system that is still relevant and essential in modern Dakota society.

The Corn Wife

As an author and poet, Cook-Lynn often “fuse[s] “old traditions and myths” with new ones (“Sacred Myth” 98). According to Wilson, this gift is the hallmark of a “skilled and trained” tribal storyteller who is “apt at interpreting contemporary events and incorporating them into their” own story (*Remember This!* 41). This practice is rooted in the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, which consists of two different types of narratives or literary genres known as o-hun-ka-ka and ke-ya-pi.⁸¹ The former denotes oral stories from “an ancient and sacred period,” while the latter connotes stories from “a period of time that describes the lives of ordinary people” (“Sacred Myth” 98). Cook-Lynn borrows elements from both of these literary genres in *Aurelia*, which is based on the following two narratives: 1.) the Corn Woman, a mythic figure from an “ancient and sacred period;” and 2.) Aurelia Blue, a young Dakotah woman living on the Crow

⁸¹ Cook-Lynn’s offers a different spelling of these two literary genres than Ella Deloria. Specifically, she does not use any diacritical marks, nor does she italicize the words o-hun-ka-ka or ke-ya-pi

Although Cook-Lynn and Deloria each rely on a different spelling of these literary genres, their definitions are virtually the same as they both firmly maintain that one narrative emphasizes the tribal past, while the other focuses on the tribal future. The main difference between these two definitions is that Cook-Lynn is more adamant that these two literary genres are “intertwined and interconnected” (Cook-Lynn “Sacred Myth” 98). Although Deloria alludes to this connection, she is less explicit about it than Cook-Lynn.

Again, this dissertation does not seek to uncover the most accurate or authentic definition of this myth. Instead, it examines how each writer/scholar’s understanding of her own culture and language impacts her writing.

Creek Sioux Reservation. In traditional Dakota culture, the Corn Wife is responsible for preserving and perpetuating the Dakota way of life. Accordingly, Aurelia, throughout the trilogy, learns to embrace the traditional Dakota role of wife, mother, and culture keeper. It takes her a lifetime – or the bulk of the trilogy – to recognize the importance of playing each one of these roles in modern tribal society.

At a young age, Aurelia's grandmother tries to explain the important role that the Corn Wife plays in traditional Dakota society. Grandma Blue tells Aurelia: "The woman with the yellow dress . . . talked the people into come here to the Big Bend in the Missouri River. And she give them corn seeds" (154-55). Eventually, these seeds grow into corn intended to help nourish and sustain the people for generations.⁸² According to Ella Deloria, o-hun-ka-ka tales are intended to convey a specific moral lesson or value (*Dakota Texts* x). The moral lesson implicit in this particular o-hun-ka-ka tale is that the Corn Wife is responsible for sustaining Dakota culture, language, and values. However, Aurelia does not seem to immediately grasp the power or potential of this role. She absent-mindedly responds to her grandmother by asking: "What woman was that, Gramma?" (155) Initially, Aurelia's inability to grasp the importance of this story is related to her youth and lack of knowledge. Later, however, she seems to consciously and deliberately refuse to acknowledge the importance of this role because she cannot fathom how to reconcile this traditional role in modern society. As Aurelia grows older, she starts to suspect that the Corn Wife, a once honored and revered figure among the Dakotapi, is often vulnerable and powerless in this new "colonized, suppressed cultural environment" (*Anti-Indianism* 134). Kelsey points out that as Aurelia matured, she "witnessed domestic violence by Native men . . . [and even] survived sexual assault at the hands of her mother's white husband"

⁸² Walker emphasizes this point in his interpretation of this myth. See Walker's *The Sun Dance*.

(106). Therefore, Kelsey argues, Aurelia now associates the Corn Wife with violence and vulnerability, and adamantly rejects the traditional role of wife, mother, and culture keeper for as long as possible.

Beginning when she was a teenager, Aurelia has a ten-year affair with John Tatekeya, a much older, married man. Kelsey theorizes that Aurelia engages in this illicit sexual relationship to avoid marriage and children (*Tribal Theory* 107). Although it is true that Aurelia does use this relationship to evade the responsibilities expected of traditional Dakota women, Cook-Lynn points out that their affair is also intended to reinforce Aurelia's connection to the Corn Wife. Aurelia is not simply John Tatekeya's teenage mistress; she is actually his second wife. According to Cook-Lynn, who has explicated her own trilogy numerous times, Aurelia is "play[ing] a modern female role in a culture that at one time not so long ago was polygamous" (*Anti-Indianism* 135). This statement reaffirms that *Aurelia* is a modern adaptation of the Corn Wife. Cook-Lynn's interpretation is supported by Danker, who points out that the Corn Wife was a second wife, who "relinquished her lover to his first wife . . . to help her relatives survive and continue" ("River Mythology" 12). Indeed, Aurelia and John part ways so that he can return to his wife, and she can start a family of her own.

Once Aurelia's relationship with John ends, she begins a new one with Jason Big Pipe. Although Aurelia is drawn to Jason, she is also reluctant to start a relationship with him because she is still hesitant about embracing the traditional Dakota role of wife and mother. Kelsey theorizes that Aurelia's reluctance stems, in large part, from the abuse she witnessed and endured as a child. She observes that "the rape annuls [Aurelia's] ability to take on her traditional role until she is physically trapped by pregnancy" (106-107). Although Aurelia is initially hesitant to accept this traditional role, the word "trapped" is problematic because it implies that Aurelia only

fulfills the role of Corn Wife because she *has* to and not because she *wants* to. In short, the word “trapped” undermines Aurelia’s agency. However, Cook-Lynn observes in the trilogy that Aurelia’s actions are, in many ways, deliberate and willful, as evidenced by the following scene with Jason:

He grinned up at her . . . he always liked to talk as though he had her *trapped* . . . as though he had tempted her with his irresistibility which they both knew was, in some indefinable way, of course, the truth, yet at the same time ridiculous.

They both knew no one trapped Aurelia unless she wanted to be trapped.

(my emphasis 166)

Although Aurelia’s pregnancy was an accident, this passage suggests that, on some level, she was ready to be a mother. Now she must simply decide where she wants to raise her new family. She briefly considers leaving the Crow Creek Sioux Reservation and moving to an urban setting. As she prepares to leave, however, she is suddenly struck by the realization that her decision is selfish and would constitute an “appalling violation of all the rules [Dakotah] women have been taught to live by” (186). This epiphany underscores Aurelia’s agency because she makes a conscious and deliberate decision to fulfill the traditional role of the Corn Wife. The decision to stay on the reservation empowers Aurelia because it allows her to stay close to her family and community so that she can help preserve and perpetuate the Dakotah way of life. This epiphany is a turning point for Aurelia, who begins to recognize that the Corn Wife is still an important and relevant figure in modern Dakota society.

This epiphany convinces Aurelia to marry Jason and move in with his family. As a modern adaptation of the Corn Wife, Aurelia helps the Big Pipe family navigate their way through modern society on several occasions. For example, she accompanies Jason and his uncle

to Rapid City, South Dakota to visit Jason's cousin, Leaper, a "young university student from the reservation, who had now become a rapist and murderer" (239). The Big Pipe family travels to see Leaper in the hopes that he did not commit this heinous crime. Eventually, however, they are forced to come to terms with the fact that "the young man . . . [did indeed do] a terrible thing" (239). Neither Aurelia nor anybody else in the family can save Leaper. Initially, then, the purpose of this journey is unclear to Aurelia who "resist[s] accompanying Jason" and his family to Rapid City (233). However, the purpose of this experience is two-fold. First, it allows Aurelia to comfort Jason and fulfill her traditional duty as the "companion of men" (205). Second, it "awaken[s her] to the issue of race relations in a state [filled with] many post pioneer families" (233). For Aurelia, this increased cultural awareness reinforces the importance of the Corn Wife in modern Dakotah society. It reiterates the importance and value of preserving the Dakotah way of life as Leaper's crimes are, in many ways, related to the fact that he left his community and forgot his traditional beliefs and values.

Aurelia witnesses these dangers numerous times throughout the trilogy. Perhaps the most haunting example of an individual who strays too far from his community is Jason's older brother, Sheridan Big Pipe. Presumably, Sheridan and Jason are raised with the same tribal beliefs and values; however, Sheridan loses his way after fighting in the Vietnam War. Aurelia observes: "From the day of Sheridan's return, he had been unemployed, his wife and children on welfare, [and had withdrawn from] his parents and brothers and sisters" (258). Following the war, Sheridan loses himself and abandons his traditional lifeways. In an attempt to find himself, he joins the American Indian Movement (AIM), which the trilogy suggests actually undermines – instead of strengthens – the Dakota way of life. This idea is evident in Aurelia's description of an AIM activist who visits the reservation. Initially, she observes:

His beauty was dazzling. He wore a beaded vest, blue jeans, and a brilliant colored shirt of satin with ribbons at the shoulders. It was like he came down from a rainbow, the people said afterward, unaware that they were being taunted. His dance with an old mother, from the crowd who had no speaking part was meant to symbolize his bindings to the Earth and his relationship to the Buffalo Nation. Yet in his arrogance, he told them that he would be the one to produce new rituals and mythic stories to respond to ecological, social, and economic changes and disasters. (331)

Typically, the words “dazzling” and “brilliant” are complements; however, in this context they suggest that the activist’s flashy attire and actions are insincere. According to Robert Warrior, AIM is often viewed as “synonymous with protest and media spectacle” because these activists tend to use the media to publicize their existence and spread their message (136). Aurelia’s description of the AIM activist’s flashy attire suggests that she is troubled by his staged display of culture. Further evidence that she is offended by the activist are her comments regarding his “dance with an old mother,” which she describes as a “symbolic” or empty gesture that fails to uphold traditional Dakota beliefs and values. According to Aurelia, “the Corn Wife, who was co-tenant in every myth and ritual of the past, played almost no role in [this] significant tribal drama” (333). Aurelia’s observation suggests that the activist has abandoned his traditions and is largely disconnected from the Dakota way of life. Therefore, he is able to provide little guidance to Sheridan or other Dakota youth.

As a result of this influence, Sheridan slips further and further away from his family and community, eventually leaving the reservation with dire consequences. First, Sheridan moves to a reservation border town where he marries a non-tribal member who frames him for murder.

Eventually, he flees the state and moves to Houston, Texas, where he can “wander, conceal his identity, and busy himself with inconsequential matters” (343). Sheridan, “disconnected from [his] tribal mores” decides to live in a “modern, non-tribal world,” that leaves him alone and vulnerable (343). One night, seemingly as punishment, Sheridan suffers a stroke and “lay[s] alone] in panic for three days, without water, without food, his own dried urine and feces caked about his thighs. . . mumbling and incoherent” (344). At first glance, these vivid details seem unnecessary and strangely out of place in the trilogy. In fact, Sheridan’s story seems like a random sidebar that strays from the main plot of *Aurelia*. However, it actually functions as a warning about the dangers of abandoning traditional Dakota lifeways and thus reinforces the important role that the Corn Wife plays in modern tribal society because she has the potential to unite and strengthen the Dakotapi by reminding them of the importance of their traditions.

After witnessing these dangers, Aurelia makes a conscious decision to teach her children and other members of the Big Pipe family the importance of the Dakota way of life. For example, Cook-Lynn points out that Aurelia’s first son, Blue, unlike many children of the modern Indian world, was raised in a cradleboard and when he outgrew it, his mother did not take it apart, but instead hung it on the wall in a special place so it would be known as a revered object and part of the family history” (254). Aurelia’s decision to use a cradleboard, and later hang it up as a “revered object,” symbolizes her intentions to raise Blue, and her daughter, Sarah, to appreciate and value his traditions. This decision suggests that Aurelia has decided to fully embrace the traditional role of the Corn Wife as the “bearer of children . . . and keeper of the stories” (254). Perhaps, the most important story that Aurelia shares with her children is Mni Sosa. She tells her children that “the river is a lifeway, a place where the spirits reside, a place of origin” (424). This creation story is further evidence of Aurelia’s connection to the Corn Wife

because, as Grandmother Blue pointed out earlier, it was the Corn Wife who “talked the people into come here to the Big Bend in the Missouri River” (155). Accordingly, Aurelia, a modern adaptation of the Corn Wife, shares a deep connection with the river which helps her navigate her way through this new “colonized, suppressed cultural environment.”

Mni Sosa

According to Aurelia and several other tribal elders in the trilogy, the Dakotapi are descendants of the Star People who emerged from the waters of Mni Sosa or the Missouri River. Mni Sosa is a creation myth or an o-hun-ka-ka tale from “an ancient and sacred period,” with a deeper moral lesson or cultural meaning (“Sacred Myth” 98). In the trilogy, Aurelia is responsible for interpreting this story and applying it to her life. In short, Mni Sosa is an allegory, or, more accurately stated, it is an allegory-within-an allegory. As Cook-Lynn’s readers analyze and interpret Aurelia, a modern adaptation of the Corn Wife, Aurelia herself explicates the mythical river. The river – both as part of the physical landscape and a creation myth – is a constant presence that flows throughout each novella in the trilogy. In the first novella, the river is dammed up, swells, and damages its natural surroundings. In the second and third novellas, the waters subside and “the river itself . . . learn[s] new ways of being” (404). Aurelia, by closely watching the river, also learns “new ways of being” in this new “colonized, suppressed cultural environment.” As indicated in the previous two sections, she learns how to adapt and modify the traditional role of Dakota women to fit the needs and concerns of modern tribal society.

For Aurelia and many other characters in the novel, the river is symbolic of the Dakota way of life. This point is most evident when Aurelia’s grandmother passes away. Before she

dies, Grandma Blue whispers to her family: “You must never let the river go without me” (424). Initially, Aurelia assumes this statement means that her grandmother wants to be buried in a traditional manner that was outlawed by the federal government. Eventually, however, Aurelia realizes that her grandmother meant that she was about to join the ranks of their early ancestors, who emerged from the waters of the mythical river. In other words, Aurelia’s grandmother is now a part of the rich body of cultural knowledge and experience that is the river. Indirectly, then, Aurelia’s grandmother was asking her granddaughter to keep the stories and traditions of their ancestors alive by becoming a tribal storyteller and historian herself. It is a request that Aurelia (and by extension, Cook-Lynn) obeys by “interpreting contemporary events and incorporating them into” traditional oral stories (Wilson *Remember This!* 41). This request underscores the processual nature of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, with one storyteller passing her knowledge and wisdom to the next.

The natural flow of the river also helps emphasize that culture itself is vibrant, dynamic, and fluid. This lesson is reinforced by Reclining Bear, a tribal elder in the trilogy, who protests the damming of the river. He tells Aurelia: “The river . . . is like the blood flowing through the arm. It cannot be stopped. Even for a short period of time. Because an infection will set in. It should not be done” (*Aurelia* 325). This statement emphasizes that cultural change is inevitable and it is futile, and even potentially dangerous, to ignore or stand in the way of this change. Ultimately, it is risky to stand in the way of this change and place a strong emphasis on the tribal past – as John and Aurelia did in the first novella, with devastating consequences to their family and community – because it tends to ossify Dakotah culture and language. Scott Richard Lyon’s theorizes that privileging the tribal past at the expense of the tribal present will ultimately transform traditional Native lifeways into “a fetish that loses its realism, denies the actually

existing diversity of Indian life, and/or confuses modern practices and institutions with the assimilation of ‘white’ or ‘Western’ identity” (*X-Marks* 12). In short, an overemphasis of the tribal past will hinder the growth and development of culture. Aurelia witnesses the dangers of this type of fetishization when she visits The Sioux Museum in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Initially, upon entering the museum, Aurelia is comforted by the sight of precious mementos from her early childhood such as beaded regalia, moccasins, pipes, and drums (185-86). However, these warm, “soothing” feelings are quickly replaced with “great panic” when she realizes that these mementos have been reduced to static cultural artifacts (186). Essentially, this “great panic” is an epiphany where Aurelia suddenly realizes that these precious mementos – frozen and preserved in glass – have been stripped of their emotional meaning and robbed of their sacred and ceremonial purposes. According to Majel Boxer, museums are institutions which have been used to help colonize indigenous people, because they help “dispossess indigenous people of their material culture, ancestral remains and funerary items” (2). To emphasize this point, Cook-Lynn contrasts the image of the museum’s drum with Aurelia’s memory of her father-in-law Harvey Big Pipe’s drum. The museum drum is situated silently among a stack of dusty books, while Harvey’s drum sits in “the living room where family and visitors often gather” to honor and celebrate the Dakotapi (186). The former image is an ossified representation of Dakota culture because it suggests that the drum is a relic from the distant past, while the latter is a de-ossified representation of Dakota culture because it suggests that the drum is still very much an integral part of modern tribal life.. This realization emphasizes that it is only natural for culture to change over time. If culture – any culture, Native or non-Native – stops changing or growing over time, it stops being culture. The challenge for Aurelia and the rest of her community, then, is to adapt and modify their culture and language without

abandoning the Dakota past, neglecting the Dakota present, or assimilating to the EuroAmerican future. In short, they must figure out how to emulate the river and merge the tribal past, present, and future.

The Style of *Aurelia*: “She had the ability to adapt the rhythm of one language to change the sound of another.”⁸³

Aurelia is written in an innovative code-switching style that reflects the bilingual nature of the Dakota literary tradition.⁸⁴ As demonstrated in the previous two chapters of this dissertation, this literary tradition is based upon both the Dakotah and English languages. Code-switching denotes the ability to switch from one language to another. It is not surprising, then, that Cook-Lynn, a writer who has been strongly influenced by the rich and complex Dakota literary tradition, uses both languages in her trilogy. For example, her characters often incorporate Dakotah words and phrases into their English dialogue, such as greetings, geographic references, kinship terms, songs, etc. Cook-Lynn might have even included longer Dakotah passages in her trilogy if editors and publishers had not constantly questioned her code-switching style. She recalls often being asked: “How and why do you use an Indian language word or phrase at certain places in your narrative? Don’t you think you should have a glossary at the end of your manuscript?” (*Wallace Stegner* 80). She likely encountered these questions on such a regular basis because code-switching, until quite recently, was often perceived as an “inferior mode of communication” (*Holly Martin* 403). The assumption is that second-language speakers simply resorted to their native tongue because they did not have a strong grasp of their new

⁷¹ Quote from *Aurelia*, p. 52.

⁸⁴ Thanks to Steve Lamos, who first suggested this connection.

language. However, Cook-Lynn never bothered to explain her motivations, nor did she add a glossary to the trilogy. She simply incorporated the Dakota language into *Aurelia* using three different types of code-switching.

There are many different types of code-switching styles. The three most common forms are untranslated, translated, and interlingual code-switching styles.⁸⁵ As demonstrated in the previous paragraph, Cook-Lynn prefers an untranslated code-switching style that allows her to simply use Dakota words and phrases without translating them to English. She observes: “The problem with my writing is that I don’t want to translate [cultural and/or linguistic references]. At the same time, I want to use them in my fiction” (Bird 58). This statement underscores the strengths and limitations of an untranslated code-switching style. On the one hand, this style is an act of resistance because it addresses issues of domination and power relations. For instance, Cook-Lynn refuses to explain the importance or significance of the Dakota language. She simply treats it as a legitimate knowledge system and expects her readers to do the same. The advantage of this approach is that it is an act of resistance that helps further legitimize the Dakota literary tradition. Additionally, it helps the author tailor her literature to a specific audience. Cook-Lynn is adamant that it is important for Native writers to write for a Native audience. The potential disadvantage of an untranslated code-switching style, then, is that it also tends to alienate some readers/speakers. In Cook-Lynn’s case, she tends to exclude the English-speaking Dakota members of her audience. She muses: “The trouble with that [approach] is that nobody knows the story but the Sioux people – and sometimes not even they do” (Bird 58). This admission indicates that an untranslated code-switching style is potentially problematic because

⁸⁵ For more information about these three code-switching styles, see H. Martin.

it tends to disregard those readers who need to strengthen and improve their knowledge of their traditional cultures and languages the most.

Cook-Lynn attempts to address these limitations by using two other code-switching styles to bridge the gap between the Dakota and English languages. The second form that she employs is known as a translated code-switching style that directly and/or indirectly translates the Dakota language, making it more accessible to Cook-Lynn's intended audience. For instance, Cook-Lynn translates certain Dakota words and phrases to the English language, using parentheses rather than the glossary she previously rejected. Susan Gardener points out that the use of glossaries and footnotes tend to push the voices of female Dakota writers to the margins, both literally and figuratively ("Assimilative" 26). Consequently, the decision to use parentheses rather than a glossary or footnotes is an empowering one. The first time Jason attempts to court Aurelia, for example, he knocks on her door and switches between both languages. Cook-Lynn writes:

Aurelia was at home putting clean clothes on her grandmother following the old lady's bath. And just then, Jason Big Pipe appeared at her front door.

She looked at him, trying not to show her surprise.

"Uh . . . a . . . '*el naka huwo*,'" he said, at first. (Are you home?) Almost fearfully.

She said nothing.

Then, in English, as though he had changed his mind, "Uh . . . is your grandmother home?" he asked. (111)

In this passage, Cook-Lynn translates '*el naka huwo*' in parenthesis. She strategically places the two languages side by side, implying that they are commensurate. The decision to

juxtapose Dakota alongside English is an empowering act of resistance that her editors and publishers attempted to dissuade her from. Furthermore, it helps dismantle the long-standing hierarchy that suggests that the Dakota language is inferior to the English language.⁸⁶ Further evidence that this code-switching style is an act of resistance is the fact that Jason consciously and deliberately slips back and forth between these two languages. For example, he initially decides to use the Dakota language to woo Aurelia by establishing an intimate connection with her based on their shared language. However, when she fails to respond to his romantic gesture, he quickly switches back to English. Jason's linguistic awareness in this situation suggests that Cook-Lynn, like the characters in her novel, is also aware of the power and potential of utilizing a code-switching style. Holly Martin convincingly argues: "For multilingual authors, switching between two or more languages is not an arbitrary act, nor is it simply an attempt to mimic the speech of [the author's] community; code-switching results from a conscious decision to promote the validity of the author's heritage languages" (405). Indeed, Cook-Lynn uses these code-switching styles to honor and celebrate the rich and complex Dakota literary tradition, which was composed by both Dakota and non-Dakota writers and translators; relayed in both an oral and written form; and in expressed in both Dakota and English.

Finally, Cook-Lynn also uses an interlingual code-switching style. According to Martin, the mixing of languages often has "a synergistic effect, creating a third mode of expression" (407). She uses the term "interlingual" to describe this third mode. She explains that linguists tend to use the term "interlingual" as opposed to "bilingual" because "bilingual" connotes a passive amalgamation of two languages. Meanwhile, "interlingual" emphasizes "the constant

⁸⁶ According to Clemmons, early missionaries often adhered to an Enlightenment theory of polygenesis that "posited that different races had separate (and inferior) origins" (10). For more information on this linguistic hierarchy, see Clemmons p. 9-10 and 47-54.

tension” that exists between these two languages. This tension arises from the conscious and deliberate process of using two languages at once to convey a specific meaning (407). As indicated in the previous paragraph, the decision to use or not use one language over the other has significant personal implications. Even more importantly, it has political implications and consequences as well. Cook-Lynn’s description of Aurelia’s unique speech pattern, for example, emphasizes the political implications of interlingual code-switching:

He [i.e., John Tatekeya] noticed that she [i.e., Aurelia] had the ability to adapt the rhythm of one language to change the sound of another. And so, when she talked in English she often used the sounds of Dakotah, the cadence and tone of Dakotah speech. This day he sat and listened to the cadence of her voice, and in his own heart he knew what it amounted to was a kind of purity of speech, an attempt on her part to retain some sense of Dakotah aesthetic in everyday life. (52)

Aurelia’s ability to merge Dakotah and English is an example of interlingual code-switching because she creates a potentially powerful third mode of expression that empowers her to reclaim and revitalize the Dakota literary tradition. This third mode of communication enables her to fulfill her role as a modern adaptation of the Corn Woman because it allows her to “retain some sense of Dakotah aesthetic in everyday life.” In the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, the purpose of the Corn Woman is to protect and preserve Dakotah people for future generations. Likewise, Aurelia, like Cook-Lynn herself, adopts an interlingual code-switching style that allows her to “retain . . . the Dakotah aesthetic” in the midst of colonization. Admittedly, this new language does not sound (or even look) as it did pre-colonization. However, it is still a powerful force because it has the potential to ensure the future survival of Dakotah language, literature, and lifeways.

The Structure of *Aurelia*: “How is the American Indian novel a formless genre that mirrors a Native world, describes a temporal world of past, present, and future?”⁸⁷

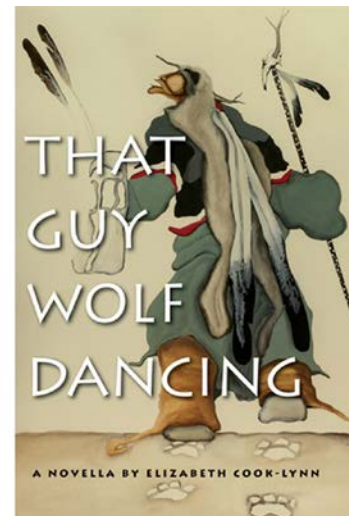
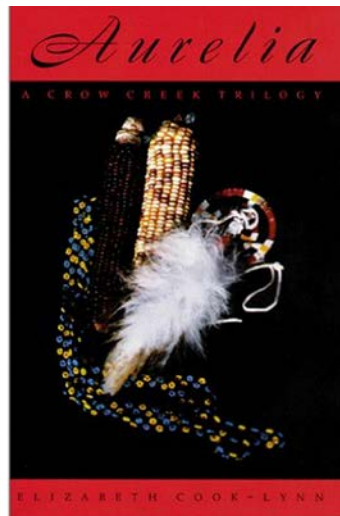
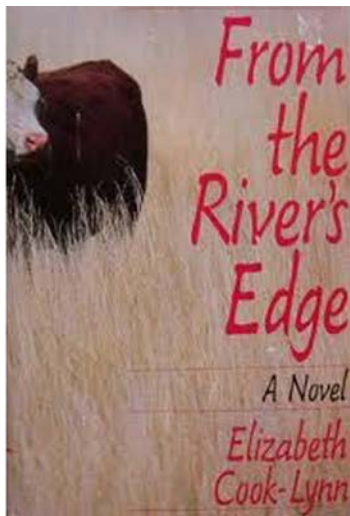
Admittedly, the structure of *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy* is challenging, and at times, difficult to follow. It consists of three novellas that total more than four hundred pages. As demonstrated in the previous section, it is based upon two traditional oral stories that have been reimagined in a more modern context. Although these two stories are “intertwined and interconnected,” they are difficult to unravel and often tend to symbolize different things to different readers (“Sacred Myth 98). As a result, the handful of literary scholars who have critiqued this trilogy have viewed each of these stories as a different allegory or metaphor for Dakota culture, law, history, gender, and/or politics. Further complicating the structure of the trilogy are several seemingly random side stories and poems. Houston describes these sidebars as “experiments,” admits he finds them “exasperating,” and ultimately dismisses them as the shortcomings of an inexperienced writer (2). Houston fails to realize, however, that *Aurelia* is much more than an “experiment” because Cook-Lynn’s trilogy is firmly grounded in the Dakota oral storytelling tradition.

According to Cook-Lynn, “everything originates from what is called the oral tradition” including the Dakota literary tradition (“Who Stole NAS?” 10). Cook-Lynn defines Dakota literature as “a formless genre that mirrors native society [and] describes a temporal world of the past, present, and future” (*Anti-Indianism* 42). She applies this “formless” framework to her trilogy which transcends both temporal and spatial boundaries. *Aurelia* is not a linear novel with a beginning, middle, and end. Like the Dakota oral storytelling tradition, Cook-Lynn’s trilogy is

⁸⁷ Cook-Lynn *Anti-Indianism*, p. 42.

“continual and expanding,” meaning oral storytellers often revise their stories and add more details to them. Indeed, Wilson points out that the hallmark of a “skilled and trained” tribal storyteller is one who can “interpret contemporary events and incorporate them into their” own story (*Remember This* 41). This observation helps explain why Cook-Lynn published the first novella in the trilogy as a 140-page stand-alone novel and, a decade later, expanded it to a 440-page trilogy. In 2014, she published a new book, *That Guy Wolf Dancing*, which might be considered the fourth novella of the trilogy, as it seems to pick up where *Aurelia* left off by expanding upon her nephew Philip Big Pipe’s journey. Cook-Lynn’s decision to continuously expand and revise her novellas emphasizes that her trilogy is firmly rooted in the Dakota oral storytelling tradition.

Figure 6: Cook-Lynn Book Covers. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn published *From the River’s Edge* as a stand-alone novel in 1993 about John Tatekeya. She added to more novellas to this novel in 1999, shifting attention to Aurelia Blue, and published it as *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy*. In late-2014, Cook-Lynn published *That Guy Wolf Dancing* about Philip Big Pipe’s experiences away from the Crow Creek Sioux Indian Reservation.



As Cook-Lynn expands each novella, she also adds new characters, events, and details to her trilogy. For example, Aurelia is a minor character in the first novella, who evolves into the main character in the second and third novellas, and virtually disappears by the fourth novella. In the first novella, Aurelia is portrayed as a rebellious teenager who has a scandalous affair with a much older, married man. There is absolutely no indication that Cook-Lynn perceived or even imagined that Aurelia will evolve into a modern adaptation of the Corn Wife. In fact, when Cook-Lynn explicates this first novella in 1993, she describes Aurelia and John's affair as "illicit [and] . . . unsanctioned by custom or law" ("Politics" 80). In other words, Cook-Lynn initially disapproved of this relationship and did not seem to associate it with any traditional Dakota beliefs, customs or values. After she adds the second and third novellas to the trilogy, however, her opinion of their affair changes dramatically.

In 2001, shortly after the second and third novellas are published, Cook-Lynn reasons that Aurelia is not simply John "Tatekeya's mistress, a role usually maligned in mainstream America . . . [but] not in the native Dakota perspective" (*Anti-Indianism* 135). She argues that Aurelia actually "represents a 'second wife' figure . . . [and thus embodies] a connection to the Corn Wife in Dakota mythology" (135). At first blush, Cook-Lynn seems to back-pedal, thus supporting Houston's criticism that her early work was the reflection of a writer who had "launched herself out in a craft she had not yet learned how to sail" (2). However, Cook-Lynn's revisions actually reflect the ongoing and processual nature of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition because these revisions tend to strengthen and enhance the readers' understanding of the trilogy. As readers watch Aurelia embrace her role as tribal historian and storyteller, they also watch Cook-Lynn flourish and come into her own as a writer within the Dakota literary tradition.

According to Cook-Lynn, “there is much mingling of Dakota myth and ritual and culture in the entire trilogy that concerns Aurelia . . . she represents me in some obscure ways . . . [she] is a flawed character as I am a flawed writer” (*Anti-Indianism* 134). This statement suggests that the author and her protagonist share many of the same strengths, limitations, shortcomings, and perhaps even stories. Indeed, it is often difficult to separate Cook-Lynn from Aurelia, as the trilogy’s narrative often slips back and forth between the first and third person. Although Houston describes this narrative strategy as “heavy-handed advocacy and intrusiveness on the part of the narrator,” these slippages are an important reflection of the Dakota literary tradition that underscores the connection between the storyteller and the story (2). In the trilogy, Aurelia observes: “It took me years to understand that when the storyteller becomes part of the story, it somehow makes sacred the whole” (*Aurelia* 156). These slippages indicate that Cook-Lynn herself has become part of this story and inserted herself into the Dakota literary tradition, thus making the literary canon whole, and laying the ground work for future generations of Dakota writers and scholars to improve and build upon. This practice emphasizes the “ongoing and continuous” nature of the Dakota literary tradition – in both its oral and written form.

Conclusion

This chapter examined Cook-Lynn’s trilogy *Aurelia* through the lens of critical nationalism to examine the literary devices and rhetorical strategies that she used to reimagine the Dakota oral storytelling tradition in a more modern form as print literature. This analysis revealed that Cook-Lynn used both Dakota and non-Dakota languages and literary traditions to express the importance and value of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition in modern tribal life. Previous efforts to colonize the Dakota nation and denigrate its’ people and knowledge systems,

briefly cast doubt upon the power and potential of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition in modern tribal society. Cook-Lynn used her literature, poetry, and countless essays to prove that this tradition is alive and well. Indeed, a close reading of *Aurelia* indicates that Cook-Lynn based the content, style, and structure of her trilogy upon the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. Specifically, she adapted two traditional Dakota oral stories (i.e., Corn Wife and Mni Sosa) – that other early translators and writers suggested were extinct and/or irrelevant – to fit the unique needs of modern tribal life, while also incorporating other elements of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition into her trilogy. Cook-Lynn’s ability to reimagine these two myths as print literature is empowering, because it proves that the Dakota oral storytelling tradition continues today, and it still has the potential to strengthen and empower the Dakota nation.

Chapter Six: The Future of Dakota Literature and Literary Studies

This dissertation analyzed and critically engaged with Dakota literature from 1836 to present by analyzing archival documents – Dakota orthographies, Dakota mythologies, and personal and professional correspondences – to better understand how Dakota literature has evolved from an oral to a written form. This process traced the evolution of the Dakota literary tradition across nearly two centuries, witnessing its’ evolution from an oral to a written form; from a static cultural artifact that provided insight into the tribal past to literature that attempts to celebrate and honor the tribal present and future. Specifically, it focused upon six oral stories and/or mythic figures – Fallen Star, Mni Sosa, Ta-te, Ite Waste Win, and the Corn Wife – that have been transcribed and translated multiple times. The fact that these stories have been reimagined by more than one writer and/or scholar on multiple occasions over the past two centuries demonstrates that Dakota literary tradition is alive and well in print form. Furthermore, it proves that this tradition, even in its seemingly fixed written form, is still vibrant, dynamic, and fluid.

Chapter Two, “Analyzing Dakota Literature,” examined how other scholars have analyzed and critically engaged with various indigenous literary traditions. This chapter weighed the strengths and limitations of American Indian literary nationalism and several other critical approaches to American literature, and envisioned a new literary methodology for explicating and critically engaging with Dakota literature. This two-step approach helped critically interrogate the colonial system, and then examines how future writers challenge and resist it. The goal of this approach is to acknowledge that colonization has had a deep and lasting impact on indigenous literatures that many Native writers and scholars are still struggling to overcome today. Furthermore, this dual approach helps emphasize that colonization and

decolonization are ongoing processes that we need to critically reflect upon to strengthen and improve.

Critical nationalism attempts to acknowledge that indigenous literatures are vibrant, dynamic, and fluid and attempts to account for the processual nature of these traditions by critically examining how literary representations evolve from writer to writer across different cultures, languages, disciplines, genres, and time periods. This approach is, in many ways, difficult to implement as it tends to be broad in scope. For example, this dissertation examined the Dakota literary tradition across two centuries from the perspective of five writers and/or scholars from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as different fields of study who often used different literary genres to imagine and reimagine the Dakota nation. Indeed, each chapter of this dissertation could have easily been expanded into a dissertation project in its own right. Feasibly, this dissertation could have focused exclusively on the Pond brothers or just Riggs or perhaps it could have focused specifically on Deloria or even Cook-Lynn. Indeed, a much narrower scope would have made for a much easier research project as each writer and/or scholar discussed in this dissertation produced a tremendous amount of research on Dakota language and/or literature in their lifetime. However, this dissertation was not concerned with just one writer's interpretation of Dakota language and literature as a single representation – especially within the field of Native American Studies – is often misinterpreted as the most authentic or authoritative representation of that tribe or tribal community. Instead, it examined how five writers and/or scholars – Samuel and Gideon Pond, Stephen Riggs, Ella Deloria, and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn – contributed to our current knowledge and understanding of the Dakota literary tradition.

Chapter Three, “Claiming Dakota Language and Literature,” traced the evolution of the Dakota literary tradition from an oral to a written form. In this chapter, I demonstrated how three missionaries – the two Pond brothers and Riggs – deconstructed the Dakota literary tradition sentence by sentence, word by word, and eventually letter by letter. These three missionaries used a colonized alphabet to publish and disseminate the New and Old Testaments, which were then used to create the first Dakota dictionary and grammar. After slowly and systematically dismantling the Dakota language, missionaries used their colonized translations of the language to stake their claim on the Dakota literary tradition, reimagining it within the context of their own Western, largely Christian, worldview. All three of these missionaries used the Dakota dictionary and grammar to transcribe the Dakota oral storytelling tradition and eventually, translate it to the English language. These translations are problematic because many of the tools and resources used to construct them were based upon the tacit assumption that the Dakota literary tradition was an inferior knowledge system rapidly nearing extinction. As a result, anthropology – a discipline which tends to emphasize the tribal past – has been more interested in studying these stories than literary scholars. For the past two centuries, Dakota literature has been treated as a static cultural artifact as opposed to literature.

Missionaries documented and recorded these stories as evidence of the Dakota past, never imagining that they would continue to flourish in both their oral and written forms. This chapter primarily focused upon two specific oral stories – Mni Sosa and Fallen Star – that missionaries translated through a cold, detached, anthropological lens that helped reduce these vibrant, dynamic, and fluid stories to static cultural artifacts. Additionally, this lens also helped strip these stories of their literariness by situating them into a Western, largely Christian, framework that downplayed many of the unique cultural and linguistic nuances that make the

Dakota literary tradition special. Ironically, despite devaluing and erasing both the Dakota and literary elements of these translation, these early missionary translations are often regarded as the most authentic and accurate representation of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. In fact, they have been published and studied numerous times as such. This dissertation used the lens of critical nationalism to challenge these notions of authenticity and thus opened up a critical space to examine the work of other writers and scholars who have also contributed to the growth and development of the Dakota literary tradition, but whose literary work has often been pushed to the margins by these early authentic missionary translations.

Chapter Three, “Reclaiming Dakota Literature,” examined how modern Dakota anthropologist, linguist, and author Ella Deloria corrected and re-translated these early missionary translations. In this chapter, I demonstrated that Deloria, who grew up “steeped in Dakota lore,” immediately noticed some discrepancies between the oral stories she heard and the printed transcripts she read. The main discrepancies that she noticed and corrected in these early translations were overt Christian references that tended to downplay and/or undermine the Dakota way of life. For example, these references often elided the Dakota kinship system and seemed to relegate women to a subordinate role in Dakota society when, in fact, women were largely responsible in traditional Dakota society for preserving and perpetuating the Dakota way of life. Elden Lawrence firmly states: “The women of traditional societies were often the principal holders and transmitters of oral tradition” (6). Deloria reimagined this traditional role in a more modern tribal context and spent a lifetime trying to preserve the oral tradition in written form. In an attempt to accomplish this goal, she developed an innovative literary translation method that allowed her to emphasize the importance of the Dakota kinship system and women as culture keepers in Dakota society. Unfortunately, however, despite her best

efforts to publish these revised translations, they never saw the light of day as she was unable to publish her manuscript *Dakota Legends* during her lifetime.

Most scholars attribute Deloria's inability to publish much of her work to issues of sexism, racism, and the fact that her colleagues had already started to publish her research themselves. Deloria was a unique female figure working in a male-dominated field – anthropology – that did not seem willing to relinquish their control over Dakota language and literature. Indeed, Deloria's attempts to correct these translations were often shut down by her colleagues including her mentor Franz Boas. In many ways, then, Deloria's colleagues, like the missionaries before them, helped displace her and other Dakota women, from their traditional role in Dakota society as “the keeper of the tale.” Although Deloria did not get the opportunity to publish her own revised translations or even fully articulate her unique literary translation method, she spent much of her later years as an educator and lecturer teaching future generations – both on and off the reservation – about the importance and significance of the Dakota way of life. As an educator, she inspired future generations of Dakota writers and scholars to revitalize the Dakota literary tradition, including Cook-Lynn, whom often cites Deloria as a major influence on her writing.

Chapter Four, “Revitalizing the Dakota Literary Tradition,” explicated Cook-Lynn's 1999 book *Aurelia: A Crow Creek Trilogy*, which is firmly grounded in the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. The content of this trilogy is based on two traditional Dakotah oral stories – the Corn Wife and Mni Sosa. In this chapter, I argue that Cook-Lynn modernized these stories nearly two centuries after missionaries declared them extinct thus reiterating that the Dakotah oral storytelling tradition is alive and well in its print form. Additionally, she reinforced the existence of the Dakotah oral storytelling tradition by adopting an interlingual code-switching

style that helped incorporate “some sense of [the] Dakotah aesthetic into everyday life,” thereby challenging the dominant belief that the Dakotah language was extinct and inferior to the English language. Finally, Cook-Lynn solidified this point by situating the trilogy within a distinctly Dakota framework that mirrored the processual and ongoing nature of the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. Overall, Cook-Lynn’s deliberate use of these three literary devices demonstrate that she reimagined the Dakota oral storytelling tradition in a more modern form as print literature thus allowing her to reclaim and revitalize this tradition for future generations of writers and scholars. This strategy is empowering because Cook-Lynn used her writing to ensure the survival and continued development of Dakota language, literature, and life.

Interestingly, this chapter is, in many ways, the most “literary” chapter of the entire dissertation. It is the only chapter to conduct a close reading that focuses upon the literary elements of the Dakota novel (i.e., style, structure, and content). The missionary chapter of this dissertation, for example, primarily focused upon the different translation methods used to both deconstruct and reconstruct the Dakota literary tradition. Although I attempted to use the tools of literary analysis and Anderson’s theory of nationalism to shed light on this process, most of the writings analyzed in this section were anthropological texts that imagined the Dakota literary tradition as a static cultural artifact. It is not entirely surprising, then, that the missionary chapter of this dissertation seemed to provide more anthropological/historical insight into the Dakota literary tradition than critical analysis or discourse into the text itself as the missionaries stationed at Lac Qui Parle did not view – or attempt to portray – the Dakota literary tradition as literature.

These early missionary translation efforts were largely successful in their attempts to strip the Dakota literary tradition of its literariness. It took Deloria and Cook-Lynn more than a

century to reclaim and revitalize Dakota literature on their own terms. Although Deloria attempted to restore the literariness of the Dakota literary tradition to her own translations, her literary translation efforts went largely unnoticed and unappreciated. In many ways, then, Deloria managed to reclaim (i.e. preserve) the Dakota literary tradition, but her colleagues prevented her from revitalizing this tradition (i.e., implementing this tradition and making it accessible) for future generations. Although Deloria failed to publish her literary translation efforts, she used her role as an educator to teach future generations about the relevance and importance of the Dakota literary tradition. Deloria's influence allowed Cook-Lynn to reimagine the Dakota oral storytelling tradition in a more modern form as three (now four) novellas. In many ways, then, Cook-Lynn succeeded where her predecessors had failed as she did manage to restore the literariness of the Dakota literary tradition. Meanwhile, missionaries refused to acknowledge the unique aesthetic, linguistic, and stylistic form of Dakota literature and Deloria had her own literary restoration efforts suppressed. Tracing the evolution of the Dakota literary tradition across two centuries illuminates the process that transformed it from a legitimate knowledge system to a delegitimized cultural artifact to literature with the power and potential to strengthen and empower the Dakota nation.

By tracing the evolution of Dakota language and literature from an oral to a written form, this dissertation emphasized the resilience and resonance of this rich and complex literary tradition. Although missionaries interrupted and colonized this tradition, they also helped preserve it and made it more accessible for future writers and/or scholars to improve and build upon. Over the past two centuries, this tradition evolved from an oral to a written form. Despite efforts to reduce this tradition to a static cultural artifact it has endured, evolving into different literary genres that still have the power and potential to sustain the Dakota nation. Many

modern Dakota writers and/or scholars are still using the linguistic and literary tools fashioned by the missionaries in new and creative ways today. However, this time, many of them are using these tools to decolonize themselves and strengthen and empower their communities.

The Road Ahead: Expanding the Dakota Literary Tradition

As a legitimate knowledge system, as opposed to an extinct cultural artifact, the Dakota literary tradition raises several important questions for scholars in a number of different fields. First and foremost, it is important to note that five writers alone do not make a literary tradition. This dissertation just scratches the surface as there are many other Dakota/Lakota/Nakota writers and scholars who have contributed to the Dakota literary tradition. Some of these writers have been published and are well-known such as Charles Eastman, Zitkala Sa, Westerman, Red Shirt and Marshall. However, there are many more writers and/or scholars who have not been published or studied. Furthermore, it is important to note that the two to four Dakota literary genres delineated by Deloria and Cook-Lynn are not the only genres that constitute the Dakota literary tradition. Wilson points out that there is another major category of stories known as *oḱicize* or stories of war that have yet to be explored (64). Red Shirt explores these narratives in her upcoming book: *George Sword's Warrior Narratives*. These new literary genres suggest the possibility of other potential categories within the Dakota literary tradition, and also raises the question about stories within the Lakota literary tradition, which is an extension of Dakota literature. Clearly, there are still many questions left for literary scholars to answer.

In addition to these questions, literary scholars are also now responsible for developing a new literary methodology to analyze and critically engage with the rich and complex Dakota literary tradition. Critical nationalism is a potentially useful literary approach that provides a

broad overview of the Dakota literary tradition. There are also other critical lenses that might be more useful for examining more specific details within the text. For example, this dissertation revealed interesting gender dynamics that need to be explored further. Although I did not intend to focus explicitly upon issues of gender while conducting my research, a recurring trend in this dissertation is that white male writers often silenced the voices of female Dakota writers and scholars, who have spent the past few decades struggling to reclaim their voice, both inside and outside the academy. Obviously, there is still much work to be done within the field of Dakota literary studies.

For Native American Studies scholars, the ethical issues of how to responsibly and respectfully engage with tribal communities – without exploiting or misrepresenting them – is an ongoing issue. What can and cannot be analyzed and study? What is and is not part of the tribal experience? For example, I struggled to decide where to mark the origins of the Dakota literary tradition – with the oral tradition, when it appeared in print, with the publication of the first Dakota writer or with the spoken translators who helped transformed this tradition from an oral to a written form. Furthermore, this dissertation emphasizes that issues of authenticity and authority still plague many Native writers, scholars, and communities. More discussion is needed to address these issues and figure out how to overcome them

This dissertation also raises interesting issues for anthropologists who – as demonstrated in the case of Ella Deloria and Franz Boaz – are often unwilling to relinquish their control of the Dakota literary tradition. Pauline Turner Strong argues that the field of anthropology has started to shift dramatically, since Vine Deloria’s scathing critique of “anthropologists and other friends” in *Custer Died for Your Sins*, as more Native scholars enter the discipline. She reasons that these new anthropologists are placing a greater emphasis on “multi-cited and comparative

research” that is improving the field of anthropology and making room for more Native voices and new methodologies that attempt to capture a more “realistic” representation of indigenous life (261). Hopefully, these new approaches will help dismantle the issues of authenticity and authority that have plagued Dakota literature over the past two centuries and silenced many of the other voices that have contributed to this rich and complex Dakota literary tradition.

Translation Studies also offers a useful space for analyzing and critically engaging with the Dakota literary tradition. In addition to being transformed from an oral to a written form, the Dakota literary tradition was also translated across several different languages and has been corrected and revised by numerous scholars over the past two centuries. Over the past two hundred years, Dakota language and literature have been subjected to literal translations, free translations, and literary translations to name a few methods. What effect have all these translations and revisions had on the structure and meaning of Dakota language? How have these translation efforts and revisions impacted the way the language is understood and taught today? In many ways, these are questions that only translation theorists and Dakota/Lakota language instructors can start to answer.

Perhaps, most importantly, this dissertation emphasizes the need to make the Dakota literary tradition more accessible to teachers and students at both the mainstream and tribal college levels. Today, Riggs’ *Dakota Grammar with Text and Ethnography*, Walker’s *Lakota Myth*, and Deloria’s *Dakota Texts* (which was published using Boas problematic literal and free translation methods) are the most widely circulated examples of the Dakota literary tradition. Intentionally or unintentionally, these three texts tend to ossify and delegitimize the Dakota oral storytelling tradition. Meanwhile, the rest of the translations and/or literary representations studied in this dissertation are currently out of print. The Pond brothers’ translations are buried

in an archive at the American Philosophical Society and thus are not easily accessible to the public. Over the past thirty years, Deloria's work has experienced resurgence with the publication of *Waterlily* and *The Dakota Way of Life*. Additionally, in the late nineties, Julian Rice published several of her literal translations for Boas; however, none of her literary translations, which she translated on her own without outside assistance from Boas or his colleagues, have ever seen the light of day. However, these translations are often dismissed by scholars as children's literature. This dissertation demonstrates that these stories are much more sophisticated than fairy tales for children and are, indeed, the reflection of a gifted translator who was very much ahead of her time. Recently, Cook-Lynn's trilogy fell out of print, making it difficult to teach even the most contemporary literary work of these five writers. The inaccessibility of these materials emphasizes the urgent need to publish an anthology that will make these texts more readily available and also contextualize these stories to highlight the unique linguistic and literary elements of Dakota literature.

Conclusion

In all, the purpose of this dissertation was to reconstruct the Dakota literary tradition, while simultaneously examining how it functions as literature. It succeeded in this goal by reconstructing the Dakota literary tradition from the very first moment it appeared in print in 1836 to the present. This dissertation used the tools of literary analysis to explore how the Dakota literary tradition functions as literature. The tools of literary analysis helped illuminate the cultural and linguistic differences between early and more modern representations of the Dakota literary traditions. Translation theory also helped shed light on these differences and

emphasized the need for more research on how the translation process impacted the meaning and context of the Dakota literary tradition.

This dissertation also modeled a new literary lens, critical nationalism, to analyze and interpret Dakota literature. This new lens attempted to sidestep the issues of cultural authenticity and authority that often plagues the field of Native American literary studies by critically examining *how* the Dakota literary tradition has evolved across different cultures, languages, disciplines, and genres as opposed to focusing upon *who* constructed these representations. This shift from *who* to *how* the text functions helped illuminate the rich and complex nature of the Dakota literary tradition. Most importantly, it helped honor and celebrate the Dakota literary tradition for the legitimate knowledge system that it is.

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Appendix I: “The Star Born – A Dakota Myth.”

Riggs, Stephen. Iapi Oaye, Volume X, Number 6, Page 74

A people had this camp; and there were two women lying out of doors and looking up to the shining stars. One of them said to the other, “I wish that very large and bright shining star was my husband.” The other said, “I wish that star that shines less brightly were my husband.” Whereupon they say both were immediately taken up. They found themselves in a beautiful country, which was full of beautiful twin flowers. They found that the star which shone most brightly was a large man, while the other was only a young man. So they each had a husband; and one became with child. In that country the teepsinna, with large, beautiful stalks were abundant. The wife of the large star wanted to dig them, but her husband forbade it, saying “No one does here.”

Then the encampment moved; and the women with child, when she had pitched her tent and came inside to lay the mats, etc., saw there a beautiful teepsinna, and she said to herself, “I will dig this-no one will see it.” So she took her digging stick and dug the teepsinna. When she pulled it out immediately the country opened out and she came through, and falling down to the earth, they say, her belly burst open. And so the woman died; but the child did not die, but lay there stretched out.

An old man came that way, and seeing the child alive took it up, put it in his blanket and went home. When he arrived he said, “old woman, I saw something today that made my heart feel badly.” “What was it?” said his wife. And he replied, “A woman lay dead with her belly bursted, and a little boy child lay there kicking.” “Why did you not bring it home, old man” she said. He answered, “Here it is,” and took it out of his blanket. His wife said, “old man, lets raise

this child. “We will swing it around the tent,” the old man said, and whirled it up through the smoke hole. It went whirling around and fell down, and then came creeping into the tent. But again he took it and threw it up through the top of the tent. Then it got up and came into the tent walking. Again the old man whirled him out, and then he came in a boy with some green sticks and said, “grandfather I wish you would make me arrows, and he killed a great many buffalo, and they made a large tepee and built up a high sleeping place in the back part, and they were very rich in dried meat.

Then the old man said, “Old woman I am glad we are well off; I will proclaim it abroad.” And so when the morning came he went up to the top of the house and sat, and said, “I, I have abundance laid up. The fat of the big guts I chew.” And they say that was the origin of the meadow lark, a bird which is called tasiyakapopo. It has a yellow breast and black middle, which is the yellow of the morning, and they say the black stripe is made by a smooth buffalo horn worn for a necklace.

Then the young man said, “Grandfather, I want to go traveling.” “Yes,” the old man replied, “when one is young is the time to go and visit other people.” The young man went, and came to where people lived, and lo! they were engaged in shooting arrows through a hoop. And there was a young man who was simply looking on, and so he stood beside him and looked on. By and by he said, “My friend, let us go to your house.” So he went home with him and came to his house, this young man also had been raised by his grandmother, and lived with her they say. Then he said, “Grandmother, I have brought my friend home with me; get him something to eat.” But the grandmother said, “Grandchild, what shall I do?” The other young man then said, “How is it, grandmother?” She replied, “The people are about to die of thirst. All who go for water come not back again.” The star-born said, “My friend, take a kettle; we will go for water.” The

old woman interposed, "With difficulty I have raised my grandchild." But he said, "You are afraid of trifles," and so went with the Star-born. By and by they reached the side of the lake, and by the water of the lake stood troughs full of water. And he called out, "You who they say have killed every one who came for water, whither have you gone? I have come for water."

The immediately whither they went was not manifest. Behold there was a long house which was extended, and it was full of young men and young women. Some of them were dead and some were in the agonies of death. "How did you come here?" he said. The replied, "What do you mean? We came for water and something swallowed us up."

Then on the head of the young man something kept striking. "What is this?" he said. "Get away," they replied, "that is the heart." So he drew out his knife and cut it to pieces. Suddenly something made a great noise. In the great body these were swallowed up, but when the heart was cut to pieces and died death came to the body. So he punched a hole in the side and came out, bringing the young men and the young women. So the people were very thankful and gave him two maidens. But he said, "I am journeying; my friend here will marry them," and so he gave them both to him. Then in the middle of the camp they put up a tent, and the young man with his grandmother and the two young women were brought to it.

Then the young man- Star-born- proceeded on his journey, they say. And again he found a young man and standing without where they were shooting through a hoop. And so, saying he would look on with his friend, he went and stood by him. Then he said "My friend, let us go home," and so he went with him to his teepee. "Grandmother, I have brought my friend home with me," he said, "hunt up something for him to eat." But the grandmother replied, "How shall I do as you say?" "how is it?" he said. "This people are perishing for wood; when any one goes for wood he never comes home again," was the reply.

Then he said, "My friend, take the packing strap; we will go for wood." But the old woman protested, "This one my grandchild I have raised with difficulty." But, "Old woman, what you are afraid of are trifles," he said, and went with the young man. "I am going to bring wood," he said; "if any of you wish to go, come along."

"The young man who came from somewhere says this," they said, and so followed after him.

They had now reached the wood, and they found it tied up in bundles, which he had the people carry home, but he himself stood and said, "You who killed every one who came to this wood, whatever you are, whither have you gone?" Then suddenly where he went was not manifest. And lo! a tent, and in it were young men and young women; some were eating and some were alive waiting. He said to them, "How come you here?" And they answered, "What do you mean? We came for wood and something brought us home. Now, you also are lost."

Ho looked behind him, and lo! there was a hole; and, "What is this?" he said. "Stop," they said, "that is the thing itself." He drew out an arrow and transfixed it. Then suddenly it opened out, and it was the war of an owl that had thus shut them up, when it was killed It opened out. Then he said, "young men and young women, come out," and with them he came home.

Then again they gave him two maidens; but he said again, "My friend will marry them." And so the young man with his grandmother and the two women were placed in a tent in the middle of the camp.

And now again he proceeded on his journey. And he came to the dwelling place of a people, and again he found them "shooting the hoop." And there stood a young man looking on, to whom he joined himself as special friend. While they stood together he said, "Friend, let us

go to your home,” and so he went with him to his tent. Then the young man said, “grandmother, I have brought my friend home with me; get him something to eat.” For this young man also had been raised by his grandmother. She says, “Where shall I get it from, that you say that?” “Grandmother, how is it that you say so?” interposed the stranger. To which she replied “Waziya treats thus people very badly; when they go out and kill buffalo he takes it all, and now they are starving to death.”

Then he said, “Grandmother, go to him and say, “My grandchild has come on a journey and has nothing to eat, and so he has sent me to you.” So the old woman went and standing afar off, called, “Waziya, my grandchild has come on a journey and has nothing to eat, and so has sent me here.” But he replied, “Bad old woman, get you home; what do you mean to come here?” The old woman came home crying, and saying that Waziya threatened to kill some of her relations. Then the Star-born said, “My friend, take your strap, we will go there.” The old woman interposed with, “I have with difficulty raised my grandchild.” The grandchild replied to this by saying, “Grandmother is very much afraid,” and so they two went together. When they came to the house of Waziya they found a great deal of dried meat outside. He put as much on his friend as he could carry, and sent him home with it, and then he himself entered the tepee of Waziya, and said to him “Waziya, why did you answer my grandmother as you did when I sent her?” But Waziya only looked angry.

Hanging there was a bow of ice. “Waziya, why do you keep this?” he said. To which he replied, “Hands off; whoever touches that gets a broken arm.” So he thought, “I will see if my arm is broken,” and taking the ice bow he made it snap into pieces, and then started home.

The next morning all the people went on the chase and killed many buffaloes. But, as he had done before, the Waziya went all over the field of slaughter and gathered up the meat and

put it in his blanket. The “Star-born” that had come to them was cutting up a fat cow. Waziya, on his round of filling his blanket with meat, came and stood and said, “Who cuts up this?” “I am dressing that,” he answered. Waziya said, addressing himself to the young man, Fallen Star, “From whence have you sprung that you act so haughtily?” “And whence have you sprung from Waziya that you act proudly.” He retorted. Then Waziya said, “Fallen Star, whoever points his finger at me dies.” So he said to himself, “I will point my finger at him and see if I dies.” He did so, but it was no whit different.

Then he on his part said “Waziya, whoever points his finger at me, his hand becomes paralyzed.” So Waziya thought, “I will point my finger and see if I am paralyzed.” This he did and his forearm was rendered entirely useless. He did so with his other hand, and it too was destroyed even to the elbow. Then Fallen Star drew out his knife and cut up Waziya’s blanket, and all the buffalo meat he has gathered there fell out. Fallen Star called to the people, “henceforth kill and carry home.” So the people dressed this meat and carried it to their tents.

The next morning it was reported that the blanket of Waziya, which had been cut to pieces, was sewed up by his wife and he was about to shake it. He stood with his face toward the north and shook his blanket, and the wind blew from the north, and the snow fell all around about the camp so that the people were all snowed in and very much troubled, and they said: “We did live in some fashion before, but a young man has acted so that now we are undone.” But he said, “Grandmother, find me a fan.” So, a road being made under the snow, she went and said to the people, “My grandchild says he wants a fan.” “Whatever he may mean by saying this?” they said, and gave him one.

The snow reached up to the top of the lodges, and so he punched a hole up through and sat on the ridge of the lodge, and while the wind was blowing to the south he sat and fanned

himself and made the wind come from the south, and the heat became great, and the snow went as if boiling water had been poured on it, and it melted away, and all over the ground there was a mist, and Waziya with his wife and children all died of the heat. But the little, youngest child of Waziya, with the smooth belly, took refuge in the hole made by a tent pole, where there was frost, and so lived. And so they say he is all that there is of Waziya now. So also this myth is called the Fallen Star.

Appendix II: Fallen Star

FALLEN STAR

FALLEN STAR

had

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So they spread their beds on the clean grass in the very centre and lay down to sleep; but first they must exchange confidences, as young girls will. So they lay talking and watching the stars that shone brightly through the smoke-opening where the flaps had been left spread out for the night, for ventilation. They were especially

near tonight, almost human, those stars.

After ^{silence} a while, one girl said idly, "Cousin, do you see that biggest, most brilliant star? I am sure he must be the chief. I wish he were my husband!"

And the other answered, "Yes. And do you see the one near it? Not so big, nor so bright, but sparkling continuously? I wish he were my husband!"

Soon afterward they both fell asleep. And, lo and behold, they woke in the heaven-world where all the stars were people, and each girl was the wife of the star of her own choosing.

This upper world was both beautiful and strange. And the tipsila, usually something of a task to find on earth, grew everywhere, ^(abundantly large) ~~with its~~ ^{with their flowers much larger up there,} ~~so~~ ^{now,} ~~entirely~~ ^{by} ~~dotting~~ the entire landscape. The handsome male plants stood out conspicuously far above the grasses; and invariably their shy wives, in plainer dress, were close by, just as they are on earth.

Since Dakota women can never resist digging tipsila, the two cousins prepared speedily to do so ^{now,} ^{by} borrowing digging sticks from their neighbors. But their husbands returned just then.

"No, do not dig them. Nobody does so, up here. Why not pick instead the beautiful twin-flowers that are so plentiful?" they advised. And indeed the purple furry-stemmed and petalled spring flowers were thick everywhere, though it was long past their season ~~down~~ below. ^{So they picked twin-flowers instead.}

~~But~~ One day when the Star Nation moved camp to a

new site, the Dakota women arranged to place their tipis side by side. And when the wife of the Great Star, now with child, entered her tipi to lay the mats and robes for the beds, she saw a magnificent tipsila, growing in the very centre. The temptation was too great.

"I will dig it. Inside my own lodge here, who will ever know of it?" she thought.

So she brought in a digging stick and worked it into the ground far enough to uproot the plant by overturning the sod all around it. But lo! directly she did this, she made a hole that proved to be an opening in the sky through which she fell headlong down, down, down to earth!

And there she lay dead, her young body broken by the fall. And, near by, her infant son lay kicking and crying, still linked to his lifeless mother. ^{Thus} ~~So~~ little Fallen Star was born.

^{away was the tipi of}
Not far ~~from here there lived~~ ^{an} aged couple and every morning the husband went forth to walk about in the woods for whatever he might find. So once again he was going along when he heard a feeble infant-voice crying. He followed the sound ^{till he} ~~and~~ found the child and its dead mother. ^{So} ~~He~~ placed the tiny child in his bosom inside his robe, and took it home.

"Wife, something I have seen this day which makes me sad," he began. "Why! What is it, old man?" she said, ^{amusing} impatiently, for it was his ^{way} to be slow of speech.

"I saw today a beautiful young woman. She lay dead upon the ground. Her body was broken; and a babe lay

near by, kicking and crying. It was a man child," he finished.

"You stupid old man, why must you take so long? Why didn't you take him up and bring him home?" she almost screamed, and now began to whimper to hold back the tears, at the thought of the pity of it all. But just then the old man took the red squirming infant out of his blanket. "This is he," he said.

Then she laughed to see. "O, old man, what if, at our age, we should manage to bring him up?" she exclaimed.

"We can; and we will," he answered. "I shall roll him down the tipi-side."

"A yes, do! Do!" She was all eagerness. So he stood up inside the tipi, and tossed the babe upward through the smoke opening at the top; ^{and} ~~he~~ rolled down the ^{outside} ~~side~~, to the ground. In a moment or so, a child in the creeping stage came in through the doorway.

~~But~~ Mercilessly he picked him up and threw him upward again. And lo, presently a small boy ran nimbly in. A third time, and they heard him bounce and bump down the side, and strike the ground outside with a thud; and a very talkative boy ran in with some twigs in his hand.

"Grandfather, make me some toy arrows at once!" he begged. But for the fourth and last time, the old man picked him up. It was not easy now, but with great effort he heaved him up out of the opening. Then the two sat ~~and~~ waiting. For a long time they sat waiting. But finally a handsome youth entered the tipi, carrying some saplings suitable for arrows. "Make these for me, grandfather. I want to go hunting," he said.

How happy the old pair were now, for they had a grandson, grown up from helpless infancy to his full stature, all in a day! They hastened to take him into their home and into their lives. The youth proved himself an excellent hunter, and brought in an abundance of game daily, so that very soon the little household was well provisioned, with many skins for new garments and a tent, and with much food stored away.

In the honor-place the grandmother built the youth a bed banked high with the softest robes. And many friends and strangers came to visit, and nobody was turned away without food. And the old man said,

"Wife, so full of joy am I, let me stand on some high hill, and proclaim my good luck to the world, by inviting all to a feast," and she replied, "Then do so."

Accordingly he did so; and invited all who heard him to a feast. And they shared in the great supply of food which Fallen Star had provided, and all went away happy.

Soon after, Fallen Star grew restless, as young men will. "Grandfather, I want to go traveling," he told him. And the old man was wise. "That is as it should be, grandson. When one is ~~young~~ ^{young}, one should do his journeying; ~~and~~ when he is old, let him sit at home. Yes, you shall go."

So Fallen Star set out to see the world. After some days, he came to a people in a tribal camp nestled close in the bend of a river. In the open space within the circle of tipis, community games were going on. ^{He entered and} ~~Some~~ reached a group of men who were watching a hoop-and-stick contest, and stood next to a young man of perhaps his own age.

"Well, I may as well stop here, next to my friend, and look on with him," he said to himself, but loud enough to be heard. And the young man moved quietly over to give him room, as he hoped he would. So the two stood, exchanging opinions about the game.

After it was over, the friend asked Fallen Star where he came from. And upon learning that he was a traveler from another tribe, he took him home to his grandmother's tipi, for he was an orphan, raised by his grandmother, ^{whose lodge was his} ~~Star~~ ^{own home.}

As they approached it, he called out, "Grandmother, I am bringing my friend Fallen Star. Hurry and set food before him, for he has journeyed far today." But the old woman replied in distress, "Alas, grandson, what can I do? You know the curse we are under!"

Fallen Star asked what it was. It seemed that the entire tribe was slowly dying for lack of water. For whenever anyone went for water, after he had dipped it out and turned about to come home, he was no longer seen.

^{Here} ~~This~~ ^{for fallen star -} was a challenge, "Get a water container. You and I are going for water!" he said to his friend.

Whereupon the old woman started to wail. "Alas, grandson! What will become of you, after all the trouble it cost me to bring you up!" And she bent low where she stood, and wept, letting her tears fall of themselves to the ground.

But the youth said lightly, "Come now, grandmother, do not be always worrying over trifling things!" and he departed with Fallen Star.

long since

Near the stream there stood wooden troughs filled with very clear water, for the sand had settled in the bottom. It sparkled in the sun. Fallen Star dipped his container into it, calling out defiantly as he did so,

"Whither have you gone? You who are said to punish all ~~that~~ come for water? For I ~~have~~ Fallen Star have come for water!"

Forthwith the two young men vanished, and for a time even they themselves did not know where they were. But afterwards they found themselves in a great room. It was very long, extending far into the distance, and seemed made of logs ~~and~~ parallel. And along the wall ~~set~~ countless youths and maidens ~~and~~ imprisoned there for having tried to get water.

Doubtless there was a time when these were beautiful and vigorous; but now they were in a piteous state. Some were already dead ~~and~~ the rest were about to die. They had had no water or food since they came in.

Fallen Star questioned those who were still strong enough to talk. "Now, how is it that you are all here?" And they said, "You ought to know, ~~for~~ you have been swallowed by the monster, just as we were, for getting water." So the two latest arrivals sat down at the end, and Fallen Star leaned back on the wall to rest his head. As he did so, he felt and heard something ticking regularly.

"Why, what's this?" he asked, jumping up. "Hush!" they whispered, "that is the ^{heart} of It!"

Immediately he took ~~out~~ his knife ^{out} of its sheath, and boldly slashed and sliced it to pieces, to the horror of all who sat within. It stopped ticking then; and the whole

Missing Page 8

seen to it that all things had been accomplished correctly,
as if for him; and ^{he} traveled on for many days, coming at length
to another tribe in a great circular ^{summer} camp on the open prairie.

In the centre was great commotion and much cheering and
laughter. From time to time, the entire multitude of onlookers
moved in droves from one point to another. When he went to see
the cause of it all, he found ^{that} a shinney game ^{was} being played by
Dakota women. Handsome, lithe-bodied women ran, swiftly, as
one might draw a line, here and there over the field, intent on-
ly on the ball. It was truly a sight to see.

He came down
Fallen Star took his place amid the spectators, and saw
that the one near him was an especially agreeable looking young
man. So he remarked, as though to himself, "Here will I stop
a while, and look on with my friend."

At once the young man courteously moved to give him room.
When the game was over, he said, "Friend, where do you come
from?" And when he realized that Fallen Star was a visitor,
^{even} not from the next tribe, but ^{far} beyond it, farther off, he invited
him to his home ~~at once~~ with no delay.

"Grandmother, hasten some food. My friend here is a travel-
er from far off," he called, as he entered. But the old woman
shook her head sadly, as ~~she~~ ^{she} greeted Fallen Star -

"Alas, grandson, it is good you have come to visit. But
in our tribe, the people are dying for want of ~~food~~ ^{food}. Whoever
goes for ~~fuel~~ ^{wood} fails to return so that by now we are not able to
cook our ~~feed~~ ^{meat}. And when winter comes, we shall probably freeze
to death. How can I ~~cook to give~~ ^{prepare} you food?"

But Fallen Star was undaunted by this news. "Take up a packstrap," he told his friend, "we are going after wood!"

The old woman began to raise objections, but ended by weeping helplessly, being old and easily ~~quiesced to carrying~~ ^{provoked to tears}.

"Alas ^{my} grandson, with what difficulty I brought him up! Now he will surely die!" she wailed.

But the youth laughed away her fears, "Stop worrying, grandmother," you only ~~bring~~ ^{beckon to} trouble, ^{by} fearing trifling things. I shall be all right, with my friend here," and he left with ~~him~~ ^{his}.

As the two walked through camp, Fallen Star cried out, "I am going after firewood. If there be any who wish to join me, come on!" And the word passed rapidly from tipi to tipi,

"A young man..... Oh, very fearless! he has come from somewhere away..... he says this....." and soon from here and there other young braves came running out to join him with pack straps thrown over their shoulder.

They arrived in the wood. All about lay great bundles of fuel which had been gathered and strapped ready for carrying home--and then abandoned. Some apparently had lain there a long time, while others had been gathered only recently. Those who came with Fallen Star took up these bundles and started home, being told by Fallen Star to go. But he remained behind and when the rest were well out of the wood, he cried ^{out in} ~~aloud~~ ^{voice} that ~~it~~ rang and echoed down the river,

"Whither are you gone, you who are said to kill those ~~that~~ come for firewood? For I, Fallen Star, have come for firewood!"

Straightway he vanished from view, and himself did

not know where he was. After a time, however, he found himself in a great round room. And it was filled with youths and maidens. Some were dead and others were dying from long imprisonment.

As Fallen Star was about to take a seat, he ^{noticed} ~~saw~~ over-
head a spot which appeared to be drawn very tightly together in
a pucker.

^{was taking}
While he ~~took~~ careful aim at it,
~~He aimed his arrow at it, but then~~ the ones who saw
him laid hands on him to restrain him. "Take care," they ad-
monished, "for that is It." But even so he let fly the arrow
which struck the pursed spot and stood impaled in the folds.
And at once the tipi-like room opened out and the prisoners
stepped out into daylight again. For it was none other than
the Owl ~~Man~~ who had thus caught the youth of the tribe and
thrown them into his enormous ear and kept them trapped there.

^{hastened home}
They ~~ran in eager haste~~ to the village; and there
was great joy everywhere, And again these people gave ^{Fallen Star} ~~him~~ their
two finest maidens, revered ^{for} their chastity, that he might
take them for his wives.

But he refused them. "Ah, ~~but~~ they are lovely! Not
every man gets ^{the} tribe's two ^{best maidens} ~~loveliest~~ for his wives. But,
alas, for me they can not be, for I am a roving man. There-
fore my friend here shall take them to wife." So all the rites
and formalities for a young chieftain's taking a wife were
carried out for the humbly-reared youth who had befriended
Fallen Star.

As for him, he went on farther, and in due time ^{he}
arrived at another encampment. ~~This was the fourth tribe.~~
~~he was to know.~~ Here a moccasin game was being played. Men

--12--
participants

crowded around the seated players, intent on watching every movement of the skillful players whose sleight-of-hand in hiding the "moccasin" was unbelievable. Fallen Star pushed his way in as politely as that could be done, and stopped, saying as if to himself,

"I'll just stand here and watch, over my friend's shoulder," and at once the young man moved to give him room. When the game was over, he invited him home.

"Hurry, grandmother, here is my friend, Fallen Star, who has come from a far-off tribe. He is my guest, so get him some food!" he called. But the old woman came limping around from the back of the tipi, looking greatly troubled. "Alas, how can I provide food for your guest?" she ~~said~~ *said*.

Fallen Star asked why not, and he learned that the tribe was being dominated by the cruel cold-god.

"Waziya lives near us," the old woman told him, "and abuses this tribe beyond endurance. Whenever there is a chase and the people are butchering the animals they have killed, he goes along claiming all the meat. Thus it is that he alone has food in abundance stored about his home, while all the people are perishing slowly."

Fallen Star was indignant. "Grandmother, go to the lodge of Waziya and tell him this: "Fallen Star, my grandson, has come on a journey but I have no food for him, so he has sent me to tell you about it!"

In ~~fear~~ ^{surprise} and trembling she went forth, and stopped ~~well~~ ^{at} a distance from the cold-god's home, too timid to

go nearer, and called out weakly, "Waziya, my grandson Fallen Star has come on a journey but I have no food for him, so he has sent me to tell you about it."

Waziya was furious that she should dare to annoy him. "You worthless old thing, get you gone, and do not come here again, making a nuisance of yourself!" he shouted, causing her to hobble back, shaking *all the way*

She came home crying, "I think he intends to kill me outright--the way he yelled at me who am a *timid* ~~cautious~~ woman by nature!" she sobbed, "I can not stand to be shouted at!"

Fallen Star instructed his friend to get a pack-strap and go with him. Together they arrived at Waziya's tipi. All around outside the giant lodge great bales of dried jerked meat lay in high piles. Fallen Star took several of them and strapped them on his friend's back, and sent him home to the grandmother. "Tell her to cook some and have it ready," he said.

Then he entered the lodge where Waziya sat scowling, cross-legged, in his bed-space. What is this, Waziya?" he asked ~~curiously~~, pointing to a huge bow of ice which hung from a tipi-pole.

"Let that be!" Waziya warned, "for whoever touches it gets a broken arm!"

I will touch it, and see if I do get a broken arm, thought Fallen Star. So he took it down, but it was ~~so~~ cold and ~~freezer~~ *freezer* his hands, and ~~heavy~~ *was* withal, so that it slipped from his ~~hand~~ *grip*. And ~~because it was also brittle, it~~ crashed to the ground, shattered to countless bits; but Fallen Star's arm remained whole.

Next day there was a communal hunt and many buffaloes were killed. But as the men were busy cutting up the meat, Waziya walked about in and out among the groups at work and selected the best of all the meat and took it, placing it inside his immense robe which he wore ~~app~~ held ^{close} ~~about~~ his body by a strong belt.

When he came to the fat cow which Fallen Star had killed and was now skinning, he asked, "And whose is this ~~one~~?" Fallen Star, without looking up, replied, "I am dressing this one. You may tell by that that it is mine!"

And Waziya was put out by his insolence. "Where do you hail from, Fallen Star, that you dare to be so haughty and impudent even to Waziya?" he asked.

But Fallen Star came back at him with, "And you, Waziya, what makes you think yourself so important?"

The cold-god went on, "Fallen Star, let me tell you this: Whoever defies me by pointing a finger at me, dies on the spot!"

Fallen Star said in turn, "Waziya, know this: Whoever points a finger at Fallen Star becomes paralyzed to the elbow!"

"Why!" and Waziya in fury pointed his finger and his arm was useless instantly. Frantically he tried with the other hand, and that arm also became utterly limp and without life.

This emboldened Fallen Star to go further. He took his knife and slashed the helpless Waziya's blanket into strips, causing all the meat he had taken from the people and packed

away in it to fall to earth with a thud, all about him, The people who had watched in amazement ran and took up their meat and hurried home to their starving families. It is said that there was great feasting and much happiness in every tipi that night.

On the morrow, the herald went along proclaiming that Waziya's wife had pieced together her man's blanket which Fallen Star had almost ruined; and that presently she would stand outside and shake it out to rid it of lint, grasses and other bits.

All the people watched, apprehensive, as she stepped outside and stood facing the north, and began shaking the robe with a mighty effort, for it was very big.

And straightway, like an answer, a strong northwind began to blow, and with it appeared particles of snow. Both wind and snow gradually increased, and ~~and~~ soon a supernatural snow-storm was in full ~~action~~ ^{force}. The snow piled steadily higher and higher until at last only the tops of the tallest tipis were visible; a cluster of lodge-pole tips alone indicating where the smaller ones stood.

Then the people became frightened, and began to complain, as people will, of the one who but lately they had acclaimed as their saviour.

"Alas! We did live, after a fashion at least, formerly..... but now we are undone!" they wailed.

Still Fallen Star was undaunted. "Grandmother, go out and find me a fan," he ordered. Now, with rare foresight a network of passages had been maintained from tipi to tipi under the snow, so she was able to walk along those tunnels,

looking for a fan.

"My grandson Fallen Star needs a fan!" she planned to say at each tipi. But at the very first place she found a group of older men gathered for the evening. To them she put her quest.

One said, "Well, give him this!" and he threw her an eagle's wing such as men on the decline of life carried habitually, as essential to their dress as a pipe and kinnikinick pouch.

Others commented, drily, "Whatever he wants with a fan, this kind of weather! He is a queer lad..... well, he can hardly harm us much more!"

When the old woman returned with the fan, Fallen Star removed all his clothing and climbed naked to the top of the tipi, ~~there he sat down at the place~~ ^{where} all the poles are tied together, ~~he~~ seated himself, ~~there,~~ facing the south; and began to fan himself, in all that snow.

Soon he brought forth a hint of warmth, ^{and} ~~on~~ a south breeze which quietly struggled with the boisterous northwind for supremacy; and by its very stealth, overcame it.

A tremendous heat-wave, a supernatural thing, swept over the land now, turning the snow into water at a magic speed, equalled only when ~~one throws~~ ^{is poured} boiling water [^] over a pile of snow. In no time at all, what was so shortly before a solid white now became a flowing sea.

And only Fallen Star, nude and fanning himself, was comfortable in all that heat.

All the people suffered somewhat in the heat and the flood; but those who fared hardest were Waziya himself and his wife and their many mischievous children. Running amuck in an effort to escape the unaccustomed heat, they died by the way. Only the smooth-bellied little last-born of Waziya, the cold-god, managed to escape with his life.

Neglected by his elders who were too frenzied to think of him, he ran about by himself, trying to find safety. At last he fell into a deep hole at the base of a tipi-pole, and there he found it ^{comfortable} ~~better~~; for the heat did not reach the frost down there.

And so he alone survived. And if you think it gets cold in winter now, you are sampling only such cold as a weak little last-born can bring. Just think what winter used to be long ago, when Waziya, the king of the north, ^{and} ~~assisted by~~ his wife and stalwart sons, ^{was} ~~was~~ alive to bring it on!

Appendix III: Ta-Te, The Wooing of the Wind God

Ta-te, the Wind God's Wooing.

Down in the Lower World, where the vast tribe was ruled by Waziya, there was great common rejoicing because the chief's wife, Wakanka, ~~had~~ gave birth to a baby, a girl. Immediately great feasts ~~and gifts were~~ were given, and the old men of the tribe came to the chief's tipi, vying with one another for the privilege of naming her.

Many high-sounding and significant names were proposed, names which nobody could question, for they were all based on the personal exploits of the warriors who offered them; and those exploits were known to everyone. Nobody could deny that they were all justifiable names. But unfortunately, not one name was suitable, in the opinion of the chief and his close friends. "If only the baby were a boy! For then almost any of these names would do!" they cried.

Now, Iktomi who happened to be in camp just then, had a comment to make on this, as he did on almost everything. As a rule, nobody paid him any attention, but this time when he said, "Call her I-te. (Face.) That she has a face is evident. Then, when she grows up, you can give her a longer name, one that will suit her," the people accepted his suggestion. "Who knows more about giving ~~things/their~~ names than Ikto? After all, did he not name all birds and animals, as well as invent all language? The child shall be called I-te," they declared. So

when the baby's ears were officially pierced, the name I-te was conferred upon her.

Everybody's favorite, the child grew more attractive daily, and after a time, she was pronounced the most beautiful girl that ever lived. She was, of course, a Favorite Daughter, a Child-beloved not only of her parents, but also of the entire tribe as well. People of wealth took turns in honoring her, giving feasts and other benefits to the tribe, in her ~~honor~~ name, so that very soon hers was a name far above all other names.

"There goes Ite-WasteWin," they would point her out at the public gatherings. Automatically they had enlarged upon her name so that she was now "The-woman-of-the-beautiful-face," Or if choice foods were obtained, a portion of them was sure to be offered at the home of Waziya, "for Ite WasteWin's special delight." As it was considered unbecoming to retain all good things to oneself, Ite WasteWin's mother called a gathering of young women, and feasted them with these delicacies from time to time.

But because Ite Waste Win was a universal favorite, she was also the object of too much interest; so that she was deprived of making her own choice of a husband. From far and near, handsome youths, sons of chiefs, who considered themselves eligible, in their own right, came to seek her in marriage, but were turned away. In the tribal opinion, not one qualified to be Ite Waste Win's husband. This happened so often that in time all the sons of chiefs were rejected. And then it became a cause of great alarm that Ite Waste Win, Child-beloved of the entire tribe, might go

unwed through life. No more suitors presented themselves, so life was beginning to bore the young girl.

One day she lay in her tipi, too indolent ~~to~~ and too disinterested to get up. The bottom of her tipi was propped up ~~on~~ all around to admit air for it was a warm day. She was thus enabled to see all who went by. Presently a few of her companions hurried by and called to her,

"Ite Waste Win, come with us, won't you? The hillsides are covered with ripe berries. We are going to gather some."

So she snatched her shawl from the lodge pole where it hung, and ran to join them and soon they reached the foothills. There, on every tree, luscious choke cherries grew in such profusion that they literally ~~went~~ hung ~~bending~~ almost to the ground, bending the trees with their weight. The girls were able to sit on the ground and hold the branches in their laps while they picked.

But they did not remain in one place long, for their wonder at the perfection of the fruit made them run from one tree to another, reveling in the abundance. They moved on and on, thus, up the mountainside, always hoping to find some even better than the last, until they found their way to the very top where none of their people had ever arrived before.

A cloud hung even with the mountain, and when they looked downward towards home, they could not see their tribal circle for its presence. But ~~on the level with their eye,~~ the saw in the ~~distance other mountains and prairies.~~

A delicious coolness enshrouded them, a pleasant influence which they could feel but could not see. Feeling considerably refreshed, they ran down the mountain and returned home. They did not know that they had been to the Middle World; ~~and that the Supernatural Wind had surrounded and caressed them.~~ ~~And~~ Ite Waste Win did not know that it was the Supernatural Wind who had caressed and revived her and her friends.

But he knew; and it was soon after that he came in human guise, in the shape of the handsomest man that was ever seen, to offer rare gifts for the privilege of marrying the chief's daughter.

The tribe, at once relieved of their anxiety, and honored that a Supernatural was marrying into their midst, and that they were being elevated thereby, outdid themselves in hospitality; feasting the entire Camp Circle again and again, in honor ~~the~~ of the young husband. All the details of honoring a Child-beloved in marriage were elaborated upon; a very beautiful tipi was set up a little ~~inside~~ inside the Circle, and filled with rarest blankets and other gifts for the couple. When the two were allowed to pass into the bridal tipi, then for four days they were left alone together, to get accustomed to each other and to the life they were to lead.

People waited patiently for a chance to place the next bowl of choice foods outside the bridal door; and were honored if, just at that time, the newly wedded pair should be pleased to reach out for food, ~~if~~ and accepted their offering. Sometimes, however, one left food there, and it remained

untouched because it was not needed then. In such an event, any old person, man or woman, who chanced to go by, at the instant when another bowl of food was being placed there, had the right to take what they found already there, and eat it, lauding the names of the pair through whom they were deriving such a benefit.

When the four days were ended, it was annouced by the crier that the young husband was taking his wife with him, to live in his tipi; and they went away. And in due time, a message was brought back to the tribe that Ite Waste Win was with child.

"That is right; that is right," they people declared; "When two people marry, there should be children." And all the women who were skilled in handwork now proceeded to embroider baby-things. And when the carrier prepared to go back, he had too much to carry back, so that others went with him; for no infant ever had so many beaded cradles and pillows and garments than did the one they were awaiting.

The cradles were just large enough to wrap the child in, and were trimmed with rare ornaments of many colors; and down in bright colors also; and fringes and quillwork. The pillows were small, soft bits, filled with duck down, and embroidered lengthwise with infinitesimal ~~lines~~ parallel lines of scarlet quill work. On the upper side was fawn skin of rare softness.

Now came the day of the birth; and lo, instead of one baby, there were four. All boys. And then people said, "How fortunate there were so many baby-wraps made? Otherwise, how

would the three extra ones have fared without suitable things?"

These four sons of Ite Waste Win, and the Supernatural, Wind, were named, in the order of their birth, North Wind, West Wind, East Wind and South Wind. They lived in a tipi with their mortal mother, but they were supernatural, being sons of Wind, who would never die. To this tipi, Wind retruned whenever his duties permitted. And always he found a model wife, loving and dutiful and industrious; who knew how to do everything; who thought much and said little, and so pleased much. For such a woman was pleasing to gods, as well as to men.

The boys were fine, healthy children, hard at play all day every day, only finding their way home when they were hungry or sleepy. And so they grew until the day when they were old enough to take over their father's work, and to carry on the extra duties which the Great Spirit assigned them. But that was not until much later; and I will tell you that when I come to it.

And so Ite Waste Win lived, contented with her lot, willing to die as all mortals should when her time came, until that day when Iktomi, the trickster, came to tempt her to usurp the Moon's place; which she did, obtaining immortality thereby, and eternal beauty, but with it also, a curse; a punishment she carries to this day.

Appendix IV: The Feast of the Supernaturals

The Feast of the Supernaturals.

The Sun and the Moon who were man and wife, were two very important Supernaturals; they had always been and never would die. They were very powerful. They ruled the heavens together, and were the Associates of Sky, the Great Spirit; and the entire Star nation grew from their children.

The Supernaturals often feasted together; and all who belonged with them came to attend. But Iktomi never attended; he went about playing tricks on people, and animals, and did not come to the feasts because they did not take him seriously. But then, nobody did.

So Iktomi thought to play a trick on the high and mighty, and to laugh at them at the last. So, one day when a feast was planned for the evening, after the Sun's journey was ended and he was rested. And that afternoon, Iktomi outdid himself in arranging disaster all around.

First he stepped out of the wood near Ite Waste Win's tipi, all unexpectedly, and came upon her, on her hands and knees, on a hide she was dressing. She did not look up; nor did she realize his presence. He touched her for a time, and as she worked steadily, scraping the hair from the hide, he suddenly cautioned her, "Not so hard, there in the neck, younger sister, not so hard. It is a little fragile there. You might

just cut through it!" Your scraper is very keen-edged."

Startled, she still did not look up. Anyone who addressed her as Sister, was or should be a respect-relative, and one did not look into the face of such. "How extraordinary! To call me sister, and yet advise me!" She was annoyed as she thought this. (For one should not advise a respect-relation, of the opposite sex. It would sound as if one doubted the good judgement of such a one.)

She carefully stood up, and went to her tipi, like the hospitable woman she was, and in a little while, she set food out for ~~him/for~~ Iktomi to eat, in the guest's place of the tipi, and then she came back out. "Brother, there is food placed in the tipi," she said, with eyes averted; and went away. But when she returned, thinking he was finished, he was still thinking; and he began:

"Younger sister, there is to be a feast tonight, as soon as the Sun rests. Why don't you ever go to those feasts? You certainly should. They are very pleasant feasts."

"I have no right; I am a mortal. Those feasts are for the Supernaturals, I can not go there and associate with them." she answered.

But he continued: "Why, you're next thing to a god; your children are gods; your husband is a god; you associate with them daily. How can you say you/~~can/for~~ have no right?" and he looked to see how she took that, but she was with her face turned aside. Still he continued: If the Sun should ask you,

as I understand he contemplates doing, I advise you to go. You know, once you are admitted to the feast, your beauty will never fade and you will never die!"

This was his parting shaft; and she sat playing with the idea for a little while. And then her mother entered. "What did he say?" she asked; but she had been listening through the tipi walls, and knew already. When Ite Waste Win told her in detail, she also was tempted by the idea of a daughter of hers ranking with the Supernaturals, so she urged her to consider it.

While they talked, Waziya, the father came in. He warned them, thus: "Old Woman, take care, or you will find us all in trouble. You know Ikto is not to be believed; even the Supernaturals who could easily foil his plans, still avoid him to save themselves bother. Why should we want to be as the immortals, seeing we are but men?" Come home, I am hungry!"

And so the old parents went to their own tipi. And then, Ite Waste Win gave herself up entirely to dreaming, and she grew rapidly excited, and her imagination carried her far. "What if the Sun should ask me?"--"What if my beauty did last forever?" . . . and she could do no work. Her tipi remained untidy and her food remained uncooked; and when her boys returned from the creek, soiled of clothing and hungry, they were neglected, until at last, puzzled, they went over to their grandmother's for something to eat.

Meantime, Iktomi hurried to the Sun's tipi in the Lower World, and was already sitting inside, much at home, when that

tired Supernatural returned to rest. "Iktomi, what are you doing here?" he asked, good-naturedly. And Iktomi answered, "O, not much of anything. I have spent the day visiting; and I said to myself, 'Now, when my brother gets in from his journey, I shall try to manage a visit with him,' and here I am; ready to amuse you, if you wish!"

The Sun order^{ed} food; and with his guest he ate in silence. Then, when they had finished, and sat smoking, Iktomi who had found it hard to wait, now began, "By the way, speaking of women, have you ever noticed a mortal from the Lower World by the name of Ite Waste Win? Ite, they used to call her; and in fact, I named her myself. . . . She is an uncommonly beautiful woman, I think." And the Sun said he had noticed her; and he agreed that she was very beautiful--for a mortal.

Ikto affected indignation. "For a mortal! Why, brother, don't you realize that she is next to a god, herself? Her husband is a god, and her four small sons are all gods; and her beauty rivals that of any Supernatural. Many people have said to me that they thought she should be accepted by the gods; and they have even said she should go to the feasts, the mystery-feasts of Supernaturals. I am almost persuaded that way, myself. You know, when you keep hearing something said from all sides...."

The Sun was surprised. "Who said that? Where did you hear it, Iktomi?" he asked; and then Ikto laughed heartily. "Why, brother, you ask me that? You know where I got my name, 'Iktomi-who-wanders-all-over-the-world', don't you? What a question! Here, there, everywhere, people have said those very words to

me as I have gone about. I can not name them all."

The Sun was thoughtful now. At last he said, "Go and tell her that I invite her to the feast tonight!" For the Sun, being the chief of all the tangible Supernaturals, is the superior of them all, and presided at all feasts. He well knew that by his act now he was admitting a mortal to a state from which neither he nor anyone else could ever move her. Yet he was reckless, when he thought of her beauty. "Such loveliness should not be allowed to fade!" he declared; and within his heart he was thinking of the quarrel he had had with the Moon.

Ikto, the instant of the Sun's command, could hardly contain himself to finish the smoking in quiet. As soon as ever he was finished, he leaped to his feet, and bidding the Sun too hasty a goodbye, he was flying rather than running, until he arrived at Ite's tipi.

He fairly slid into the doorway. "Hurry up; hurry up!" he cried; "The Sun sent me to bid you to the feast tonight. don't be late; and take whatever seat you find vacant." And he was out again so quickly that Ite Waste Win asked herself, "Did I dream it, or was Iktomi really here?"

Never-theless, she began to get ready, by washing her long hair in the river and braiding it smoothly in two great ropelike plaits that hung down on either side of her head, and reached well below her waist. At their ends she tied her sweet-grass charms. Her mother came to help her dress; greatly pleased at her elevation to the Supernatural state; but the old man

Waziya walked around outside the tipi, occasionally warning the two women of the danger that lay ahead for those who followed Iktomi's lead. But they were dizzy with ambition and did not heed him.

A gown of whitest deerskin, trimmed in shells applied in intricate designs and embroidered with smoothest porcupine-quill work in brilliant reds and yellows and greens ~~was~~ enhanced her dark beauty. Her leggings were also of white leather, heavily fringed in white, and she wore a pair of Child-beloved moccasins although she was going to walk.

Her mother applied her face paint with care; and marked the part in her hair with red vermillion. Lastly, she put on her daughter's waist a handsome new belt with knife case, and into the holes in her ears her loveliest earrings.

When Ikto had hurried from her tipi, after delivering the Sun's invitation, he had gone thence to the tipi of the Moon to complete the havoc it was to cause. "What do you think?" he breathed out his eagerness, "the Sun had invited Ite Waste Win that very beautiful mortal, to sit at the feast tonight!"

The Moon said, "Not the wife of Wind?" She was incredulous. O, yes; Ikto assured her; none other than she.

"Why, but she is not a Supernatural," the Moon protested; to which Iktomi had an answer ready-made. "Of course not; not yet. But she is going to the feast; and you know what that means. For who sits at the feast of the gods is a god. Her beauty will last always now, of course; and she will be immortal. That was good

thoughtful of the Sun, was it not? Otherwise, she would have to die some day; and leave those little wind gods motherless."

But of this the Moon heard nothing. She was planning how to clothe herself, so as to surpass Ite Waste Win at her very best. And as soon as Iktomi went away, she began to get ready.

With infinite care she watched every detail of her dressing; and the gown she put on at last was of a white brilliancy such as no one had ever beheld on her till now. It was sure to dazzle the eyes of even the gods. So, out of courtesy for them, and their comfort, she wrapped about herself lastly a wrap of thin black, like the night; and so she started forth with only her face exposed; and that was dazzling enough.

The Supernaturals of all ranks were there; assembling at about the same time, and taking their seats on the ground, according to their accustomed and rightful places. They were greeting one another, and laughing joyously.

And then Ite Waste Win approached, while Iktomi who had retired behind a bank, lay on his belly, with his head just over the top, ready to see the fun. Hers was a very definite, striking loveliness. Everyone stopped talking to watch as she walked around behind the circle. Seeing one vacant place, she sank into it, and looked timidly about. It was a seat next to the Sun. He smiled upon her, warming her with his glances; and she was no longer afraid of the company.

Now the food was about to be passed; and then, the Moon drew near. She was well covered in her ~~black veil~~

blanket of the night; but through its guaselike drapes, her glistering gown was visible. And all the company stopped once more to gaze and to admire; for the Moon had surpassed even herself tonight, and the delicacy of her beauty ~~was~~ benumbed (paralysed) even the gods.

But alas for the Moon! For in her extreme anxiety to please, she had taken too long to get ready, and was late. For a woman now sat in her place. She came around behind the seated guests, and stopped behind Ite Waste Win. They laughed thoughtlessly; and Iktomi who now came out of hiding, slapped his thighs with delight and laughed harder and louder than all the rest. He was pleased that he could thus upset gods as well as men.

But the Moon was ashamed; and she carefully doubled her blanket, and pulled it up over her head so that her face was entirely hidden. And there she stood; ~~too~~ ashamed to move, and ashamed to remain. It was a trying time for all, when the Moon hid her face.

She refused the food which servers offered to her; and in her heart she was planning revenge against her spouse, the Sun who had thus betrayed her and shamed her before the World of gods and men. In his place, Wind also was suffering the humiliating of his wife's conduct; and he could not wait with any sort of grace for the feast to end that he might run home, away from sight.

After the feast, when the guests dispersed, then she also went home, lost in the confusion of many going in all directions. She hurried to the Great Spirit, that invisible one, God of Life and Motion and Energy, and unbiased judge of the Supernaturals as well as of mortals because through the blue sky, his medium which stretches over the world in every way, he can and does see all sides of everything.

The Moon told him how she had been shamed by the Sun who brought a mortal to the feast and ~~placed her~~ allowed her to take the seat of honor beside him, where his spouse had always sat. The Great Spirit told her to go home, and he would consider the matter.

Next came the Wind god, husband of Ite Waste Win, who had gone home immediately after the feast, completely humiliated, and had found his tipi cold and cheerless; the food unprepared, and his children with dirty faces, crying because they were hungry. He took some common mud from the creek and besmeared his face and the faces of his four little sons, and thus, in mourning, he took them with him to stand before the judge. And when he had told his story, the Sky-god said he would consider the matter.

So when, in time, he summoned them all, there came together, the Sun, the Moon, the Wind, the mortal Ite Waste Win, the old mother, Wakanka, and the father Waziya. Iktomi was already hanging around.