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Author

Murphy, Peter G.

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Foucault and Colonial Strategy in Douglas C. Jones's *Arrest Sitting Bull*

PETER G. MURPHY

Douglas C. Jones (1924–1998) stands out among Western novelists for his multicultural text and dialogic perspective. In *Arrest Sitting Bull* (1977) and its sequel, *A Creek Called Wounded Knee* (1978), he presents colonial issues, such as the removal of the Native American, from various ethnic points of view. Jones's work is far more realistic than romantic, although overtones of the latter movement are apparent in how he portrays the past. His characters are not idealized noble savages or heroes; they are individuals with strong personal qualities who endure in the face of overwhelming circumstances. The novels often include ethnic hybrids—persons who symbolize points of ethnic encounter and embody hope for the future. In these respects, Jones views the frontier's clash of cultures with a fresh, multidimensional perspective that neither condescends nor ridicules. He presents history with commendable accuracy and explores why ethnic conflict exists and how such confrontations reflect a general pattern of historical struggle.¹

Although not a student of literary approaches or Foucauldian criticism, Jones illustrates the ways in which colonizing tactics operate: *Arrest Sitting Bull* demonstrates how one dominant ethnic group can establish and maintain control over the subaltern. The text reveals the author's views on the victimization of the Lakota by the colonial process, particularly by the killing of the Sioux leader Sitting Bull. *Arrest Sitting Bull*, in effect, provides a case study in the operations of colonization. The novel also considers the human side of events surrounding the death of Sitting Bull, including both personal relationships among Anglo and Native Americans and more formal relationships between politicians, the army, and the agency. Native and Anglo cultures may be presented as incompatible at this time, but Jones's treatment of the volatile situation provides a mediating perspective, one that attempts to understand what went wrong. His account of events in this literary history expands ordi-

Peter G. Murphy is an assistant professor of comparative literature at the University of South Carolina Union. His area of concentration is Native American representation, most recently focusing on the works of Douglas C. Jones and William Gilmore Simms.

nary, narrow interpretations of ethnic conflict to encompass anthropological and historical perspectives.

Arrest Sitting Bull sheds light on the physical and psychological methods of coercion that play a major role in the attempted arrest and subsequent killing of Sitting Bull. Because Jones's chronicle of these events dwells at length on these techniques, the present essay assumes a Foucauldian approach to examine how surveillance and fear tactics brought about the domination and control of the Lakota at Standing Rock Reservation in 1890 from Jones's perspective. Michel Foucault raises the following questions in *Power/Knowledge*: "Who wages war against whom? Is it between classes, or more? Is it a war of all against all? What is the role of the army and military institutions in this civil society where permanent war is waged? What is the relevance of concepts and tactics and strategy for analyzing structures and political processes?"² Foucault then considers whether power is basically a "form of warlike domination," adding: "Isn't power a sort of generalized war which assumes at particular moments the forms of peace and the State? Peace would then be a form of war, and the State a means of waging it."³ Questions of this nature imply that the exercise of power is indifferent to the consequences of war in an ethical context. The legitimization of a military act against a proclaimed enemy is part of a "productive network," a "state apparatus" that aims to establish and maintain itself in large part as a mechanistic function. Dominance becomes a multifaceted, all-inclusive operation to apply power to its subject. One result is the maintenance of "normalization," or passiveness and docility, through "modes of subjection."

Thomas Biolsi writes of the government's role in continuing to suppress the Sioux after the military had "politically subdued" them in 1885.⁴ Here, the state, from its own political and philosophical perspective, effectually becomes the "protector" of the Sioux, ironically through its thorough policing of the Sioux on the reservation. Jeremy Carrette writes in *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault* that the body identified as "police" "appears as an administration heading the state, together with the judiciary, the army, and the exchequer," and it "includes everything": its "intervention in man's activities could well be qualified as totalitarian."⁵ This all-inclusive body "must see to eleven things within the state: (1) religion; (2) morals; (3) health; (4) supplies; (5) roads, highways, town buildings; (6) public safety; (7) the liberal arts (roughly speaking, arts and science); (8) trade; (9) factories; (10) manservants and labourers; and (11) the poor."⁶ Sheldon Wolin comments that such "carceral institutions signify the perfect melding of discursiveness and practice into a hermetic whole with no outside";⁷ furthermore, carceral institutions provide self-legitimation for the state. Under these circumstances, truth becomes "a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation"⁸ of practices while "knowledge" becomes discourse shared inside the hegemony.⁹

These observations are deeply relevant to Jones's *Arrest Sitting Bull*, which can be read as an illustration of how methods of subjection are applied in the exercise of power. The novel relates the personal stories of individuals involved in the military and the political domination of the Sioux Indian

during the period leading to the killing of Sitting Bull. As depicted by Jones, a culture and people were thoroughly oppressed through the efficient policing of the Sioux on the Standing Rock Reservation in the 1890s. Joseph Manzione writes: "In the United States, the surrender of Sitting Bull marked an end to an epoch. The nature of conflict between whites and Native Americans changed: rarely was such a war fought in unorganized territory beyond a defined frontier. Violence, when it occurred, usually erupted on the reservations or on settled lands nearby, as Indians resisted white incursions onto their properties, or into their traditional culture. The white agenda in the 1880s was embodied in the Dawes Act: control and assimilation."¹⁰

The introduction to the Dawes Act of 1887 reads:

An Act to provide for the allotment of lands in severalty to Indians on the various reservations, and to extend the protection of the laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. That in all cases where any tribe or band of Indians has been, or shall hereafter be, located upon any reservation created for their use, either by treaty stipulation or by virtue of an act of Congress or executive order setting apart the same for their use, the President of the United States be, and he hereby is, authorized, whenever in his opinion any reservation or any part thereof of such Indians is advantageous for agricultural and grazing purposes, to cause said reservation, or any part thereof, to be surveyed, or resurveyed if necessary, and to allot the lands in said reservation in severalty to any Indian located thereon.¹¹

A key element of the government's effort to "control and assimilate" the Sioux in the last decades of the nineteenth century is the incarceration of Sitting Bull, the nuclear act of *Arrest Sitting Bull*. This goal is carried out by the army and Standing Rock Reservation agents who maintain surveillance through the effectual incarceration of the Sioux Indians of North Dakota. Ironically, Indians police themselves by this time, enforcing the laws of the white government, and forming a buffer zone for agents on the reservation who fear the large number of Indians on the Western frontier and the possibility that they might unite to fight the army. The politicians, reinforced by ranking army officers, decide to remove the "idol," the strongest symbol of rebellion and traditional Indian customs—Sitting Bull. In so doing, they hope to break the spirit of the Indian population so that it will more readily submit to the demands of the US government.

Sitting Bull, portrayed by the narrator of Jones's novel with reverence, foresees the inevitability of war with the army. Note the foreshadowing at the inception of the novel:

*After the old man makes his prophecies, the grandsons go outside the tipi and stand to roll cigarettes and smoke, saying nothing as they look across the agency where everything is peaceful and quiet. Yet the winter comes warmer than it should come, the red-winged blackbirds refuse to peck the crows flying past, and pools of dust are lying where water should be clear and cold. And there are other ominous signs too dangerous to consider. So they smoke and think of the words of the old man. And they are deeply troubled. For he has said there will be blood on the ground and there is a strong foreboding in them. They know what the old man says is true.*¹² (Jones's italics)

The listlessness of the birds and the dryness of the environment reflect the spirit of the men who sense the approaching strife and hardship; nevertheless, they will fight back for pride and dignity. The Native people have been weakened from battle, illness, and alcoholism, but still are feared by the civilians. They especially fear the power underlying the tribal authority of Sitting Bull, whom they believe encourages his people to continue to perform the Ghost Dance in defiance of the whites. John M. Coward writes of the Sioux leader: "Sitting Bull was one of the most famous Native Americans who ever lived, a brave, fierce, determined Lakota leader who defended his people against the invasion of the northern plains and the destruction of the Lakota way of life. But Sitting Bull was known in his lifetime largely through newspaper representation, ideas, and images that routinely obscured the character, accomplishments, and the failings of the man himself, creating a native identity that owed more to rumor, racial ideology, and expansionist myth-making than to truth or historical fact."¹³

While the government may be portrayed as paranoid, it nonetheless is considered an ominous force by the Natives. Jones usually depicts politicians and agents as proud, if not haughty men, sometimes working toward contradictory ends because of personal interests or poor communication. While reservation agents such as James McLaughlin want to avoid war and confrontation in general with the Natives, others, like General Miles and Bill Cody, relish the thought of the accolades a victory would bring. Political aspirants, too, may benefit from a war with the Indians that was likely to be colorfully reported in the newspapers. The possibility of confrontation is exacerbated by poor government oversight of the agencies and the chronic problem of hunger among the Indians.

Miles recognizes that many of the frontier army soldiers lack the training needed to function in such a delicate political environment, and he worries that they will act out of emotion rather than good sense. In one scene, Miles's ruminations reveal this tension:

The Indian Bureau and the Congress have practically ensured trouble with their inept handling of the plains tribes. And now this Messiah craze that threatens to remove all reason, from both sides. Sioux talking gibberish about shirts that will turn away bullets and settlers nearby screaming, Uprising! Uprising! Uprising! The agents compounding one blunder with another. So that now any quick or

misinterpreted move by some green recruit—and God knows there are plenty of those in the frontier army—any hotheaded brave wanting to erase the stigma of Carlisle in the eyes of his people, any unnecessary saber-rattling, and the whole thing could explode in the furnace. (141)

Miles accuses reservation agents and soldiers of incompetence regarding the Indian problem on the frontier, but his political aspirations still drive him to seek out Sitting Bull. The arrest of the chief receives priority because the alternative of war may cost the army lives, and there is sympathy for the Indian back in the East. Ironically, the act of arresting Sitting Bull, which may increase the likelihood of war, is planned as Christmas approaches. If there were no drive to secure military and political power in the frontier regions, there would be no need to take this risk. However, political ambition outweighs even the religious significance of this time of year.

Foucault's concept of the panoptic society can be applied to the decision to incarcerate Sitting Bull.¹⁴ The chief's adherence to tradition threatens the government's determination to control the movements and practices of the Natives; consequently, Sitting Bull sets a subversive example for Natives, and especially the young. In the quest for power, government control must be exercised over both individuals and the social group. Within this context, Foucault observes that the effort of one sociopolitical group to establish and maintain cultural dominance over another encompasses the need to appropriate, restrain,¹⁵ isolate, and regroup individuals.¹⁶ He further argues that "power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth."¹⁷ In *Arrest Sitting Bull*, Indians are forced to adopt Anglo beliefs and practices, such as the Christian religion. Sioux Indians come to police their own tribal members according to governmental law. The reservation, itself a system of incarceration, represents an ultimatum for those who wish to survive in the presence of the government's armed forces. For the hegemony, Sitting Bull embodies the notion of "the individual to be corrected."¹⁸ He is the "incorrigible," a "monster" of sorts to the government because of the threat he poses to the hegemony and the political ideology to which the Natives might otherwise adhere. He must be isolated or incarcerated so that his influence does not instigate rebellious activity. Sitting Bull and his followers must be "dominated" and "pacified" in order for proper control to be maintained on the reservation. Intervention is the strategy used in this instance.¹⁹ In the context of Foucauldian criticism, we see that the military can justify this tactic by claiming that 1) Sitting Bull's influence potentially threatens other members of the tribe, 2) he may adversely influence outsiders, and 3) he presents a threat to new moral and intellectual practices.²⁰

Reservation agent McLaughlin does not look forward to the confrontation expected to follow the recommendation from General Miles to "secure the person of Sitting Bull" (182). But "the Messiah craze of Kicking Bear" (an elder) and the Anglo perception of "Old Sitting Bull" as the "local minister of the new cult" serve to strain relations. In this sense, it is a two-way street leading to the confrontation foreshadowed in the novel. The narrator

observes: “[Sitting Bull] sings under a prayer tree at the Grand River camp—which he has erected in a defiant imitation of the forbidden dance pole, outlawed long since. To incite the people, he makes orations. His young son Crow Foot preaches, too. For a time, McLaughlin had thought the old fool should be arrested and removed from the people until the craze died out, and he suggested his Indian policemen do the job, but his Washington superiors had mostly ignored him” (35–36). McLaughlin’s reaction to Miles’s plan and the government’s failure to respond to his earlier requests testify to the lack of communication between government officials. It also suggests the severity of the mayhem that might result. It is ironic that McLaughlin’s plan to arrest Sitting Bull is to be carried out by Indian policemen; among some Indians on the reservation, the actions of Sitting Bull are feared because of possible repercussions from the agents. Many Natives have acquiesced to men like McLaughlin, who often mediate governmental demands and Indian needs.

Jones explores the contrasting attitudes of men such as Miles and McLaughlin. Miles, for instance, sends his orders from the city of Chicago. Jones depicts him walking through the city, reminiscing about giving the order for the arrest to Cody, which he boasts of prematurely (143). In comparison, McLaughlin, or “Father Whitehair,” as he is referred to by Native policemen, senses that problems will erupt between Indians and whites after the attempt to arrest Sitting Bull. He once remarked of the arrest plan: “Sitting Bull is no bosom friend of any white man. It would be against nature. Like owls going to roost with crows!” (43).²¹ But McLaughlin also fears the increasing attention of the press to this affair, especially since news is created if there is none to report. From a Foucauldian view, the press is releasing news from the perspective of hegemonic truth, power, knowledge, religion, and culture. The press also fabricates and sensationalizes in order to keep its readers interested in events occurring on the frontier. One exchange between frontier reporters reveals:

“Why, hell, there isn’t any war there either. Half the stories out of Pine Ridge complain about the other half being fake.”

“Nobody reads that calm stuff. There’s got to be blood and burning...”
(180)

News of turmoil satisfies the urban commercial market but simultaneously creates pressure on government officials and exacerbates the potentially volatile situation. Additionally, men like Miles take it upon themselves to characterize circumstances to their own advantage, thereby confusing some of the facts pertaining to the arrest of Sitting Bull and its subsequent complications. It is assumed and understood that reporters are there to make news in the novel’s context. Overstatement and “creative” description obscure the reality of many of the mundane circumstances that surround the event. Stanley Vestal records: “The arrest that followed has been much reported, chiefly by the officers (both military and civil) who had a hand in it. Most of these gentlemen make a great to-do over the Ghost Dance, and appear to think that the

Ghost Dance made the arrest necessary. *But Sitting Bull's arrest had nothing to do with the Ghost Dance.* That dance was a mere pretext, and a mere pretext suggested rather late in the game."²²

The influence of the press is superseded only by that of the army commander, who must maintain "absolute power," while it is the job of men like McLaughlin to uphold the carceral atmosphere of the reservation (144). Such authority is maintained by regularly exhibiting military strength, such as in the daily drills of the soldiers on the reservation. The arrest of the chief will help complete the panoptic environment that the government wishes to create. The fear and intimidation instilled in the tribe by the constant display of arms and the presence of the men drilling have strong, suppressive psychological effects on the Natives and engender further submission to hegemonic culture and rule. Ethnopolitically, the Indians become "designated Others" in a cultural context in which sociopolitical practices will be exercised with the intention of subjugating the Native to governmental authority. The combination of newspapers and troops signifies the respective application of propaganda and power in the oppression of the Natives.

The fear tactics employed by the military include the scheduled firing of Hotchkiss cannons. The narrator comments:

The soldiers fire the guns every week. It is not for target practice because adjusting fire would waste too much precious ammunition. But always a few rounds are fired. Sometimes, it is to teach the soldiers gun drill, but on alternate Saturdays it has a grimmer purpose. Alternate Saturdays are ration days, when the tribe comes in for the dole. Everyone agrees it is a good time to show the wagon guns, to parade bluecoat power before the eyes of any young Sioux who might be thinking about the old days when there was black paint on warriors' faces. The picture strongest in every mind as they go toward home will be of those nasty guns, barking like dogs.²³

The incessant firing of the guns reinforces the threat that looms over the Natives—if they disobey, they will be shot; if they obey, they will be fed. This psychological tactic makes the Natives passive, if not docile, in the presence of government agents (217–18). Instilling fear increases the extent of control that the government exercises over the Natives: the firing of guns represents an exhibition of power.

The arms assembled for the surprise attack preceding the planned arrest of Sitting Bull are excessive in number and force. One soldier will bring with him "one Gatling gun and one Hotchkiss," while we read that "a detail is selected to load fifteen hundred rounds of .45-70 ammunition in one of the spring wagons" and "each trooper will carry thirty-six rounds for his Colt pistol" (33). By this time, even civilians are arming themselves. Natives are believed to pose a threat to all civilians when they in fact have become quite submissive and fearful. The narrator candidly comments on the circumstances on the reservation and surrounding area at this time: "Reducing rations is worse than adding whiskey to the ghost dance craze! Politicians talk

of appropriating enough money to arm private citizens living near the Sioux reservation, a sure recipe for calamity. Agency warehouses nearly empty, no crops in the corncribs, no livestock to slaughter. And talk of money to buy guns for civilians already stoop-shouldered from carrying rifles and pistols of their own. Absurd!" (104).

From the narrator's perspective, the political decisions made on behalf of those living on the frontier are unreasonable. Under such conditions, the harmonious coexistence of whites and Natives is unlikely, and the covert surveillance of Natives only adds to the tension. John Carignan, a teacher at the Indian day school, for example, is simultaneously engaged to spy on the Natives. Surveillance becomes pervasive: we read that "the system of spying is extensive. There is hardly a family in the dance camp that does not have at least one distant relative on the Standing Rock police force."²⁴ This breakup of tribal unity causes feuding, especially among the men.²⁵ The sounds of the artillery on ration day are ironically echoed by the chimes of the evening vesper bell, reminding the Natives that they should worship according to the dominant culture's practices. The close association of the firing of guns and the rationing of food also reminds the Natives that they live in a carceral society as prisoners to the rules and desires of the hegemony that is associated with ominous military power.

The tactics of coercion, which revolve around the central act of arresting Sitting Bull, have the larger goal of suppressing the Sioux people and other tribes. If the symbol of potential rebellion against the US government can be dishonored or removed from his position of power, the strength of his image will be weakened, and the power that he represents will be diminished or eliminated. Those who had once wished to emulate the chief will think carefully about the dangers of doing so.

The strategy of creating a carceral society and then forcing acculturation upon Natives is based on the hegemonic assumption that they adhere to inferior, uncivilized cultural practices. Given this premise, the government paternalistically claims that re-education is necessary for their own benefit: The acculturation and assimilation of the Native is seen as a form of mental and physical therapy.²⁶ The reservation, in this regard, may be construed as a type of healing institution. Those Natives who cannot be cured in mind and body of the "disease" of practicing traditional ways will come to be understood as "parasitic vegetation" that threatens the rest of the social harmony for which the dominant culture strives. Sitting Bull has become this sort of figurative parasite, threatening progressive movement on the frontier and the growth of the dominant society, which Jones would describe as adhering to the colonial concept of Manifest Destiny. This belief, institutionalized in policy, is a driving force behind the suppression of Native culture. Sitting Bull and his followers become delinquents of which the dominant society wants to make an example; such "rebels" provide the model for unacceptable behavior that the army and agency will police and punish. Ironically, the Natives who have been coerced to do much of the agency's monitoring take white policemen out of the immediate range of physical harm. The government-sponsored forces on and about the reservation establish and maintain an all-encom-

passing form of physical and psychological control over the Indians under their surveillance.

The presence of the Native police force separates tribal members into factions that mistrust one another. Some men, such as Bull Head, have adapted almost wholeheartedly to the desires of the hegemonic powers (201). In fact, Bull Head "is more convinced than ever that the white man is right—one wife can be enough for a man. Soon [his wife] will give him a child—a man-child, he hopes—and he will teach the child to be the best farmer and breeder of cattle on Grand River" (114). Bull Head now believes that the child cannot be a warrior like his forefathers; he is also a practicing Christian whose hair is closely cropped like that of the white males. Bull Head and others see the arrest of Sitting Bull as a necessity, and they readily execute the orders given by McLaughlin. Bull Head is an opportunist who feels that Sitting Bull's presence threatens the good life some have attained by assimilating to the dominant culture. Bull Head now sees the dances as "poisoning the minds of the people." He exclaims: "...this mad foolishness of the dance—bringing back the dead and the buffalo! Spirit people and spirit buffalo! But is it something a man can feel? Is it something a man can taste? I can touch the walls of my cabin, and I can feel my stove's heat and my wife beside me under a white man's tick. And I can taste the good beef ribs roasted in my stove. I tell you, these things of the white men are good" (115).

Although the dances and the spirits remain sacred for Bull Head, he has been influenced by the pressures of the Anglos. He knows he will receive material goods if he accedes to their culture. Bull Head, in effect, is a product of the dominant culture's physical and psychological methods to force acculturation upon the Native. Nonetheless, he is perhaps a happier man than many of his brethren. Men like Standing Elk know that the life Bull Head envisions for the present and future may not entirely come true under the present circumstances: his corn fields, like those of many other converts, are dry and full of "stunted crop." The Native policeman Gall, who represents "the greatest of all Sioux chiefs and warriors" for Standing Elk, has mixed feelings about the changes that are occurring among his tribe (25). He observes that "many of these things are all right, but they are not completely all right" (125). Gall lives in a clapboard house: cartridges from his target practices are scattered about the grounds and chickens roam about the property, indicating his shift from hunting to farming. Gall is a practicing Episcopalian, but his attitude toward the Church is somewhat patronizing. He chooses the traditional Lakota ways when he is not under the microscope of the agency. His character baffles Standing Elk, who asks prophetically:

If the great Gall has become a devout Episcopalian, then surely the Episcopal missionary speaks truth. But what of the Catholic and the Congregational missionaries? Are they all from different tribes? Do they all have different white gods? They preach of brotherhood, but how do they recognize their own tribal brothers when each looks like the other, even in dress? At least when the old men of the Sioux speak of war with the Crow, it is a simple thing. The old men are proud to

have had so many enemies—proud to have been called by them the “cutthroats” or “beheaders.” It makes Standing Elk proud, too, sometimes. But it is difficult to fit it all together. (82)

Standing Elk also wonders why the Indian religious practices are not accepted by the Christians if the latter can have so many different gods.²⁷ He questions the coherence of the dominant system that appears to accept multiple views yet excludes the traditions of his people.

Bull Head and Gall are among the policemen who set out for Sitting Bull’s cabin on the fateful morning. The narrator describes the bleak scene: “Bull Head is silent for a moment and they all wait, the rain running from the brims of their hats. Most have blankets or overcoats draped over their shoulders. Nearby, Standing Elk can see a number of badges gleaming softly in the light” (229). As the confrontation begins, Sitting Bull’s men choose to fight against the Indian policemen, who are assigned the task of the arrest in order to preserve the safety of the government soldiers. Ironically, Indian policemen are the only casualties among those representing government forces in the raid on Sitting Bull’s cabin. The army soldiers place themselves distantly behind the Indian policemen and do not come to their aid when the incursion becomes bloody—another instance of the government’s tactics to exploit the Natives.

McLaughlin feels satisfied with his men’s performance, but he comes to recognize the animosity aroused among the Lakota who realize that they have been duped. This time, however, many of the Indian men are killed, and the agents feel accountable. The funeral arranged by the agency, nevertheless, adds insult to injury by including a firing squad detail of eighteen men. The show of respect for the dead is largely superficial, and the funeral, arranged according to military custom, becomes yet another showcase of the army’s strength. Here, the Indian women are not even allowed to expose their mourning wounds, a tribal tradition under such circumstances.

By this point, relations between red and white people on the reservation have been seriously damaged; nonetheless, the emphasis on demonstrating authority at the funeral remains. As a consequence, even greater fear is engendered among the tribe. One Indian immediately discards his traditional religion in favor of Christianity, stating to McLaughlin: “Father, I want to take the religion of my children now.... My children are of the church of the Black Gown. If you would have my wife come, I would let the Black Gown marry us in that church. For the sake of my children and for my sake as well” (284). The government’s achievements in the aftermath at Standing Rock include the conversion of some Natives on the reservation, the deaths of Indian policemen, and the killing of Sitting Bull. Fear and extermination further the process of colonizing the frontier.

Two subordinate characters in *Arrest Sitting Bull*—a novice policeman, Standing Elk, and his Anglo teacher, Willa Mae Favory, who strives to convert him—develop a friendship that Jones uses to represent another aspect of colonized Native life. On the reservation, the two form what would have been an improbable relationship between Native male and white female. It is an affair

that will never be consummated because of the threat it carries, that of the male of the inferior race cohabiting with the female of the dominant culture. Here again, the panoptic hegemony keeps careful watch over the behavior of those on the reservation, denying a relationship between members of different cultures.

Standing Elk tries to understand the Christian religion, and he is cursorily encouraged by other Natives, such as Bull Head. He finds Christianity somewhat abstract, saying, "sometimes it is all very hard to understand," especially since many of the biblical stories he studies do not relate to the world in which he lives (58). Like others, Standing Elk has joined the police force. The narrator explains: "McLaughlin understands why they do this job. With all the old war trails rubbed off the land by white man's rule, police work is the only way left for a young man to show his courage. Bravery is still the surest way to honor these people. Yet McLaughlin realizes it is an imperfect system, unpredictable and sometimes dangerous. The courage these people have always celebrated is the kind displayed before an enemy. But police bravery shows mostly through enforcing white man's rule on members of the tribe" (34). Gall says to Standing Elk that his choice to become a policeman is good because McLaughlin sees him as a son, and it is one of the only alternatives left for him and other young men of the tribe. Nonetheless, Standing Elk responds, "I do not think my spirit is ready yet to become a white man" (126). He continually ponders how the clashing ideologies of the two cultures can come together in harmony.

Standing Elk becomes a martyr to an ambiguous cause when he is killed in the attack on Sitting Bull. Discovering the pistol from which Standing Elk had fired all six rounds, Gall throws the weapon into the river, disgusted at the unjust circumstances that caused the death of the young man. It is Standing Elk's reluctant decision to act on behalf of the government agency that leads to his death. Gall reflects: "There had surely been courage, for after all, the pistol had been empty and the wounds were in front. It is not so bad, Gall thinks, kicking his horse along. Dying with one's face toward one's enemies. That is a good way to die" (247). It is not the fighting that angers Gall but the cause for which Standing Elk had fought: it was not his battle to fight; nor should he have gone to battle on the lame horse provided by the agency. Gall concludes of the burial arrangement: "What matters is that [Standing Elk] was not ready for the white man's God. We must give him a funeral from the old days" (243). Ironically, Gall chooses the spy-schoolteacher John Carignan to write the letter informing McLaughlin of Standing Elk's death. The martyred Native's life represents an ambivalent existence caught between two seemingly incompatible cultural and philosophical forces. Gall, as participant and observer in this same environment, embodies the frustration caused by the Catch-22 dilemma that these Natives confront.

Willa Mae Favory is also profoundly affected by the death of Standing Elk. Before he goes off to confront Sitting Bull's men, she cries to him, "I will be afraid for you!" In return he shouts, "I want to learn the rest of that book. I want to read it all. That Bible!" (214). Their relationship was based on dreams and hopes that would never have come to fruition during the time of this

ethnic encounter. Willa Mae recognizes the plight of the Sioux, but she does little to help preserve Sioux culture. She is drawn to the exotic presence and ways of Standing Elk and his people, but she nonetheless tries fervently to assert the superiority of her beliefs in her teaching. She, like many people on the reservation, is torn by ambivalent emotions and values. Willa Mae even distrusts herself, for she is strongly attracted to the young "heathen." In one scene, she is unsure of herself before the young Native: "The time of the old people is gone,' she cuts in sharply. 'Now, read this.' She has pushed the Bible away and opened a McGuffey. I am not yet ready to explain what happens next in Genesis, she thinks, when the man and his wife are naked but are not ashamed—then become ashamed and have to be clothed" (26). Such mixed feelings dominate the emotional state of the teacher, who lives alone on the reservation, fears becoming an old maid, and loves a Native American. Her attraction to Standing Elk is not acceptable under the hegemonic social code.

Willa Mae's vocational role is empowered by the authority and importance the government has given to re-educating the Native, but her emotional life is disrupted by her longing for a man of a supposedly inferior culture. The ambiguity of her role and identity in this society eventually will exhaust her. She feels that she teaches children who can never truly understand her way of life, and there is uncertainty about the genuineness of their interest in learning her lessons. The narrator relates: "How many watched her each day, thinking of her in their world, along with all other whites? As the Messiah had promised. But what had He promised? What kind of end were they ... visualizing? She went to sleep, finally, but the night was restless for her. Her mind would not let go the prospect of all the coming days when she would look into Sioux faces without knowing behind which glance lay friendship and which something else" (23). She teaches them promises—some listen because they see no alternative under the circumstances.

Willa Mae feels the pressure of her domineering culture on the reservation and sometimes argues its side with Standing Elk. On one occasion, he says to her, "Your people have stolen our land." To this, Willa Mae retorts, "Do you think this land has always been *yours*? You have not been here forever. Your people came and took it from someone else!" (159). This exchange exemplifies the philosophical difficulties between the two apparently incompatible cultures. Conquest has been a way of life for the Western world for centuries, and Willa Mae assumes Anglos will take the role of conqueror in this case as well. After the debate, Willa Mae becomes sexually aroused by Standing Elk, but neither can act on their passion.

Perhaps fittingly, Willa Mae is from a family of preachers and soldiers: the values instilled in her youth remain in her adulthood. Psychologically and physically, men like her elders have pushed to extend the frontier of the nation further and further west. She believes that with time the "savages" can be civilized: "she is convinced there are ways to show them why the new is better than the old. Why civilization really means the white man's way" (15). But her love for a "savage" suggests the ongoing conflict that exists between Willa Mae's head and her heart: "It is absurd, she knows, yet he is handsome. Perhaps even more than handsome. Perhaps even beautiful as only Kiowa men

are supposed to be" (135). Because of Standing Elk's high level of intelligence, it "makes her think of him as though he were white" (133). In turn, Standing Elk surmises of her: "Straight Back Woman. A fine woman, good for having a family. She is very old, of course, almost twenty-five summers, the people say, but that is only a guess. Her skin looks soft and there are few wrinkles in it, even though it is the color of the ground along White Clay Creek. Her hands are soft, but with a strongness. Her legs are long enough for her to walk beside a man, even through snow. Most of all, her smell is different than any Sioux woman's smell. And her teeth are the best teeth on the reservation" (85).²⁸

For each, the other is somewhat exotic, and this paradoxically helps draw them together, especially in their perspective on the cultural war taking place around them. They often spend the lessons together in privacy about which one can only speculate. Standing Elk knows the smells of all of her rooms, and he watches the light of her candle go out each night before she goes to sleep. To dampen her passion for Standing Elk, Willa Mae practices a type of self-flagellation, brushing her teeth vigorously with "a large man's brush, using face soap" (290). As both Willa Mae's internal conflict and the conflict between whites and Natives worsen, she becomes more uncertain about her role and withdraws from her own people, reinforcing the theme of alienation caused by ruthless and indifferent social, political, and military procedures.

Learning of Standing Elk's death, Willa Mae forgets that it is Christmas. She is reminded of the date by the purser as she is about to board the *Nellie Peck*, the ship by which she leaves the reservation. And yet, it is she who had taught the Indian children Christmas carols to sing, and she had promised to "explain the spirit of giving and the tree" (308). All of this becomes a paradox to her, for it is the threat of war, not Christmas, that now dominates the thoughts of the people in Standing Rock, and the spirit of giving is obscured. She had always felt awkward in the company of the students, who she feared did not accept her. After the killings, she no longer can appreciate the company of the officers and their families; nor can she visit Standing Elk's grave, for Gall keeps its location a secret. The notion crosses her mind as she leaves the school and the children that "she is not only an old maid but is becoming a bitter one" (325). Willa Mae is a picture of impotence and exhaustion as she departs the reservation. Her alienation reflects the overwhelming physical and psychological impact that the government's tactics on and about the reservation has on anyone involved with the Natives.

Willa Mae's role, in many respects like that of the Native on the Standing Rock Reservation, is marginalized by the powerful sociopolitical structure to which she is subjected. But even men like Miles and McLaughlin have become part of a mechanism greater than themselves, and each responds to a governmental order that reflects an unwavering political intention to settle the American frontier. Despite the regimented nature of the military roles that soldiers fill on the reservation, the human element, with all its frailties, comes into play in the red-white encounter depicted in *Arrest Sitting Bull*. McLaughlin, for example, is highly respected by many Indians. He does not approve of the admiration his men feel for Sitting Bull, but he understands it. His greatest concern is that the arrest of Sitting Bull be accomplished without

a violent confrontation. He and Miles provide a study in contrast between Indian agent and military officer. Distanced from the reservation, Miles is a born politician who senses the opportunity to advance his political career if he can play a part in the arrest or assassination of Sitting Bull. Miles realizes that he is “capable of attracting a train of eager supporters in Congress simply by trailing his cape across the marbled floor of the Capitol rotunda” (139). When McLaughlin is ordered by the secretary of the Interior to follow the orders of Miles in the arresting of Sitting Bull, he is infuriated, and also worried. While Miles writes orders from the city of Chicago, it is McLaughlin who is living at the agency in the midst of the Natives, and he believes that he knows from experience the safest way to secure the arrest of Sitting Bull. Miles worsens the situation by calling on the showman Bill Cody to lead the arrest. McLaughlin especially fears this situation because Cody, like Miles, is mostly interested in glory: the killing of the notorious Sitting Bull, as depicted by the ever-inventive press, would generate considerable popularity and fame among American civilians mystified by the news reported from the frontier.

Arrest Sitting Bull shows how disorganization is the rule on the frontier and reservation. We learn that McLaughlin’s plan to slow down Cody is to get him drunk and then await orders for a countermand to Miles’s plan. The men who are trying to secure the government’s arrest of the chief are in fact working against one another. Cody appears to take the mission in jest, regarding himself an old pal of the chief. These lightly humorous yet potentially tragic circumstances form the context of the novel’s central act: a degree of mayhem exists even in this most serious of military maneuvers. In the effort to get Cody drunk, alternating shifts of soldiers are needed to stay up with Cody, who proves to have an incredibly high tolerance for even the strongest alcohol. Cody rides the next day despite his condition.

McLaughlin fears the communication between Miles and President Harrison, commenting to Colonel Drum, “Miles makes what he pleases of instructions—even from the President” (45). All appear to be working for their own interests, and there is little unity between the politicians and military officers involved in the arrest. Cody, vainglorious to the extent that McLaughlin pities his naïveté, states: “You need have no fear of trouble with Sitting Bull. We are old friends. He will come with me. I have no intention of having to arrest him by force.” Reinforcing McLaughlin’s attitude toward Cody, the narrator comments:

What a fool! Could he not read what Miles had written, and did he really believe that Sitting Bull would meekly walk away from his people on the basis of a white man’s friendship? Cody had fooled everybody—including himself. He had not the faintest notion of the depth of Sitting Bull’s capacity to resist. (276)

Cody believes that his having accompanied Sitting Bull at circus exhibitions and rewarded him with some fine horses would sway the chief. President Harrison eventually countermands Miles’s order. But Cody is chosen primarily because of his status as a cultural idol. Propaganda and self-interest play

important parts in the shaping of the events at Standing Rock, which to a great extent are mythologized in the very process of being reported by the press. Theatrically presented characters such as Cody and Sitting Bull meet the popular desire for a sensational story.

News reports of Sitting Bull's death differ. In the end, it is surmised that Sitting Bull was killed by the Sioux Indian policemen that McLaughlin had sent. On this day, McLaughlin feels "uncomfortable" among the Natives for the first time. An important exchange captures the ideological differences that continue to exist between the agent and his policemen. Red Tomahawk says to McLaughlin:

"Father, when we shot Tatanka Iyotake [Sitting Bull], his stallion—the horse we had saddled for him to ride into the agency—the white stallion sat on the ground and lifted his front hooves. As though he were praying."

"Son, you musn't allow such things in your mind..."

"But it frightened us, Father. As the Old Uncle's soul went out of him, the white stallion was trying to follow him, reaching up."

"No, no, no," McLaughlin says, placing his hands on Red Tomahawk's shoulders. "Listen to me. That old horse—he was in the circus. When he heard the firing, he thought he was back in the circus and started his act."

The Indian stares into McLaughlin's eyes. He slowly shakes his head.

"No, Father. I think he was praying."

"Son—"

"Father, I think he was praying for us all..." (100)

Two incommensurable rationalities are presented here. Even if the agent believed Red Tomahawk, he probably would not admit it for fear of acknowledging powers not typically accepted by the dominant culture.

Sitting Bull, a striking man of about fifty years, has come to be thought of by whites as a representative of all Plains tribes. Like Cody, he is in many senses a product of American expectations both generated and fulfilled by the press. Each also serves an important role for the United States government. Some report that when his body is found, the face is desecrated. With Sitting Bull dead and his image dishonored, many Indians feel emaciated in body and spirit.

Foreshadowing more hardship for Natives, *Arrest Sitting Bull* concludes: "Only a few miles west of where the *Nellie Peck* churns downriver toward the

cities, a band of Miniconjou Sioux are marching, their leader old and dying of pneumonia, but it will be three more days before they reach the little creek called Wounded Knee” (327). Fittingly, Jones’s conclusion introduces its sequel, *A Creek Named Wounded Knee* (1978), which also addresses the theme of human suffering.

From a Foucauldian perspective, Jones’s *Arrest Sitting Bull* shows the reader how hegemonic physical and psychological tactics give rise to the passivity of the subaltern group.⁶⁴ We see through this novel the incessant quest to establish and maintain control and the integral roles played by fear and obedience. We may also note how Natives, soldiers, civilians, and the press are all incorporated into the political process of suppressing the culture and will of a people. Perhaps most importantly, we should recognize the paradigmatic nature of these tactics, which are often executed with the intention of controlling a subaltern party in similar struggles for power throughout the Americas.

* * * * *

There is a very important dialogic thread weaving through *Arrest Sitting Bull* and other novels by Douglas C. Jones, one that sets his work apart from both romantic colonial literature and reactionary postcolonial works. His tone and message are mediative; they are not pessimistic, but realistic and optimistic. As in Leslie Marmon Silko’s work, there is a recognition that historical struggle and hardship must be endured before one can embrace an optimistic vision of cultural hybridity. While *Arrest Sitting Bull* and *A Creek Named Wounded Knee* represent this first step of recognition, novels such as *Season of Yellow Leaf* (1988) and *Gone the Dreams and Dancing* (1989) are imbued with optimism despite the suffering that is dictated by the historical settings in which these stories transpire. Arnold Krupat suggests that, on an even broader level, Silko’s (to which I would add Jones’s) work attempts to reconcile Anglo and Native American worldviews.²⁹ Charles Taylor writes: “The relation of domination within man, which is part of a stance of domination towards nature in general, cannot help engendering a domination of man by man. What goes on within must end up happening between man.”³⁰ Taylor’s conclusion implies that people eventually end up working matters out amongst themselves. Multicultural texts such as those of Silko and Jones, which narrate the uncertain and tumultuous efforts of people engaged in mutual cultural understanding, offer a reconciliation of Anglo and Native perspectives that works toward this end.

NOTES

1. Although not known to many readers of Western American literature, and more particularly literature dealing with the Native American, Jones published twenty novels that received excellent critical reviews. Included among the reviews are the following comments: “The borderland of nineteenth-century Indian Territory is Douglas Jones country” (Dee Brown); “Our finest prose dramatist of the American West” (*The Boston Globe*); “With infinite grace, Douglas C. Jones is creating a masterful fictional history of America” (*The Washington Post*); and “Douglas C. Jones for years has led the

historical Western in the direction it must go to survive and grow" (Loren Estleman). Jones has also received the following recognition: three Golden Spur Awards (*The Court Martial of George Armstrong Custer*, 1976; *Gone the Dreams and Dancing*, 1989; *Roman Hasford*, 1986), the Hallmark Hall of Fame Movie Award (*The Court Martial of George Armstrong Custer*), the Friends of American Writers Best Novel of the Year Award (*Elkhorn Tavern*), the Owen Wister Award, for contributions to Western literature (*This Savage Race*), and the Western Writers of America's Lifetime Achievement Award. Jones is especially noted for exploring multicultural themes without privileging any single ethnic group. He often places ethnic conflict in the context of historical struggle; a given culture may come to understand itself as both predator and prey, depending on the situation. In this way, Jones allows the reader to see that each group has played a part at some time in the oppression of another, and each has suffered as a result of innate human tendencies.

2. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 123.

3. *Ibid.*, 123.

4. Thomas Biolsi, "The Birthplace of the Reservation: Making the Modern Individual Among the Lakota," *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 1 (1995): 29.

5. Jeremy R. Carrette, *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 148–49.

6. *Ibid.*, 149.

7. Sheldon S. Wolin, *After Foucault* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 194.

8. *Ibid.*, 191.

9. Barry Allen, "Power/Knowledge," in *Critical Essays on Michel Foucault*, ed. Karlis Racevskis (New York: G. K. Hall and Co., 1999), 76.

10. Joseph Manzione "I Am Looking to the North for My Life": *Sitting Bull, 1876–1881* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 151.

11. Delos Sacket Otis, *The Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 177.

12. Douglas C. Jones, *Arrest Sitting Bull* (New York: Harper Collins, 1977), 5. Further page references to this work will be provided parenthetically.

13. John M. Coward, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820–1890* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 159. The Ghost Dance has been described as: "an American Indian religious movement of the late 19th century. It first appeared in 1870 among the Paiute Indians of Nevada, and it was revived in 1889 by the prophet Wovoka, known to the whites as Jack Wilson. The dance then spread over the major portion of western United States. Participants in the Ghost Dance believed in the imminent return of the dead and of the buffalo, the disappearance of the white man, and the return of the land to the Indians, who would live a life free from death, disease, and misery. During ritual dancing, individuals experienced visionary trance states, in which they saw themselves reunited with their dead relatives. While ritual and belief varied somewhat among the tribes, a number of Christian elements were incorporated. The Ghost Dance is commonly linked to the Sioux outbreak of 1890. The massacre of Indians by the US Army at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, brought the Ghost Dance virtually to an end." Erika Bourguignon, "Ghost Dance," in *The Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. 12 (New York: Grolier Inc., 1994), 724.

14. Panoptic society may be described as “a prison design, first proposed by the British thinker Jeremy Bentham and important to nineteenth-century penal reform, in which the cells of prisoners are arranged in a circle around a central observation tower. All prisoners can thus be kept under surveillance at all times. [It is] used metaphorically by Michel Foucault to describe the ability of modern governments efficiently to keep track of the movements of their citizens.” M. Keith Booker, *Literary Theory and Criticism* (New York: Longman, 1996), 484.

15. Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (New York: The New York Press, 1997), 33.

16. *Ibid.*, 33

17. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 194.

18. Foucault, *Ethics*, 52.

19. *Ibid.*, 41.

20. *Ibid.*, 48.

21. James B. Boyd writes: “Only by the slowest degrees does General Miles become acquainted with the real situation. He employs his Indian police as scouts and messengers, makes them bearers of information between the camps, uses them to overcome prejudices and to ascertain intentions, and if force become necessary they appear rather as policemen for arrest, than as soldiers for slaughter.” *Recent Indian Wars Under the Lead of Sitting Bull and Other Chiefs* (n.p.: Publishers Union, 1891), 202.

22. Stanley Vestal, *Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 286.

23. See Foucault’s discussion of “docile bodies” in *Discipline and Punish*, xx–xxi.

24. Generally it is a very tense and unhappy environment, as indicated by the level of alcohol abuse among Indians and Anglos.

25. Foucault, *Ethics*, 40.

26. M. Keith Booker defines *hegemony* as: “The process through which the bourgeoisie (though a minority) maintains its power in a capitalist society through processes of ideological domination that cause the proletariat to accept bourgeois ideology and therefore submit willingly to domination. Associated with the work of Antonio Gramsci, who argues that bourgeois power resides more in ideological techniques of persuasion than in direct techniques of coercion.” See Keith M. Booker, *Theoretical Approaches* (New York: Longman, 1996), 479.

27. Robert M. Utley writes: “To Indians practicing the very principle of religious freedom that the white people celebrated, the government’s reasoning made no sense. If whites could choose among the mutations of Protestantism and Catholicism, so the Indians should have the same right to choose between them or, if they wanted, a Ghost Dance that drew on Christian principles.” *The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1993), 371.

28. The relationship between Standing Elk and Willa Mae Favory reflects the theme of cultural hybridity often found in the novels of Jones that include Native Americans. A similar relationship will occur in *A Creek Named Wounded Knee*, in which a roughneck reporter falls in love with a Native American woman abandoned for her crossbreed child. Their union symbolizes the potential of ethnic unity between cultures. In *Season of Yellow Leaf*, Morfydd Parry (later renamed “Chosen” by the Natives), a child kidnapped by the Comanche, becomes a leader in the tribe. She bears a child, Kwahadi, who grows into a leader who encourages a blending of cultures in the sub-

sequent novel, *Gone the Dreams and Dancing*. In none of these historical fictions is one culture favored over another; rather, strengths and weaknesses are exposed in each, and hybridity represents hope for a future free of ethnic hatred between Anglo and Native Americans.

29. Arnold Krupat, *The Turn to the Native* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1996).

30. Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzons (London: Basil Blackwood, 1986), 76.

