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Autobiographical Indiscipline: Queering American Indian Life Narratives

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

Alicia Marie Cox

June 2014

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Michelle Raheja, Chairperson

Dr. Jennifer Doyle

Dr. Traise Yamamoto

Dr. Rebecca Kugel

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2014

The Dissertation of Alicia Marie Cox is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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For Charlotte

Growing up apart from you
Coping with confusion and resentment
Mothering myself in your absence
Attaching to schooling
Structuring my life
Coming to know myself
Now coming home to you
Reading and writing
Learning and teaching
Empathy and expression
Now forgiving everything
Our story belongs to a long history of displacements
Enduring trauma and sacrificing to survive
Bringing me into this world
You are a goddess
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Gvyalielitsehi
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Etsi

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Autobiographical Indiscipline: Queering American Indian Life Narratives

by

Alicia Marie Cox

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in English
University of California, Riverside, June 2014
Dr. Michelle Raheja, Chairperson

Reductionist discourses in various academic disciplines have tended to treat the Native authors of collaboratively written autobiographies as objects of Euro-American study rather than subjects of knowledge production. To develop a decolonial practice of reading as-told-to Indian autobiographies, this dissertation engages with scholarship in the fields of Native American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies to offer queer readings of the autobiographies of Helen Sekaquaptewa, Polingaysi Qoyawayma, and Don Talayesva, Hopi people who were born during the 1890s amid the federal Indian policy era of assimilation. This study focuses on the primary texts' narrations of discipline in Indian boarding schools and highlights Hopi perspectives on the role of gender and sexual normalization in the colonial assimilation project.

Chapter One, "‘I am talking. She is writing.’: Autobiographical Indiscipline in *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa*," develops the term *autobiographical indiscipline* to name the mode of collaborative self-authorship that these Hopi authors employed to represent the continuation of their Hopi identities. Chapter two, "Remembering Polingaysi: A Queer Recovery of *No Turning Back* as a Decolonial

Text,” examines the gendered facets of the trope of living “between two worlds” and the imbrication of sexual, racial, and nationalist politics underlying Indian boarding schools’ policing of students’ genders. Chapter three, “Twins, Whips, Tricks, and Clowns: Sovereign Erotics in *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*,” explores the history of sexuality in America and its inherent ties to race making in the context of state-sponsored ethnologic projects. Chapter four, “Decolonizing Voth’s Archive: Re-narrating Ethnographic Photographs in Hopi and Settler Colonial Contexts,” re-narrates images from the archive of Mennonite missionary H. R. Voth through the voices of Hopi autobiographical subjects.

Despite its particular Hopi context, this dissertation belongs to a broader intellectual context regarding the delimitation of literary and national boundaries and the politics of canon formation, which forms the core of American Studies. My theory of autobiographical indiscipline has implications for a range of Indian autobiographies as well as other forms of literature that blur the definitions of the autobiographical genre, such as ex-slave narratives, autobiographical fiction, and fictional autobiography.

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PREFACE

This dissertation is a work in progress. It is full of first impressions, suppositions made from the gut that I trust will prove useful when followed through in thought and action. Or maybe they won't. It is full of contradictions, but that is why I think there may be some kind of truth in it. (It is, after all, written in English; “this is the oppressor’s language / yet I need it to talk to you.”)ⁱ

Decolonization begins with changing the mind. It begins with desiring an existence free from imperialism, racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of nonconsensual dominance. It begins with speaking truth back to the powers that tell us we are already as liberated and self-determined as we can be, that there is nothing to be done. It begins with knowing that we are theorizing on stolen land. It begins with imagining ways to get the people and the land back together, to restore balance.

In drafting this document, these stories about other stories, I have struggled much with language—its inadequacies as well as my own. For instance, when I write about the Hopi characters in my primary texts, I fall into the trap of using the pronoun “they,” which signals an outsider status, an otherness from “I” or “us,” and signifies that the Hopis do not include me, myself; that they are different from me. However, my reason for selecting these three narratives to write about is, in part, that I identify with these characters, their struggles, and their victories. I see myself in their stories of displacement, alienation, and creative acts of survival. Reading these books makes me

ⁱ Adrienne Rich, “The Burning of Paper Instead of Children.”

feel less lonely and hopeless. I also worry that the pronoun “they” perpetuates the problem, so prevalent in academia both historically and presently, of treating Native peoples as though they and their cultures are objects to be studied rather than, for instance, subjects of intellectual discourse in their own right: authors, fellows, and colleagues.

In a different yet related conundrum of English pronouns, I fall into using “she” and “her” when referring to the subjects of the life narratives of/by Helen Sekaquaptewa and Polingaysi Qoyawayma and “he” and “him” when referring to the subject of the life narrative of/by Don Talayesva. My use of these pronouns is informed as much by their use in the primary texts as by my lack of an acceptable alternative—a gender neutral pronoun—in English. I find that these gender binary pronouns do not match up with the characters they signify. For example, the feminine qualities that “she” and “her” connote are not shared by Helen and Polingaysi alike. And Don speaks of himself not as a single person but as twins, male and female, so it may be more accurate to refer to Don as “they.” Singular pronouns are inadequate. Nothing is ever only one thing. It is significant that gendered singular pronouns do not exist in the Cherokee language. In Cherokee, one pronoun is used to denote “he,” “she,” and “it.” I wonder about pronouns in the Hopi language, of which I am ignorant. Some queer people have begun the habit of using the pronoun “they” to refer to any individual, however they identify their gender. Although “they” is technically a plural pronoun, and so it is not grammatically correct to use it in order to signify a single person, I like this trend, and I hope it sticks. It acknowledges that

no one among us is a single being; that we are all constituted by our relations with others; that we all embody our ancestors and our progeny.

Through this work, I want to align myself with the Hopi autobiographers, and all Native scholars and activists, in their struggles for intellectual sovereignty and self-determination in the face of colonial pressures to assimilate and conform to the demands of the dominant culture. I too want to free myself from the cannibalistic category of whiteness that threatens to incorporate my Native identity (which is not to say that I do not acknowledge the privileges that I enjoy, undeserved, merely because I am light-skinned).

My own autobiographically situated critical persona informs my questions and methods. Throughout this dissertation, I try to acknowledge and work through my responsibility to my history, my present position in academia, my identifications, and my desires. I recognize that no one benefits more from my scholarship than I do, though my intention is to work toward collective decolonization for the benefit of all beings. I understand the oppression I have suffered on the bases of my gender (queer, not a feminine female), sexual orientation (queer, not heterosexual), economic class (lower-working class), and racial identity (“mixed-race,” which is to say impure, not-quite-white) to be tied to the history and ongoing occupations of settler colonialism in the Americas. I want to break the cycle of violence, root out my internalized hatreds and heal, and help my mother and brother and all my relations to awaken to the truth.

I don’t mean to foreground my own life stories to champion them as “true” because they’re “lived experiences.” I don’t mean to preempt others (with different

experiences of their own) from joining this conversation. I mean to open a space where all can share and work collectively to explain the what-has-been, to imagine the what-might-have-been, and to transform ourselves to shape the what-yet-may-be.

In my scholarship, as in my life, I continuously question my assumptions and try to understand myself. This is feminist methodology, or “immanent critique,” to use Judith Butler’s phrase. My struggle to find a way to make my academic work relevant to my unemployed, under-employed, and clock-punching homies is ongoing.

The cultural conflict of the “white trash”ⁱⁱ scholar’s pursuit of higher education relates to that of Native American and Black intellectuals. There is a paradox between the ideological promise of the American Dream and the school-induced homelessness, cultural or actual, that characterizes many marginalized students’ experiences of academia. Our belonging in the academy is tenuous.

I have chosen a dissertation topic that is outside my realm of personal experience. Unlike the subjects of the autobiographies I examine, I am not Hopi. However, I find it problematic that if I were to write a dissertation about the works of Virginia Woolf, Mary Shelley, or Charlotte Bronte, though I am not British, no one would bat an eye. Although I may have Irish, Scotch, and/or English heritage, I am American. (No one of the white side of my family knows their genealogy. They are simply American, melted into the proverbial pot.)

ⁱⁱ Theorists of the power structures of race and class in America demonstrate how middle- and upper-class professionals have used various methods of knowledge production to construct poor white people as degenerate or distinguished from “normal” whites on the basis of characteristic traits such as racial impurity and miscegenation; licentiousness and other forms of sexual misconduct, such as rape and incest; general criminality; and nonnuclear kinship structures—all of which constitute my personal experience. See, for example, the work of sociologist Matt Wray, *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

I am American. What does that mean? I am read as “white” in the suburban Kansas neighborhood where I spent most of my childhood. And white Americans are free to appropriate the cultures of any European nation they so choose.

However, my mother always told me that I am Cherokee. She told me that I must remember the stories. She told me that I must learn to grow my own food. She told me that I belong to the trees, to the sunlight, and to this earth. She told me that I must realize that God is more than my father’s Protestant religion says. But there are many restrictions to my claim of Cherokee identity.

Do I identify with the Hopi subjects of these autobiographies because I identify as Cherokee? Maybe. Perhaps I feel that these stories hold “trans-indigenous” significance, to borrow Chadwick Allen’s phrase. I value writing as a way of communicating with people beyond the limits of time and space. I value reading and writing because they are boundary-crossing activities, or they have the potential to be. When I read the words of people who have passed from this life, I understand that they are not really gone and that their life work continues to affect my present reality. This gives me hope for my own writing to also touch people in the future, to impact places and times beyond my own body. Maybe this is important to me because I have an aversion to the idea of reproducing myself sexually. Since I will bear no child to bring my genetic material into the future, I will bear words on a page that may bring my consciousness into the future. Stories have power. Knowing myself through other people’s stories situates my sense of being as relational to the being of others. This dissertation is my own act of autobiographical indiscipline.

INTRODUCTION

The Politics of the Personal

In April 2011, I went to UCLA to attend a talk delivered by Scott Morgensen titled “Queer Settler Colonialism, Anti-Racism, and Two-Spirit Critique.” After the talk, respondent Elton Naswood (Navajo)¹ displayed an early twentieth century black-and-white photograph of Native American children dressed in uniforms and seated in rows in an Indian boarding school classroom. Naswood confided to the audience that, as a two-spirit person, when he first looked at this photograph he wondered how many of the students pictured in it were also two-spirit like him. Naswood’s question echoed the questions that had been haunting my own research on American Indian boarding schools and the autobiographies produced by their alumni, and it resonated with my own research methods, which are grounded in my personal experiences and my identifications. Like Naswood, I wonder about the students at Indian boarding schools who were “two-spirit,” to use the post-1990 umbrella term that designates an array of tribally specific traditional identities that were gender variant (e.g. *winkte* among the Lakota, *nádleehí* among the Navajo, and *lhamana* among the Zuñi).² More specifically, I wonder how such students experienced—and resisted—the boarding schools’ projects and procedures of “civilizing”

¹ At that time, Elton Naswood was the Program Coordinator for the Red Circle Project, an HIV prevention program that targets American Indians and Alaska Natives in Los Angeles County.

² In 1990, during the third annual intertribal Native American/First Nations gay and lesbian conference in Winnipeg, the term “two-spirit” was chosen as a replacement of the offensive anthropological term *berdache* to signify a variety of distinct Native/First Nations gender variant identities. Not all tribes have two-spirit traditions, and many Native people use the term queer or queer Native instead of or interchangeably with the term two-spirit. For more on the history of this term, see Gilley, *Becoming*; Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang, *Two-Spirit*; and Morgensen, *Spaces*.

Indian students by disciplining their gender identities through the colonial processes of individualization and heteronormative indoctrination that Native American literary scholar Mark Rifkin has termed “straightening.”

My questions arise from my understanding that much of the suffering and sexual violence in today’s Native communities, including homophobia and intergenerational sexual abuse, is rooted in abuses sustained during the boarding school era. This dissertation reads the life narratives of three Hopi people who were born in the 1890s and who attended off-reservation Indian boarding schools beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century. Each of these autobiographers—Helen Sekaquaptewa, Polingaysi Qoyawayma, and Don Talayesva—expresses a profound sense of difference from her/his peers. I focus on the gendered and/or sexual aspects of this difference, which each author seems to embrace as a marginalized position at the fringe of both Hopi and white settler communities, and I theorize *autobiographical indiscipline* as these storytellers’ narrative mode of disidentification.³

Each of this dissertation’s first three main chapters performs a queer Indigenous reading of a different Hopi person’s as-told-to autobiography: *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa*, as told to Louise Udall (1969); *No Turning Back: A Hopi Indian Woman’s Struggle to Live in Two Worlds*, by Polingaysi Qoyawayma, as told to Vada F. Carlson (1964); and *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*, by Don Talayesva, edited by Leo W. Simmons (1942). Although these texts were published in the

³ The original working title of this dissertation was “Consensual Marginalization” because these autobiographies embrace marginal spaces as places of potential constituted by relative freedom from political pressures to conform to social norms.

mid-twentieth century, each story's context lies in the nineteenth-century federal policy of Indian assimilation and acculturation, which permeates a broad swath of American literature and culture. I want to clarify that the objects of this study are books, not people. Although I have engaged the works of anthropologists in my research, I am not attempting to write ethnography. I have no desire to produce knowledge about Hopi or other Native people. We know who we are. When I write about the Hopi subjects of these three life narratives, I do so in order to highlight their voices, their stories, and the philosophies and ideas that their books express. I do not intend to offer a truer account of their lives. I seek to show that although these Hopi authors are no longer living, their books continue to tell stories that remain relevant for us as long as we read and speak of them. And I argue that we should. As cultural artifacts, these works exceed any authorial intention—either that of the Native subject or the non-Native informant. This is not to say that the Native voice can't be heard. Although these texts were produced in a context of U.S. imperialism, we readers can—and should—reappropriate them as works of Indigenous literature that represent alternatives to settler colonial biopolitics and may guide us in our struggles for decolonization.

It is a feminist commonplace that the personal is political. In the life narratives *Me and Mine*, *No Turning Back*, and *Sun Chief*, which reflect Hopi children's institutionalization in federal boarding schools, I see my mother's story of being placed into the foster care system at the age of fourteen. I also see my own story of being displaced from my mother at the age of five as the result of a custody battle. I have suffered from loneliness and resentment stemming from this natal alienation. But when I

read stories of others who I identify as having suffered, endured, and survived similar and/or worse situations, I feel emboldened, hopeful, and less lonely. These stories help me to see my and my mother's stories as interconnected within a long history of settler colonialism and the displacement of Native children, which is ongoing today (most noticeably in the foster care and adoption industries). I can see that my separation from my mother is not my mother's fault, and I can forgive, heal, and move on to try to promote the healing of others and protest the perpetuation of cultural genocide.

I believe that ghosts speak to us across time and space through stories. Their words are traces of the past that affect us in the present. This particular project stems from my being haunted by Polingaysi, the autobiographical subject of *No Turning Back*. Since I first read Polingaysi's life narrative, I felt an affinity for her character and identified with her experiences of what I intuited as her gender trouble, which were complicated by the double burden of her Indian race in the white supremacist context of settler colonial projects of Indian assimilation. Initially, I related to the character of Polingaysi because she struck me as a fellow queer person. I identified with her stated aversion to marriage and motherhood, her seemingly ironic attachment to colonial institutions of education, her struggles to belong, her career as a teacher, her love of and talent for music, and her radical race politics. Her story often returns to my mind and comforts me. Her words help me in my struggles to defy the dominant culture's norms regarding gender roles, sexuality, and personal expression and to oppose the systematic racial and class oppressions that perpetuate colonial occupation and imperialist ideologies.

To haunt is to return to something over and over. Throughout my research, I have also been haunted by the notion of non-Native amanuenses as “ghost writers,” skeletons in the closet of Native American literature. I want to develop a reading practice of bringing them out without consequently closeting the Native subjects. So, I focus on the lessons that are to be learned from reading these texts, the knowledge to be gained, rather than on their production process.

In *Touching Feeling*, Eve Sedgwick poses the question, “what does knowledge *do*?” For me, knowledge helps me to see the interconnectedness of everything, to release fear, to act responsibly in the present, and to imagine alternatives, visions of the future. When I read these autobiographies, I gain knowledge of queer Native strategies for surviving gendered settler colonial violence—especially the everyday sort of discursive violence that queer people face in their schools, jobs, and other disciplinary institutions that demand conformity to social norms. The knowledge produced in these books helps me to imagine strategies for decolonization and encourages me to seek out other readers who share this desire, other imaginers of a decolonized world. All I have to say here has been said before, better than I can say it, and it will be said again. But that doesn’t negate the necessity of my saying it now. We must keep refreshing the stories, holding them in the front of our memories.

Toward a Theory of *Autobiographical Indiscipline*

What’s the difference between a book about a Hopi person made by a non-Hopi author and a book made by a Hopi person *through* a non-Hopi author? What’s the

difference between ethnography and literature? The life narratives I examine here use the collaborative process of self-authorship as a tool, an instrument to express themselves, to liberate their silenced voices, and to fight back through the colonizer's own medium. (And the amanuensis is also a medium.) There is political agency in personal memory and expression. This dissertation develops my theory of *autobiographical indiscipline* as the mode of collaborative self-narration that Native authors employed to offer their own accounts of surviving colonial projects of Indian assimilation. Autobiographical indiscipline is a mode of disidentification that constructs selves that are multiple, relational, and mutable rather than singular, independent, and fixed. It challenges academic and colonial notions of Indian authenticity as a pure, traditional (read: antimodern) subjectivity. I argue that autobiographical indiscipline is an Indian intellectual tradition, a mode of "intellectual sovereignty," to use Robert Allen Warrior's term.⁴ Through acts of autobiographical indiscipline, these authors accessed the white-controlled publishing industry to represent the continuation of their Hopi ethnic and gender identities, despite their subjection to genocidal policies of assimilation. According to Foucault, "[o]ne of the primary objects of discipline is to fix."⁵ Here, fix has at least two significances: to repair or correct and to place, stick, or cement. Autobiographical indiscipline is a narrative mode of self-expression that is collaborative and intercultural, defying federal Indian policy's programs to individualize and fix Indian peoples. Indiscipline is more than mere disobedience. It is an undoing of the boundaries and rules

⁴ See Warrior, *Tribal Secrets* and *The People and the Word*.

⁵ Foucault, *History*, 218.

of discourse that opens new spaces and creates possibilities for decolonization. In this way, my queer reading practice is an act of indiscipline. To read autobiographical indiscipline in these as-told-to autobiographies as a practice of intellectual sovereignty is to understand Indian authors as producers of knowledge not only about themselves but about the ideologies that structure settler colonialism and about how to build coalitions for decolonial politics.

As-told-to Autobiography

As-told-to autobiography, otherwise known as Indian autobiography, is a genre that has been defined by the textual production process, in which so-called Indian informants orally tell their life stories to non-Indigenous amanuenses who then transcribe, organize, edit, and secure publishing for the texts. Many American Indian people have assented to narrate their life stories in order to assert their tribal identities and voice their responses to U.S. settler colonialism. However, the place of collaboratively-authored Indian autobiographies in the field of Native American literature has been debated because their mediation via non-Indigenous editors complicates disciplinary notions of authorship and authenticity and poses problems for literary categorization. The privileging and delineation of “authenticity” has been a foil to Indigenous peoples and has served to divide and create tensions among communities, inhibiting them from working together. It is a “divide and conquer” colonial tactic to declare some indigenous people as authentic and worthy of speaking and to silence, shame, and elide other voices. “Autobiographical Indiscipline: Queering American Indian Life Narratives” focuses on the stories that get

unduly elided when the notion of authenticity in Native American representation is circumscribed by Eurocentric definitions of the self. I argue that to insist on the inevitably distorted or inauthentic nature of these works effectually erases the Native storytellers' voices and neglects an appreciation of their past, present, or potential value as agents of decolonial change. It is my goal to privilege Polignaysi, Sekaquaptewa, and Talayesva as authors of their own autobiographies, regardless of the editorial aid or typographic mediation they received; after all, how is this different from any of our works in the academy, which all depend on the benefit of collaborative processes in writing workshops, peer review, and editorial boards?

In his foreword to the new second edition of *Sun Chief*, Hopi historian Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert identifies a problem with the practice of collaborative Hopi autobiography, and it is the problem of authorial agency: "Hopis did not publish their own books or articles with university presses. Instead, they relied on white scholars to make their voices heard. And white scholars relied on the Hopi to validate their research . . . and bring a sense of authenticity to their work."⁶ Sakiestewa Gilbert categorizes works that "sought to enlighten the public on Hopi history and culture" as belonging to a particular place in time, the "'as told to' era in Hopi studies."⁷ In this category, Sakiestewa Gilbert includes the life narratives of Helen Sekaquaptewa and Polingaysi Qoyawayma, and he distinguishes these texts from self-written autobiographies like

⁶ Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Foreword," x.

⁷ Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Foreword," x.

Edmund Nequatewa's *Born a Chief* (1992).⁸ By repeatedly stressing the fact that "none of [the as-told-to autobiographies] were solely written or published by Hopis themselves," Sakiestewa Gilbert highlights the repression of Hopi knowledge production due to the fact that "academic credentials and resources" were most often required in order to gain access to the publishing industry.⁹ He points out that "university presses preferred to situate Hopis as 'informants' rather than the authors of their own books," and this says a lot about the racism of the academy and its denigration of indigenous forms of knowledge production.¹⁰ Sakiestewa Gilbert's foreword implies that self-written autobiographies are to be honored as evidence of increasing Hopi intellectual sovereignty. He celebrates the fact that "Hopis are now producing scholarship on the Hopi people, using the skills they honed in graduate school to rearticulate, and at times reinterpret, our history and culture."¹¹ I want to add to Sakiestewa Gilbert's meditations on as-told-to autobiography by developing a practice of reading these texts that acknowledges the shared authorship of the Native subjects.

It is important to clarify the fact that Louise Udall and Vada Carlson, the amanuenses of Helen Sekaquaptewa's and Polingaysi Qoyawayma's autobiographies, were not scholars in the strictest sense. Udall was a fellow member of Sekaquaptewa's church, and Carlson was a fellow classmate in a creative writing course that Qoyawayma

⁸ For discussions about the differences between as-told-to and self-written American Indian autobiographies, see Krupat and Wong.

⁹ Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Foreword," x.

¹⁰ Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Foreword," x-xi.

¹¹ Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Foreword," xi.

took at Northern Arizona University. Apart from the material realities of racial inequality, the relationships of these autobiographers and amanuenses were fairly equitable; they related to one another as peers and collaborators in their particular communities rather than as scholars to their objects of study or as writers to their informants. How are the life narratives of Helen and Polingaysi different from those produced by anthropologists and social scientists with academic and social credentials, like *Sun Chief*? As friends of the authors, did Udall and Carlson see more at stake in getting the stories “right” rather than seeking to prove their preconceptions?

Hopi Specificity

My project is tribally-specific, in part because of the resources at my disposal in Riverside, California (where Polingaysi Qoyawayma and Don Talayesva attended boarding school at Sherman Institute from 1906 to 1909) and also out of allegiance with the arguments of certain Indigenous literary nationalists. Proponents of American Indian literary nationalism declare that Native literatures must be studied in the context of tribal/Native communal issues and politics to ensure that literary criticism is useful for Indian peoples. In *Tribal Secrets*, Robert Warrior calls for Indian literary studies methodologies to arise from Native communities, and he specifically names class, gender, and sexuality as under-theorized issues of great import that get elided in literary scholars’ discussions of authors’ racial identity politics. A tribally specific frame of study allows for an exploration of diversity and factions *within* the Hopi nation, problematizing the homogenization of tribal peoples.

This stance critically responds to modes of critique wherein white scholars appropriate Native cultural forms for the benefit of their own careers or for the aims of American multiculturalism, which pads the classically Eurocentric American canon with the literatures of Native and other so-called ethnic minority populations to create the appearance, via the logic of inclusion of the other, that the U.S. harbors a democratic love of diversity and social equality. In solidarity with American Indian literary nationalists, I have restricted the parameters of this project to address a particular body of Hopi literature. However, I have refrained from using the word “Hopi” in the title of this dissertation because I do not want to give the impression that the problems and ideas expressed in my primary texts are relevant only for the study of Hopi literature and culture. The relevance of these texts exceeds tribal specificity and perhaps even Native specificity.

Hopi Autobiography as American Literature

Paula Gunn Allen declares that Native American literature is “a major tradition that informs American writers,” and she defines as-told-to narrative as a genre of American Indian literature that exceeds “classic western categories.”¹² The as-told-to narratives that I examine here especially inform American writers who theorize friendship and non-biological nuclear kinship (chapter one), gender (chapter two), and the history of sexuality in American literature and cultural studies (chapter three). I argue that the study of American Indian autobiographical practices is important to any

¹² Allen, *Sacred*, 4.

consideration of American literary practices of self-making and literary subject formation. Such a conversation requires us to acknowledge the continuation of indigenous nations within the geopolitical boundaries of the U.S. and the arbitrariness of the American canon. To understand Native literary practices as American literary practices is to disrupt the idea of America itself. It is to allow a space for indigenous authors to speak truth to the power of the American canon and the settler colonial nation-state which American literary nationalism represents—indeed, which it has served to construct. American literary studies must engage Indigenous literatures. In the words of Creek author Craig Womack, “tribal literatures are not some branch waiting to be grafted onto the main trunk. Tribal literatures are the tree, the oldest literatures in the Americas, the most American of American literatures. We are the canon. . . . Without Native American literature, there is no American canon.”¹³ I reproduce this quotation to suggest that a politics of inclusion, which would pretend to correct the American canon by adding Native literatures to it, is not the solution to the problem of the marginalization of indigenous intellectual practices in the academy. Rather, my project seeks to question the existence of the canon in the first place and to claim that these life narratives contain ideas that are not being expressed elsewhere and philosophies that are valuable for understanding decolonization praxis beyond the binary of oppressed people overthrowing the oppressors, which is problematic for its perpetuation of a seemingly never-ending cycle of violence.

¹³ Womack, *Red*, 7.

Indian Boarding School Discourses

From the advent of the praying towns developed by the Puritans of New England in the seventeenth century, to the Spanish missions established in the eighteenth century, to the residential schools that operated across the Americas well into the twentieth century, Indian boarding schools attempted the extermination of American Indians as such through assimilation—a euphemism for cultural and ethnic elimination or genocide. The objective of assimilation policy was to discipline Indian children to act like white people, instilling in them a sense of their essential difference from white people—as racial Indians, as religious heathens, as social savages. In North America, boarding schools sought to incorporate Indians into the white supremacist national body as second class citizens, a cheap labor force, a dying race that would either “breed out” through miscegenation, disappearing into the proverbial melting pot, or else wither away in their isolated reservations. Boarding schools displaced students from their communal homelands and prescribed urban living, private home ownership, and nuclear kinship as the pinnacles of civilized life. Disciplinarians at the schools stripped Native children of their traditional clothing, declaring them to be unclean, and brutally punished students for speaking their Native languages or practicing their sacred ways. Somewhat ironically, the schools also encouraged students to perform cultural expressions like Native song and dance for white audiences, whose admission fees supplemented the schools’ incomes.

Woefully understaffed and underfunded, these boarding schools were havens for rapists, sadists, and other ostensibly well-meaning philanthropists who sought to “civilize” the so-called “savages.” The boarding school era is a major source of many ills

among today's Native communities, e.g., alcoholism and substance abuse; internalized oppressions like racism, homophobia, and sexism; intergenerational sexual abuse and other forms of domestic violence; incarceration; and the displacement of Native children into non-Native foster and adoptive homes.¹⁴ For this reason, it's imperative to ground our understanding of these issues—as well as our imagining of a decolonized future for all people—in the stories of boarding school survivors. Stories have power to inform and transform. This work necessitates a critical reevaluation of historiography, archives, and other practices of remembering.

Archival Research

My archival research is aligned with the methodologies of Indian boarding school scholars who seek to illuminate obscured narrative voices and highlight the diversity of student experiences, which were differently impacted by factors such as relationship to home community and tribal culture; economic status; and blood quantum, phenotype, and other racial identity markers.¹⁵ I pay sustained attention to the ways that students' gender and sexuality variously affected their experiences of boarding school. As Native feminist Dian Million points out, "The strongly gendered training in residential schools . . . radically reorganized indigenous familial relations to conform to a uniform patriarchal order. Those societies that were matrilineal, as well as those in which both maternal and paternal lines

¹⁴ For fictional, dramatic, filmic, and documentary accounts of boarding school abuses and their legacies in present Native communities, see Highway, *Kiss*; Loyie and Manuel, *Two Plays*; *Older than America*; and *Our Spirits Don't Speak English*.

¹⁵ For discussions of the diversity of Indian boarding school students' experiences, see Lomawaima, *They Caled It* and Sakiestewa Gilbert, *Education*.

determined identity, property, and responsibility, were incorporated into a patriarchal hierarchy that placed Indian men below white male Indian agents and male priests but above Indian women.”¹⁶ I ask how we might read former Indian boarding school students’ life narratives to ascertain their practices of resistance and survival. A critical turn in Indian boarding school scholarship moves away from the victimization of Native students and rather centers attention on students’ modes and practices of “survivance,” to use Gerald Vizenor’s term for essentially resistant methods of survival.¹⁷ This reparative reading practice, to use Eve Sedgwick’s term, is central to Indigenous studies’ decolonization efforts.¹⁸ By focusing on what Helen Sekaquaptewa, Polingaysi Qoyawayma, and Don Talayesva say and do through collaborative self-authorship, my readings align with this shift in boarding school discourses from the old victimization rhetoric of assimilation as genocide to a more useful celebration of students’ past and ongoing strategies of survival and healing.¹⁹ In focusing on the gendered and sexual politics of the colonial enterprise, I contribute to discussions of scholars like K. Tsianina Lomawaima, whose work investigates the role of the ideology of “domesticity” in the boarding schools’ training of Indian pupils; Andrea Smith, who theorizes the gendered politics of genocide, “unlikely alliances,” and settler colonialism; Qwo-Li Driskill, who theorizes a “sovereign erotic” as

¹⁶ Million, “Felt Theory,” 270.

¹⁷ See Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*.

¹⁸ See Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading,” in *Touching Feeling*.

¹⁹ As Dian Million explains in *Therapeutic Nations*, healing is not a historical event but a perpetual process.

a goal of decolonization; and Mark Rifkin, who characterizes heteronormativity in Indian boarding school curricula as a “romance plot.”²⁰

To contextualize and enrich my readings of my primary texts, I attend to unpublished materials housed in museums and research libraries, as well as obscure or underestimated published documents that can aid in “Articulating that living history” of Native people whose attempted assimilation into mainstream America has been coerced through education; this, according to Osage scholar Robert Warrior, “is among the most important work Native scholars can do.”²¹ I have perused the student records and archives at Sherman Indian Museum, located on the campus of Sherman Indian High School in Riverside, California, in order to gain insight into the activities and work of Polingaysi Qoyawayma and Don Talayesva, who were enrolled at Sherman in 1906. I have accessed the Sherman Institute student case files at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Perris, California. And I have studied the manuscript and photographic archives of H. R. Voth, Charles Lummis, and George Wharton James in the Braun Research Library at the Southwest Museum of the American Indian in Los Angeles, California. A question that has guided my research is whether an interpretive focus on schooling as a system of gender identity formation might provide a means to transcend the disciplinary borders that so often elide the histories and literatures of queer Native people. This historicizing practice aids my reading of silences, gaps, and omissions in the life narratives; it gives me a sense of what has been left out and what has

²⁰ See Lomawaima, *They Called It*; Smith, *Conquest*; Smith, *Native Americans*; Smith, “Queer Theory”; Driskill, “Stolen”; and Rifkin, “Romancing”.

²¹ Warrior, *The People*, 141.

been foregrounded. Attending to archives also allows me to see what has been saved (in the archive) but closeted, hidden, or kept in the remissions of institutional memory and out of published histories.

Hopes

This dissertation seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of Indian self-authorship and literary subject formation in the context of settler colonialism. It intends to re-appropriate the words of “Indian informants” as the stories of Hopi authors to which contemporary Indigenous intellectuals and activists may refer as models of political coalition. What is at stake in my identification of these autobiographical subjects as authors is my wish to position them not as objects of study but as subjects of intellectual discourse about the relationships among settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and disciplinary practices in Indian boarding schools. The resistance strategy I see at work in these texts are coalitional uses of autobiography and publication—even a co-optation of dominant cultural forms for Native use. I aim to highlight how Native students at boarding school used their acquired knowledge to resist colonial logics.

Queering

As an identity category, “queer” is not a Native concept; rather, it is created as a foil to the normal in the context of settler colonial ideologies.²² Queer Indigenous

²² Studies of queer Indian identities by scholars like Walter Williams and Will Roscoe have been criticized for their lack of historical specificity and use of contemporary colonial sexual identity categories to understand past Indigenous cultural lives. See Williams, *Spirit*, and Roscoe, *Changing*. However, similar works seeking to reclaim queer Indian traditions have been legitimized by Native scholars who point out

scholars such as Scott Morgensen explore how Native Americans get marked as queer through processes of colonization. “Following Indigenous feminist and queer critics,” Morgensen defines *queer* as “a location constituted by white-supremacist settler colonialism that will be unascertainable until this condition is explained,” and he claims that “nothing in the history of white-supremacist settler colonialism or the globalization of European capital and empire that it facilitates is separable from what is perceived as ‘queer.’”²³ In related discussions, queer of color theorists like Roderick Ferguson and José Muñoz have pointed out that sexual deviance is always already racialized and that heteronormativity is a problem for everyone, not just subjects who are oppressed on the basis of their sexual identity.²⁴

The interdisciplinary field of queer Indigenous studies marks a scholarly coalition of queer and Native studies. Queer Indigenous studies encourages queer theorists to attend to a historical blind spot in their interrogations of “normal” as a system of oppression by calling them to acknowledge the settler colonial context of not only dominant constructions of normative sexual and gender identities but also of LGBTQ identities and politics. This critical intervention helps us to understand how decolonization is a necessary prerequisite for any sustainable deconstruction of oppressive regimes of the normal.

that accusations of anachronism presume that the past and the present are incommensurable, erasing the ways the past continues to exist in the present moment, and also reify a Eurocentric understanding of time as linear and progressive, thereby eliding the ways that queer Indigenous people’s present desires inflect our historical research and interpretations. See Driskill et al.

²³ Morgensen, *Spaces*, 25.

²⁴ See Ferguson, *Aberrations*, and Muñoz, *Disidentifications*.

Queer Indigenous studies also explores how queer theoretical methodologies may equip Indigenous studies scholars with a model for moving beyond their conventional entrenchment within ethnographic modes of analysis, as queer theory has evolved from its foundation in deviant sexual identity politics to an analytic methodology that may be applied to multiple issues, such as heteropatriarchy, racism, and settler colonialism. Queer Native scholars have adapted queer theoretical methodologies to enable themselves to theorize beyond the ethnographic bind, or the burden to represent their tribe or Native nation, and to equip themselves to consider sovereignty beyond issues of race, ethnicity, and law or to consider the relation of each to gender and sex. Since the notion of *queer* at its core rejects categorizations of identity and holds that behaviors, practices, and feelings that make up our sense of self are fluid and multiple, queer theorists purport to be able to move beyond the exclusivist practices of essentialism that inhere in identity politics by, instead, engaging ideology critique and encouraging us to imagine new modes of identification and relation. I offer my theory of autobiographical indiscipline as a tool for queer Indigenous scholars to explore the past and potential cultural and intellectual work of these as-told-to autobiographies—the ideas and philosophies contained in the stories—above and beyond their creations of Indian subjects.

My close readings of my primary texts focus on issues of kinship (chapter one), gender (chapter two), and sexuality (chapter three) through a queer Indigenous studies framework that understands gender and sexuality discourses as co-constitutive of racialized and sexualized—not to mention colonized—subjectivities. All three of these

Indian autobiographies claim that the Hopi subjects went to boarding school by choice, not by force. I show how these stories resist the individualizing and straightening projects of boarding school disciplining that pressured them to conform to nuclear, heteronormative models of kinship.

My use of “queer” as a verb, and my term “queering,” is meant to mobilize a way of reading queerly, of queering texts that are not usually read with a focus on issues of gender and sexual normalization and/or marginalization. By queering these Indian life narratives, I look at the imbrication of kinship, gender, and sex in these tales of surviving racist and sexist assimilation projects. One of my assumptions is that Indian students at boarding schools were queered by the settler colonial ideologies that structured their situations as “savages” in need of “civilization.”

My use of the term “queer” is multifaceted. It signifies a range of behaviors that are non-heteronormative, or that deviate from the gender roles sanctioned by the colonial society, which were based on biological sex with an eye toward heteropatriarchal marriage and biological reproduction and the construction of the nuclear family as the cornerstone of civilized society. By naming the identities and practices that were queered among Native communities in the situation of colonization, I launch my queer critique of heteropatriarchy.²⁵ Generally, my use of “queer” is inspired by the work of José Muñoz,

²⁵ Since the objects of my analyses exceed identity politics, my work deviates from that of anthropologists like Williams, Roscoe, and Lang. In *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America*, Roscoe outlines a “core set of traits that justifies comparing” various tribes’ alternate gender roles with those of colonial LGBT identities across time, space, and cultures. These traits include specialized work roles; third or fourth gender social categories; spiritual sanction; and same-sex erotic relations, significant not because of their homosexual nature (which were not exclusive to *berdaches*) but because of their non-procreativity (Roscoe 8). In her essay “Coming to Terms with Navajo *Nádleehí*: A Critique of

whose *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* advances the theory that queerness is a horizontal, utopian world-making process—a mutable position of being, relating, knowing, and feeling—rather than a monolithic identity category. To queer something is an act of hoping, of imbuing it with potential or possibility, of reclaiming its use value, of remaking it anew. My reading of these texts is geared toward their usefulness for like-minded readers, my imagined comrades in the projects and processes of decolonization. To queer is a practice of deconstructing and extending the borders of binary systems of meaning, of acknowledging the presence and significance of anomalies and those whose being transcends multiple categories or fails to fit neatly into any one. It is to question the usefulness of categories per se. These chapters posit that queered characters in Indian literature can be described in instances of: non-heteronormative kinship relations (chapter one), non-reproductive futurity (chapter two), and non-heteronormative sexual desires, behaviors, and identifications (chapter three).

Hopi gender

I must admit my ignorance of Hopi language and gender traditions, outside of what has been written by anthropologists and historians. I use gender pronouns “he,” “she,” “his,” and “her” because they are used in the primary texts. Since I understand that in the Cherokee language such gendered pronouns do not exist, I wonder if these gendered pronouns are used in the Hopi language and/or if there are pronouns or other words in Hopi that correspond with a gender identity outside the male/female binary. I

Berdache, ‘Gay,’ ‘Alternate Gender,’ and ‘Two-Spirit,’” Carolyn Epple takes issue with Roscoe’s use of “traits” as knowable or meaningful subjects of analysis.

am tempted to replace all gendered singular pronouns with the plural pronouns “they” and “their,” in line with my argument that all selves are plural; there is no such thing as a singular individual who acts or speaks outside of the context of a community.

Decolonization

We are theorizing on stolen land. I am convinced that if racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other ideological barriers to respectful inter-being and democratic sociality are to be eradicated in this land, we must continuously vocalize our refusal to acknowledge the United States as a legitimate government. We must act against colonial authority. We must repeatedly call for the return of governance to the people. This is what I mean by decolonization: an ongoing and collective struggle to restore our rights of self-determination; to restore balance.

Colonization fixes Native peoples, denying their capacity to change and adapt and still remain Indian or retain their tribal identities. It is based on the logic of elimination, which as Patrick Wolfe explains, predicts the disappearance of Native peoples as inevitable. Decolonization is a project of developing theories and practices that destabilize and disrupt colonization. A necessarily comparative project, it involves comparisons of Indigenous ways of knowing with colonial archives and epistemologies in order to correct misinformation. Decolonization is a creative (not reactionary or conservative), gendered (not strictly racial or nationalist), and transformative praxis.

Winona LaDuke’s foreword to Andrea Smith’s *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* explains that the “reality is that what is personal and intimate

. . . become[s] the centerpiece of power relations between peoples and societies. The reality is that there is no way to build a real movement for justice and peace . . . without challenging the violence of historical and contemporary colonialism.”²⁶ Smith claims that any attempt to decolonize Native America must necessarily include a mode of gender critique to attend to the ways Indigenous communities have been impacted by imperial heteropatriarchy. Through their storytelling practices, the life narratives I explore in the following chapters politicize the autobiographical subjects’ personal lives, blurring boundaries between public and private, political and personal, and challenging the violence of colonialism—in particular the idea of the assimilated Indian.

Chapter One

The first chapter, “‘I am talking. She is writing.’: Autobiographical Indiscipline in *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa*,” proposes that intercultural, collaborative authorship has been an intellectual tradition of many Native peoples. I argue that Sekaquaptewa collaborated with her amanuensis and friend, Louise Udall, to narrate her self as constituted through intercultural relationality and communal responsibility. Through Udall’s transcription, Sekaquaptewa narrates her methods of surviving federal Indian boarding school and maintaining Hopi lifeways in urban settings, and her story is clearly meant to enrich the Hopi community.

This chapter focuses on the politics of collaborative autobiographical authorship in order to theorize autobiographical indiscipline as a strategy of sovereign self-representation. Autobiographical indiscipline is a narrative mode that defies imperialist

²⁶ LaDuke, “Foreword,” xvii-xviii.

projects of disciplining Indians as colonized (individualized, racialized, sexualized) subjects and instead represents the relationality and communal responsibility of the self. Autobiographical indiscipline deconstructs the conventions of autobiography—literally defined as self-life-writing. *Me and Mine* constitutes Helen’s self as relational and mutable rather than individual and fixed; her life as multiple, including the lives of others, rather than unified and contained by her body; and her written life narrative as engendered through oral traditions.

My reading of *Me and Mine* considers how the friendships between Native autobiographers and non-native amanuenses may be considered as decolonial coalition building rather than intellectual exploitation or cultural appropriation. As Andrea Smith points out, “lack of coalition-building only keeps white supremacy and colonialism in place.”²⁷ In our struggles for justice, Native people may do well to take advantage of the help and collaboration of non-Native people who also suffer in various ways under the colonial system: other people of color, working class folks, and women, to name a few. Louise Udall, the amanuensis of Helen Sekaquaptewa’s life narrative, *Me and Mine*, was a fellow member of Helen’s Mormon church. As Smith argues, “it is important to expand our notion of community to include communities based on religious affiliations, employment, hobbies, and athletics, and develop strategies based in those communities” rather than restricting Native activism and struggles for decolonization to tribal communities.²⁸ A strictly nationalistic or racial view of oppression ignores the many

²⁷ Smith, *Conquest*, 53.

²⁸ Smith, *Conquest*, 164.

things that Native peoples share in common with other oppressed groups in the United States and imposes limitations on our abilities to organize and mobilize affectively.

Udall asserts that her friendship with Helen substantiated the text of *Me and Mine*, defying critical attempts to discipline the (Indian) informant/(white) amanuensis relationship according to settler colonial logics of individualized subjectivity and hierarchical social relations. In a system of friendship, differences signify on a more horizontal and latitudinal rather than hierarchical plane. This chapter explores how we might understand friendship as a relationality of indiscipline, as it eludes the fixing or placement of the self.

I engage Michel Foucault's theory that friendship encourages the mutual cultivation of an immanent impersonal self. My examination of Sekaquaptewa's and Udall's cultivation of queer kinship through interracial friendships and non-biological family relations is also indebted to Andrea Smith's theorizations of the "unlikely alliances" Native Americans forge in their struggles for sovereignty.²⁹ Despite the fact of Sekaquaptewa's racial Indianness, Hopi nationality, and working class status, she nevertheless regards her friend Udall—a Euro-American middle class woman—as a member of her family; the two women even name each other as surrogate mothers of each other's children. For Helen and Louise, "friend" is a kinship term.³⁰ On the whole, Sekaquaptewa's life narrative defies the colonial logics of individualism and

²⁹ See Smith, *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances*.

³⁰ My interpretation of friendship as a mode of queer kinship follows from a history of queer and feminist scholarship on friendship, including the works of Michel Foucault, Alan Bray, and Ivy Schweitzer.

heteronormative kinship structures and represents the self as both personal and relational—as both “me” and “mine,” my self and my relations.

This chapter develops a reading practice that foregrounds the Native voice, not the amanuensis’ mediation, and acknowledges the author’s voice as in-conversation with other voices, highlighting the relationality of the self. *Me and Mine* is full of relationships that blur the contours of the individual autobiographer’s life and self. And the story also contains the voices of others. The inclusion of multiple voices in the telling of a story is a characteristic of the oral tradition that is essential to the creation of as-told-to Indian autobiographies. Helen’s husband and one of her sons narrate events and information, and their own first-person voices are indicated through the use of italics. Amanuensis Louise Udall’s voice also makes a direct appearance. In the chapter that narrates the notorious Oraibi Split, the faction among the Hopis of Oraibi that resulted in the geographical displacement of more than half the population of Oraibi, Udall transparently explains that she elaborated on Helen’s account of the event by including information she discovered in federal archives in Washington, D.C.

Chapter Two

Chapter two, “Remembering Polingaysi: A Queer Recovery of *No Turning Back* as a Decolonial Text,” examines the gendered significance of the trope of living “between two worlds,” which commonly signifies the fraught identities of Indian people who were subjected to federal policies designed to transform them into U.S. citizens. The title on the cover of Polingaysi’s life narrative reads, *No Turning Back: A Hopi Indian Woman’s*

Struggle to Live in Two Worlds (1964), while the title page features a longer subtitle, *A True Account of a Hopi Indian Girl's Struggle to Bridge the Gap between the World of Her People and the World of the White Man*. The longer subtitle demonstrates the “between two worlds” trope of the assimilated Indian as colonized subject whose identity is fragmented and worldview divided by the system of settler colonialism. Polingaysi’s narrative deals with the question of how to remain Hopi after converting to Christianity, learning to speak, read, and write in English, and refusing to conform to Hopi norms of home and family. According to Allen, “between two worlds” is a prevalent theme in literature about Indians by non-Indians, and the phrase indicates the position of the doomed noble savage. Polingaysi’s life narrative repositions this situation and recuperates the space of the in-between for decolonial purposes. In *No Turning Back*, the space “between two worlds” becomes a generative, creative space, a springboard into the future, not a place of alienation and hopelessness.

My reading of *No Turning Back* takes up an inferential hermeneutic that has been encouraged by queer Indigenous scholar Craig S. Womack. Womack theorizes “suspicioning” as a mode of recuperative interpretation that actively ties our intellectual identities in the present with our historicist fantasies and scholarly investments.³¹ Through the practice of suspicioning, I theorize silence as a way of saying, a mode of knowledge production through which Polingaysi tells her stories through things unsaid, implied, skipped over, or left to the reader’s imagination. It is in these opportunities for inference that queer Indigenous readers might gain some insight into the gendered

³¹ See Womack, “Suspicioning.”

inflections of the racial or cultural constructions on the surface of the stories. Suspicioneering forwards a queer mode of reading that acknowledges intuition and inference as valid sources of interpretive knowledge.³² Rather than eliding identity politics, however, this method highlights the subject position of the reader doing the “suspicioneering.” The practice of inferential reading is queer in that it allows a method for reading silences and omissions as speech acts. Queer reading deals in making much of traces—ashes left after the fire, people pushed to the margins, left in the dust, hints of what might have been, and suggestions of what yet may be. Womack’s use of “suspicioneering” as a verb mobilizes the definition of *suspicion* as a noun denoting a slight trace, hint, or suggestion, and pulls away from the negative connotations of the verb *to suspect*, or to believe to be guilty, false, or counterfeit with little or no proof. To suspect is to infer wrongdoing or even criminal behavior. To the contrary, Womack’s notion of suspicioneering is a joyous action of suspecting one to be *like me*, of surmising that you are not alone and that you have ancestors, though you have little or no proof besides what is felt intuitively.

This chapter is also indebted to Indigenous feminisms, which point out the specificity of Native women’s concerns regarding sovereignty and decolonization. They decry the patriarchal underbelly of nationalist ideology, especially as it has been internalized by tribal governments seeking recognition of their right to self-govern in

³² Diane Million’s essay, “Felt Theory,” also takes up a critical methodology of queer theory commonly known as affect theory.

terms that are legible to and therefore modeled after the U.S. nation-state.³³ Native feminist discourses recognize gender analysis as necessary for sovereignty struggles, due to the patriarchal and heteronormative valences of settler colonialism. In *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, Andrea Smith theorizes settler colonialism as a system of sexual violence that situated Indigenous peoples as inherently rapable, Indigenous lands as inherently invadable, Indigenous cultures as inherently destructible, and Indigenous peoples as inherently conquerable and terminable. Smith explains that “gender violence is not simply a tool of patriarchal control,” which oppresses women and subordinates them to the rule of men, but it is also “a tool of racism and colonialism” because “colonial relationships are themselves gendered and sexualized.”³⁴ Smith warns that “If we maintain these patriarchal gender systems, we will be unable to decolonize and fully assert our sovereignty” because “It has been through sexual violence and through the imposition of European gender relationships on Native communities that Europeans were able to colonize Native peoples in the first place.”³⁵ Such models of nationalism perpetuate patriarchy and other hierarchical models of organization that in turn perpetuate colonial violence. Informed by the critical interventions made by feminists of color, Native feminists claim that gender critique is crucial for decolonization praxis because heteropatriarchy is a basic organizing logic of

³³ For example, the 2008 issue of *American Quarterly* features a forum, “Native Feminisms without Apology,” wherein a multiplicity of Native feminists encourage Indigenous studies to rethink the way it engages decolonization projects and struggles for sovereignty and nationalism and to be careful not to reproduce systems of oppression.

³⁴ Smith, *Conquest*, 1.

³⁵ Smith, *Conquest*, 139.

settler colonialism. They point out that Native men and Native women experience oppression as Indians in different ways and that gender, as a basis for oppression, is not secondary to race or nationalism but intersects with it in material ways.

A prevalent theme in the autobiographies of Indians who lived through the assimilation era is the difficulty that they experienced in overcoming pragmatic and ideological contradictions between forging a viable home away from home at boarding school and maintaining communal and cultural ties; between their need to survive their immediate situations within structures of American imperialism through acts of complicity and their desire to resist the genocidal designs of the agents of power that shaped their rebellions. Scholars such as historian Margaret D. Jacobs and anthropologist Leo W. Simmons have interpreted Polingaysi as an assimilationist whose conversion to Christianity and collaboration with non-Indigenous intellectuals constituted her movement away from Hopi tradition and toward whiteness/Americanness, deeming her an “atypical Hopi.” In this chapter, I remember Polingaysi by challenging the simplistic binary of “two worlds” as a way of organizing reality so that a mixture of both would become a hybrid, a lesser-Hopi way of being, rather than the legitimate third space that it is in Polingaysi’s view of herself as a bridge between two worlds. The space in between two worlds, I argue, is a bridge; it is not one, nor the other, nor a hybrid or mixture of both; it is a route of access to either/or, both/and, and it is a third liminal, queered, and as-yet-unnamed space which, in *No Turning Back*, is a distinctly Hopi space, for all its borrowing/adapting of the “white” world’s ways. According to Paula Gunn Allen, “In tribal gynocratic systems a multitude of personality and character types can function

positively within the social order because the systems are focused on social responsibility rather than on privilege and on the realities of the human constitution rather than on denial-based social fictions to which human beings are compelled to conform by powerful individuals within the society.”³⁶ As a non-conformist, as an anomaly, Polingaysi is nonetheless fully Hopi.

I suggest that we may queer Polingaysi, or read her as a queer subject, because rather than being forced to go to boarding school, she claims to have run away from home/her parents and stowed herself away on the wagon headed for Sherman Indian Institute in Riverside, California. She was fourteen years old when she did this, and I argue through my close reading that she was trying to evade the gendered responsibilities of a young Hopi woman to begin preparing to get married and start a family. In the Hopi matriarchal society, the woman is central to the economic structure; the house, food, and crops are owned by the women. Women say where which men plant crops, and men give the products of their farming to their wives to cook to feed the family. It is Polingaysi’s duty as a Hopi female to get married and to start having children, and she has a conflict about this with her mother. Because Polingaysi runs away to go to boarding school at this critical time, my queer reading of her defiant choice looks at her flight to California as a queer diaspora. Polingaysi wanted to leave her known world, which did not suit her personality, in search of the unknown because, scary as the mystery was, it was also exciting and pregnant with potential. Her known world—the conventional, the normal—did not suit her sense of self, her desire. And she wondered what the alternative might

³⁶ Allen, *Sacred*, 3.

have been. It is a utopian orientation, a process of coming to know, of moving toward the horizon, a process of discovering.

Not surprisingly, Polingaysi found Riverside to be not quite what she had imagined. Remembering her time at Sherman, she recalls it as a “time of torture.” I argue that what tortures her about being in Riverside is that she endures restrictive conventions for the roles of women there at the boarding school. Her teachers and other authority figures herald companionate marriage, and the single-family household by extension, to be the cornerstone of civilized society. (Not much has changed in the past century of continued colonial occupation.) Additionally, in the “white world,” she discovers not only the familiar expectations of marriage, conjugal domesticity, and reproduction but also a compulsion to be submissive to men and white people in a patriarchal and white supremacist society; there is no gender balance of social power for women, and there is certainly no justice for Indians, racialized to think of themselves as inferior to the white population. Polingaysi is compelled to submit to the white people in whose employ she must labor to “earn” her room and board. In this racist society, the Eurocentric indoctrination of Native children was meant to destroy their tribal communities and train them to accept an inferior social position as a low-wage working class/labor force; they could be farm hands, migrant agricultural workers, maids, servants, cooks, and nannies, or even teachers of Indians or nurses if they are well-behaved “noble savages.” Polingaysi refused to follow either Hopi or white “world’s” rules of gender normativity. As a self-identified “bridge” between these two worlds, she fomented productive, decolonial change by disidentifying with gender norms and crossing cultural/ethnic

divides. By reading the “between two worlds” trope in Indian life narratives for its gendered rather than strictly ethnic significance, I seek to highlight Polingaysi’s methods of surviving the violent policing and disciplinary measures that boarding schools employed to, in Mark Rifkin’s terms, “straighten” Indian subjects. For example, through my discovery of the praise of Polingaysi’s singing voice in the school’s newspaper, I theorize how music in general, and singing in particular, served as a creative mode of queer gender expression in an environment that strictly enforced heteronormativity as the standard of civility.

Unable or unwilling to reintegrate herself into traditional Hopi life, Polingaysi attended colleges in Newton, Kansas and Los Angeles and became a teacher of Indian pupils at day schools on the Navajo and Hopi reservations. In this capacity, Polingaysi revolutionized the federal policy of English-only education for Indians by pioneering an ESL style of teaching and incorporating Hopi pedagogical practices into her classroom. Her methods were so successful that John Collier changed the federal Indian education policies according to her advice. It is due to Polingaysi, in large part, that the Hopis survived assimilation.³⁷ My consultation of an independently printed and bound collection of eulogistic letters written by Polingaysi’s friends and relatives, titled *When I Met Polingaysi underneath the Cottonwood Tree*, helps me to theorize how Polingaysi engendered new ways of relating to her community by avoiding marriage and excelling as a teacher of Hopi students to transform the violent methods of Indian education she had endured during her adolescence.

³⁷ Near the end of the documentary film *Beyond the Mesas*, a Hopi tribal administrator claims, “We survived assimilation.”

I argue that the titular phrase, *No Turning Back*, does not mean that Polingaysi is doomed to leave behind Hopi traditions and assimilate with progressive, white modernity. Rather, it means that Hopi traditionalism must find ways to move into the future despite, within, and through the colonial situation and that changing is not the same as vanishing. By disrupting the Hopi/white binary of the “two worlds” model, Polingaysi practices what José Muñoz “named for queers of color as *disidentification* from the totalizing binary of opposition or assimilation by working ‘on and in’ power to expose and disrupt its effects.”³⁸ Polingaysi used the power she acquired through her boarding school education (knowledge of English language and white culture, Christian orientation, etc.) in order to transform that education into a mode of decolonizing Indian educational policy through her radical style of teaching Indian students (which flew in the face of English-only policies of cultural genocide and white immersion by employing ESL language learning, Hopi epistemology and pedagogical practices) and also a point of access to the lives and minds of non-Hopi outsiders who visited the reservation and with whom she formed strategic political, economic, and kinship relations in order to explode the settler colonial logic of exclusion/inclusion that marks settler colonial ideologies of dominance.

Chapter Three

My third chapter, “Twins, Whips, Tricks, and Clowns: Sovereign Erotics in *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*,” explores the significance of Don Talayesva’s

³⁸ Morgensen, *Spaces*, 26.

life story to the history of sexuality in America and its inherent ties to race making in the context of state-sponsored ethnologic projects. *Sun Chief* differs from other as-told-to autobiographies because Don Talayesva sourced the book's contents not only through oral narration but also about 8,000 pages of self-written diary entries, for which Simmons paid him seven cents each. Leo W. Simmons edited the text to focus, apparently, on the chronology of Talayesva's sexual, educational, and religious experiences. Simmons, an anthropologist from Yale, produced *Sun Chief* as part of the Bureau of American Ethnology's project to penetrate reservation communities to produce knowledge about the behaviors and personalities of "primitive" peoples. Within the context of U.S. imperialism, the text's significance to the history of sexuality in America is ambivalent. On one hand, the biopolitical framework of Simmons' social science methodology effectually construed Talayesva's sex tales as proof of the perversion of Hopi people generally, advancing the notion that Indian people, as a racial type, exist in a state of exception to the moral U.S. nation-state. In this way, the U.S. justifies its so-called overriding sovereignty and masks its exploitation of Native peoples, lands, and resources as paternalism, as for the Indians' own good. On the other hand, Talayesva's telling of sexual stories enacts what Qwo-Li Driskill (Cherokee) calls a "sovereign erotic" by depicting his struggle for Hopi autonomy through his resistance to U.S. gender norms, particularly by narrating sexual Hopi stories and traditions in the face of their criminalization and attempted eradication by colonial forces.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section, titled "Twins Twisted into One: Remembering Talayesva's Queer Hopi Identity," explores the significance of *Sun Chief* to the history of sexuality in the United States. Although *Sun Chief* constitutes an abridged version of Talayesva's diary that is less than five percent of its original

length, the text explicitly narrates Talayesva's sexual experiences from childhood to his age of 50 at the time of the book's publication, including: his childhood sex play with adult relatives and other Hopi boys; his attempt at bestiality with a chicken; and intercourse with eighteen different girls and women from his youthdays at Indian boarding school to his adulterous affairs with white prostitutes. By revisiting Foucault's theory of sexual regimes of power, I recuperate *Sun Chief* as a work of Hopi literature despite its originary context in Simmons' biopolitical project. Reading *Sun Chief* as a work of Hopi literature, we can discern that sex, religion, and education are not distinct cultural facets ripe for categorizing racial differences in human behavior and personality; rather, they are intricately tied up with one another in the history of sexuality discourses in the context of settler colonial America.

Many tribal communities harbored social positions, roles, and responsibilities for people whose gendered or sexual identities exceeded the binary categories of men and women. Talayesva seems to have been already queered in his Hopi context and to have accessed special social roles and privileges as a result of his queered status. Talayesva explains that his villagers acknowledge his status as "double sexed," a characteristic which led to his placement in the Antelope Society and granted him special powers to heal certain urinary tract/pelvic illnesses in babies, children, and adults. I read Talayesva's narration of his identity as twins as a Hopi version of a non-binary gender, which we may understand as a Two-Spirit identity.

In "Stolen from Our Bodies: First Nations Two-Spirits/Queers and the Journey to a Sovereign Erotic," Qwo-Li Driskill theorizes homophobia in Indian communities as an

adverse effect of internalized colonialism. Driskill encourages Indians to recover a “sovereign erotic” by joyfully taking back and inhabiting their stolen bodies and repatriating or recreating traditional ways of relating and loving. I argue that Talayesva was not only a victim or object of colonial sexuality discourse but also a willing participant in and generative subject of it. We may usefully understand *Sun Chief* as Talayesva’s performance of what I call autobiographical indiscipline, a trickster’s engagement of the autobiographical form bent to a decolonial purpose. Collectively, Talayesva’s sex stories discursively cultivate what Driskill calls a sovereign erotic, “an erotic wholeness healed and/or healing from the historical [and ongoing] trauma” of settler colonialism, “rooted within the histories, traditions, and resistance struggles of our nations.”³⁹ Talayesva’s self-narrated sexual history rhetorically authors a self whose struggles for Hopi sovereignty were rooted in resistance to settler colonial imperatives of sexual normativity or Puritanism. I focus on Talayesva’s sex history to foreground his narration of a Hopi tradition that we may usefully conceive of as a queer Indigenous identity and also to highlight Talayesva’s strategies of resisting the sexual normativity disciplining to which he was subjected at Indian boarding school.

The section titled “Whips Wielded by Wolves: Sexual Discipline at Indian Boarding School” acknowledges Talayesva’s victimization by colonial sexuality disciplining. It explores the boarding school’s methods of disciplining students’ sexual behavior and punishing “sexual misconduct.” It also asks how queered students at Indian boarding schools might have resisted heteronormative disciplining. I argue that *Sun Chief*

³⁹ Driskill, “Stolen,” 51.

defames colonial authorities for oppressing the sexual behaviors of Indian students at boarding schools. Through his literary collaboration with Simmons, Talayesva voices his critique of the hypocrisy of the colonial regime that seeks to assert its moral supremacy on the backs of exploited and abused children.

The third section, titled “Trix are for Anthropologists: Sexual Indiscipline in *Sun Chief*,” explores the nature of *Sun Chief* as a trickster tale. Its “obscurity” expresses what Allen refers to as the “tribal perception of the essential humor of earthly life.”⁴⁰

Talayesva seamlessly slips in Hopi stories, myths, humorous tales, and jokes into the narrative of his life. Since colonization involves the production of truth and ordered knowledge, I view Don Talayesva’s life narrative’s secrets, lies, and jokes as tricks or acts of epistemological indiscipline.

The section titled “Hopi Clowns and the (Sexual) State of Exception” explores Talayesva’s expression of the sacredness of the corporeal and celebrates his critique of the missionaries and other “moral reformers” working among the Hopi. For example, it reads a scene in which Talayesva employs the lessons he learned at boarding school to denounce Mennonite missionary H.R. Voth as a hypocrite who failed to follow the tenets of his own Christian religion. In this way, Talayesva co-opts settler colonial ideology for his own anti-colonial purposes.

⁴⁰ Allen, *Sacred*, 97.

Chapter Four

Chapter four, “Decolonizing Voth’s Archive: Re-narrating Ethnographic Photographs in Hopi and Settler Colonial Contexts,” analyzes select photos from the archive of H.R. Voth, who captured over 2,000 images during his residence at Hopi. Voth’s photographic and manuscript documents are housed in the Braun Research Library at the Southwest Museum of the American Indian in Los Angeles. This chapter also examines relevant manuscript documents in the archives of Charles F. Lummis, Frederick Webb Hodge, and George Wharton James, also located in the Braun Library. H. R. Voth was a Mennonite missionary who began the Hopi mission, church, and day school in Oraibi in 1893. Voth was a significant presence during the childhoods of Helen Sekaquaptewa, Polingaysi Qoyawayma, and Don Talayesva, and he appears as a character in each of their life narratives. This chapter explores the potential for re-appropriating Voth’s problematic archive for decolonial purposes. Rather than construing Voth’s photographs as representative of the Hopi subjects they depict, I read his images against the grain by contextualizing them through the voices of my autobiographical subjects. I seek to demonstrate how all three life narratives are sources of Hopi knowledge that have the potential to illuminate colonial systems of knowledge (like ethnographic photography) through comparison. I suggest that re-narrating or re-appropriating colonial knowledge through Hopi voices and ways of knowing may be a potential method of decolonizing the colonial archive.⁴¹

⁴¹ Some questions that will guide my future research are: What has been saved, by/for whom, and why? How can I draw scholarly attention to issues that have been neglected? What would the Hopi people like to see done with this archive? Should the collection of photos be relocated to the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office?

Conclusion

The stories told in these as-told-to autobiographies are relevant to the present moment, which is marked by continuing threats to Native sovereignty. To this day, Child Protective Services receives federal funds for its ongoing practices of kidnapping Native children and displacing them into non-Native foster and adoptive care. I see these three autobiographies as useful for contemporary Indigenous readers who are still being displaced through genocidal means and may be searching for strategies of belonging, surviving, and coming to voice; for example, the recent “Baby Veronica” case comes to mind. I wonder if reading stories of autobiographical indiscipline and assertions of Native sovereignty will help Veronica and others to repatriate themselves as Native, despite the federal government’s sponsorship of their adoption by white parents and consequent displacement from their home communities.

My concluding chapter outlines my projects of future study, which will address the limits of tribally-specific study for understanding the cultural productions of so-called mixed-race Indians by considering the practice of autobiographical indiscipline in works that feature mixed-blood or “half-breed” protagonists. Some questions this study will address include: How do our imaginations of a decolonized world resonate with theories of queer utopia? What does haunting, the awareness of and attraction to traces of the past in the present, offer to utopian, futurist politics? What are the political stakes of projecting a future that’s not yet written? Included in my notion of today’s imaginers of a decolonized future are those “mixed-race” Americans who identify as Native despite a history of colonial appropriation and attempts to assimilate, that is eliminate, us.

This dissertation is an act of storytelling. Storytelling is a present-moment-centered/centering process. It is a rhetorical mode of resisting settler colonial temporality and a way of saying that the past is not past but rather lives and bears powerful relevance for the now. Storytelling is a way of taking power. I share these stories for the benefit of all my relations.

CHAPTER ONE

‘I am talking. She is writing.’: Autobiographical Indiscipline in

Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa

Introduction

Unlike many works of as-told-to autobiography narrated by American Indians and transcribed or edited by non-indigenous amanuenses, *Me and Mine* does not begin with the story of Helen Sekaquaptewa’s birth.⁴² Instead, Helen’s life story begins with a description of her homeland. After positioning her native village of Oraibi in its context among the ten other Hopi villages by acknowledging their similarities and differences, the text continues to introduce the Hopi social structure, spiritual belief system, and Helen’s parents. Instead of conforming to the conventional autobiographical structure of narrating an individual’s life events along a chronological timeline, *Me and Mine* situates Helen among her geographical and social relations with the land and her Hopi community, demonstrating that Helen’s life extends beyond the existence of her body and is interwoven with the lives of her parents, ancestors, and other relations. When the narrative arrives at the story of Helen’s birth, on page seven, it describes the naming ceremony that took place when she was twenty days old: “Several names were given me, one of which ‘took’ and became my name, Dowawisnima (dew-wow-iss-nima), which means a ‘trail marked by sand’” (7). At the time of narrating *Me and Mine*, Helen no longer used the name Dowawisnima; like most Hopis, she acquired several different

⁴² For examples of chronologically structured Indian autobiographies, see Talayesva, Shipek, and Whitewolf.

names throughout her lifetime. “Helen” is the name she was given at boarding school, and “Sekaquaptewa” is the name of her husband.⁴³ This multiplicity of names shows how Helen’s identity shifts and accrues throughout her life rather than remaining static from birth. *Me and Mine* further develops Helen’s relational subjectivity by featuring the voices of Helen’s relatives, who contribute to the telling of her life story. This polyvocality is a standard aspect of the oral tradition, in which the audience participates in the telling of a story. By challenging the contours of individualistic selfhood, troubling the timeline of a life, and imbuing Helen’s written life narrative with elements of the oral tradition, *Me and Mine* exemplifies what I call autobiographical indiscipline.

In this chapter, I develop the term autobiographical indiscipline to characterize a model of decolonial praxis that I discern in some as-told-to Indian autobiographies. As-told-to autobiography, otherwise known as Indian autobiography,⁴⁴ is a literary genre defined by its collaborative production process. In this process, a Native narrator tells his/her life story to a non-Indigenous amanuensis who then transcribes, edits, and secures publishing for the story. The fields of history and anthropology are notorious among some American Indian scholars for appropriating works of as-told-to autobiography as sets of data, originating from so-called “Indian informants” and compiled by non-indigenous amanuenses, rather than as works of literature by Native authors. Such uses of these texts have led to their unfortunate marginalization in the field of American Indian

⁴³ Since Helen was away at boarding school throughout her adolescence, she never acquired a Hopi adult name through a coming of age ceremony. “Helen” was arbitrarily assigned by teachers at the Keams Canyon boarding school. Taking one’s husband’s name as one’s surname is also not a traditional Hopi practice.

⁴⁴ See Krupat, *For Those Who Come After*.

literature. Rather than see the Indian subjects of as-told-to autobiographies as mere “informants” whose knowledge is exploited or misrepresented by non-indigenous amanuenses, I consider Native autobiographers’ engagement of collaborative self-authorship as autobiographical indiscipline in order to acknowledge their agency in making the choice to narrate their lives for publication. Native people produced as-told-to autobiographies for many different reasons, including: to represent their experiences, to transmit knowledge and worldviews to future generations (for whom English literacy was becoming increasingly important as a result of the colonial project of assimilation),⁴⁵ to correct Euro-Americans’ common misconceptions about tribal peoples,⁴⁶ to earn money,⁴⁷ or even just to tell a good story.

Although as-told-to Indian autobiographies are concerned with the lives of individual Native people and generally adopt the form of traditional autobiographies, the term autobiographical indiscipline names the mode of self-narration that disidentifies with the categorical conventions of the genre of autobiography—literally defined as self-life-writing. My use of the term *indiscipline* is inspired by Michel Foucault’s theorizations of how discipline works in modern biopolitics. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault claims that “one of the primary objects of discipline is

⁴⁵ This is the reason Helen Sekaquaptewa gives for publishing her as-told-to autobiography. See the dedication page in Udall, *Me and Mine*.

⁴⁶ This is the reason Polingaysi Qoyawayma gives for publishing her as-told-to autobiography. See Qoyawayma, “Foreword,” *No Turning Back*.

⁴⁷ This is the main reason Don Talayesva gives for his collaboration with the anthropologist Leo W. Simmons to produce *Sun Chief*.

to fix,” to arrest bodies in space and time.⁴⁸ As a discipline of self-life-narration, the autobiographical genre conventionally fixes the subject within the spatial and temporal strictures of individuality and chronology. Through its performance of autobiographical indiscipline, including the strategy of collaborative authorship, *Me and Mine* literalizes Helen as a person whose self fails to conform to colonial American standards of individualism; whose life refuses to be confined to the timeline between her birth and death; and whose written story harbors oral traditions in the printed product. Like Hopi naming practices, autobiographical indiscipline in *Me and Mine* represents the multiplicity and mutability of Helen’s self and the interdependence of her life on the lives of others, past, present, and future.⁴⁹

Some critics have likened the relationship of the Native subject and amanuensis of as-told-to autobiographies to that of a heteronormative married couple; in both cases, two individuals—despite differences in background or access to power—labor together to create a life.⁵⁰ In this chapter, I read *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa* through the framework of autobiographical indiscipline to trouble such readings, which risk confining representations of Indian selfhood in collaboratively authored autobiographies to settler colonial logics like liberal humanism, possessive individualism, and reproductive futurity, and consequently perpetuate the disciplining of Indians as

⁴⁸ Foucault, *Discipline*, 218.

⁴⁹ This Hopi practice of giving multiple names to a newborn child and allowing the most appropriate name for the child to present itself contrasts with mainstream U.S. naming practices. Aside from the issue of gender, the name of the child is often arbitrarily chosen by parents, regardless of the child’s identity and sometimes long in advance of the child’s birth.

⁵⁰ See Couser, *Vulnerable Subjects*.

colonized subjects. I offer the term autobiographical indiscipline to name a strategy of Native literary subject formation and self-representation that I see as enacted through collaborative authorship. By engendering Helen's life story through the process of her long-term friendship with her non-Indigenous amanuensis, Louise Udall, *Me and Mine* constitutes Helen's self as relational and permeable rather than individual and contained by her body. Traditional approaches to Native autobiography have functioned to discipline Native people as colonial subjects in part by denying the ability of "authentic" Indians to change and adapt and constricting them to the bounds of what Native feminist and queer Indigenous theorist Andrea Smith calls "ethnographic entrapment."⁵¹ *Me and Mine* refuses to force Helen's life story to uphold these generic standards; rather, it performs autobiographical indiscipline by formulating Helen's literary subjectivity through relationality and adaptability rather than individuality and rigidity, enabling the expression of Helen's collective identities.⁵²

The title of Helen's life story, *Me and Mine*, demonstrates her sense of her identity as excessive of her individuality. It represents Helen's subjectivity not only as "me," my embodied self, by also as "mine"—my relations, my experiences, my homeland, my past and future and other selves, etc. In this accretive view, multiple selves and other people constitute Helen's subjectivity, so there is no contradiction in employing collaboration as a mode of autobiographical narration; the "self" that the written life constructs is not singular.

⁵¹ Smith, "Queer Theory," 44.

⁵² Audra Simpson theorizes Native scholars' or storytellers' practice of escaping this ethnographic entrapment, or the burden of Native representation, as "ethnographic refusal." See Simpson, "On Ethnographic Refusal."

Louise Udall signals as much in her foreword to the text, titled, “How the story came to be written” (vii). Explaining the production process of the text, Udall writes that her “friendship with Helen began” later in Helen’s life, during the period in which she was “living in Phoenix,” off the Hopi reservation, and “keeping a home for her children who were attending” public schools there, since the Indian boarding schools had proved to provide inadequate preparation for college (vii). At this time, Helen had already converted to Mormonism, after one of her sons invited her to join him in his new religious practice. Udall explains that she and Helen were fellow members of the Relief Society, “the women’s organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,” and they carpoled weekly “to the Maricopa Reservation” where they held Relief Society meetings with the Maricopa Indians (vii). According to Udall, these car rides sparked the creation of the text at hand. Udall writes:

As we traveled we visited.

The many things she told me about her life prompted me to say, ‘You should write the story of your life for your children and grandchildren.’

Her answer was, ‘I have thought of doing it, but didn’t think I was capable.’

I started writing the events as she told them. I visited her at the Ranch for weeks at a time, and the story grew and grew.

The trader at Oraibi asked [Helen], ‘What is Mrs. Udall writing? I know she is writing something.’

Helen replied, ‘I am talking. She is writing.’ (vii)

It is interesting to me that Udall does not elaborate on the reason for Helen’s feeling of incapability to write her own autobiography. Helen was certainly literate in English; she excelled to the highest possible level at Keams Canyon boarding school, at which point she convinced the superintendent to lie about her age, claiming her to be older than she truly was so that she could continue her education at Phoenix Indian School without her

parents' consent.⁵³ And *Me and Mine* includes multiple scenes of Helen both reading and writing for pleasure. Helen obviously considered the endeavor of writing her life story to be worthwhile, as she had “thought of doing it” before Udall suggested it, so I wonder if her sense of inability stemmed more from a lack of time or opportunity to write, or a realistic sense of inaccess to the white controlled publishing industry, than from a genuinely felt lack of skill.

It seems odd, at first, that such an apparently good friend as Udall did not encourage Helen to overcome her feeling of inadequacy or otherwise try to convince her that the task was surmountable, whatever the obstacles. However, it is clear from the foreword and elsewhere that Udall's election to complete the narrative herself was meant as a favor for Helen and that the project was a labor of love. And despite the fact that Udall was the person holding the pen, Helen's declaration to the trader at Oraibi—“I am talking. She is writing”—demonstrates her sense of being the author of *Me and Mine*, of being the source of the story told therein. Readers are to assume that Helen's intentions for publishing *Me and Mine* are the same as those that Udall names: to pass on the stories of her life to the next generations of Hopis, to her children and grandchildren. The dedication page reads, “*To my husband, Emory Sekaquaptewa and to our children and to our children's children –Helen*” (v). Unlike other works of Indian autobiography that are published for the purpose of enlightening white readers, disabusing them of their misconceptions and providing them with an “authentic” Native perspective, Helen's text

⁵³ See Udall, *Me and Mine*, 132-133.

is meant to preserve stories, acknowledging the centrality of English literacy to the lives of Hopis who inherit the legacies of settler colonialism.⁵⁴

I have begun by establishing Helen's authorship in order to move forward with reading *Me and Mine* as a literary rendering of Helen's voice, despite its mediation by Udall, and to thereby contend with critics who argue that all collaborative authorship compromises the representational authority that characterizes autobiography as a genre. For example, Edward Valandra characterizes "the 'as-told-to' Native [auto]biography" as "one troubling area where colonialism-tainted material has gained a foothold in Native literature" and as "tabloid material that perpetuates colonialism-tinted misrepresentations and hence invariably pollutes Native and other cross-cultural disciplines."⁵⁵ According to Valandra, as-told-to autobiographies are problematic, in part, because they fail to address "issues and problems confronting Native North America" such as "sovereignty, self-determination," and "genocide," and he argues that "the distortions of Native life and cultures found in the so-called Native autobiography constitute a call to Native scholars to reclaim our intellectual heritage," or, in other words, revive authentic Native intellectual cultural traditions.⁵⁶ Valandra's rendering of as-told-to autobiographies as tainted, polluting, and distorted, and his subsequent praise of Native authors who have increasingly penned their own stories since the 1970s, effectually champions the existence of an ostensibly pure Native identity and intellectual tradition unbesmirched by colonization. Furthermore, it belittles "the status or station of the individual [Native

⁵⁴ A question that will guide my future study is how *Me and Mine* has been received by Hopi readers.

⁵⁵ Valandra, "The As-Told-To," 104.

⁵⁶ Valandra, "The As-Told-To," 106, 105.

person] who is doing the telling” and implies that the so-called Native informant has a less-than-legitimate “relationship to their own traditional community.”⁵⁷ Quoting Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Valandra avers that the Native subjects of as-told-to autobiographies “are almost always marginalized or on the edge of their own communities, families, art, or profession” and are thereby not worthy, it seems, of being taken seriously as authors of Native literature, due to their minority status.⁵⁸

I understand Valandra, and Cook-Lynn before him, to represent the position of what Scott Richard Lyons labels “culture cops,” who police the boundaries of authentic Native identity and pass “*judgments . . .* upon that hapless lot deemed less than culturally competent.”⁵⁹ As a proponent of cultural revival, Valandra’s position is that of the “cultural elites” who, Lyons explains, “emerge and relentlessly ‘correct’ their peers or decry certain cultural forms as ‘inauthentic.’”⁶⁰ Lyons warns that “history has proven time and again that the revival of cultural traditions can be used to oppress individuals or groups, especially minorities and women” because “revivals can deny the hybridity and interactions inherent in all cultures.”⁶¹ Perhaps Cook-Lynn and Valandra are correct in their assessment of the “Native accomplices” of non-Native biographers as marginalized members of their tribal communities.⁶² As a Mormon convert, Helen Sekaquaptewa was

⁵⁷ Valandra, “The As-Told-To,” 107.

⁵⁸ Valandra, “The As-Told-To,” 112.

⁵⁹ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 76. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁰ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 76.

⁶¹ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 76.

⁶² Valandra, “The As-Told-To,” 103.

certainly among the minority of Hopis who adopted some form of Christianity as a result of Protestant settler colonialism. However, Helen's Mormon orientation does not negate her Hopi identity.

Helen's conversion to Mormonism did not happen as a result of colonial indoctrination. In fact, *Me and Mine* narrates Helen's resistance of the proselytization to which she was subjected at boarding school. Helen narrates,

Sunday was a busy day at boarding school. We had to go to Sunday School where we were separated into age groups for Bible instruction. Different churches came and held services. We were required to go to evening services too. . . . I hated them and felt like crying. . . . The different sects were always urging and bribing us with little presents to join their church. It didn't appeal to me and I didn't join any of them. (129)

Helen resented being compelled to attend boring and irrelevant sermons, and she understood the economic motives of religious authorities who tried to lure potential converts with material goods. When she decided to embrace Mormonism as an adult, she was persuaded to do so by one of her sons. Helen declares that her acceptance of Mormon doctrine did not enervate her Hopi identity; rather, she claims that "Reading the *Bible* and the *Book of Mormon* has helped us to understand the Hopi traditions, and the Hopi traditions help us to understand these books of scripture," indicating that she has accepted Mormonism as an extension of, not a contradiction to, her Hopi beliefs and practices (241). She explains that "What [the Mormons] taught sounded good to me, like a familiar philosophy, like the teachings we were used to, like the Hopi way. I was really converted the first week and believed everything . . . I read the *Book of Mormon*. It sounded exactly like Hopi tradition" (241). Although Helen's conversion to Mormonism

marked her as anomalous among her Hopi community, Helen's narrative makes a strong claim that her Mormon and Hopi identities were not contradictory.

Lyons calls for us to “turn our attention . . . to the social processes that create intersubjective Indian identities” by moving “away from conceptions of Indians as ‘things’ and toward a deeper analysis of Indians as human beings who *do* things—things like asserting identity, defining identity, contesting identity, and so forth—under given historical conditions.”⁶³ To comply with Valandra's demand to dismiss all as-told-to Native autobiographies as “literary embarrassments rather than as authentic Native voices” is to elide the historical project of collaborative authorship as one of the social processes that created intersubjective Indian identities. Native identity is an all-important issue in these texts. As Lyons explains, “Indians want to keep their communally constructed, intersubjective identities . . . Identity orients you in space and time, connects you to the past, helps you develop a vision for the future, and provides you with a story.”⁶⁴ Helen Sekaquaptewa's life story, *Me and Mine*, comprises her assertion of Hopi identity in the face of U.S. imperialism, with its attempts to assimilate members of sovereign tribes as American citizens. In what follows, I read Helen's assent to narrate her life story through the project of collaborative authorship as itself a claim of Hopi sovereignty and of her right to determine the relational contours of her selfhood, in defiance of the individuating designs of colonial disciplining. I treat the practice of as-told-to autobiography as an important aspect of Native intellectual heritage, and I

⁶³ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 59.

⁶⁴ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 39.

acknowledge Helen's storytelling as a strategy of responding to the colonial situation by bearing witness to her "children and" her "children's children," to whom she dedicates the book (v).

Although the content of *Me and Mine* is mediated through Udall's transcription and editorship, this fact need not deter us from reading the work as the story of Helen's life and a literary rendering of Helen's voice. In fact, we may usefully consider Helen's engagement of collaborative authorship as a decolonial project informed by her disidentification with the self-written convention of autobiography. Andrea Smith notes that a "politics of disidentification can be helpful to the project of decolonization" because it "forces us to admit that we cannot organize from a space of political purity, that we have been inevitably marked by processes of colonization. When we no longer have to carry the burden of political and cultural purity, we can be more flexible and creative in . . . us[ing] the logics of settler colonialism against itself."⁶⁵ Representing this burden of political and cultural purity, in *American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives*, Gretchen M. Bataille and Kathleen Mullen Sands propose that the "best" way to engage as-told-to autobiography, due to its "problematical form," is to analyze the "process of its creation" rather than considering it "as an established genre."⁶⁶ However, as Stephanie Fitzgerald points out, "the scholarly emphasis on the process of creation" "can obscure the Native voice, shifting the focus away from lived experience of the Native subject to that of the non-Native editor."⁶⁷ Fitzgerald encourages critics to "foreground Native

⁶⁵ Smith, "Queer Theory," 56.

⁶⁶ Bataille and Sands, *American Indian Women*, 3.

agency in the process of collaboration” and to explore Indian women’s use of “life-writing as a tool to interrogate and secure their legal and social identity as Indian women during an era of tremendous social change,” which included, for Helen, compulsory colonial education and religious conversion.⁶⁸ By focusing on Helen’s voice rather than Udall’s mediation, I aim to show how *Me and Mine* holds not only representational power but also decolonial potential. I seek to contribute to the development of a strategy of reading as-told-to Native autobiographies that is reparative rather than paranoid; that accepts the text at the level of its language and respects Helen’s choice to engage the collaborative autobiographical project rather than tries to sniff out ways that Udall might have exploited, misrepresented, or otherwise betrayed her friend.⁶⁹ Such a reparative reading practice is crucial, I argue, for fellow or future readers who might find comfort, encouragement, community, or even pleasure in reading this story of survival, adaptation, and continuity.

Collaborative Scenes of Self-Authorship, or Self-Construction through Friendship

To account for *Me and Mine* as a contribution to anti-essentialist Native identity politics, I will explore several scenes in which Helen constructs her self in writing to, for, or even as others, for example, by writing letters to a non-Hopi pen pal, exchanging notes in class with her best friend at boarding school, or featuring her husband’s and son’s first-person voices in her own life story. I interpret these scenes of writing as performances of

⁶⁷ Fitzgerald, “Intimate Geographies,” 109.

⁶⁸ Fitzgerald, “Intimate Geographies,” 110.

⁶⁹ See Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading,” in *Touching Feeling*.

autobiographical indiscipline, as their significance to Helen's subjectivity resists the liberal logic of individualism. My reading of these scenes focuses on friendship as a theoretical concept and on friendships as material systems of relations.⁷⁰

The fact that the text of *Me and Mine* was substantiated through Helen's friendship with Udall defies critical attempts to reduce the informant/amanuensis relationship to settler colonial logics of individuated subjectivity, racial difference, and the hierarchies of power that these systems entail. In the interview "Friendship as a Way of Life," Michel Foucault explains how "friendships encourage the mutual cultivation of an immanent impersonal self."⁷¹ Foucault designates friendship as "the becoming of queer relationality" since "friendships [call] into question traditional, dialectical conceptions of subjectivity, community, and belonging" and realize "communal forms that cannot be contained by sadistic social hierarchies of identitarian difference," such as race, gender, class, and nationality.⁷² In his interpretive engagement of Foucault's theory, Tom Roach explains that since the "friend is neither possessive nor possessed, neither owner nor owned," and "friendship is always a becoming," then the "friend is the . . . figure that intuits and enacts the common, that which seethes beneath and is excessive of relations and communities founded on identitarian difference."⁷³ If we accept, with Foucault, that "one of the primary objects of discipline is to fix," then we might

⁷⁰ On the intensity of friendships between women as a major facet of late nineteenth and early twentieth century American cultures, see Faderman. For a study of how young women readers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used fiction to imagine, create, write, and author their selves, see Sicherman.

⁷¹ Roach, *Friendship*, 8.

⁷² Roach, *Friendship*, 8.

⁷³ Roach, *Friendship*, 15.

understand friendship as a relationality of *indiscipline*, as it eludes the fixing or placement of the self as inherently or irreconcilably different from the other.⁷⁴ Despite the facts of Helen's racial Indianness, Hopi nationality, and working class status, she nevertheless regards her friend Udall—a Euro-American middle class woman—as a member of her family; the two women even name one another as surrogate mothers of each other's children, attesting to the bonds of kinship that exceed the biological foundations of racial relatedness.

To explicate how friendship works, according to Foucault, as a mode of cultivating queer relationality, Roach lists the five features of Foucault's theory of friendship: anti-confessional discourse; parrhesia, or boldness or freedom of speech; ascetics, or self-denial; impersonality, or the absence of or reduced concern for individual needs or desires; and estrangement, or alienation, removal, or distance.⁷⁵ I see all of these aspects of the queer, feminist, and anti-racist model of friendship at work in the friendships represented in *Me and Mine*, but I will focus on the fourth feature—impersonality—to inform my reading of friendship in the context of collaborative authorship as a mode of writing the self as relational rather than individual or comprised by a self-contained essence. Through co-authorship and the stories it shares through that collaborative structure, *Me and Mine* challenges the quintessential American autobiography's story of the self-made hero, the autonomous subject who struggles and

⁷⁴ Foucault, *Discipline*, 218.

⁷⁵ Roach, *Friendship*, 7.

succeeds on the strength of his own free will. Helen's practice of autobiographical indiscipline positions her friends as co-constitutors of herself.

Some autobiography theorists have applied Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the "contact zone" to collaborative autobiography.⁷⁶ According to Pratt,

A 'contact' perspective emphasizes how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. It treats the relations among colonizers and colonized, or travelers and 'travelees,' not in terms of separateness or apartheid, but in terms of copresence, interaction, interlocking understanding and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power.⁷⁷

Since *Me and Mine* constructs Sekaquaptewa's Hopi subjectivity through the process of her friendship and collaboration with Udall, we may understand her life narrative as formulated through such a contact perspective. As members of the same church, Udall and Sekaquaptewa relate to and work with one another as peers.

Insofar as we accept the feminist edict that the personal is political, Helen's collaboration with Udall can be seen as a project of Native women's political organizing. According to Andrea Smith, "the work of Native women's organizing suggests . . . not that identity politics has no value but that it is possible to organize around a non-essentialist form of identity politics."⁷⁸ In its depiction of Hopi identity, *Me and Mine* foregrounds doing, not being. This identification of indigeneity as a system of relations and practices rather than a biological or racial essence resonates with Scott Lyons' claim that "Indian identity is something people do, not what they are."⁷⁹ However, that is not to

⁷⁶ See, for example, Carbonara and Ngwenya.

⁷⁷ Pratt, *Under*, 7.

⁷⁸ Smith, *Native*, 214-215.

say that Indian people become less Indian to the extent that they adopt non-Native beliefs or practices. Helen's life story asserts that she is no less Hopi for having attained Euro-American education, for choosing to wear American style clothing, or for converting to Mormonism. She also exposes the hypocrisy of certain Hopi neighbors who fit Lyons' definition of "culture cops," religious and cultural traditionalists who criticize her for engaging with white people and culture. For example, these neighbors would openly criticize and belittle Helen for sewing and laundering her American style clothing while they themselves forsake traditional diets and medicines in exchange for processed American foods and carbonated beverages: "We [Helen and her husband] lived well and were always healthy. Our neighbors spent their money for bread and foods in cans at the store and bought ice cream and pop. They didn't spend time grinding corn and preparing food like their parents before them did" and like Helen continued to do, even as she adopted the clothing and other lifestyles she acquired at boarding school (218). Although Helen let go of some Hopi traditions and innovated on others, she clearly valued Hopi knowledge and practices. "We were so far out at the ranch that I made my own medicine and could cure the children's ills pretty well. These were remedies used by the mothers before me, from what elements were at hand" (221). Helen's comparison of herself with her critical Hopi neighbors indicates that continuing traditions and pursuing new practices are not mutually exclusive endeavors. Helen insinuates that she upheld Hopi traditions of food and medicine better than her conservative neighbors, despite the fact that she wore American style clothing, read books written in English, and adopted

⁷⁹ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 40. This distinction between being and doing as the basis of identity also calls to mind Judith Butler's theory of gender as performativity. See Butler.

Mormonism. Sekaquaptewa uses collaborative life writing as a tool to secure the Hopi identity of herself and her posterity, despite their vexed relations to the traditional Hopi community (due to their residency on the outskirts of the Hopi reservation, their status as U.S. government employees, their attainment of higher education, and their conversion to Mormonism). *Me and Mine* asserts that Helen is a wholly Hopi person, despite her education and religious conversion; since Hopi identity need not entail cultural purity and a paranoid clinging to tradition, she resists the fragmentation of herself as an assimilated Indian-turned-American. Helen uses her autobiography to assert that she has used her learning to cope with and adapt to economic changes induced by the conditions of colonization and to thereby maintain Hopi lifestyles like growing and preparing her own foods and medicines for her family.

Growing up during the Indian policy era of Assimilation, Helen was forced to attend Keams Canyon Indian boarding school beginning in late October 1906, when she was eight years old. In 1887, “A small boarding school for Hopis was built at Keams Canyon,” located “thirty miles” away from Oraibi; “At first they took only boys and girls whose parents gave consent, but later the policy changed” (31). Her narrative tells that she and the rest of the Hostile faction of Hopis who had been cast out of Oraibi by the representative chief of the Friendly faction awoke “early one morning . . . to find our camp [in Hotevilla] surrounded by [U.S.] troops who had come during the night from Keams Canyon. [The Keams Canyon boarding school’s] Superintendent Lemmon . . . told the [Hostile Hopi] men . . . that the government had reached the limit of its patience; that the children would have to go to school” (91). Previously, the adult members of the

Friendly faction had consented to send their children to school willingly, and in reward for their compliance, their children attended the day school in Oraibi and were allowed to remain living with their parents. However, the adult members of the Hostile faction resisted the U.S. government's command that they relinquish the education of their children to colonial institutions; as punishment, their children were taken from and sent to Keams Canyon boarding school. "All the children of school age were . . . loaded into wagons hired from and driven by our enemies, the Friendlies . . . We were taken to the schoolhouse . . . with military escort" (92). Helen calls it like it is: "we were . . . kidnapped" (102). Friendly children who attended Keams Canyon were allowed to return to their homes during school breaks, but children of the Hostiles were not were required to live at the school year round. What is worse is that the rift between Friendly and Hostile adults was learned and copied by the children; Helen testifies that "Some of the friendly girls . . . used to call us Hostiles and tease us until we would cry. At night . . . our tormentors would take our native clothes from the boxes and put them on and dance around making fun of us" (94). In this context, the term "friendly" is mired in irony.

The political division of the Hopi community that was instantiated by settler colonization, in general, and the issue of Indian schooling, in particular, highlights the significance of the concept of friendship in the colonial context. The names of the two factions among the Hopis of Oraibi signify the relationship of each group to the U.S. government: those who federal agents considered amenable to assimilation policies were deemed "Friendlies," and those who were more staunchly resistant to coerced cultural change were derided as "Hostiles." Regardless of which faction Hopi children hailed

from, the objective of the schools were the same: to separate Hopi children from their parents and traditional cultures and to discipline them to act like white settlers and conform to the dominant colonial society, thereby instilling in them a sense of their essential difference—as racial Indians, as religious heathens, as social savages.

Throughout *Me and Mine*, Helen performs autobiographical indiscipline by narrating scenes of writing her self as constituted through friendly relationships with others. The first scene occurs during Helen's second year at Keams Canyon when, for Christmas, she reports, "I got a very nice doll that came in a box from a group of children from the Baptist Church. The girl who sent the doll asked me to be a pen pal, and I wrote to her for a while" (102-103). Helen does not elaborate on the identity of her pen pal or the content of her letters. However, the intercultural exchange of self-written letters between a Baptist girl and the as-yet Hopi traditionalist ten-year-old Helen must have influenced her development of a sense of self. Usually, in my own experience of being a pen pal, these exchanges revolve around the narration of life events, likes and dislikes, and questions about the interlocutor which, it is hoped, will be answered in the next letter. Such letters entail autobiographical narration or the formulation of a self/subjectivity in writing by relying on the intended audience—the second-person, the "Dear," the "you"—for their meaning. As I show in the next section, these letters that Helen exchanged as a child with her pen pal, whose racial and cultural difference and geographical distance from Helen are transcended through their correspondences, are markedly dissimilar from the notes she passes to her friend in class at Indian boarding school.

Autobiographical Indiscipline in the Colonial Classroom

Despite her background as a Hostile, Helen proclaims that she enjoyed learning and generally excelled at school. She admits, “I was really serious at school, even from the beginning,” and she “always helped” other girls at school who would “come and ask” for “help . . . with a hard lesson” (105, 104). However, despite Helen’s “serious” efforts, good behavior, and lack of resistance to authority, “some of the teachers” were nevertheless “unkind” to Helen, which seems like an understatement of the physical, psychological, spiritual, and sexual abuse she endured (104). She confides that she sustained permanent hearing impairment as a result of being disciplined at school: “Once when I gave the wrong answer, the teacher boxed me real hard on the ear. I had [an] earache after that, every night for a long time, and I can’t hear very well out of that ear” (105). Such violence on the part of Helen’s teacher seems to contradict the goal of teaching students to think about and venture responses to questions. If the consequence for giving an incorrect answer is irreversible physical damage, then it is safer for Indian students not to participate. Unfortunately, Helen’s experience of arbitrary physical abuse was the rule at Keams Canyon, not an exceptional or rare case. Hopi students at Keams Canyon had to be careful not to attract the attentions of abusive school authorities; opportunities for student resistance in these institutions were few, and acts of indiscipline were dangerous, often incurring dire consequences.

In addition to being subjected to physical violence at the whim of school teachers and disciplinarians, sexual abuse was also a common experience among students at

Keams Canyon boarding school. Helen's description of one such instance warrants

quoting at length:

There was a certain teacher, a man, who when the class came up to 'read,' always called one of the girls to stand by him at the desk and look on the book with him while the others took their turns at reading, down the line. He would put his arms around and fondle this girl, sometimes taking her on his lap. Some of the girls seemed to like it. They laughed, and neither teacher nor pupil paid any attention to the reading.

I was scared that I would be the one next called to his desk. Finally I was. He called, 'Helen, come to the desk while we read.' When I got there, Mr. M. put his arm around me and rubbed my arm all the way down. He rubbed his face against mine. When he put his strong whiskers on my face, I screamed and screamed and didn't stop until he let me go. I knew he was embarrassed. I ran out of the room before he could catch me, and to the dormitory.

They didn't punish me. When they saw me they knew I was really scared. I didn't go back to school that day and they didn't force me. The other girls said his face was red all the rest of the day. (106-107).

Helen's keen observation that the teacher's sexual abuse had nothing to do with education but rather distracted teacher and pupil from "any attention to the reading" metonymically signifies the true designs of Indian boarding schools: to subject Native children to the will of the dominant white culture, disciplining them as a subservient class and inferior race rather than endowing them with "education." When Helen screams in protest of the teacher's inappropriate and unwelcome touching, raising her voice in resistance to molestation, "he let [her] go," and she fled the classroom without permission. This act of indiscipline is a victorious commandment of her sovereign rights. By narrating this incident in her life story, Helen authorizes herself as one not to be trifled with. Her claim that she "knew he was embarrassed" asserts the teacher's own knowledge of wrongdoing and his chagrin at being disabused of his presumption that Indian children are inherently rapable, to use Smith's phrase. The fact that "They [the

school authorities or disciplinarians] didn't punish" Helen for disrupting and leaving class indicates that they understood that her fear was based on a legitimate cause.

However, although she wasn't forced to return to school that day, it may be assumed that the teacher kept his job, and Helen continued as his student.⁸⁰

The generally hostile atmosphere of the school and the strict consequences for acts of resistance make any occurrence of indiscipline all the more remarkable. Through the course of one particular friendship, Helen flouted and disregarded the school's boundaries on her learning as well as her identity. Helen describes how she and her school friend, Amelia, created literary personas in the form of letters to one another that were written from the perspectives of these imagined—which is not to say imaginary—selves:

When I was about twelve years old I had a friend, Amelia Albert. We played and imagined ourselves as two eastern society women. Amelia was Mrs. Judson of New York City. She had a son and a daughter. I was Mrs. Holmes of Philadelphia and had two sons and a daughter. We got our ideas from books we had read. We wrote letters to each other telling about our families. (128)

Helen doesn't name the titles of the books that sparked her and Amelia's imaginary self-constructions, though the name "Holmes" could reference the popular Sherlock Holmes detective fiction series, and "Judson" may refer to author Edward Zane Carroll Judson, Sr., a dime novelist who published *The Mysteries and Miseries of New York* in 1849. In any case, the books to which Helen refers were certainly not school texts, as Indian boarding school curricula was notoriously rudimentary, and students primarily spent their

⁸⁰ Due to the isolation of these schools, it was difficult to find enough teachers to staff them; and due to the absence of parents or other protective guardians, the schools were notorious as hotbeds for pedophiles and other sadists who took pleasure in abusing Indian children—girls and boys alike.

time not in literary study but in conducting the menial labor required for the school's functioning.⁸¹ Therefore, Helen and Amelia used their literacy to read books that were not directly sanctioned by the colonial institution. Helen continues,

We would find hard words in a book and look them up in the dictionary, see what they meant and use them in our letters. We would try to be like society women . . . It was fun and helped us a lot in our English. Amelia would always write 'no' for 'know' and I was always reminding her. (128)

Helen's recollection of her intellectual friendship with Amelia portrays two Hopi girls educating themselves outside the confines of the Indian school's disciplinary structure. They use the dictionary as a tool to learn and employ new words in play, in the form of mock-autobiographical letters to one another. Through the writing and exchange of these letters, Helen and Amelia employ autobiographical indiscipline to create narrative selves that mimic the form of the American literature they have read and simultaneously resist the subjugation of their selves as singular, unified, colonized subjects.

Helen's and Amelia's literary impersonations of adult society women resemble the popular Hopi game of playing house with bone dolls. The game of bone dolls involves the creation of life narratives, storytelling, and the enactment of adult situations. Helen explains the game thus:

⁸¹ See Adams, *Education*; Lomawaima; and Whalen. The only mention Helen makes of literature that was assigned as part of the boarding school curriculum is "The Ugly Duckling," the literary fairy tale of personal transformation by Danish poet and author Hans Christian Andersen. On being courted by her husband Emory, Helen states, "Many of the girls wanted Emory. I couldn't understand why he chose me. I had always been a wallflower, and Emory was the best looking (and the best) boy in school. When we would read the story of the ugly duckling in our school reader, I always thought of myself as the ugly duckling. Now it was like the story; I felt like a beautiful swan" (141). As part of the school curriculum, the rhetoric of transformation in "The Ugly Duckling" may be considered as an advocacy of Hopi cultural renunciation and colonial assimilation and therefore an example of discursive violence. However, Helen seems to interpret the story as a coming-of-age tale, according to the Hopi perception that a girl does not accede to womanhood until she marries and becomes a mother.

Each little Hopi girl had her family of bone dolls, which she collected and hoarded and treasured . . . These bones came from the lower parts of the legs of the sheep. A two-inch was a man doll. A smaller one was the woman. The same bones from smaller animals were the children. Chickens were triangular-shaped bones from the horny hoof. . . .

Hours could be spent with bone dolls, either alone or in groups. Sometimes the girls brought their dolls to school and would play with them at recess out in the yard. . . .

First the girls gathered little flat rocks, then they smoothed the sand and used the rocks to mark off a house, partition the rooms, and make the furniture. One certain bone was the broom. With it the floor was marked, leaving a waffle-like pattern in the sand. A chicken yard was enclosed and the chickens put in their places. An old discolored bone was the grandmother, set surrounded with children or tending the baby.

With the stage all set, the little girl reenacted family life, speaking for the characters, cooking, feeding, training her children, and as the day ended putting them to bed. There would be a quiet time; then, a cock would crow, the chickens would begin to talk, and the mother would get the family started on another day. The girls had boundless imagination as they dramatically portrayed real life. (15-16).

The little girl playing with her bone dolls impersonates adult Hopi women as well as boys, men, giants, and also farm animals, transcending the boundary between “imagination” and “real life.” “Speaking for the characters” is a mode of play as well as of learning. Perhaps we can understand Helen’s and Amelia’s impersonations of the society women Mrs. Holmes and Mrs. Judson as literary versions of playing with bone dolls. Whereas the game of playing “house” with bone dolls impersonates lived experience and the observed behavior of Hopi adults, the game of writing letters as “society women” involves the impersonation of literary characters experienced through the act of reading. However, the Hopi girl who plays with bones has some expectation of

growing up to eventually become the Hopi woman she impersonates, whereas Helen and Amelia could not have dreamed of becoming society women.⁸²

Amelia's persistent spelling error, "always wri[ting] 'no' for 'know,'" is a hilarious—and perhaps purposeful—signification of *autobiographical indiscipline* as a decolonial strategy. The homonym puns on Amelia's and Helen's creative manipulation of their situation; they say "no" to the colonial system of educating Indians, even while they make fun out of the mandatory task of coming to "know" the English language. Helen, who was "always reminding" Amelia of the correct spelling of the words "no" and "know," may be read as complicit with colonial agents in her tutoring of Amelia.⁸³ According to the Lancasterian system of colonial pedagogy, Helen's role as Amelia's English tutor may be viewed as that of a proxy for the English teacher. According to Patricia Crain, the monitorial pedagogy that Joseph Lancaster had "designed for the urban poor" of London in the nineteenth century "became a boon to missionaries on the southern frontier," revealing "the striking similarities between the child produced by Lancaster's system and the American Indian imagined by colonial discourse."⁸⁴ Colonial discourse portrayed the Indian as the "child of the forest," capable of growth but not development and utterly dependent on the patriarchal care of the U.S. "Lancaster's system promised wholesale acculturation and social control," and his "revolutionary

⁸² Or did they? I also wonder whether any young Hopi girls played with bones and dreamed of becoming the Hopi men they impersonated. And what about Hopi boys who played with dolls? According to *Me and Mine*, it seems to be primarily a girls' game. The literature mentions other games that were specific to Hopi boys, like shooting arrows and spinning tops with whips.

⁸³ On the Lancasterian method of education by student proxy of the school master, see Crain.

⁸⁴ Crain, "Children," 61.

management trick” was “simply to delegate; the innovation that he shared . . . is the ‘mutual’ or ‘monitorial’ (Lancaster’s term) positioning of more experienced students as instructors, boys teaching other boys, in small groups organized by level of accomplishment,” so that “the absence of the master’s person signals the ubiquity of his effect.”⁸⁵ However, it is significant that Helen’s correction of Amelia’s spelling was not commanded by the English teacher, and the writing practice in which this tutorship occurred was out of the bounds of the course curriculum. For these reasons, it is too simple to and not quite right to say that Helen was complicit with the colonial system of education. Her concern with learning English well doesn’t signify mere accommodation of U.S. imperialism or acculturation; it’s an adaptive strategy necessary for survival. The letters of Mrs. Holmes and Mrs. Judson signify survivance. By impersonating Euro-American, middle-upper class, “eastern society women” in writing, Helen and Amelia subvert colonial pedagogy intended to discipline their subjectivities as individualized, racialized, and colonized.

Helen narrates that “[o]ne day in school the teacher caught me in the act of passing a letter to Amelia, and she took the paper from me. I was telling in detail about the coming-out party of my [Mrs. Holmes’] daughter and describing the dress she would wear” (128). This passage contains a telling slippage of the pronouns “me,” meaning Helen, and “my,” meaning Mrs. Holmes. The significance of “passing” in this passage is multiple. Passing notes is a familiar way of subverting school policies that strictly delineate social from work times. To pass a note in class constitutes an act of indiscipline,

⁸⁵ Crain, “Children,” 62-64.

of claiming the authorial agency to speak out of turn, beyond the limits of dominant discourse. The note itself also narrates Helen's impersonation of a "society woman," an act of racial passing as white.⁸⁶ And as the next passage shows, Helen's letter apparently aids her ability to successfully pass the course. Helen continues, "When the teacher took my letter, I surely felt humble. I was afraid I would be punished, but I wasn't" (128).

Unlike Mrs. Holmes the eastern society woman, Helen the Hopi girl has been relegated to a second-class status through colonial disciplining at the school. However, through her unruly creation of a white persona, Helen effectively distances herself from feeling humiliated as a Hopi. The humility to which Helen alludes in her admission that she "felt humble" does not signify a sense of inferiority to the teacher but rather a fear of being humiliated, or punished. Helen's fear of punishment is not unwarranted; recall, for example, the permanent hearing impairment she sustained from a teacher when she once "gave the wrong answer" in class (105). However, the unexpected result of Helen's autobiographical indiscipline in this instance is quite the opposite.

First chance she had the teacher read the letter, and all morning long she had a smile on her face. During recess I saw her letting the other teachers read the letter of Mrs. Holmes to Mrs. Judson, and everyone laughed. My teacher gave me a good grade in English composition because of that letter. (128-129)

Helen states with certainty that her letter was the reason for her success, the reason why her "teacher gave" her "a good grade" in the class. In the teacher's interception of Mrs. Holmes' letter to Mrs. Judson, Helen's intellectual property was stolen; her communication with Amelia was stunted; and she was excluded from her teacher's

⁸⁶ Also relevant to this discussion is scholarship on racial passing as Native, otherwise known as "playing Indian" (see Deloria), "going Native" (see Huhndorff), or "redfacing" (see Raheja, *Reservation*).

discourse about her. The teacher's monitoring and policing of student communication are appropriate to the disciplinary nature of Lancasterian schools, in which the "children are placed in order to be observed, first for purposes of discipline . . . Along with this panoptical visibility . . . Lancaster's system produces as well a certain legibility."⁸⁷ "In the Lancasterian system, the visibility of the child" figured the students "as all exterior, all surface . . . a surface upon which messages can be posted."⁸⁸ The teacher's act of sharing the illicit letter with her colleagues seems to celebrate her sense that some message has been successfully posted onto Helen.

This passage raises several questions in my mind: What is the significance of the teacher's smile? Is she amused by the naive Hopi child's fantasy that she might someday attain a bourgeois white lifestyle? Is she proud of herself, considering the letter as evidence of her pedagogical effectiveness as an instructor of English composition? Or, is she so pleased with herself for being an effective colonial agent that she shares Helen's letter with her colleagues to demonstrate her success in colonizing this Hopi child? Perhaps she considers Helen's impersonation of a white society woman as an indication of her assent to the mode of the assimilated Indian, acting as what she is not and can never be. The teacher's smile and her colleagues' laughter signal that Helen is the butt of a joke from which she is excluded. However, Helen inverts the structure of humiliation and interprets her teacher's pleasure as praise of her cleverness. If Helen's interpretation of her teacher's reaction constitutes a misreading of the teacher's self-satisfaction as

⁸⁷ Crain, "Children," 65.

⁸⁸ Crain, "Children," 66.

praise of Helen's literary prowess, then Helen's teacher also misreads the significance of Mrs. Holmes' letter to Mrs. Judson, which doesn't signify Helen's colonized subjectivity but an act of indiscipline to colonial authority that says "no passing notes in school" and "Hopis can't be society women—only the maids, cooks, and nannies of such." Through her literary creation of herself as Mrs. Holmes, Helen makes herself legible to her teacher as a writer and creator; and, even if the teacher misreads the significance of Helen's letter, Helen's commands agency through her act of colonial impersonation.

The literary impersonations that Helen and Amelia enact through their letter writing constitute a mode of what José Esteban Muñoz theorizes as *disidentification*, defined as "the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform to the phantasm of normative citizenship."⁸⁹ Muñoz situates his theory of disidentification within the history of scholarship on practices of identification and counteridentification. Citing the work of Homi Bhabha, Muñoz suggests that some modes of mimicry may be disidentificatory because they point "to the ambivalence of power in colonial discourse . . . the ways in which the colonized might gain access to power and enact self against and within the colonial paradigm."⁹⁰ According to Bhabha, mimicry in colonial contexts reveals the slippage that always exists between what is said and what is heard, producing moments of ambivalence that open up spaces for the colonized subject to subvert the master discourse. "The civilizing mission,"

⁸⁹ Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 4.

⁹⁰ Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 89-90.

Bhabha writes, “often produces a text rich in the traditions of *trompe-l’oeil*, irony, mimicry and repetition. In this comic turn from the high ideals of the colonial imagination to its low mimetic literary effects mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge.”⁹¹ By “engag[ing] and recycl[ing] popular [literary] forms with a difference,” the example of disidentificatory mimicry we see in the exchange of letters between “Mrs. Holmes” and “Mrs. Judson” points to the ambivalence of power in colonial assimilation discourse by inserting the Hopi girls Helen and Amelia into the bourgeois world of white society women, not the gendered, classed, and racialized position of inferiority that would be their destiny according to the ideology of white supremacy.⁹² So what does it mean that Helen’s teacher rewards her for breaking the rules of classroom etiquette and colonial discourse?

I want to suggest that Mrs. Holmes is not not-Helen. Mrs. Holmes’ letter to Mrs. Judson constructs Helen’s self-in-relation to both her Hopi friend Amelia, who may be said to be the co-author of her “immanent impersonal,” impersonating, personifying self, as well as in relation to her Euro-American teacher, thereby redefining the delineations of Hopi personhood in the wake of U.S. imperialism. Ironically, it is Mrs. Holmes’ very “inauthenticity” as a representation of Helen which, in the end, grants Helen’s authorial power. In taking on the persona of Mrs. Holmes, Helen engages another form of collaborative authorship that unites two parts of her self, disidentifying with colonial discourses through double negation; Helen assumes, co-opts, consumes, or abject-ifies

⁹¹ Bhabha, *Location*, 85.

⁹² Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 90.

Mrs. Holmes, rather than the reverse. Helen's and Amelia's impersonations are acts of indiscipline in that they ignore the cult of true womanhood inherent in the books that they are reading. According to Victorian sentimentalism, "true" women are white, middle-to-upper-class, Protestant/Christian mothers. The fact that Helen and Amelia are subjected in the school as heathen, savage, Indian children doesn't stop them from imagining otherwise. Their literary impersonation defies colonial logics of racial and cultural difference, as well as the designs of the boarding school training that would limit their aspirations to becoming cooks, maids, or nannies serving in the homes of such "society women."

Crain explains that the Lancasterian "telegraph and its methods . . . create a temporal and spatial density from which it is hard to remove oneself: not time for thought or privacy or interiority. These are for others."⁹³ Helen's and Amelia's practice of passing letters in class defy the rigid regimentation of student behavior and assert their right to privacy and interiority through the space of their writing.⁹⁴ In this way, Helen's and Amelia's letters may be understood as a self-styled telegraph, a cooptation of the Lancasterian system for their own purposes. As Crain notes, *telegraph* means, "literally, writing at a distance, from afar," and she asks, "But why do you need a telegraph when you are in the same room? When is proximity figured as distance? One answer," she posits, "is that hierarchy always safeguards class, age, gender, or racial distinctions

⁹³ Crain, "Children," 71.

⁹⁴ Helen describes the school's rigid routines thus: "It was a military school. We marched to the dining room three times a day to band music. We arose to a bell and had a given time for making our beds, cleaning our rooms, and being ready for breakfast. Everything was done on schedule, and there was no time for idleness" (134).

through protocols of communication.”⁹⁵ The letter of Mrs. Holmes to Mrs. Judson, as a telegraph, demonstrates how Helen’s and Amelia’s proximity to one another in the same classroom was figured as distance because of the hierarchies at work in the colonial space of the boarding school: teacher/students, adult/children, white/Indian. In this scenario, the protocols of communication forbade students from writing or speaking out of turn or communicating with one another without the teacher’s mediation. The Lancasterian system’s “representational techniques, its miming of technologies of communication, and its production of technologies of the self” became “inextricably embedded in urban schooling and mission schooling” as “sites . . . in which students’ interiority was intentionally proscribed.”⁹⁶

Like as-told-to autobiographies, letters are only indirectly self-referential, as they are written in the second person—to a known intended reader—rather than in the first person, the narrative voice of disciplined, “authentic” self-representation. Rather than represent Helen’s self according to colonial imperatives of authenticity, Mrs. Holmes’ letter to Mrs. Judson highlights the history of U.S. imperialism and attendant colonial constructions of Indian difference as the bases of her autobiographical production. These letters demonstrate how one may practice autobiographical indiscipline to engage the autobiographical form, thereby accessing subjectivity and power, while defying the

⁹⁵ Crain, “Children,” 72. The fuller passage reads: “During the formation of the republic, education was conceived as a component of the ‘diffusion of knowledge,’ essential to the transformation of ‘subjects’ into ‘citizens.’ Such ‘diffusion’ implies an existing cache of ‘knowledge’ requiring radiation from a center along metropolis-to-provinces routes. Aligned with this mapping, the Lancasterian structure positions ‘monitors’ as relays between master and pupils; in the classroom telegraph, this relationship is distilled and refined into ever more narrow channels” (Crain 72).

⁹⁶ Crain, “Children,” 81.

disciplinary aim of colonial subject formation: to contain the Indian as an individual, singular and isolated from the tribal community.

Homecoming as Estrangement

In 1919, at the age of twenty-one, after thirteen years of residence in Indian educational institutions, Helen moved back home to her mother's house in Hotevilla. Although Helen's family welcomed her, Helen confesses, "I didn't feel at ease in the home of my parents now" (144). All of Helen's family members expressed their desire that she cast off her school clothing and "wear Hopi attire" (144). Helen reports, "My brother gave me two complete Hopi costumes that he had woven especially for me . . . I didn't wear them" (144). Helen's defiance of her family's pressure for her to conform to Hopi conventions is met with resentment and even hostility in the figure of her older sister, but fortunately her mother promised that "she would not urge me to change my ways . . . if I would just stay at home with her" (145). This experience of feeling like a stranger in one's own home is common of many boarding school students who returned to their parents after years away in colonial institutions, and many were not as willing or able as Helen to remain.⁹⁷

It was difficult for Helen to be happy in her situation, where her sister Verlie consistently "nagged and nagged at" her, making it clear that she disapproved of Helen's adoption of non-Hopi traits and practices (151). When Helen's mother and brother died

⁹⁷ For stories of former Indian boarding school students who suffered from a sense of unbelonging once they returned to their reservation communities and left home again to pursue college degrees, see Zitkala-Sa, *American Indian Stories* and Qoyawayma, *No Turning Back*.

during a flu epidemic, Helen explains that it “should have been” her “place to take over” her “mother’s household and make a home for” her “father and” her “younger brothers,” according to Hopi custom, since she “was unmarried and living at home. I should have inherited my mother’s house” (150-151). However, since Verlie seemingly considered Helen to be incapable of properly managing a Hopi household, she “brought her big family of children and her husband and moved right in. . . . This placed me in an awkward position, a sort of outsider with no place nor part in the family” (151). Helen laments, “I could do nothing that would please my sister, Verlie. Even though I carried the water from the spring myself, she would get after me for using so much water for bathing and washing my clothes, which I felt I had to do to keep clean. Even when I read, it irritated her” (151). The conflict of interest between Helen and Verlie arises from the fact that Helen tries to maintain the habits and customs she had learned at school—wearing American clothing, observing American standards of cleanliness, and reading—rather than forsaking what she had learned in order to conform to Hopi living traditions.

Me and Mine tells that the difficulty of Helen’s home life during this time was mitigated by a friendship she cultivated with a non-Hopi woman who resided in Hotevilla. “Miss Sarah Abbott . . . was the first resident field nurse in Hotevilla, coming there in 1915 from Polacca . . . She had learned enough Hopi to be able to converse with the women about their problems” (145). For six years, from the time of Helen’s homecoming until Miss Abbot retired in 1925, Helen explains, “She was a good angel in my life . . . When I felt that I just had to get away from the tension in my home, I would go . . . and find relief with Miss Abbott” (146). The friendship shared between Sarah

Abbott and Helen exemplifies Foucault's concept of shared estrangement, as both women were out-of-place in some way and therefore cultivated a space of belonging for and with one another. The fact of Miss Abbott's culture crossing capabilities is significant, as it is a characteristic that Helen shares. "Miss Abbott endeavored to learn and understand the ways and customs of the people" (146). Helen is able to "find relief" with her friend because Miss Abbott would not criticize her for speaking English, wearing or washing her American clothes, or for engaging any other traditionally non-Hopi activity. In stark contrast to Helen's sister Verlie, Miss Abbott is a haven of acceptance and non-judgment. "When I had done my daily share of chores I would slip away and go to the community laundry and sewing room and spend the day with Miss Abbott" (151). The friendship they share is particular to American conventions of feminine gender. They relate to one another as women, united by their shared situation as cultural outsiders. In what ways did the colonial situation encourage these types of cross-cultural friendships and create contact zones that allowed forms of interracial intimacy to flourish? Should we read Miss Abbott as a colonial agent who was complicit with federal aims to dissolve Hopi self-governance or as an anti-imperialist figure who worked in alliance with the victims of colonial oppression?⁹⁸ I argue that Miss Abbott can be seen as anti-imperialist because instead of contributing to agendas to force Hopis to assimilate and acculturate with the dominant colonial society, she herself "endeavored to learn and understand the Hopis," and she did so not with the intention to exploit them but to serve and help them. She eased Helen's adaptation to Hopi home life, helping her to remain in Hotevilla.

⁹⁸ For a discussion of anti-imperialist affiliations, see Gandhi.

Living between the space of Verlie's home and the space of her friendship with Miss Abbott, Helen's post-boarding school subjectivity is doubled and divided. Miss Abbott is in a position to support Helen's decisions and to uplift her in critical situations. For example, when Helen and her fiancé, Emory Sekaquaptewa, interrupt the extensive Hopi marriage ceremony because they decide that they want to be married "legally" by license, her father stridently disapproves of this departure from Hopi tradition, and neither he nor anyone else from the Hopi community takes part in the Christian wedding.

About halfway through the rites, our consciences troubled us, because we felt the Hopi way was not quite right. We decided to get a license and be married legally. . . . In the afternoon that the license came, I went to my father's house in Hotevilla; Emory went with me. I just walked in and told my father that I was going to be married by license that night and had come to get my clothes. I could feel the disapproval of my father and my sister as I gathered the things I was going to wear. I just could not stay there and get dressed. I took my clothes and went to one of the school teachers, and she let me dress in her house. (161-162)

Emory's and Helen's "legal" marriage took place in the home of the Hotevilla school principal, and it was officiated by a reverend from the Mennonite Mission in Oriabi. Miss Abbott supported Helen's decision "to finish the tribal wedding rites at Bacabi" the following morning: "Miss Abbott came to see me once during the thirty days of the tribal ceremony. She said she did not want to embarrass me, but she whispered in my ear, 'You have never looked better in your life. You look healthy and happy. You have rosy cheeks. This has done you good'" (165). It is incorrect to say that Helen and Emory assimilated to white marriage customs and/or abandoned Hopi traditions, as they participated in both cultural expressions of their love and commitment to one another. In their worldview, the two ways are interwoven and interrelated; their marriage is constitutes what Lyons has theorized as an "x-mark," like their signatures on the marriage license. Helen's and

Emory's marriage began and ended with Hopi wedding rites, sandwiching their legal marriage in a space between, a space of their own creation. Hopi traditions preceded and followed the Christian wedding, signifying the strategic and temporary nature of their compliance with colonial institutions in order to assure the continuation of Hopi tradition. Whereas Helen's father and other Hopis disapprove of Helen's and Emory's decision to officiate their marriage according to both Hopi and American practices, Miss Abbott supports their decision, and she doesn't protest the Hopi ceremony. According to Roach, "Friendship . . . bespeaks the anarchical contingency of all relationality. In its very nature it is *anti*-institutional, indeed it cannot congeal into an epistemological object known as 'society.' It is excessive of self-identity, and hence . . . structurally incapable of grounding social forms."⁹⁹ In the space of the friendship, there is room for both Hopi and American ways. As a mode of autobiographical production, friendship is a site of performing indiscipline, a refusal to be a single being.

Another factor of Helen's subjectivity that is excessive of self-identity is her relationship with her husband, Emory Sekaquaptewa. Although Roach and others have commonly contrasted friendship with marriage, I argue that friendship is foundational to Helen's and Emory's union. Roach argues that "Friendship, as a formless relation without telos . . . is an immanent alternative to an institutionalized—hence concretized, deadened—form of union. Whereas marriage enacts the privatization of relational pleasures and practices, friendship remains properly communal, in common."¹⁰⁰ Roach's

⁹⁹ Roach, *Friendship*, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Roach, *Friendship*, 14.

distinction between friendship and marriage seems to preclude the possibility that a marriage could be based on friendship or that married people can continue to engage friendships; the case of Helen and Emory contradict both of those assumptions.

Helen includes Emory's life story as part of her own. For example, she narrates his experience of being kidnapped as a young boy by boarding school officials and of having his father taken away to Carlisle Institute as a way of showing the significance of their shared experiences and the entanglement of their lives. Chapter four of Helen's life story, titled "Emory's Early Years," interrupts the narrative flow of Helen's own life story. This instance of autobiographical disruption, to use Michelle Raheja's term, constitutes a sovereign strategy by which Helen claims or controls the terms of her literary subject formation, against the chronological and progressive diegetic flow of conventional American autobiography. Helen's inclusion of Emory's voice, represented in italics, marks her refusal to narrate herself as an individual, separable from family and community. She links her history to Emory's to show that, even before she knew him, their stories and their selves were connected. The presence of Emory's voice in Helen's life narrative queers her autobiography; his story is Helen's story.

The division of the Hopi into Friendly and Hostile factions, which culminated in the notorious Oraibi Split,¹⁰¹ estranged Emory from his father, who was a member of the

¹⁰¹ *Me and Mine* narrates the back-story of the Oraibi Split, when the Friendly faction evicted the Hostile faction from Oraibi, thus: "Even though I was only seven years old at the time, I remember most vividly the happenings of September 6 and 7, 1906. Those days brought to a climax events going back more than fifteen years, and they had a profound effect on my life, as well as the lives of each and every inhabitant of the village of Old Oraibi. In the year 1890, Lololama, Chief of Oraibi, along with chiefs from four other villages, went on a government-sponsored trip to Washington, D.C., seeking good will and better understanding. Lololama returned convinced by what he had seen and heard that his people would benefit by embracing some of the changes offered by the government. He spoke out boldly, urging his people to

Hostile faction. Emory “lived in Oraibi with his mother and step-father,” who were members of the Friendly faction, and their non-nuclear household also included “Emory’s grandfather, Wickvaya,” who “looked after little Emory” (31). Wickvaya also worked for the Mennonite missionary, H. R. Voth, as his translator.¹⁰² Such employment in the service of a federal agent undoubtedly secured financial gains for Emory’s family, which may have garnered jealousy or suspicion from other Hopis, especially those of the Hostile faction who may have considered such collusion to constitute complicity with a system that sought to dismantle the Hopi way of life. Viewed from another perspective, however, Wickvaya’s service to Voth may be seen as an “x-mark,”¹⁰³ his assent to the changes that were inevitable—indeed, were already being forced upon them—and his attempt to inform himself of the intentions of colonial powers and, to the extent that he could, control the terms of such changes. It is one of the choiceless choices we make when resistance seems futile at best or dangerous at worst.

Emory’s story of being captured and taken to Keams Canyon is rendered both in Helen’s and Emory’s own voices, with Emory’s words represented in italics:

When Emory was five years old . . . without his mother’s knowledge, the school police took little Emory, still asleep, wrapped in a brand new blanket that his

move down off the mesa where they would be nearer their farms and their water supply and to send their children to school. To the Hostiles, this was heresy” (63-64). The institutionalization of Hopi children in federal boarding schools interrupted traditional gender roles. According to *Me and Mine*, “Sending children to school was not the Hopi way of education. They had on-the-job training. Children learned to care for the sheep and raise corn in the day-by-day school of experience. Girls learned from their mothers to grind corn, prepare the food, and care for the household. Men and boys met in the kiva in winter time for lessons in history, religion, and traditions—all taught in story and song. Here also was learned respect for their elders and for tribal and clan codes” (64).

¹⁰² This fact is not mentioned in *Me and Mine* but in Cathy Ann Trotta’s unpublished dissertation about Voth’s mission. See Trotta.

¹⁰³ See Lyons, *X-Marks*.

grandfather had made for him. . . . The ‘catch’ that day was Emory, another six-year-old boy, and six girls . . . [They] were soon loaded into a wagon for the thirty-mile trip to Keams Canyon. Emory recalls:

. . . *It was after dark when we got to the Canyon . . . We were herded into the dining room and given hard tack and syrup in a saucer. . . . My beautiful new blanket with colored stripes was gone. I saw it later, in the possession of the wife of the superintendent.* (31-32)

Emory’s story resonates with those of other Hopis like Polingaysi Qoyawayma and Don Talayesva. In *No Turning Back*, Polingaysi describes the daily routine of Hopi parents and grandparents hiding their children from school police or truancy officers. Similar to Helen’s use of the term “catch” to describe the victims of colonial kidnapping, Polingaysi also uses hunting as a metaphor to describe the situation in which colonial agents preyed on Native children to fulfill their goal to subdue and assimilate American Indians. Emory’s use of the term “herded” further signifies the dehumanizing and demoralizing effect of such practices of alienating Native children from their homes and families. In *Sun Chief*, Talayesva also uses the term “herd” to describe the management of students’ bodies at Keams Canyon boarding school. The process of assimilation and the institutionalization of Native children may also be understood metaphorically as an attempt to eat, consume, or incorporate Native children into the body of the U.S. nation state. This metaphor is continued in Helen’s and Emory’s description of the theft of Emory’s blanket. Emory’s narrative voices his experience of being dehumanized (“herded”) and stolen from as part of the boarding school’s civilization (read: racialization) process to construct Hopi children as “Indians,” homogenized by their inferiority to superior white authorities who deserve to inherit their stolen “primitive” possessions to be displayed/preserved in museums or flaunted as exotic fetish items. The

theft of Native people's possessions and appropriation of them as American Indian cultural artifacts, kept as souvenirs by offending and hypocritical white people, exemplifies the project of U.S. national incorporation of the Native into the American body through the stripping of sovereignty from Native nations. Despite the fact that Helen's parents were members of the Hostile faction and Emory, by contrast, was raised in the home of his mother, who was of the Friendly faction (though his father was a Hostile), Helen's inclusion of Emory's story in her autobiography establishes the similarity of their experiences and the entanglement of their subjectivities. While Helen's rendering of Emory's voice in her life narrative exemplifies the polyvocality of much Native American oral tradition, the co-presence of each united in the same text also signifies that, as partners, they speak with the same voice.

Helen's and Emory's voices also come together around their shared experience of estrangement upon returning home from long stints away at boarding schools. Since Emory's family was among the Friendly faction, unlike Helen, he was allowed to return home to his mother's house during summer breaks from school at Keams Canyon. However, Helen explains, "When Emory was thirteen, he was transferred to the Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, where he stayed for three years without going home" (33). She continues, "According to Emory: . . . *After three years in Riverside I was sent home to the Reservation. Now my mother had a third husband. I had been away so long that I didn't feel at home there, and I went to live in Bacabi with my cousin Susie, whose husband was my godfather*" (34). Emory struggled to maintain ties to his home, and he relished visits to his mother's house:

I especially remember sleeping on the roof with my grandfather. He told me the story of how in his youth he had gone alone to Santa Fe, New Mexico. His young wife of a few months had been kidnapped by raiders, along with some children, and taken away and sold into slavery. Wickvaya went to the head man in Santa Fe and brought back not only Chosnysie but many other Hopi captives, on orders of the government—a saga in heroism in true Hopi style. (34-35)

Emory's rendition of his grandfather's story, told within Helen's life story, told within Udall's transcription, is a story within a story within a story within a story, demonstrating the genealogic and multiple layers of being and knowing. Wickvaya's story is significant because it compares Emory's experience of leaving Oraibi to attend school with his own experience of venturing out alone to save his wife and other Hopi slaves, thereby enfolding Emory within a history and a tradition of Hopi heroes.¹⁰⁴ This passage is also remarkable for its narration of the esoteric history of Native enslavement, which was practiced, formally or informally, across the continent. Wickvaya's recourse to the "orders of the [U.S.] government" for the authority of retrieving the Hopi slaves demonstrates the complexity of the issue of complicity. Wickvaya's ability to speak English and his relationship with government authorities, most likely through his role as Voth's interpreter, allowed him to restore the sovereign rights of his fellow Hopi people. Rather than an assimilationist, Wickvaya is a true Hopi hero due to his fluency in English, his affiliation with the Mennonite missionary Voth, and his collaboration with the U.S. government to return the captives. His culture crossing abilities, his work as a

¹⁰⁴ Indeed, this is the argument of Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert's *Education Beyond the Mesas*: Hopi children away at Sherman Institute boarding school were not helpless victims of colonial assimilation policy; rather, they were brave adventurers who continued a legacy of Hopi travel and migration; they brought Hopi knowledge with them to the school, and they returned home with newly gained knowledge in order to benefit their home communities.

translator, and his position as an advocate for the Hopi nation in colonial contexts solidify rather than enervate his Hopi identity.

Married Life as Interrelational Selfhood

After Helen and Emory completed their wedding rites, they took up residence in Hotevilla. Typifying the non-nuclear family structure of conventional Hopi homes, Helen's two younger brothers soon joined their household, where they "were a part of our family until they married" (175). Helen gave birth to ten children, including one son who she named "Abbott," perhaps after her good friend, the field nurse, Miss Sarah Abbott.

Life in Hotevilla was hard for Helen, who suffered from the criticism of her neighbors. *Me and Mine* describes her hometown as a place where people still harbored hostile sentiments and disparaged behaviors and practices typical of the Friendly faction. According to Helen,

Living in Hotevilla was just like living in any little country town where everyone sees and knows and talks about what everyone else does, only more so. The keynote was 'conform,' and one who failed to do so felt the lash of disapproval. Our lives were a combination of what we thought was the good of both cultures, the Hopi way and what we had learned at school. Whenever we departed from the traditions, our neighbors would scorn us. They were greatly offended because we were friendly with the government workers, the teachers, and the nurses, and even let them come into our house. (186)

Helen reports being criticized and ridiculed by other Hopi women nearly every time she would leave her house, and the motivations of her critics included her non-traditional clothing and her failure to participate in all community and religious events. Helen reports, "I was aware that my neighbors were talking about me, laughing at me, mimicking, and generally belittling me all the time" (187). The fun that Helen's

neighbors had at her expense was intended to ridicule her, to discipline her difference, and to coerce her to conform. The disidentification that Helen espouses in her lifestyle choice of yoking the good of both Hopi and settler colonial cultures was not an acceptable way of being Hopi in the eyes of her traditional neighbors. This distinction between tradition and innovation risks miring “authentic” Hopi identity in the ways of the past as well as eliding the traditional values of culture-crossing Hopis like Helen. Helen tells with pride that she and her husband “worked hard, like Hopis are supposed to do, and were self-sustaining even during the Depression” (188). In 1935, Helen and Emory moved their family away from the center of Hotevilla to the margin of the Hopi reservation. “Emory farmed on clan land twelve miles southwest from Hotevilla . . . We bought a big hogan from a Navajo for our summer home. We gradually came to feel that life would be better for us in every way if we lived out at the ranch . . . freer from the criticism of our villagers” (197-198). Here, Helen clarifies that she and her husband were social outcasts due to their amicability to colonial agents and cross-cultural lifestyles. Helen’s liminal, marginalized social position seems to have influenced her decisions to seek/cultivate friendships with non-Hopi women like Udall.

Although Helen and Emory lived differently than many of their fellow Hopis and were harshly criticized for their refusal to conform, they retained a strong sense of Hopi identity and affiliated their labor with the benefit of the tribe. Emory took a three year position working for the government to set up windmills and water tanks. “At one time Emory criticized the department for some policy they were starting. He was told, ‘You can’t do that when you work for the government.’ Emory said, ‘Then I won’t work for

the government. What is best for my people means a lot more to me than a job.’ After about a week they sent word, ‘Come on back. We can’t find anyone to take your place’” (200). Emory’s resistance to government policy that would enervate or undermine Hopi sovereignty demonstrates that his relationship with the U.S. government was a source of agency rather than assimilation or exploitation. Their resilience paid off on the home front, too: “After many years of patience and long suffering, the enmity between ourselves and our relatives and neighbors has at last almost melted away. . . . A spirit of tolerance has gradually replaced the spirit of hostility” (203). Helen’s once-critical neighbors grew to accept her practices of disidentification, demonstrating that stubborn resistance in the face of cultural change is part of a process of surviving colonization rather than the only way of being authentically Hopi.

Emory’s experience working with the U.S. government proved to be beneficial for Hopi nationalism and tribal sovereignty. The Hopi Tribal Council was activated in 1951, and the Council nominated Emory as a tribal judge in 1953. Helen explains that Emory’s position is one of service to the Hopi people: “It is from a sense of duty and public service that he serves. It gives him satisfaction to help administer justice among his own people. He goes from the ranch into Keams Canyon two times each week to hold court. His pay would hardly cover his gasoline cost” (223). Emory’s service as a tribal judge exemplifies how his and Helen’s practices of disidentification with the logic of assimilation enabled them to learn colonial lessons, such as English literacy and political practices, in order to use them in the service of Hopi sovereignty.

Conclusion

“Most of my chums gave up and went back to their Hopi ways when they returned home from school. . . . I was stubborn and held on and would not give up, even though my sister was continuously trying to discourage me . . . After being away for so long I was not used to the old kind of life and could not be happy living as the others did. My children would not be what they are, or doing the things they are doing, if I had forsaken the good that I learned at school. We chose the good from both ways of living” (247). Helen’s disidentificatory practice caused her to incur criticism from her Hopi neighbors, but she explains that, over the course of time, a spirit of tolerance replaced the spirit of hostility.

Near the end of *Me and Mine*, Helen quotes her father’s advice to her own children, and her invocation of his voice, through her own mediated life story, demonstrates the decolonial potential of autobiographical indiscipline as a strategy of self-representation: “To his grandsons he advised, ‘ . . . Go to school and be diligent . . . learn the white man’s language and his ways so you can come back and help your people and fight the *pahana* [white man] in his own way. Who knows? It might be one of you to save our land”” (248). Indeed, Helen’s children did go to school. In 1954, Helen established a home in Phoenix for five of her children who attended public school there, since the reservation day and boarding schools were woefully inadequate to prepare the children for higher education. Helen resided in Phoenix for six winters, where she worked as a housemaid to support her school children. During this time, Emory remained at their home on the ranch and worked at the trading post in Oraibi. Helen’s and Emory’s

part-time long-distance marriage did not fit into either Hopi or American models of a normal figuration of home and family. However, their priority was the future of their children and, by extension, the future of the Hopi tribe. At least two of their children, Leroy and Allison, attained college degrees from Arizona State University and Brigham Young University.

The narrative body of *Me and Mine* ends somewhat anticlimactically. The final paragraph repeats Helen's mother's advice for her to never use makeup, which seems like an indictment of white femininity. The final words of the text read:

I never curl my hair or use make-up or anything to improve my looks. My mother's admonition is behind all this. Even when I was a little girl she would tell me . . . that it is always best and more honest to look the way you really are. . . . When she came to visit me in Keams Canyon, my mother would bring me a fresh supply of very fine blue cornmeal. I would rub it on my face after I washed it, to take away the shininess. The little oil in the cornmeal made the skin feel smooth and silky. (249-250)

Helen's memory of her mother's lesson is interwoven with her boarding school education, signaling that her acquisition of English education did not hinder her internalization of Hopi values. This ending asserts Helen's identity as a Hopi woman who has not assimilated to white conventions of femininity. For her, the Hopi way is better. It is also an act of autobiographical indiscipline, as it implies that what we are reading is the true story of the real Helen, without makeup, although it is told through the collaborative aid of her friend Louise Udall.

The final chapter of *Me and Mine* is a coda titled, "In Retrospect," which must have been added at least five years after the book's original publication. This chapter explains that "Louise Udall died February 14, 1974," and Helen gave a eulogy at the

funeral service, which is reprinted as the bookend of Helen's life story. In her eulogy, Helen says, "Louise has been an important part of my life the past seventeen years. She has shared my family and my home as I have hers" (251). Helen remarks extensively on Louise's culture-crossing capabilities, and she explains:

Some of the most intimate times, and those most revealing of her character, took place on the Hopi Reservation in and around our home. . . . Wherever we went, she never questioned or shied away from strange customs or foods. She always enjoyed herself and relished the food set before her. If weary, she would lie down on anything handy, whether it was a couch or a sheepskin. Her manners so pleased the hosts that I often heard this comment in the Hopi language: 'What kind of Pahaana (white person) is this? She does not feel ill at ease; she is one of us.' She was easily accepted by all we met. (251-252)

Helen makes it clear that, throughout her friendship with Louise Udall, she was not the only one crossing cultural boundaries to join Louise in the white world of Mormonism and Christian philanthropy. Louise participated in Helen's Hopi world, too, opening herself to the occasion to share and learn across differences in the contact zone of their friendship. "Best of all," Helen continues, "she was a part of my family; a second mother and grandmother to my posterity. She told me I am the same to hers, for which I am honored. We took pride in our children and agreed privately with each other that we would stand in each other's stead where they were concerned" (253).

In this chapter, I have tried to develop a theory of writing the self and reading the autobiographical subject through the vehicle of friendship. Such a writing and reading practice complicates and extends historical and anthropological interpretations of Indian autobiography, which have hobbled the autobiographical subject through the burdens of representation, authenticity, and authorship. Such reductive discourses inhibit our ability to understand the autobiographical subject as fluid—mutable, multiple, and impersonal—

and have tended to reproduce and perpetuate imperialist notions of liberal personhood. I hope to have demonstrated how Helen's practice of autobiographical indiscipline highlights the fact that there is no pure Hopi space from which she might have resisted colonial disciplining. *Me and Mine* reveals how Helen has been inevitably affected by her colonial context—and how she herself has been one agent of such change.

CHAPTER TWO

Remembering Polingaysi: A Queer Recovery of

No Turning Back as a Decolonial Text

Riverside. Land of oranges. Land of perfume. Time of torture. After more than half a century, Polingaysi still could not recall that interval without a surge of emotion, remembering the white nights filled with the cloying scent of the orange and lemon groves, remembering the stifled sobbing of the lonely child she had been.

But there was another, happier, memory of that time. Each day the schoolchildren sang. Song was Polingaysi's salvation.¹⁰⁵

Introduction: The Erotics of Remembering

In *X-Marks: Native Signatures of Assent*, Scott Richard Lyons claims that “[n]o aspect of Native history has been more maligned in contemporary discourse than the boarding-school experience, or, as the historian David Wallace Adams names it, ‘education for extinction.’”¹⁰⁶ The “typical narrative of victimization” tells how Indian children were displaced from their homes to genocidal institutions that sought to eliminate their Indigenous identities by assimilating them into the dominant Euro-American culture.¹⁰⁷ This narrative rhetorically opposes (settler) colonization and (Indigenous) resistance, perpetuating a binary that denigrates Indians who lived in nontraditional ways as inauthentic at best, or as successfully assimilated and no longer truly Indian at worst. In this chapter I offer a “more complex treatment” of boarding

¹⁰⁵ Qoyawayma, *No Turning*, 59-60. I note subsequent citations of my primary text parenthetically.

¹⁰⁶ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 22. See Adams, *Education*.

¹⁰⁷ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 22.

school histories by exploring the ways Polingaysi's as-told-to autobiography, *No Turning Back: A Hopi Indian Woman's Struggle to Live in Two Worlds* (1964), complicates and challenges Indian victimization rhetoric.¹⁰⁸ *No Turning Back* characterizes Polingaysi (born c. 1892, died 1990) as a "self-willed" woman who consistently pursued her personal desires rather than conforming to the gendered social norms of Hopi or U.S. cultures, the two worlds indicated in the text's subtitle (26). Remembering Polingaysi as an agent of her own destiny, I focus on the gendered significance of her choice to attend Sherman Institute, a federal Indian boarding school in Riverside, California, and I recollect her life story's narration of her Hopi decolonization praxis, which I call *gender indiscipline*.

I open this chapter with an overview of the disciplinary and theoretical issues that *No Turning Back* raises. This introduction describes my analytic methods and explains why we may usefully consider *No Turning Back* as a queer Indigenous and decolonial text. Subsequent sections of the chapter provide close readings of Polingaysi's gender indiscipline in specific parts of the book, which bring the decolonial orientation of the story to the surface.

¹⁰⁸ Lyons, *X-Marks*, 23. As-told-to autobiography is a genre that is defined by a collaborative production process in which a so-called Indian informant orally narrates his or her life to a non-Indigenous amanuensis who transcribes, edits, and secures publishing for the story. Some critics argue that collaborative authorship compromises the representational authority that characterizes autobiography as a genre. For example, Gretchen M. Bataille and Kathleen Mullen Sands propose that the "best" way to engage as-told-to autobiography, due to its "problematical form," is to analyze the "process of its creation" rather than considering it "as an established genre" (Bataille and Sands 3). In contrast, Stephanie Fitzgerald contends that this "scholarly emphasis on the process of creation" often has the effect of "obscur[ing] the Native voice, shifting the focus away from lived experience of the Native subject to that of the non-Native editor" (Fitzgerald 109). Fitzgerald encourages critics to "foreground Native agency in the process of collaboration" and to explore Indian women's use of "life-writing as a tool to interrogate and secure their legal and social identity as Indian women during an era of tremendous social change" (Fitzgerald 110).

In general the term *decolonization* denotes the undoing of colonialism. Although federal legislation affirming Indian nations' sovereignty, or right to self-determination and autonomous rule, has theoretically decolonized Indian governments, American Indian communities continue to be surrounded by a settler colonial population and imperialist sociopolitical structure.¹⁰⁹ Decolonization involves ongoing processes of removing or transforming the pernicious cultural effects of colonization—for example, the myth of the assimilated Indian. Authoritative histories have long denied a secure space for Indian people caught in the drama of federal assimilation projects. The phrase “between two worlds,” prominent in both subtitles of *No Turning Back*, conventionally circulates within Indian boarding school discourses as a trope that signifies a cultural chasm, a no-woman's-land that ostensibly separates Indigenous from Euro-American communities. Caught in this void, or so the story goes, assimilated Indians experience a sense of subjective fragmentation or a feeling of unbelonging in either world.¹¹⁰ Some Native American scholars dislike this trope because it homogenizes settler colonial and Indigenous peoples and condemns Natives who live in the space of the in-between as inauthentic and therefore powerless to claim or represent either culture. The decolonial significance of *No Turning Back* lies, in part, in Polingaysi's representation of herself as a bridge between Hopi and white worlds. Polingaysi's liminal identity recuperates the in-

¹⁰⁹ I agree with Mark Rifkin's definition of sovereignty, which explains that “sovereignty is a translation,” a term meant to articulate Native peoples' “existence as polities through a comparison to the logics and structures of the settler state . . . 'sovereignty' often is used to mark the rightful autonomy of [N]ative peoples—their existence as polities that precedes and exceeds the terms of settler-state jurisdiction” (Rifkin, *When*, 17).

¹¹⁰ See Bahr; Henze and Vanett; and Vučković.

between as a productive space from which she engenders new relations and modes of belonging in the face of cultural and geo- graphical alienation.

No Turning Back is written in the third-person narrative voice, which may induce some readers to consider Polingaysi's amanuensis, Vada F. Carlson, as an omniscient white narrator. However, significant aspects of Polingaysi's story would be elided if we were to attribute sole authorial agency to either Polingaysi (as the story's "teller") or Carlson (as the story's "writer"). Since *No Turning Back* was produced through Polingaysi's collaboration and relationship with Carlson, throughout this chapter I treat the text itself—the medium of the book—as the story's narrator.¹¹¹ My reading practice attends to instances of what Michelle Raheja describes as "autobiographical disruption," the "intentional rhetorical silences" that "operate in Indian personal narratives" so that Indian authors can "strategically . . . 'stay Red' even while engaging with the white-controlled literary and publishing practices of their day," including especially the practice of collaborative authorship with non-Indigenous amanuenses.¹¹²

Autobiographical disruption in *No Turning Back* often takes the form of Polingaysi's recollections of sensory experiences, such as those that appear in the above epigraph to redirect readers' attention away from her subjection to torture and toward her

¹¹¹ In correspondence about the production process of *No Turning Back*, Carlson refers to the book as "our baby," indicating that she shared not only authorship but also kinship with Polingaysi (Linder 127). Furthermore, Polingaysi wrote the book's foreword in the first-person narrative voice; her opening statement suggests that she ultimately approved of Carlson's account of her narrative.

¹¹² Raheja, "I leave it," 88. Michelle H. Raheja is not the only Native literary scholar who advocates a somewhat intuitive method for reading silences in as-told-to Indian autobiographies. Queer Indigenous scholar Craig Womack (Creek) offers "suspicioning" as a method for queer Native readers to reconcile their nonnormative subjectivities and desires for social legibility with their critical practices of interpreting queer significances in Native American literatures. Womack's theory makes the crucial claim that silence surrounding queer Native identities and practices does not equate absence. See Womack, "Suspicioning."

methods of surviving her experiences at Sherman Institute, one of which was singing. *No Turning Back* narrates that a Sherman teacher cajoled Polingaysi into taking the lead part in a school musical production. After her performance Polingaysi found that “[s]he began to receive pleasure from giving pleasure. Compliments encouraged her and aroused in her a desire to excel” (61). By touching her audience through the sense of sound, singing provided “a way [for Polingaysi] to express her pent-up yearnings, her uncertainties, and her loneliness and to rise above them” by creating a community based on the exchange of aural and emotional pleasure (61). Polingaysi’s singing, as I show, can be read as part of the erotic—a source of sovereign power that tied her to her remote relatives on the Hopi reservation, for whom singing was a common practice.

No Turning Back narrates Polingaysi’s erotic memories and silences other significant aspects of her life story. The text provides a sensuous description of how the night air in Riverside smells, for example, but does not tell us the precise reason why Polingaysi wanted to leave home and go to Sherman Institute. Rather than simple curiosity or a desire for new experiences, marriage avoidance was a more probable motive. Hopi girls were expected to stay close to their homes and mothers, and Polingaysi’s act of running away to attend Sherman was one of a series of gender role transgressions. From early childhood, Polingaysi’s desires conflicted with the cultural norms of her Hopi community. Because Polingaysi loathed the domestic lifestyle of the “true Hopi maiden,” *No Turning Back* tells us, more “tradition-bound” Hopis gossiped that she “‘doesn’t want to be a Hopi; she wants to be a white man’” (52, 145–46). The implication of this critique that Polingaysi “wants to be a white *man*” demonstrates the

importance of gender to both colonial and decolonial discourses. I focus on Polingaysi's gender expression in order to challenge characterizations of her as an assimilationist who desired to abandon Hopi culture and adopt a white lifestyle. Polingaysi struggled to live as a bridge, located between and serving both Hopi and white worlds, not because she despised Hopi traditionalism per se nor because she considered U.S. culture a preferable alternative; rather, she desired to find or create a space where she could live free from the gendered imperatives to marry and reproduce that confronted her in both cultural realms.

A queer Indigenous analytic lens is crucial for understanding *No Turning Back's* decolonial orientation. Queer Indigenous studies methodologies help us to focus on the ways that Indigenous peoples survive colonial assimilation projects that are particularly sexist and homophobic, not only racist and imperialist. Polingaysi's practice of gender indiscipline, as rendered in *No Turning Back*, enacted a decolonized Native identity, which I term sovereign selfhood. My theory of sovereign selfhood challenges the binary opposition of tribalism (characterized by homogeneity, communalistic values, and dependence on kinship relations) and individualism (characterized by heterogeneity, individualistic values, and independence or self-reliance). Sovereign selfhood names Polingaysi's sense of individuality and difference while simultaneously acknowledging her relationality and responsibility to her sovereign Hopi tribe.

In his groundbreaking work, *When Did Indians Become Straight? Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*, Mark Rifkin claims that U.S. projects designed to "civilize" American Indians and to "reorganize [N]ative social life" "can be

understood as an effort to make them ‘straight.’”¹¹³ The “language of ‘individualism’” that is so central to Indian “education discourse,” Rifkin explains, contrasts “an atomized notion of selfhood with traditional communal conceptions of identity among [N]ative peoples.”¹¹⁴ Rifkin adds that a “larger heteronormative matrix . . . is the horizon for” colonial processes of naturalizing individualism “through the representation of monogamous marriage and the single-family dwelling as the self-evident basis for true intimacy and human reproduction.”¹¹⁵ I concur with Rifkin’s assessment of the inextricable connection between imperial efforts to detribalize Indians and to discipline them according to Eurocentric standards of sexual normalcy. But we must be careful not to conflate (supposedly Euro-American) individualism with heterosexuality or to position these characteristics as the binary opposites of (supposedly Indigenous) collectivism and queerness. To do so risks erasing the experiences of Native people like Polingaysi, a Hopi individual who struggled against what may be understood as a Hopi version of heteronormativity. Although Hopi home and family life were matrilineal and extended rather than patriarchal and nuclear, tradition nevertheless required Hopis to engage in monogamous and sexually reproductive marriage. *No Turning Back* offers a more complex view of Native selfhood by accounting for the ways Polingaysi’s desires differed from those of her Hopi peers prior to her subjection to the individualizing or straightening influences of the Indian boarding school.

¹¹³ Rifkin, *When*, 6, 8.

¹¹⁴ Rifkin, *When*, 149.

¹¹⁵ Rifkin, *When*, 150.

One reason why Polingaysi assented to narrate her life story was to combat assaults on the authenticity of her Hopi identity. I want to explore the usefulness of her story for today's queer-identified Indians who struggle with queerphobia, to use Daniel Heath Justice's term, and also for Native- and non-Native-identified people who want to understand the gendered aspects of U.S. imperialism. Viewed through queer Indigenous lenses of analysis, *No Turning Back* reveals that Polingaysi's practice of gender indiscipline preceded—and, indeed, instigated—her attendance of boarding school and also aided her ability to thrive in the space she cultivated between Hopi and white worlds. By offering a more complicated understanding of Native selfhood in the context of U.S. imperialism, I hope to demonstrate how the nontraditional identities or practices of some Native individuals may have decolonial implications that benefit said individuals' tribal communities. Since the self exists only in relation to other selves in a web of relations, self-interest is not necessarily opposed to communal welfare. By acting on her personal desire, Polingaysi served not only her self but also her Hopi people.

Polingaysi's avoidance of marriage and willing attendance of Indian boarding school do not indicate her successful assimilation to dominant U.S. culture but rather her anomalous mode of being Hopi. *No Turning Back* portrays Polingaysi as different from her fellow Hopis and as remarkable for her ability to transcend the boundary between Hopi and white worlds—a geographical and ideological division that arose from U.S. settler colonialism. Polingaysi's practice of sovereign selfhood, as presented in *No Turning Back*, resonates with traditional Indigenous approaches to the anomalous in nature. Justice locates a potential precedent for affirming queer Native people “*as Native*

people” in Indigenous Mississippian peoples’ traditional reverence for anomaly as a necessary and integral feature of Native social life.¹¹⁶ Justice takes the term anomaly from anthropologist Charles Hudson, who defines anomalies as “those beings *and states of being* which fall into ‘two or more of their categories,’ and which are ‘singled out for special symbolic values.’”¹¹⁷ Examples of anomalies include “conventional creatures whose habitats, appearance, or behavior marked them as deviating from categorical clarity,” such as bats (four-legged fliers) and bears (four-legged creatures who can walk upright like humans); creatures who possessed an “ability to move between worlds,” such as “the kingfisher as a diving bird” and “the turtle as both an aquatic and terrestrial four-footed animal”; and creatures who possessed “special abilities or strength.”¹¹⁸

Justice explains that “an anomalous reading looks to the constitutive significance of queerness,” which he defines as “the world-crossing powers of the anomalous being.”¹¹⁹ He employs the term *queer* for its “mercurial and transgressive resonance” and its inclusion of “gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, pansexuals, transgendered [sic] people, and straight folk with nonconformist sexual and gender behaviors and identities.”¹²⁰ I concur

¹¹⁶ Justice, “Notes,” 208. Emphasis in original. Although Justice’s theory of anomaly arises from a Southeastern Native-specific context, my reading of *No Turning Back* explores its potential transnational significance. As Justice explains, “until the Native folks familiar with queer tribal knowledge are less reluctant to talk about that information, we simply don’t have a lot of community resources to draw on. The inevitable results of this lack of information are continuing silence—which clearly hasn’t been a particularly productive strategy . . . or turning back to the extant ethnographic record and applying our own analytic lenses to them to the best of our ability, fully acknowledging the fact that any answers we come back with will always be partial and, to some degree, unsatisfying” (Justice 216).

¹¹⁷ Justice, “Notes,” 219. Emphasis in original.

¹¹⁸ Justice, “Notes,” 219–20.

¹¹⁹ Justice, “Notes,” 227.

¹²⁰ Justice, “Notes,” 233.

with Justice's "insistence that a place of legitimized queerness *matters* to Native cultures, and . . . to both tribal politics of sovereignty and a sovereignty of aesthetic (and erotic) expression," and I suggest that *No Turning Back* represents the bridge, the third space of the in-between, as such a place for Polingaysi, whose Hopi traditions were seemingly intolerant of her anomalous gender expression.¹²¹ We can read Polingaysi as queer, at the very least, in her avoidance of marriage and motherhood, lifestyles to which Hopi women were expected to conform. But her practice of gender indiscipline exceeds her refusal to marry and have children; it reveals that she neither immersed herself in Hopi traditions nor assimilated to Euro-American standards of gender normativity. Rather, she performed a politics of disidentification by bridging Hopi and white worlds and cultivating a third space in-between, a space of sovereign selfhood.¹²²

An early review of *No Turning Back*, published in 1965 by anthropologist Leo W. Simmons, claims that Polingaysi was so "atypical" of Hopi women that her story is of little value to anyone seeking knowledge about authentic Hopi culture.¹²³ Simmons's devaluation of Polingaysi's story neglects the fact that the margin constitutes the center

¹²¹ Justice, "Notes," 208. Emphasis in original.

¹²² Queer of color theorist José Esteban Muñoz theorizes disidentification as "a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology" to "transform" settler colonial "logic from within" (Muñoz 11). Disidentification is a third space of negotiating colonial situations that transcends the reductive paradigms of accommodation versus resistance, assimilation versus tradition, or identification (with colonial ideologies) versus counteridentification. Muñoz's theory of disidentification is useful for articulating the decolonial potential of Polingaysi's gender indiscipline. Native feminist and queer Indigenous theorist Andrea Smith notes that a "politics of disidentification can be helpful to the project of decolonization" because it "forces us to admit that we cannot organize from a space of political purity, that we have been inevitably marked by processes of colonization. When we no longer have to carry the burden of political and cultural purity, we can be more flexible and creative in . . . us[ing] the logics of settler colonialism against itself" (Smith, "Queer Theory," 56).

¹²³ Simmons, "Review," 1567.

rather than being outside of or insignificant to it. A queer Indigenous reading reveals how Polingaysi's gender indiscipline was precisely what suited her to serve her Hopi community by, in the words of the book's longer subtitle, *Bridg[ing] the Gap between the World of Her People and the World of the White Man* (iii). Polingaysi created a space for herself where none previously existed, but her innovation need not be seen as selfish or non-traditional. Justice understands Native "tradition" as valuing

adaptation, not stasis or assimilation; inclusivity of the strengths of our differences, not rejectionist claims to false purity; a generous engagement of expansive kinship values, rather than a simple-minded adoption of the miserly 'family values' of division; and unflinching honesty in its attention to both historical and contemporary tribal realities, not a naïve adherence to ahistorical visions of some pure, unchanging, uncomplicated past or present that neither did nor does exist.¹²⁴

Polingaysi engendered a space for herself to be Hopi *despite* her non-conformist expressions of gender. Although she was anomalous among her peers, she was fully Hopi and a significant member of her tribal community. To recognize her as such is part of a decolonial project of acknowledging tribal histories that legitimate and nurture social spaces for queer Natives.

In the following sections, I employ close reading to explore Polingaysi's methods of gender indiscipline. First, in "Stowing Away," I read her escapes from her mother's home to attend colonial schools as attempts to evade Hopi gender role expectations, which indicate her subject position as an anomalous Hopi girl. Next, in "Surviving Torture," I provide literary and historical contextualization for Polingaysi's strategies of surviving the torture she endured at Sherman Institute. My analysis of archival sources

¹²⁴ Justice, "Notes," 214.

housed at the Sherman Indian Museum, such as the school newspaper, *The Sherman Bulletin*, illuminates the ways Polingaysi subverted the school's disciplinary demands of what Katrina A. Paxton calls "gender assimilation." Polingaysi continued to embody a bridge between Hopi and colonial communities throughout her life. My concluding section, "You of Coyote Clan," illustrates how Polingaysi's practice of gender indiscipline served her in her later occupations as a college student, Indian teacher, and mediator of non-Hopi presence on the reservation. By narrating Polingaysi's enactment of sovereign self-hood through her decolonial praxis of gender indiscipline, I hope to demonstrate how *No Turning Back* functions as a testament to her Hopi integrity and decolonial legacy.

Stowing Away: Evasion as a Queer Survival Strategy

Federal officials working to recruit Hopi students to H. R. Voth's Mennonite day school disrupted Hopi childrearing practices, which included observation of elders at work, hands-on instruction, and participation. The issue of schooling fomented factions among the Hopi people. While some Hopi parents sent their children to the day school willingly, school authorities enlisted black soldiers and armed Navajo policemen (traditional Hopi enemies) as truancy officers to forcibly take children from the homes of resistant parents. *No Turning Back* portrays Polingaysi's mother, Sevenka, as resistant; Sevenka laments: "The *Bahana* [white man] does not care how we feel toward our children. They think they know everything and we know nothing . . . It is not the Hopi way of caring for children, this tearing them from their homes and their mothers'" (18).

In order to learn the responsibilities and roles of Hopi girls within the matriarchal social structure, Sevenka required Polingaysi to remain close to home, hiding beneath sheep pelts or in underground kivas when necessary to evade truancy officers.

No Turning Back indicates that Polingaysi always harbored an aversion to the domestic labor for which Hopi girls were responsible and in which they took pride in performing. For example, Polingaysi “had never . . . been willing to consider” learning the art of weaving “reed and yucca plaques,” which “Hopi girls from time immemorial had learned . . . as a matter of course” (51). Although her sister “Anna had been an apt and willing student,” “Polingaysi had been too restless, too filled with projects of another nature to learn such sedentary work” (51). The text neglects to name this otherness, which Sevenka disdains: “‘Always you must be doing something different,’ her mother sighed” (52). Polingaysi’s preference for “projects of another nature” marks a specifically gendered “differen[ce]” that was out of place in traditional Hopi society.

Polingaysi did not share her mother’s value of clinging to tradition in the face of colonial incursion. *No Turning Back* portrays Polingaysi as having desired to attend school. By narrating Polingaysi’s departure from home as a choice, the text casts her not as a victim of colonial authority but rather as an agent of her own destiny. After her sister was captured and taken to the day school by truancy officers, Polingaysi became lonely for her friends and curious about their activities. Polingaysi was weary of hiding, and she experienced nostalgia for her “old self,” a self that “had been as free and unhampered as the wandering wind” (22). She descended the mesa trail—without parental permission or colonial force—and entered the school: “No one had forced her to do this thing. She had

come down the trail of *her own free will* . . . she went into that schoolhouse . . . because *she desired to do so*” (24, my emphasis). When Polingaysi returned home and confessed to her mother where she had been, Sevenka chastised her for acting on her personal desire: ““You self-willed, naughty girl! You have taken a step . . . away from your Hopi people. You have brought grief to us . . . You have brought this thing upon yourself, and there is no turning back” (26). Sevenka’s admonition implies that by going to the Mennonite day school, Polingaysi had committed herself to assimilating with colonial culture, and that there could be “no turning back” to true or authentic Hopi ways.

Polingaysi’s transgression was, in particular, a gendered one, and she continued to attend the day school, spending more time in Voth’s church and less time in her mother’s house. Some years later, in 1906, when Polingaysi was about fourteen years of age, she learned that a wagon was bringing a group of Hopis to an Indian boarding school in Riverside, California. Since Polingaysi’s parents would not permit her to join them, as historian Margaret D. Jacobs writes, she ran away from home and “stowed herself away in” the wagon “bound for Sherman Institute.”¹²⁵ Inverting her mother’s prior command that she hide to evade truancy officers, Polingaysi premeditated her departure to Sherman Institute and carried out her plan by hiding: “Before daylight she crept out, snatched up her bundle, and fled . . . crouched beneath the wagon seat, hoping no one would discover her” (53).

No Turning Back clearly narrates Polingaysi’s departure as an escape; what the narrative obscures in rhetorical silence, or “autobiographical disruption,” to use Raheja’s

¹²⁵ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 48.

phrase, is the precise reason why Polingaysi ran away from home. Jacobs surmises that once she was discovered hiding in the wagon, Polingaysi “refused to get out” because she “looked forward to educational opportunities beyond the New Oraibi day school.”¹²⁶ However, I find the potential for “educational opportunities” a dubious explanation for Polingaysi’s flight. As K. Tsianina Lomawaima notes, federal boarding schools actually “limited educational opportunity” for Indian boys and girls by primarily training—and exploiting— them to perform manual labor and domestic service work, respectively.¹²⁷ David Wallace Adams’s account construes Polingaysi’s departure as an act of simple disobedience; he characterizes Polingaysi as a “stubborn Hopi girl” “who had already defied her parents by attending the day school” and “was determined to do so again.”¹²⁸ Adams claims that the “fact” that Polingaysi “eagerly wanted to go off to boarding school . . . explain[s] her overall favorable attitude toward the whole experience.”¹²⁹ His summary neglects Polingaysi’s description of her experience at Sherman Institute as a “[t]ime of torture.” So why was Polingaysi so eager to leave Hopiland, and how were her hopes disappointed when she arrived at Sherman Institute?

Marriage evasion seems like the most probable motive for Polingaysi’s escape attempt. In 1906 Polingaysi was about fourteen years old— around the age at which Hopi girls traditionally prepare to become women: by definition, wives and mothers.

According to anthropologist Byron Harvey, III’s observation, the Hopi language employs

¹²⁶ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 48.

¹²⁷ Lomawaima, *They Called It*, 99.

¹²⁸ Adams, “Beyond,” 37.

¹²⁹ Adams, “Beyond,” 38.

a single term for both “woman” and “wife.”¹³⁰ Anthropologist Diane M. Notarianni also claims that it is not until a Hopi maiden “becom[es] a mother” that “she is socially recognized as a wuhti, or woman.”¹³¹ *No Turning Back* repeatedly states Polingaysi’s desire to avoid marriage and motherhood. The potential for new experiences beyond the mesas may have been a secondary motive, but Polingaysi ran away primarily to shirk Hopi women’s roles as wives and mothers.

Polingaysi’s refusal to learn traditional Hopi industry and her self-willed attendance of the Mennonite day school in New Oraibi marked her as anomalous, or “different,” from her Hopi peers (52). Alarmed and aggravated by her deviance, her parents and other members of the Hopi community commanded her to conform to the standards of “the true Hopi maiden,” which included preparation for marriage and motherhood (52). Such expectations incited Polingaysi to leave Oraibi and pursue her own desires. Unfortunately, if marriage evasion or a desire for greater fluidity of gender expression inspired Polingaysi’s decision to run away from home, she must have been sorely disappointed upon arriving at Sherman Institute. Although Hopi and Euro-American cultures differ in their respective matriarchal and patriarchal structures, a heteronormative imperative apparently existed in each. As I show in the next section, the school’s Indian education policy of gender assimilation may have constituted much of the torture Polingaysi endured in River-side. However, *No Turning Back* silences the exact source of her torture and highlights her survival strategies. By claiming personal

¹³⁰ Harvey, III, “An Overview,” 212.

¹³¹ Notarianni, “Making,” 598.

responsibility for her situation at Sherman Institute, Polingaysi foregrounds her initial desire for displacement.

Gender Indiscipline as Decolonial Praxis

Recent scholarship in the field of queer Indigenous studies attends to the effects of settler colonialism and legacies of U.S. imperialism on the erotic lives of Native peoples. In a landmark essay, “Stolen from Our Bodies: First Nations Two-Spirits/Queers and the Journey to a Sovereign Erotic,” Qwo-Li Driskill theorizes a sovereign erotic as “an erotic wholeness healed and/or healing from the historical trauma that First Nations people continue to survive.”¹³² Driskill does “not see the erotic as a realm of personal consequence only” but rather acknowledges how our “relationships with the erotic impact our larger communities” and vice versa.¹³³ In *The Erotics of Sovereignty: Queer Native Writing in the Era of Self-Determination*, Mark Rifkin explores the ways self-identified queer Native authors draw on their most seemingly personal experiences, such as memories, as platforms from which to actualize political power and assert sovereign agency. Rifkin defines the erotic as a structure of feeling that encompasses yet is irreducible to the sexual; examples of the erotic include melancholy, shared history, connections to place, and other embodied indicators of an individual’s communal belonging. Remembering Polingaysi, in both senses of recalling and reassembling her life

¹³² Driskill, “Stolen,” 51.

¹³³ Qwo-Li Driskill pays homage here to black feminist Audre Lorde; he claims, “I am in agreement with Audre Lorde when she writes, “Our erotic knowledge empowers us, becomes a lens through which we scrutinize all aspects of our existence, forcing us to evaluate those aspects honestly in terms of their relative meaning in our lives” (Driskill, “Stolen,” 51–52).

story, requires us to acknowledge her practice of gender indiscipline as an effect of her erotic power.

As a student at Sherman Institute, Polingaysi discovered that the world of the white man also expected women to perform domestic labor, marry, and bear children. By excelling as a scholar, who eventually became a renowned teacher of Indian pupils, Polingaysi disidentified with gender normativity in both Hopi and white worlds. Acting from a third space of transformative resistance—a sovereign selfhood—Polingaysi survived assimilation.

Adams characterizes Indian boarding schools as “assimilationist hothouses” where Indian students were taught to dress, think, speak, and behave like would-be U.S. citizens.¹³⁴ Authority figures at Sherman Institute enforced Euro-American norms of gender expression and conduct; for example, girls were required to wear restrictive Victorian dresses, were physically restricted to the school campus, and were expected not only to marry and bear children but also to subordinate themselves to the dominion of men and Euro-Americans in a patriarchal and racist society. Paxton offers the term *gender assimilation* to articulate how school officials at Sherman Institute

established a gendered campus and curriculum . . . separated boys and girls, while female and male teachers encouraged Native American girls to accept the place of women within the dominant society. They did not want Indian girls to develop into professional women . . . The school curriculum provided opportunities for girls to become dressmakers, cooks, and servants.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Adams, “Beyond,” 36.

¹³⁵ Paxton, “Learning,” 174.

Although Paxton claims that the “belief that a woman’s place [is] in the home” is generally a “non-Native belief,” it likely resonated for Polingaysi as a white version of her mother’s expectations that she get married and become a mother in her own right.¹³⁶

Lomawaima explains how federal boarding schools’ demand for gender assimilation, which “pressed Indian students into a strictly homogeneous mold of uniform dress and appearance,” upheld the U.S. government’s “quest to individualize the tribal consciousness.”¹³⁷ “The seeming contradiction” between homogenizing and individualizing Indian students, Lomawaima continues, “is no real paradox” because the “federal practice of organizing the obedient individual” through strictly enforced codes of bodily comportment and conduct coincided with federal “policy aimed to disorganize the sovereign tribe.”¹³⁸ Emphasizing the straightening effect of such individualizing policies, Rifkin claims that Indian boarding schools operated according to a “romance plot” that “impose[d] a detribalizing teleology” by encouraging Indian students to pursue companionate marriage characterized by an “isolating passion between individuals” who would leave their tribal communities and assimilate with dominant American culture by living as a nuclear family in a privatized home.¹³⁹ To understand Polingaysi’s story, it is important to acknowledge a shared imperative for women to marry, bear children, and lead domestic lifestyles within both U.S. and Hopi ideologies. Meeting the same dreaded

¹³⁶ Paxton, “Learning,” 174.

¹³⁷ Lomawaima, *They Called It*, 99.

¹³⁸ Lomawaima, *They Called It*, 99.

¹³⁹ Rifkin, “Romancing,” 29.

expectations in both cultural contexts, Polingaysi eked out a space for herself between these two arenas.

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I wondered if the archives at Sherman Indian Museum might shed light on the torture Polingaysi suffered in Riverside and help illuminate her methods of survival. Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, author of *Education beyond the Mesas: Hopi Students at Sherman Institute, 1902–1929*, explains that he “looked in the *Sherman Bulletin* . . . various letterpress books and other school records, but . . . never came across [Polingaysi’s] name.”¹⁴⁰ So when I began my archival research for this project, I had low expectations of finding much information about Polingaysi’s time at the school. Museum archivist Lorene Sisquoc suggested that I speak with Hattie Lomayesva (Hopi), a retired teacher who currently volunteers at the museum.¹⁴¹ When I introduced myself to Hattie, I held out my copy of *No Turning Back*, the cover of which depicts Polingaysi as an adult surrounded by several of her young Hopi students. I asked Hattie, “Do you know about this author?” Hattie reached out her hand, touched the image of a child in the foreground, and declared, “That’s me! I remember when that picture was taken. I sure loved that sailor dress.” Hattie confided that Polingaysi had been the teacher of her class for beginners at the Hopi day school in New Oraibi. “I was surprised to have an Indian

¹⁴⁰ Sakiestewa Gilbert, “Search.”

¹⁴¹ I want to express my gratitude for the assistance of Hattie Lomayesva and Lorene Sisquoc, who played key roles in the development of my archival research at Sherman Indian Museum. In acknowledging their cooperation, I must also clarify that my reading of *No Turning Back* does not represent anyone’s opinions or perspective but my own. Rooted in the historiography of Indian boarding school texts, this study does not aim to provide a true or corrective account of Polingaysi’s autobiography but rather seeks to highlight textual silences and archival erasures and to raise questions about the possibilities that may arise for future readers by remembering anomalous figures like Polingaysi. Any mistakes are my own.

teacher. I thought only white people could be teachers,” Hattie recalled. Like Polingaysi, Hattie attended college and pursued a career in teaching. Hattie’s memories of Polingaysi’s influential teaching encouraged my search.

Together, Hattie and I perused the student registration ledgers from 1905 to 1907, as *No Turning Back* claims that Polingaysi was born around 1892 and enrolled at Sherman at age fourteen. We discovered, as had Sakiestewa Gilbert before us, the absence of any entrance for “Polingaysi Qoyawayma.” We looked for “Bessie Qoyawayma” because *No Turning Back* mentions that school authorities at the Oraibi day school had renamed Polingaysi as Bessie. Finding nothing, Hattie suggested that I search for “Bessie Polingaysi” because Hopi people do not traditionally use surnames; Qoyawayma was the name of Polingaysi’s father. Still, we met silence. Finally, with Lorene’s insight that administrators were often careless with spelling, we found Polingaysi in the *B* section of the ledger, misspelled as “Boliangaisy, Bessie,” a “full” blood “Moqui [Hopi]” female from Oraibi, Arizona, who was enrolled at Sherman on November 29, 1906, at the supposed age of thirteen (her precise birth date is unknown).¹⁴²

I share this anecdote because the absence of evidence of Polingaysi’s time at Sherman, which we originally confronted in the archive, in the end did not equate positive evidence of Polingaysi’s absence from the archive. Rather, it indicated that we researchers did not yet know what we were looking for. We found it only through the

¹⁴² Registration Ledgers.

process of searching together. This, I think, is how queer Natives may find the legitimate social spaces we seek.

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Finding is a form of remembering. Hattie's, Lorene's, and my collective discovery, our recovery, enabled me to find Polingaysi's presence in the school's student-printed newspaper, *the Sherman Bulletin: Devoted to the Interests of Sherman Institute*. Relevant *Bulletin* articles contextualize Polingaysi's life story and lend insight into the significance of her rhetorical silences. For example, *Bulletin* articles regarding the school's outing program clarify Sherman's enforcement of gender assimilation through a sexual division of labor. During summer vacations, school authorities encouraged male and female students to secure employment in agricultural and domestic labor positions, respectively.¹⁴³ *The Sherman Bulletin* reveals that local residents relished Sherman students as cheap laborers, and the school encouraged Indian girls to accept positions as low-wage domestic workers serving white citizens: "Many of our patrons are making application . . . for the same girl they had last year. This shows that the girls did their work well and is quite gratifying to Sherman."¹⁴⁴ Another *Bulletin* stated, "Since the available supply of Sherman girls [has] been exhausted, application[s] for their services in homes have been filed daily."¹⁴⁵ The commodification of female students as an "available supply" to fulfill consumer demands for domestic servicers represents Sherman's primary investment in Indian children's capacity as laborers, not intellectuals.

¹⁴³ For more on the outing program, see Whalen.

¹⁴⁴ "Local Items," *Sherman Bulletin* 1.12 (22 May 1907): 4.

¹⁴⁵ "Local Items," *Sherman Bulletin* 1.15 (12 June 1907): 3.

If Polingaysi's flight from home had been motivated by a desire to evade domestic labor and restrictive gender roles, obviously she would have been sorely disappointed and perhaps disillusioned to discover Sherman's plans for her.

While the outing program trained Sherman students to accept inferior economic positions due to their Indian race, the sexual division of labor at the school disciplined female students according to the expectation that they would become wives. Indian boarding schools like Sherman often enforced a sexual double standard that fomented a sense of gender division between boy and girl students. As Lomawaima explains, school authorities allowed boys to roam campus while confining girls indoors; scrutinized girls' bodies, hairstyles, dress, and behavior more closely than boys'; and trained boys in agricultural and vocational trades while teaching girls that "you're a woman, you're going to be a wife."¹⁴⁶ This structure institutionalized the subordination of girls to boys in order to prepare students for marriage in a heteropatriarchal system. A *Sherman Bulletin* article titled "Training for Sherman Boys and Girls at the Ranch" describes the model homestead located several miles from the school's campus and explains that "[t]he boys are required to perform manual labor" while "the household duties, *or ranch wife's duties,*" are "performed by the girls . . . just what the Indian boys and girls need."¹⁴⁷ The *Bulletin* also regularly printed praise for students and alumni who united in marriage—too many, in fact, to bother citing. Such accolades would not have been available to Polingaysi, who, as *No Turning Back* plainly reports, "had never been seriously attracted

¹⁴⁶ Lomawaima, *They Called It*, 85.

¹⁴⁷ "Training for Sherman Boys and Girls at the Ranch," *Sherman Bulletin* 1.17 (26 June 1907): 1; my emphasis.

to any young man” (70). The colonial romance plot scripted marriage as the happy ending for educated Indian students, effectively queering Polingaysi, who had no desire to wed.

The school newspaper also publicized students’ performances of gender assimilation by printing the results of the boys’ and girls’ industrial examinations. In January 1908 Polingaysi (misspelled as “Bessie Bolingasie”) scored 61 percent in “Primary Sewing.”¹⁴⁸ In March of that same year, she (misspelled as “Bessie Boliangaisy”) scored 91 percent in “Dining Room Work”; she was one of six A students in this class of twenty-four girls.¹⁴⁹ Rather than indicating her successful gender assimilation, the 30 percent improvement in Polingaysi’s exam scores from January to March was most likely due to the difference in subject matter. Among the Hopi, sewing is traditionally men’s work, so her low score on the sewing exam perhaps illustrates the fact that she had little to no previous training in the skill. In his ethnological report H. R. Voth writes, “Dresses . . . are worn by all Hopi maidens and women. The material is prepared and the dress is made by the men . . . wool . . . is carded, spun and dyed . . . and woven and worked up by the men.”¹⁵⁰ Historian Cathy Ann Trotta also writes in her unpublished dissertation on the Voths’ Mennonite mission that Martha Moser Voth’s sewing circle for Hopi women “crossed gender lines, since . . . sewing was traditionally a male activity at Hopi.”¹⁵¹ Sherman’s Euro-American domestic science curriculum

¹⁴⁸ “Industrial Examinations,” *Sherman Bulletin* 2.1 (1 Jan. 1908): 3.

¹⁴⁹ “Industrial Examinations,” *Sherman Bulletin* 2.13 (25 Mar. 1908): 3.

¹⁵⁰ Voth, *The Henry R. Voth*, 24, 33.

effectually queered Polingaysi (and Hopi culture in general) by marking her as inept at the civilized girl's task of sewing.

Despite her early lack of skill, Polingaysi improved to become an adept seamstress, and her new attachment to sewing queered her to her Hopi community, where weaving and textile production are traditionally men's work. When Polingaysi prepared for her homecoming, she packed clothes that "were neat and new, products of her skill in sewing. A sewing machine would be one of her first purchases, she promised herself. She would make good clothes for her mother and the younger children" (67). *No Turning Back* implies that Sevenka disapproved of Polingaysi's textile productivity because she considered it to be part of the "white man's way of living," a lifestyle that did not coincide with traditional Hopi gender roles (67). By offering to produce clothing for her mother and siblings, Polingaysi attempted to assume a Hopi man's role.

While Polingaysi disidentified with the sexual division of labor at Sherman by embracing a traditionally male line of Hopi work, she also resisted the school's romance plot by constructing community beyond gendered borders through the practice of singing. In "Song, Poetry, and Language—Expression and Perception," Acoma Pueblo writer Simon J. Ortiz speaks of song as simultaneously receptive and performative. Ortiz argues that "[l]anguage as expression and perception" lies "at the core of what a song is."¹⁵² He expresses doubt that "there is much of a division except arbitrary" between these two

¹⁵¹ Trotta, "Crossing," 144–45.

¹⁵² Ortiz, "Song," 108.

modes and explains that “[y]ou perceive by expressing yourself.”¹⁵³ Ortiz writes that song is “an opening from inside yourself to outside and from outside yourself to inside but not in the sense that there are separate states,” or fragments, “of yourself. Instead, it is a joining and an opening together,” as a bridge joins both sides of a chasm; “the song is part of the way you’re supposed to recognize everything . . . the singing of it is a way of recognizing this all-inclusiveness . . . It is basically a way to understand and appreciate your relationship to all things. The song as language is a way of touching.”¹⁵⁴ By touching her audience through the language of song, Polingaysi understood and expressed her relationship to all things, creating a sense of communal belonging despite her anomalousness or gender queerness. Through the transformative practice of singing, Polingaysi created relationships based on communal pleasure rather than on heterosexual romance. Such sensual relations transcended the boundary between her self and others, deconstructing the binaries of Hopi/white and community/individual and fomenting a sense of belonging—to the students, to the school, and to the Hopis—founded on the shared experience of pleasure.

Polingaysi’s vocal performances subverted the school’s disciplining of students’ gender assimilation. A December 1908 article of the *Sherman Bulletin* inscribes some of the compliments Polingaysi’s singing inspired: the “program . . . was very entertaining

¹⁵³ Ortiz, “Song,” 109, 117. Muñoz also speaks of the simultaneously receptive and performative aspects of singing as a metaphor for disidentification. He claims that the “utmost precision” that musicians employ in performance “is needed to rework that song, that story, that fiction, that mastering plot. It is needed to make a self . . . we hear and [at the same time] sing disidentification” (Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 21).

¹⁵⁴ Ortiz 114.

. . . The student body sang in bright, buoyant spirit . . . One of the most pleasing features was the double number sung by Bessie Bolaingaisy, who shows much talent and promise in the quality and strength of her voice.”¹⁵⁵ This public praise of Polingaysi’s vocal “talent” and future “promise” remarks, significantly, on her voice’s “quality” and “strength,” contradicting the school’s general advisement for girls to cultivate soft, ladylike voices. In a September 1909 *Bulletin* article titled “For the Girls” an omniscient narrator asks, “Girls, do you know that there is no adornment quite so becoming as a sweet voice?”¹⁵⁶ This article encourages girls to “cultivate a soft, low voice” because such is “the mark of a lady,” and a “sweet voice for speaking is as much to be desired as a sweet voice for singing.”¹⁵⁷ Claiming that vocal utterance marks the difference between “real ladies” and “common” women, the article asserts that those who “speak in loud, harsh, rasping voices” are “not *real* ladies.”¹⁵⁸

Polingaysi’s memories of her vocal performances at school, recorded in *No Turning Back*, recall her survival strategy of singing for and with others as a practice that created new communities in an alien context and simultaneously secured her connections with Hopi people and culture, albeit in her anomalous way. As Sakiestewa Gilbert explains, song was significant to Polingaysi because it connected her to her mother, Sevenka, who was a member of the Mazhrau, a Hopi women’s religious singing and

¹⁵⁵ “Thanksgiving Program,” *Sherman Bulletin* 2.39 (2 Dec. 1908): 2–3.

¹⁵⁶ “For the Girls,” *Sherman Bulletin* 3.30 (29 Sept. 1909): 1.

¹⁵⁷ “For the Girls.”

¹⁵⁸ “For the Girls”; my emphasis.

dancing society.¹⁵⁹ However, Mazhrau society membership was contingent on one's social status as a woman/wife, so the opportunity for public self-expression through song would not have been available to Polingaysi. *No Turning Back* tells how Sevenka "composed songs regularly" for the Mazhrau society "and at one time composed a song which was used for years afterward by the [male] Niman Dancers . . . This was a stepping out of her woman's place to compete with men" (60). This detail evidences the potential for some fluidity of gender roles at Hopi. However, Sevenka's freedom to compete with men nonetheless resulted from her overall compliance with the parameters of women's gender norms of marriage and maternity and her resultant social status as a wife and mother. *The Sherman Bulletin* provides further indication that, in general, performance of traditional Hopi songs was restricted to boys. Polingaysi's Oraibi village chief, Tewaquaptewa, attended Sherman at the same time she did. The *Bulletin* records several instances of Tewaquaptewa leading his followers, who appear to have consisted solely of Hopi boys, in performances of Hopi song and dance for various audiences, including Sherman students, tourists, and Riverside citizens; a convention of Indian teachers in Los Angeles; visiting government officials; and even a music critic who wanted to hear Native songs.¹⁶⁰

Polingaysi's vocal performances at Sherman signified more than mere musical talent. "Her singing," *No Turning Back* notes, "was a means of communication, beyond language, leaping all barriers," and especially the borders of normative gender (104).

¹⁵⁹ Sakiestewa Gilbert, *Education*, 106.

¹⁶⁰ See "Hopi Song," *Sherman Bulletin* 1.1 (6 Mar. 1907): 1; *Sherman Bulletin* 1.11 (16 May 1907): 2; "General News," *Sherman Bulletin* 1.12 (22 May 1907): 3; and "General News," *Sherman Bulletin* 1.19 (11 Sept. 1907): 3.

Through gender indiscipline, Polingaysi asserted her difference from typical Hopi girls yet related herself to them by going away to school and learning the skills necessary to later serve them as a cultural bridge who mediated relations among Hopi and non-Hopi people. Polingaysi's decolonial praxis enabled her to thrive at boarding school and paved the way for future coalitional politics.

You of Coyote Clan: Polingaysi's Decolonial Legacy

[Polingaysi's] former Sherman schoolmates had returned, married, and were living the traditional life. She was still reaching out for education. What for? they . . . asked . . . Sometimes she asked herself that very question: what for? Why, she thought, should she be so determined to learn, and learn, and learn? (116)
As her years of schooling at Sherman drew to a close, Polingaysi contrasted

herself with her Hopi classmates and acknowledged her anomalousness. "She almost envied the girls who looked forward to returning home and taking up the old ways" because she guessed that, unlike herself, "they would be content with home and children and routine duties" (66). From the first, Polingaysi eschewed marriage and motherhood, which she avoided by attending Sherman. The prospect of returning to Hopi presented her with the very challenges she had faced as an adolescent runaway.

On the day Polingaysi returned to Oraibi after spending three years at Sherman, Sevenka wasted no time broaching the subject of her daughter's marriageability. Presenting Polingaysi with "a stack of beautiful plaques," Sevenka declared, "These I have made for your wedding . . . You have reached that age. You must begin to think about taking a mate" (69). Polingaysi balked at this prospect: "Marriage! It had not entered Polingaysi's mind" (69). The narrative explains that Sevenka's command "was

appalling to Polingaysi,” who was not “willing to become a living seed pod for her Hopi people . . . she had never been seriously attracted to any young man . . . And for no man . . . would she grind corn on her knees” (70). Ignoring her stated lack of romantic desire for men, some critics interpret this passage as an indication that Polingaysi considered marriage to constitute a breach of her liberation from men—an autonomy granted by the benevolent colonial influence of white teachers and field matrons who devoted their efforts to “uplifting” benighted Indian drudges and instilling progressive feminist ideals.

In a chapter titled “Uplifting Indian Women,” Margaret D. Jacobs compares the autobiographies of Polingaysi Qoyawayma, Helen Sekaquaptewa, and Maria Martinez to advance her argument that white educators and field matrons imbued Pueblo women with a sense of the importance of becoming educated and financially independent. Jacobs proposes that Polingaysi “probably had not acquired her yen for independence and her aversion for domesticity among the Hopis in Oraibi. Rather her white women teachers, many of whom . . . shared . . . ambivalence about domesticity and who themselves never married, may have imbued her with a criticism of women’s domestic role within late-nineteenth-century Victorian marriages.”¹⁶¹ I wonder why Jacobs assumes that Polingaysi’s independence must have been “acquired,” contradicting her observation that “[b]efore ever attending American schools, Qoyawayma . . . already evinced a rebelliousness and independence.”¹⁶² By claiming that “encounters with white women had led [Polingaysi] to . . . shape a unique, multicultural view of womanhood,” Jacobs

¹⁶¹ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 53.

¹⁶² Jacobs, *Engendered*, 52.

renders white women as Polingaysi's emancipators from a stifling Hopi gender normativity and effaces *No Turning Back's* narration of Polingaysi's subjective agency.¹⁶³ I privilege the narrative's account of Polingaysi's personal desire.

When Polingaysi rejected her mother's proffered wedding implements, she credited her own aspirations as reasons for doing so. Sevenka tried to reason with her daughter: "'You are a woman,' her mother said, her voice uncertain. 'You should have a man and babies. You should have a home of your own'" (70). The "uncertain[ty]" of Sevenka's voice indicates her understanding that Polingaysi's desires differed from those of typical Hopi women. In response, Polingaysi declared, "'I intend to have a home of my own . . . I will build a home for myself some day'" (71). This statement would alarm a traditional Hopi matriarch; as Albert Yava, a Tewa-Hopi, explains, "The man [husband] builds the house but the woman [wife] is the owner."¹⁶⁴ "Sevenka looked steadily into the flushed and defiant face of her daughter, and her own face was sad. Whatever it was she saw there . . . made her turn away, weeping silently" (71).¹⁶⁵ This conversation between mother and daughter foregrounds Polingaysi's rejection of Hopi gender roles, even as it silences the issue of her lack of romantic interest in men, which was likely a significant source of her aversion to marriage.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 54.

¹⁶⁴ Trotta, "Crossing," 105.

¹⁶⁵ The text I have excised here reads "—implacable opposition to all things Hopi, perhaps—" (71). I have omitted it because its presumption strikes me as Carlson's, not Polingaysi's.

¹⁶⁶ The question remains: was Polingaysi attracted to, or romantically involved with, any woman? A study of Polingaysi's sexuality is beyond the scope of this chapter, but I think it warrants future work, as many of the narrative's autobiographical disruptions obscure sexual issues. Such a project may prove productive for today's queer Indigenous scholars concerned with "Bringing 'Sexy Back' and Out of Native Studies"

I want to conclude by summarizing *No Turning Back*'s narration of Polingaysi's life post-boarding school. The survival methods Polingaysi developed during her time at Sherman continued to serve her beyond her experiences at that institution. As a college student, Polingaysi resisted the designs her white benefactors had for her to become a Christian missionary, and she used her schooling to pursue her own desires for musical training and financial independence. In her career as a teacher of Indian pupils, Polingaysi applied her extensive educational experiences to revolutionize federal Indian education policy by refusing to follow colonial authorities' rules of English-only instruction and pioneering ESL practices. Polingaysi incorporated Hopi pedagogy within—and often in replacement of—the Eurocentric curriculum in order to help her students learn Anglo-American language and culture *through* their Hopi knowledge. In her home and family life, Polingaysi established her subjectivity and belonging according to what Rifkin calls “the kinship plot,” an Indigenous counternarrative to the colonial romance plot.¹⁶⁷ The romance plot initiates “a process of breaking away from [one's] family and tribe to create an independent house- hold,” whereas the kinship plot “reaffirms [one's tribal] identity . . . and underscores the fact that expansive notions of family suffuse . . . [tribal] relationships, providing a shared conceptual and political basis

Closet” (Finley 31). Anthropological literature and historical archives indicate that alternative gender and sexual lifestyles may have been available for Hopi men, but the documentary record lacks any account of a counterpart role for Hopi women. Sabine Lang claims that “homosexual acts were commonplace, mainly among boys,” but that “[f]emale homosexuality . . . was expressly denied among the . . . Hopi” (Lang 326, 328). Will Roscoe concurs: “Alternative roles for males (but apparently not females) existed among the . . . Hopi” (Roscoe 16).

¹⁶⁷ Rifkin, “Romancing,” 44.

for individual and collective action.”¹⁶⁸ Following “her desire to be different, to make a new place for herself in a world that sometimes seemed determined not to allow her a place in it,” Polingaysi located her self- designed home on the margins of New Oraibi, far from the center of village life (95). She fitted her large house with modern conveniences, such as electricity and indoor plumbing, and she operated her home as a sort of hotel or bed-and-breakfast that served her Hopi community by providing a buffer to mediate the influx of visiting tourists, archaeologists, scholars, and other outsiders brought in by the railroads and new government roads.

Polingaysi’s home/hotel nurtured “alternative figurations of home and family,” which Rifkin claims “contest the political economy of imperial domesticity.”¹⁶⁹ Polingaysi became an adoptive parent who raised several of her nieces and nephews in her home. Additionally Polingaysi’s choice to open her home to strangers and her acquaintance with her visitors often led to lifelong kinship relationships and even political coalitions that benefited Hopi national interests. For example, she worked with philanthropists to endow a college scholarship fund for Hopi students—many of whom eventually served the Hopi nation as lawyers, tribal politicians, or federal employees. In a letter to one of her visitor friends, Polingaysi describes her home as the “meeting place of the outside world” where “people of all walks of life” gathered.¹⁷⁰ Although her visitors were outsiders at Hopi, their status as such did not disqualify them from being regarded as kin. For Polingaysi, kinship includes all relations, regardless of colonial markers of

¹⁶⁸ Rifkin, “Romancing,” 44.

¹⁶⁹ Rifkin, *When*, 148.

¹⁷⁰ Linder, *When*, 3.

difference. Polingaysi writes, “I want all my friends . . . to know of my gratitude and love for them. The white ones, the red ones, the black ones, the yellow ones. We are all one family, all leaves of the same tree.”¹⁷¹ Polingaysi’s tree metaphor for her interracial family of friends evinces the kinship plot that structured her interpersonal relations. Polingaysi’s dealings with non-Hopi people, in her career and in her home life, contributed to her creation of a space from which she asserted Hopi ideologies of interconnectedness and relationality—qualities of sovereign selfhood.

Although many of Polingaysi’s contemporaries misconstrued her as an assimilationist for her involvement with non-Hopi people and settler colonial culture, she took pride in fulfilling her tribal obligations as a member of the Coyote clan. Polingaysi’s foreword to *No Turning Back* explains: “My grandmother . . . used to say: ‘It is to members of Coyote Clan that *Bahana* [white man] will come, within your day, Polingaysi . . . and you of Coyote Clan will be a bond between the *Bahana* and the Hopi people” (vi). Polingaysi asserts, “I . . . believe that her prophecy has been fulfilled” (vi). In her capacities as a student, a teacher, and a hotel keeper, Polingaysi realized her role as a mediator between the “two worlds” set at odds due to U.S. imperialism. Throughout her life Polingaysi mitigated the violence of colonial incursion and performed her sovereign responsibility to protect Hopi interests by bridging gaps between Hopi and non-Hopi people. Despite—and in some ways because of—her anomalous gender, Polingaysi

¹⁷¹ Linder, *When*, 145. I found these letters in an esoteric collection of independently printed and bound letters, anecdotes, drawings, photographs, and poems, titled *When I Met Polingaysi underneath the Cottonwood Tree* (1983), a source that has proven to be invaluable for my understanding of Polingaysi’s coalitional strategies of mediating the presence of non-Hopi visitors to the reservation. The solicitor, collector, and editor of this living eulogy was a female friend of Polingaysi’s named Jo Linder, who contacted each person listed in Polingaysi’s guestbook to solicit testaments of her significance to them.

cultivated a sovereign selfhood and survived the assimilation era as an unequivocally Hopi person. Her life story, *No Turning Back*, is a testament to her legacy of decolonial transformation.

CHAPTER THREE

Twins, Whips, Tricks, and Clowns: The Erotics of Sovereignty in

Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian

I thought about my school days and all that I had learned . . . It was important that I had learned how to get along with white men and earn money by helping them. But . . . I wanted to become a real Hopi again, to sing the good old Katsina songs, and to feel free to make love without fear of sin or a rawhide.¹⁷²

Introduction

In October 2013, seventy-one years after its initial publication in 1942, Yale University Press released a second edition of *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian*. This new edition features a foreword written by Hopi historian Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, which summarizes how scholars have used the text in the past and also situates the book within contemporary Hopi studies. Gilbert remarks, “People back home on the Hopi reservation in northeast Arizona often talk about this book. Some have stories to tell about Talayesva’s life, things not recorded in the book.”¹⁷³ This anecdote asserts that *Sun Chief*, as a historical documentation of Talayesva’s life, is incomplete, and it challenges the assumptions of scholars who have regarded *Sun Chief* as an authoritative account of facts about Talayesva or a source of data about Hopi culture. Privileging the interests of the Hopi nation, Gilbert questions the usefulness of previous historical and anthropological interpretations of the text. He explains that “In the past,

¹⁷² Talayesva, *Sun Chief*, 134. I reference this primary text parenthetically throughout this chapter.

¹⁷³ Sakiestewa Gilbert, “Foreword,” ix.

readers of *Sun Chief* often focused on Talayesva's detailed accounts of Hopi ceremonies or the descriptions of his many sexual encounters . . . [and] dreams," and he urges today's scholars to focus instead on matters of more importance to Hopi struggles for sovereignty.¹⁷⁴ Of *Sun Chief*, Gilbert writes, "We learn about life as one Hopi lived it . . . but we receive very little information to help us understand the larger issues of Hopi self-determination."¹⁷⁵ The effect of Gilbert's call insinuates that issues of sexuality and sovereignty are mutually exclusive. Gilbert's attempt to shift future readers' attention away from Talayesva's personal matters and toward collective Hopi struggles for self-determination seems to indicate that there is a disjuncture between private and public issues, individual lives and communal concerns. This chapter intervenes in Gilbert's argument by rethinking self-determination or Native sovereignty in light of Indigenous feminist and queer Indigenous assertions of the political import of personal matters.

I read *Sun Chief* as a work of literature that performs what I call autobiographical indiscipline, a term I have developed to name the collaborative mode of autobiographical self-narration and literary subject formation that troubles the definition of autobiography while strategically employing the autobiographical form for decolonial purposes. My use of the term "indiscipline" to describe the narrative mode of as-told-to Indian autobiography draws on Michel Foucault's theory of discipline as a technological power that developed a new economy and politics of bodies. I engage with Foucault's models of sexuality and biopower because they have been foundational to Queer Theory, and they are also useful for Native American and Indigenous Studies scholars who interrogate the role of sexual

¹⁷⁴ Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Foreword," xii.

¹⁷⁵ Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Foreword," xiv.

normalization within settler colonial institutions. My reading of *Sun Chief* highlights U.S. efforts to regulate Hopi gender and sexuality as central to attempts to colonize Hopi people as a cultural aggregate or ethnic population and not as a sovereign nation in its own right. I argue that Talayesva's narration of his non-normative gender and experiences of sexual pleasure represents his refusal to internalize colonial disciplining.

This chapter contributes to the critical conversation begun ten years ago in Qwo-Li Driskill's seminal article, "Stolen from Our Bodies: First Nations Two-Spirits/Queers and the Journey to a Sovereign Erotic." In this essay, Driskill examines the damaging effects that settler colonial institutions and legacies, such as Indian boarding schools, have wrought on the erotic lives of Indigenous peoples. Driskill explains that "sexual assault, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia are entangled with the history of colonization" and theorizes "a Sovereign Erotic" as "an erotic wholeness healed and/or healing from the historical trauma that First Nations people continue to survive, rooted within the histories, traditions, and resistance struggles of our nations."¹⁷⁶ "Stolen from Our Bodies" inspired an explosion of scholarly discourse on the mutual significance of sexuality and sovereignty, including a 2010 special issue of *GLQ* titled *Sexuality, Nationality, Indigeneity: Rethinking the State at the Intersection of Native American and Queer Studies*—an intersection which has since been coined as Queer Indigenous Studies by Driskill and many others.

More recently, Mark Rifkin's work plays on Driskill's theory of a sovereign erotic to explore what might be erotic about sovereignty. In *The Erotics of Sovereignty*:

¹⁷⁶ Driskill, "Stolen," 51.

Queer Native Writing in the Era of Self-Determination, Rifkin argues that contemporary queer Native literature illustrates the political and historical significance of the most personal experiences of Native identity, demonstrating that social and private realms are interconnected, that the personal is political and vice versa. Inspired by black lesbian feminist Audre Lorde's insight that modes of domination operate by excluding private matters from public or political discourse, Rifkin theorizes "the erotics of sovereignty" as a system of feeling through which queer Native people ground their Native identity in everyday "sensations of pleasure, desire, memory, wounding, and interrelation with others, the land, and ancestors" in the face of federal systems that continue to foreclose Native peoples' abilities to define the contours of their own selfhood.¹⁷⁷ According to Rifkin, "the engagement with Native erotics expresses . . . possibilities that can provide principles for defining, envisioning, and living indigeneity less predicated on codes of authenticity . . . privileged in and realized through settler discourses and institutions."¹⁷⁸ Although Rifkin focuses here on queer Native writing produced during the U.S. Indian policy era of tribal self-determination, which began during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, I find the erotics of sovereignty to be a useful theoretical frame through which to understand the autobiographical practices of earlier Native writers like Don Talayesva.

In the late nineteenth century, the U.S. Congress established the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), which commissioned university anthropologists to penetrate American Indian communities to amass data about the peoples and cultures they

¹⁷⁷ Rifkin, *Erotics*, 39. See Lorde.

¹⁷⁸ Rifkin, *Erotics*, 39.

encountered. Such ethnological projects were meant to produce knowledge that would support federal policy to assimilate Indian peoples into the dominant society. The shift in federal Indian policy from military extermination to assimilation and acculturation can usefully be understood according to Michel Foucault's genealogy of modern biopolitics, which marks a historical shift from "the premodern right of the sovereign to mete out death in punishment—to 'let live and make die'"—to the modern disciplinary power that states use "to 'make live' racialized national populations and to 'let die' all excluded from this life-making project."¹⁷⁹ In theory, once the flaw in the evolutionary development of the so-called savage race could be ascertained, then disciplinary procedures could be implemented to "uplift" Indian people to the level of civilized (read: Protestant, Anglo) Americans. *Sun Chief* is the product of one such BAE project. In his introduction to the text, editor and Yale anthropologist Leo W. Simmons offers *Sun Chief* as "a comprehensive life history" that is useful to "the investigation of personality problems," a "substantial body of concrete and relevant data on an individual in a 'primitive' society for the purpose of developing and checking hypotheses in the field of culture and its relation to personality development."¹⁸⁰ Subsequently, scholars have problematically viewed Talayesva as a metonym for all Hopi peoples.¹⁸¹

Don Talayesva was born in Oraibi, in the present state of Arizona, in March 1890. He was an apt subject for Simmons' project because he had attended both Keams Canyon

¹⁷⁹ Morgensen, *Spaces*, 33.

¹⁸⁰ Simmons, "Introduction," 1.

¹⁸¹ For example, Brandt's philosophical study, *Hopi Ethics*, is flawed by his presumption that all Hopi people are less moral than white Americans, a prejudice founded on his misconception of *Sun Chief*.

and Sherman Institute federal Indian boarding schools during his adolescence, and he had returned to Oraibi to “become a real Hopi again” by reintegrating himself into the traditional Hopi socio-cultural framework. So, his fluency and literacy in English, as well as his involvement in Hopi traditionalism, enabled him to understand and respond to Simmons’ questions about Hopi culture and society. *Sun Chief* differs from other as-told-to autobiographies. Don Talayesva sourced the contents of *Sun Chief* not only through oral narration but also “about 8,000 pages” of self-written diary entries, for which Simmons paid him seven cents each; so, Talayesva’s life narrative is not strictly an as-told-to autobiography; it also entails a self-written component.¹⁸² Simmons assures readers that the text of *Sun Chief* appears “almost always in Don’s own words or in words which [sic] he readily recognized in checking the manuscript,” but he also takes credit for the chronological reorganization and significant abbreviation of the final text, which is only 357 pages in length.¹⁸³

The question of how to approach anthropological Indian autobiographies is a significant disciplinary issue. A 1943 review by anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn expresses the common academic concern that Simmons’ mediation of Talayesva’s story detracts from the narrative’s authenticity, lamenting that “[e]very omission by the editor, every stylistic clarification takes us one more step away from what Don actually said” or,

¹⁸² Simmons, “Introduction,” 7.

¹⁸³ Simmons, “Introduction,” 7. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University houses an archive called “Don C. Talayesva drafts of an Autobiography,” which includes several drafts of each chapter, and the item description notes that “manuscript corrections are in several unidentified hands.” I wonder if Talayesva’s handwriting can be discerned from these notes and am curious to know what he approved and how he influenced the book’s revision process.

I would add, wrote.¹⁸⁴ Critiquing this scholarly imperative for authenticity in colonial knowledge produced about the Native Other, feminist scholars like Helen Carr and Trinh T. Minh-ha observe the role that anthropologist-induced Indian life narratives played in “the power structure” that oppressed Indian peoples as colonial subjects.¹⁸⁵ Trinh T. Minh-ha notes that the field of anthropology concerns itself with readjusting white society’s science rather than with promoting intercultural communication or otherwise working to benefit the peoples from which it profits. In the field of literary studies, scholars like Arnold Krupat and Hertha Dawn Sweet Wong categorize Indian autobiographies that are self-written and those produced through collaboration with white amanuenses as separate genres.¹⁸⁶ A few literary scholars, including Michelle Raheja and Stephanie Fitzgerald, have worked to recover the agency of the Native speaker in as-told-to autobiographies.¹⁸⁷ Predominantly, though, the authorship of Native autobiographers who collaborated with anthropologists has been unacknowledged, under-theorized, and even disparaged in the field of American literature. In “The As-Told-To Native [Auto]biography: Whose Voice is Speaking?,” Edward Valandra exemplifies the prevailing attitude of literary critics who engage this genre; he argues that as-told-to autobiographies constitute “literary embarrassments” rather than narrative expressions of “authentic Native voices” because, he claims, so-called Indian informants were always

¹⁸⁴ Kluckhohn, “Review,” 267-8.

¹⁸⁵ Carr, “In Other Words,” 134. For an example of an anthropological Indian autobiography, see Ruth Underhill’s *Autobiography of a Papago Woman* (1936). This text is remarkable for its titular erasure of the Native subject, Maria Chona, demonstrating how anthropological case studies of individual Native people served to create the idea of the Indian as a racial type.

¹⁸⁶ See Krupat, *For Those Who Come* and *The Voice in the Margin* and Wong.

¹⁸⁷ See Raheja, “I leave it,” and Fitzgerald, “Intimate.”

atypical subjects who existed on the margins of their traditional communities, and this anomalous subject position contributed to their amenability to collaborate with non-Indian scholars rather than write their stories themselves.¹⁸⁸ Although the contents of as-told-to autobiographies may not be entirely factual representations of Native peoples or cultures, neither are all self-written autobiographies. I wonder about the consequences of denigrating the literary value of these life narratives or of condemning them to uselessness, and I want to revalue their potential while remembering their limits.

Rather than defame Indian autobiographers as anomalous tribal members whose stories should be ignored because they cause the community to be misrepresented, I want to explore the potential that works like *Sun Chief* might provide today's readers with some strategies for talking back to colonial power. Perhaps Talayesva's occupation of Simmons' attention prevented the anthropologist from other forms of surveillance, thereby acting as a buffer between the BAE agent and the Hopi community. I concede that Simmons' good intentions for producing a complete and true record of Talayesva's life were never aimed at the benefit of the Hopi *as a people*; indeed, Simmons' project was intrinsically affiliated with settler colonial aims to destroy Indigenous cultural traditions and assimilate Native peoples as racialized American Indian subjects. However, even though *Sun Chief* was produced through a biopolitical system of knowledge production that sought to justify U.S. imperialism, I want to suggest that we may reappropriate it as a decolonial text; that our present engagement of the book can—and must—exceed Simmons' intentions.

¹⁸⁸ Valandra, "The As-Told-To," 117.

It seems to me that to insist on the inevitably distorted or inauthentic nature of *Sun Chief* is to erase Talayesva's agency in speaking and writing. To study the work's production process alone is not sufficient for understanding its past, present, or potential value as an agent of decolonial change. In our attempts to understand and heal the damage wrought by colonization, it is more useful to attend to what Talayesva can and does say and do through his literary collaboration with Simmons. I want to read *Sun Chief* as a work of Hopi literature, a creative expression of Talayesva's genius, and not merely a source of empirical facts or data produced by the scientist, Leo Simmons. I argue that the Talayesva's sexual stories, rhetorical uses of humor, and critiques of settler institutions lend to both the erotic and decolonial nature of *Sun Chief* as a work of queer Native literature.

Foucault reconceptualized power not as a tool that some wield over others but "as a set of events or relations," and he explained further that "resistance is an integral part of any event of power."¹⁸⁹ Ignoring this fact, scholars like anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn and historian Robert V. Hine—to whom I will return—have construed Simmons as an all-powerful producer of knowledge about relatively powerless Hopi people whose difference from Anglo-Americans stems from their perverse sexuality, which proves their need of colonial disciplining. The notion of sexual perversion and pathology, for instance, is the specific outcome of Judeo-Christian principles of policing sexuality. Sin and shame are not present in most Native cultures pre-invasion; they are alien ideas imposed on Native communities to control people and discipline behavior. In his

¹⁸⁹ McWhorter, "Sex," 41-42.

foreword to the 1963 edition, historian Robert V. Hine claims that *Sun Chief* portrays Talayesva as “lewd in his humor, excessively sensual, and dishonest with his wife,” and although Hine concedes to “the fact that Don in many of his attributes may not be typical of his Hopi culture,” the work has nonetheless served to (mis)represent Hopi people in general.¹⁹⁰ Hine claims that “sex” is one of three “broad aspects” (the others being religion and education) in which “the contrast between Don’s Hopi customs and the white man’s ways are the nub of his book.”¹⁹¹ However, if we read *Sun Chief* as a work of literature rather than a scientific study, we can discern from the stories that sex, religion, and education are not distinct cultural facets ripe for categorizing ethnic differences in human behavior and personality; rather, they are intricately tied up with one another in the history of sexuality discourses in the context of settler colonial America.

Despite the fact that Simmons published *Sun Chief* in the context of a biopolitical project to produce knowledge about the sexual lives of savages in order to discipline them, we can re-center Talayesva’s role in this power relation as his journey to a sovereign erotic. In writing *Sun Chief*, Talayesva’s engagement of the history of sexuality constitutes a performance of what Scott Richard Lyons has called *rhetorical sovereignty*, “the inherent right and ability of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires in” their aim to recover lands, languages, cultures, and identities “from the ravages of colonization” and “attempt to revive . . . our possibilities.”¹⁹² Talayesva’s

¹⁹⁰ Hine, “Foreword,” viii.

¹⁹¹ Hine, “Foreword,” xi.

autobiography literalizes a self whose struggles for Hopi sovereignty were rooted in resistance to settler colonial imperatives of sexual normativity. *Sun Chief* narrates Talayesva's journey to a sovereign erotic by tying his attempts "to become a real Hopi again" to his resistance of Puritanism and his desire "to feel free to make love without fear of sin or a rawhide" (134).

This chapter reads erotica in *Sun Chief* not to either avow or deny the truth of these sections, either in regards to Talayesva's personal life history or his Hopi culture. Rather, I focus on the sexual content of the narrative to explore how *Sun Chief* has circulated as an object of biopolitical knowledge. As Foucault explains, "[n]ot only did [sexuality discourse] speak of sex and compel everyone to do so; it also set out to formulate the uniform truth of sex . . . As if it was essential that sex be inscribed not only in an economy of pleasure but in an ordered system of knowledge."¹⁹³ I also want to suggest ways to recuperate Talayesva as a subject, not a mere object, of this literary production by acknowledging his authorship of these often hilarious and culturally critical stories. For example, *Sun Chief* includes scenes of Talayesva's sex play with fellow students—male and female—in Indian boarding school dormitories as well as Talayesva's experiences visiting white prostitutes in brothels in Winslow, Arizona. Both boarding schools and brothels were settler institutions, so I read Talayesva's narration of non-normative or deviant sexual behavior in these places not as a testament to Native

¹⁹² Lyons, "Rhetorical," 449. Emphasis in original.

¹⁹³ Foucault, *History*, 69.

people's "savage sexuality" but rather to the effect of settler colonialism on Hopi sex practices.

The humorous and often ironic nature of *Sun Chief*'s sex stories transfigures colonial sexuality discourse as an ordered system of knowledge. The abundance of erotica in the work suggests that sex was a focal point of Simmons' revision of Talayesva's diary. Although *Sun Chief* constitutes a significantly abridged version of Talayesva's diary that is less than five percent of its original length, the text nevertheless thoroughly and explicitly narrates Talayesva's sexual experiences, including his childhood sex play with adult relatives and other Hopi boys, his attempt at bestiality with a chicken, and intercourse with eighteen different girls and women, from his youthdays at Indian boarding school to his adulterous affairs with white prostitutes. Although Simmons' editorship determined the contents of the final text, Talayesva's use of humor to narrate sexual subject matter claims the terms by which sexuality gets textualized. As Talayesva claims, "jokes have truth in them" (364).¹⁹⁴ In his introduction to the text, Simmons takes care to authenticate the sex stories in Talayesva's narrative. Simmons explains that "[w]hen [he] suggested [to Talayesva] that a few delicate items might be deleted for personal reasons, Talayesva replied, 'No. You have insisted that without the complete record of my life our work would be wasted.'" ¹⁹⁵ Talayesva's hilarious refusal to censor the "delicate" (read: sexual) parts of his life story signals that he was not a

¹⁹⁴ On humor, see Basso.

¹⁹⁵ Simmons, "Preface," xvii.

victim or object of colonial sexuality discourse but rather a willing participant in and generative subject of it.

We may usefully understand *Sun Chief* as Talayesva's performance of what I call autobiographical indiscipline, a trickster's engagement of the autobiographical form bent to a decolonial purpose. Talayesva's self-narrated sexual history rhetorically authors a self whose struggles for Hopi sovereignty were rooted in resistance to settler colonial imperatives of sexual normativity. Through Talayesva's unabashed narration of his non-heteronormative sexuality, Talayesva expresses his journey to a sovereign erotic as one of attempting "to become a real Hopi again" by resisting sexual Puritanism (134).

The first section of this chapter, "'Twins Twisted into One': Remembering Talayesva's Queer Hopi Identity," explicates *Sun Chief's* narration of Talayesva's anomalous sex or gender identity, which included both male and female spirits united in his one body. Talayesva's identity as a twin, or an "antelope" person, according to Hopi tradition, was verified by his relatives and other villagers, and this specialness earned him a respected and powerful position as a healer of certain pubic or urinary maladies. However, when Talayesva was sent away to Indian boarding school, he was subjected to the discursive and physical disciplining that colonial authorities enacted to "straighten" Indian students' gendered and sexual identities and expressions.¹⁹⁶

The second section, titled "Whips Wielded by Wolves: Sexual Discipline at Indian Boarding School," explores the methods of sexual disciplining that government officials at Keams Canyon and Sherman Institute boarding schools executed. In this

¹⁹⁶ I borrow the term "straighten" from Mark Rifkin's work, *When Did Indians Become Straight?*

section, I theorize “sexual indiscipline” as Talayesva’s strategy of surviving the historical trauma of colonial sex politics. I follow my discussion of Talayesva’s time at boarding schools with analyses of *Sun Chief*’s narration of various sexual encounters that took place after he returned home to Oraibi.

In the third section, titled “Trix are for Anthropologists: Autobiographical Indiscipline in *Sun Chief*,” I engage K. Tsianina Lomawaima’s discussion of “trixing,” a humorous practice that Indian students at boarding schools used as a mode of resistance, to further develop my theory of Talayesva’s sexual indiscipline. In examining Talayesva’s sexual confessions to Simmons, I aim to indigenize Foucault’s theories of sexuality discourse by considering his challenge of the so-called repressive hypothesis and his characterization of biopower within the context of U.S. settler colonialism. I argue that although Talayesva assented to provide Simmons with a “complete and true” record of his life, he trixed Simmons by including sex jokes and other humorous rhetorical and literary elements, which were lost on the imperceptive Eurocentric anthropologist.

The fourth section, “Hopi Clowns and the (Sexual) State of Exception,” extends my discussion of Talayesva’s sexual humor to his sacred role as a Hopi clown. Hopi clowns pantomimed sexual behavior during intermissions from somber religious ceremonies for various purposes, including public education, disciplining, and healing. Jokes are culturally and temporally specific, and the miscomprehension of Simmons and other non-Hopi interlopers had dire consequences for Hopi sociopolitical autonomy—including the legal prohibition of sacred rites. Bringing queer Indigenous knowledge to

bear on our analysis and understanding of the text, we can meaningfully understand *Sun Chief* as an indictment of Protestant moralizer's hypocrisy and a manifesto of Hopi Sovereign Erotics.

'Twins Twisted into One': Remembering Talayesva's Queer Hopi Identity

In this section, I explore the queer significance of Talayesva's identity as twins, a plural person with a female and male essence "twisted into one" double-sexed body, in order to demonstrate the ideological tension between Simmons' biopolitical project of compiling a complete and true record of an individual Hopi person's life history and Talayesva's pursuit of a sovereign erotic (33). Contemporary studies of gender variant identities among American Indian communities, such as Sabine Lang's *Men as Women, Women as Men: Changing Gender in Native American Cultures* (1998), have raised academic awareness of Native third and fourth gender traditions. Lang generalizes that, "[t]raditionally, women-men and men-women were accepted in most Native American cultures—to some extent, even highly respected—although they could also be joked about and teased," and she specifies that "[t]hey were esteemed . . . among the . . . Hopi."¹⁹⁷ However, in the early 1940s, Simmons apparently had no context for interpreting Talayesva's twin identity. Although Talayesva clearly narrates the nature of his specialness and its significance to his Hopi community, this important aspect of his life goes unnoted in Simmons' introduction or appendices. Similarly, anthropological and

¹⁹⁷ Lang, *Men as Women*, 317-318.

historical critiques of *Sun Chief* have misconstrued Talayesva's twin identity as an indication of his so-called "latent homosexuality."¹⁹⁸

In *Sun Chief*'s opening chapter, "Twins Twisted Into One," Talayesva's voice speaks in the first person plural to describe the nature of his dual sexual identity: "When we were within our mother's womb, we happened to hurt her . . . a medicine man . . . told her that we were twins" (25). Talayesva's mother feared the burden of raising twins, an especial hardship for desert dwellers, so the medicine man conducted a ceremony to "put them together": "he spun some black and white wool, twisted the threads into a string, and tied it around my mother's left wrist. It is a powerful way to unite babies. We twins began, likewise, to twist ourselves into one child" (25). Aged about fifty years at the time of this testimony, Talayesva's use of first person plural pronouns indicates that he maintained his twin identity throughout his life, though his two fetal selves had successfully united into one body prior to his birth. The coexistence of a male and female spirit within Talayesva's one body complicates the idea of a singular or individual self and therefore presents a dilemma for Simmons' ethnological project.

Talayesva's father, grandfather, and mother's midwife each examined his newborn body closely and discovered that, "[s]ure enough, I was twins twisted into one. They could see that I was an oversize baby, that my hair curled itself into two little whorls instead of one at the back of my head, and that in front of my body I was a boy but at the back there was the sure trace of a girl—the imprint of a little vulva that slowly disappeared" (27). Here, Talayesva clarifies that his twin selves are not identical but

¹⁹⁸ Kluckhohn, "Review," 268.

rather intersexual. Talayesva's family members further acknowledge his dual identity by naming him "Chuka," which "means mud, a mixture of sand and clay" (31). Traditional Hopi naming practices add an additional, temporal layer to the notion of Talayesva's dual or even multiple identities. "Chuka" was the name by which Talayesva was identified throughout his childhood. Like all traditional Hopis, Talayesva received his adult name—Talayesva, which signifies his role as chief of the Sun Clan—during a coming of age ceremony. The name "Don" was given to Talayesva when he began to attend the Mennonite day school, where white teachers could not pronounce Hopi names, and speaking the Hopi language was forbidden and strictly punished, so they assigned English names to the students. Talayesva was enrolled at the Sherman Institute boarding school as "Don Cheaku [sic]," as though his given Hopi name was a surname.

I highlight *Sun Chief's* narration of Talayesva's twin identity in the face of Simmons' attempt to erase it. Despite Talayesva's self-identification and his Hopi community's verification of his twin identity, Simmons' analysis of Talayesva's life narrative contradicts Talayesva's testimony. In an appendix titled "Concerning the Analysis of Life Histories," Simmons claims that "[c]ertain insights into the interpretation and prediction of individual behavior are achieved to the degree that relevant biological potentials can be reliably evaluated," and he cites as an "obvious example" of such biological potentials "the fact that Don was born anatomically male, not female."¹⁹⁹ I am fascinated by this glaring contradiction, and I continue to be surprised by other scholars' neglect of the issue of Talayesva's twin identity. As Gilbert

¹⁹⁹ Simmons, "Concerning," 385-6.

notes in his new foreword, many have offered interpretations of Talayesva's recurring erotic dream, in which he is being sexually intimate with a girl who, upon closer inspection, turns out to be a boy, but most of these readings claim that the dream evidences Talayesva's "latent homosexuality," which strikes me as a willful misreading of the text and evidences the arbitrariness of dominant sex and gender categories. Whereas Simmons' dubious assertion of Talayesva's maleness discursively elides Talayesva's own self-identification, it is my aim to amplify Talayesva's voice and to listen for the strategies of decolonizing colonial sex and gender categories that his stories may impart.

Sun Chief narrates the existence of a legitimate social space—even a sacred and powerful position—for such "special" twin babies. Talayesva claims that

Almost everyone . . . predicted that I would become . . . a powerful healer, for I was a special baby—twins twisted into one. There was no doubt about this, for they could see the two whorls of hair on the back of my head, and those present at my birth told others how large and double-sexed I looked when fresh from the womb. All knew that such babies are called antelopes because these animals are usually born twins. (33)

Talayesva's community designates him a member of the Antelope Society, and the people anticipated that he "would have a special power . . . to heal certain diseases, even as a boy" (33). Talayesva's "grandfather, Homikniwa," particularly impressed Talayesva with the significance of his specialness; he "kept reminding me of this power" (41).

Talayesva clarifies that his antelope identity constituted an anomalous social position, stating that his grandfather told him "that I tried to hide my strange ways from other boys and that I must have known even then that I was a special person" (36). By the time Talayesva had reached six years of age, he "had made a name for [him]self by healing

people” who suffered from maladies of the pubic region, in particular the urinary tract (68-69). Talayesva explains,

My grandfather had already taught me how to heal such diseases and people had begun sending for me whenever this trouble came upon them . . . After praying, I would rub him or her around the private parts and especially between the navel and the pubis . . . The old people praised my power to heal, but . . . warned me never to let the Whites know about it, because they would not be able to understand. (66-67)

The old people’s warning indicates their awareness of white society’s rigid notions of sexual and medical propriety. Talayesva tells Simmons, a white person, about his power, despite the old Hopi people’s warning; this is probably because, unlike other agents of the government who sought to control and discipline Hopi behavior (for example, through compulsory schooling and Christian proselytizing), Simmons sought to procure knowledge about Talayesva’s life, and he paid him for that valuable knowledge while also giving financial and transportation aid to Talayesva’s fellow villagers.

In defense of his choice to collaborate with Simmons, Talayesva makes a clear distinction between anthropologists and other non-Hopi interlopers. He declares that anthropologists like Leo Simmons and Mischa Titiev “were fine fellows—not at all like government agents, missionaries, and tourists” (307). Although Talayesva’s fellow Hopi people warned him against working with Simmons, and many criticized him for his cooperation, Talayesva declares that he obtained permission to work with Simmons from his village Chief and that he “felt safe with the Chief on my side” (307). Citing his economic reasons for working with Simmons, and explaining that this role allowed him to share the wealth with other Hopis, Talayesva explains, “It made me feel more important and more comfortable to hire others to herd while I sat by a warm stove,

smoked the white man's tobacco, and told Hopi stories . . . I knew other Hopi were jealous . . . But the Chief was on my side" (307, 309). The Chief's blessing for Talayesva to work in Simmons' employ made him feel secure in coming to voice his twin identity through his collaborative autobiographical authorship. I read Talayesva's narration of his dual and intersexual self as a performance of autobiographical indiscipline that refuses to individuate and straighten his self according to settler standards of normalcy. However, the dominant Protestant culture's general intolerance of non-heteronormative gender and sexual traditions posed problems for Hopi people who attended Indian boarding schools. In the next section, I examine how Talayesva's twin identity affected his experience of settler colonial institutionalization of gendered and sexual normalcy.

Whips Wielded by Wolves: Sexual Discipline at Indian Boarding School

Sun Chief draws a stark contrast between the comprehensive methods of sexual education at Hopi and the boarding schools' strategies of maintaining students' sexual ignorance and repressing their sexual desires and behaviors through strict surveillance and punishment of so-called sexual misconduct. Hopi children traditionally learned about sex and reproduction through observing mating farm animals, playing "house" with other children, and engaging in open and frank discussion with adults. Talayesva explains that "small boys paid close attention" to sexual matters and "called to each other to watch dogs, cats, goats, and burros when they mated" (76). Hopi children "looked closely and laughed" whenever "a rooster chased a hen" because they were not taught to regard sex as somber, base or sinful. Rather, "it was fun" to learn about various animals' sexual

behaviors and also “to play housekeeping with the girls and to make believe that we were their husbands, sometimes handling them” (76). In detailing his adolescent experiences of sex as play, Talayesva acknowledges the sexuality of children, who learn through looking and experimenting, as voyeurs and playful participants, unencumbered by puritanical standards of age and heterosexual conjugality.

In addition to observation and role play, Hopi children also learned about sex from adults who “joked together and told many stories about sexual intercourse” (77). Talayesva relates how “old men” told humorous yet informative sex stories, “detailed accounts of their successes with women,” while “at work in the kiva,” and children “listened to these tales with eyes and ears wide open” (77). Adults also “drew figures on the rocks representing the sexual organs,” providing visual aids to learning (77). Supplementing their autobiographical tales, Hopi adults also told sexual myths that illustrated methods of safe sexual conduct. For example, “the story of the maidens with teeth in their vaginas,” which Talayesva first heard when he “was about eight” years old, seems intended to prevent young boys from engaging in heterosexual intercourse prematurely, before their capacity to be responsible fathers. The story also informs listeners how to create and use a prophylactic, formed by “mak[ing] a paste of” “wild lemonberries” and “mold[ing]” it into “a penis sheath” (78). To stress the seriousness of the consequences of heterosexual intercourse, the teller of this tale humorously advised Talayesva that it “was safest” for young boys to “have intercourse with a chicken, dog, or burro”—which could inflict harm by squawking, biting, or bucking—because “girls are even more dangerous” (78). As an added preventative measure, the storyteller “insisted

that any boy who had intercourse with a girl would stop growing and become a dwarf’ (78). In Hopi society, where individual behavior is disciplined through preventative education and public censure rather than punishment of transgression, such fear tactics worked to check unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Indian boarding school officials, by contrast, took a very different and, I argue, less effective approach to addressing the matter of students’ sexuality. To discipline and punish students’ sexuality, matrons and disciplinarians employed repressive and often violent mechanisms that often ironically exacerbated the very behaviors they ostensibly sought to prevent. In these federal institutions, the matter of sex was not treated as a subject of education but rather as a moral issue, and any discussion of the topic was therefore relegated to the responsibility of visiting religious authorities who warned that sex was a sinful and criminal offense, punishable both by hellfire and corporeal disciplining. Indeed, the practice of meting out severe punishment to students who were caught expressing their sexuality at boarding schools was a crucial tactic of civilizing their so-called savage natures.

The federal Indian boarding school system sought to colonize Indigenous peoples by “straightening” them, to borrow Mark Rifkin’s term for disciplining their sexual lives according to a matrix of power/knowledge in which conjugal heterosexuality formulated the standard of developmental normalcy, or civility, and anything outside or in excess of that standard marked backward primitivism or pathological perversion, i.e. “savagery.” As Foucault explains, “the target of sexual regimes of power” is “bodies—their

capacities, their energies, their pleasures.”²⁰⁰ *Sun Chief* narrates how Hopi students’ bodies were the target of colonial disciplining at Keams Canyon boarding school, which Talayesva attended from about age eleven to thirteen.

Keams Canyon Boarding School was located about forty miles from Talayesva’s home village of Oraibi. Talayesva had previously attended the Oraibi Day School, and he explains that he transferred to Keams Canyon because his family was poor, and the school provided him with much-needed clothing and also gifted his parents with food, cloth, and farming implements in exchange for relinquishing their son to the school’s care. Ironically, the dormitory style living arrangement at the boarding school provided students with the opportunity to observe and engage sexual behavior with one another without the supervision of their parents or communal elders. Talayesva confides, “When we returned to school in September, I had occasion to see some of the boys masturbate until they ejaculated. Sometimes we played a little with each other. One boy wanted me to pretend that I was a girl with him, but I did not want to do it” (103). In this scene, the unnamed boy solicits a homosexual encounter with Talayesva, yet he scripts it through a heterosexual lens in which Talayesva would “pretend that [he] was a girl.” Talayesva is nonchalant in his narration of homoerotic play, or mutual masturbation, and he is interestingly noncommittal about whether or not he simulated sexual intercourse upon the boy’s request; he doesn’t state that he did not fulfill the boy’s desire but only that he did not want to.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ McWhorter, “Sex,” 40.

²⁰¹ According to Hopi and anthropological sources, Hopi adults would not have considered the schoolboys’ homosexual play to be abnormal or punishable behavior. As Lang notes, “[a]mong the . . . Hopi,

After a matron caught a group of Hopi boys who had been sneaking into the girls' dormitory to sleep with their sweethearts, the superintendent, Mr. Burton, publicly named the offenders—some thirty boys—as they stood in line for breakfast. “Looking very angry,” Burton “led the guilty boys to a large room where he locked them up without any food,” and he eventually “lined” them “up” and “marched them to” a “room upstairs,” from which the remaining school children “heard strapping. Each boy received from fifteen to thirty lashes with a rawhide, the number depending on his age” (98).

Amplifying the shame of public defamation, starvation, and lashing, Burton and Mr. Boss, the school's head disciplinarian, “whipped” the boys “in the presence of the girls” who had been their lovers (98). The girls, in their turn, “were taken to another room and paddled” (98). This incident terrorized Talayesva and his peers. *Sun Chief* reports, “We small boys . . . felt like a flock of sheep huddled together in a corner of a big corral after the wolves have been among them” (98). This simile, grounded in the material life of Hopi sheep herders, communicates the boys' sense of terror, intimidation, and powerlessness, and it expresses their feeling of dehumanization due to being corralled and threatened with physical violence. Such practices of starving, imprisoning, and battering students for acting out their sexual desires constituted the routine methods of discipline through which, in Driskill's words, Native children away at boarding schools were “stolen from [their] bodies.”

homosexual acts were commonplace, mainly among boys,” though it was purportedly a behavior that boys were expected to grow out of as they matured and prepared for marriage (Lang 326). Nevertheless, such behavior signified savagery in the eyes of school officials whose duty it was to civilize the students through heteronormative disciplining.

In 1906, Talayesva was sent, along with dozens of other Hopi children, to Sherman Institute, a federal Indian boarding school in Riverside, California. *Sun Chief* explains how Talayesva was compelled to participate in Christian organizations at the school and how this religious disciplining taught him to be ashamed of his Indian racial identity, which was ideologically tied up with his nonnormative (twin) gender. Talayesva explains that he was “taken into the Y.M.C.A. . . . before I knew what I was getting into. I had no idea that I was committing myself to Christianity . . . At that time I was half-Christian and half-heathen and often wished that there were some magic that could change my skin into that of a white man” (117).²⁰² Talayesva’s sense of himself as “half-Christian and half-heathen” demonstrates his understanding that, according to the logic of assimilation, his conversion to Christian beliefs and practices, however strategic and temporary, compromised his Hopi identity; however, due to the intransigence of his skin color, his Indian racial identity fundamentally precluded him from being wholly Christian (read: white).

At Sherman, the Y.M.C.A. provided the students’ sole source of sexual education, which consisted of a “book . . . on masturbation. It said that the practice ruined a boy’s health and caused him to go insane,” and it advocated abstinence as the only civilized alternative (117). Even though Talayesva “saw the boys doing it [masturbating] right along” (and apparently saw no harm in observing them because “[t]hey did not mind

²⁰² Talayesva’s wish for the “skin . . . of a white man” reminds me of William Apess’ “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man” (1833), which demonstrates the absurdity of judging humans based on their appearances, skin color in particular. Talayesva’s desire also reveals the lesson he learned in school that one’s “level” of cultural civilization, according to a linear model progressing from heathen savagery to civilized Christianity, is legible on one’s racialized, sexualized, and gendered body. (It is this logic that led Thomas Jefferson to advocate Indian miscegenation with whites to solve “the Indian Problem.”)

being watched by other fellows”), he claims, “I never masturbated much myself because I did not want to lose my strength” (117). By asserting that he refrained from masturbating, Talayesva indicates that he had internalized the Y.M.C.A.’s repressive lessons (117). However, the pleasure Talayesva may have experienced through his voyeurism, coupled with the pleasure that the masturbating boys may have experienced through their exhibitionism and/or through playing with each other, threatened the school’s mission to alienate students from their bodies in order to subjugate their minds and souls.

When he began his second year at Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, Talayesva was eager to escape being racialized as an Indian. Talayesva reiterates that he “again wished that there was some way to turn myself into a white man” (119). His expressions of internalized racism demonstrate the co-constitution of sex and race in a regime of power that aligned queerness and Indigeneity against straightness and whiteness. He explains, “When I reentered school in the fall I was well dressed in citizen’s clothes [rather than the school-issued military-style uniforms]. I bought a good suit and made myself look ‘sporty’ in low-top patent-leather shoes, a fancy hat, a velvet shirt, and a silk necktie” (119). Talayesva’s efforts to fit the profile of a civilized American male do not signify willing acculturation but rather a strategy Gerald Vizenor calls *survivance*: a process of survival based in resistance.²⁰³ While Talayesva’s immediate situation in the colonial institution required him to yield to dominant modes of style and gendered behavior, his twin identity required him to do so with a difference, or with a twist. He explains, although “I had my hair cut in the American style,” “[I] parted

²⁰³ See Vizenor, *Manifest Manners*.

it on the left side instead of in the center, because I was a twin with two whorls instead of one and my hair refused to part in the center” (119). Talayesva considered his hair’s “refus[al] to part” straight down “the center” of his head to be a physical manifestation of his twin identity, which ultimately “refused to part” and assimilate to U.S. standards of normative sex and gender.

The psychic turmoil wrought by the boarding schools’ heteronormative disciplining caused Talayesva to experience a nightmare that recurred throughout his adolescence and young adulthood. He writes, “When I returned home [from Keams Canyon school] in the summer . . . I thought and dreamed more and more about girls. Sometimes I dreamed of making love to one; but when I examined her closely I would discover that she was a boy. Then I would wake up and spit four times, feeling that an evil spirit had played a bad joke on me” (108). Talayesva’s ritual of spitting to rid himself of the “evil” effects of this dream demonstrates that the prospect of making love to a male-bodied person incited feelings of disgust and fear in him. The anxiety that arises from his non-heteronormative unconscious fantasies, I suggest, indicate the psychic (and perhaps also physical) turmoil Talayesva experienced as a twin displaced in a settler colonial institution that tolerated no deviance from a narrow male/female sexual binary, a paradigm that was strictly correlated to boy/girl gender identity and embodied practice.

Years later, while away at Sherman Indian boarding school, Talayesva confesses, “I had wet dreams . . . and continued to dream occasionally of a girl in bed with me who always turned out to be a boy. I would ask her, ‘How long have you been this way?’ She would say, ‘From my birth.’ I would stop caressing her and say, ‘I don’t think I can have

intercourse with you” (117). Talayesva’s character in this dream avoids sexual intercourse with the transgender girl. The disjunction between her initial appearance as a girl and the fact, “discover[ed]” upon close “examin[ation]” that she was *really* a boy (since people with penises, according to heteronormative logic, can’t be girls), distressed Talayesva, who “always felt disappointed in making this discovery,” not to mention anxious about his own heterosexual desirability: “when I awoke I wondered if I would be unlucky in getting a girl” (117). Humorously and simply, Talayesva assures us, “I was not” (117). Nevertheless, *Sun Chief*’s readers usually interpreted this recurring dream as an indication of Talayesva’s homosexual orientation.

The biopolitical framework through which anthropologists and historians read *Sun Chief* queered Indians like Talayesva by categorizing their difference according to the paradigm of normalizing sexuality discourses. Early reviewers were quick to propose the significance of Talayesva’s recurring nightmare, along with other non-heteronormative aspects of his self-narration, as indicative of his “latent homosexuality.”²⁰⁴ In his 1943 review of *Sun Chief*, published in the journal *American Anthropologist*, Clyde Kluckhohn touts *Sun Chief* as “unquestionably a major contribution” because it presents “a storehouse of substantive data which may be analyzed by other students of culture and personality.”²⁰⁵ Kluckhohn claims “‘latent homosexuality’ as a major thema in Don’s personality,” and he cites “abundant data scattered throughout the text” to “justify” his “hypothesis,” including: Talayesva’s

²⁰⁴ Kluckhohn, “Review,” 268.

²⁰⁵ Kluckhohn, “Review,” 267.

“conviction of original uncertainty as to his sex,” of which he speaks “[e]ven after birth”; his “constant preoccupation with the penis”; his “special healing skill as a young boy which involved manipulating the pudendal region of males”; and finally, “the recurrent dream” he experienced of engaging in sexual intercourse with a girl who is actually (or also) male.²⁰⁶ Kluckhohn concedes that Talayesva’s “constant preoccupation with the penis” “may be cultural” rather than strictly personal, and this statement suggests sexual perversion as a general Hopi trait. Kluckhohn’s attribution of homosexual significance to Talayesva’s “healing skill” constitutes a misreading of the text since Talayesva’s patients included people of all sexes and ages, and his power was attributed to his twin sex or gender identity, not his sexual orientation.

Kluckhohn’s hypothesis is taken up by historian Robert V. Hine, whose foreword to the 1963 edition of *Sun Chief* claims Talayesva’s probable “latent homosexuality” as one aspect of his “excessive” “promiscuity and sensuality.”²⁰⁷ In Lang’s much more recent work (1998), she, too, characterizes Talayesva’s nightmares as “recurrent homosexual dreams.”²⁰⁸ All of these readings ignore Talayesva’s narration of his special twin gender identity, which does not necessarily correlate to western concepts of homosexual desire or behavior. As I have discussed, Talayesva’s twin identity, which is indeed tied to his healing skill, marks him as a member of the Antelope Society, a special association of people who are known to embody more than one sex; in his Hopi context, Talayesva’s special gender does not signify homosexuality *per se*. I suggest that we may

²⁰⁶ Kluckhohn, “Review,” 268-9.

²⁰⁷ Hine, “Foreword,” x-xi.

²⁰⁸ Lang, *Men as Women*, 326.

best understand Talayesva's recurrent nightmares in the context of his experiences of dislocation and heteronormative gender disciplining while away at boarding schools. Rather than indicating homosexual orientation (latent or actual), Talayesva's recurrent nightmares indicate his anxiety about his (in)ability to engage the "normal" heterosexual relations prescribed by the boarding schools' disciplining. This anxiety arises from his twin gender identity, which he projects onto the girl/boy in his dream. With more time and evidence, I might also speculate that this nightmare may have resulted from psychic trauma due to Talayesva's possible molestation at boarding school. Occasions of child molestation in these institutions are well-documented, and Talayesva would have been an easy target due to the fact that he had been raped as a boy. Pedophiles, like all predators, are exceptional at selecting their victims, as is demonstrated by studies of the prevalent phenomenon known as repeat victimization.

Sun Chief narrates Talayesva's first experience of heterosexual intercourse as an act of rape or, at the very least, coercion. Talayesva tells that he "had an awful experience with . . . an unmarried clan mother about twenty years of age" and that this experience occurred "[s]ome time before [he] had heard the story of the maidens' teeth," so he must have been eight years old or younger. Talayesva explains that he found himself "alone in" this woman's "house" because the clan brother he had gone there to visit "was away," so he "stayed to play games with her on the floor" (79). The details of the scene are rich enough to warrant quoting at length:

Finally she looked around, took my hand, and pulled me into the next room, suggesting that we take a nap. She lay on a sheepskin and drew me close to her. Soon she was touching my private parts which excited and frightened me. When I had an erection, she held me tightly to herself and breathed very hard. I tried to

withdraw, and when she released me I saw blood on my penis and cried. Cleaning me with a cloth, she talked to me soothingly and begged me to tell no one. It was no pleasure to me. It was the first time that I had seen the black pubic hair, the blood frightened me, and I was terribly worried. I wondered if all women were like that. I ran home and told my real mother. She went over and talked with the girl who was her clan sister. I heard nothing more about the matter except that my mother called it a disgrace and said that I must keep it a secret. (79)

According to U.S. juridical logics that institutionalize an arbitrary age of consent for legitimate sex, Talayesva's revelation of this "secret" to Simmons, who published it with Talayesva's apparent permission, depicts the statutory rape of a young boy by an adult female. But I wonder if the reason why the clan mother's rape of Talayesva constitutes a "disgrace[ful]" act has more to do with her abuse of her kinship role as a clan mother and her tabooed exposure of Talayesva to her menstrual blood than merely with Talayesva's status as a minor.²⁰⁹

As I will show in the next section, the sexual stimulation of a male child's genitals by an adult, in and of itself, was not taboo among the Hopi. Prior to attending boarding school, Talayesva was well acquainted with his genitals' capacity for sexual pleasure due to his uncle's and siblings' playful touching. However, the practice may have been taboo if performed by a clan mother, explaining why Talayesva was both "excited and frightened" by the woman's touching and why Talayesva's birth mother commanded him to "keep it a secret." Talayesva's narration of his emotional and physical responses to his rape, his confusing experience of simultaneous sexual excitement and terror, clarifies that intercourse with the clan mother was not play; "It was no pleasure to me," Talayesva declares, indicating that it was abuse. This scene of Talayeva's rape goes unremarked in

²⁰⁹ This is not to say that Talayesva was not victimized through this experience.

all the reviews I have read, supporting Andrea Smith's claim that settler colonialism is fundamentally sexually violent and that the racialization of Indians defines their bodies as inherently rapable, their lands inherently invadable; that is, since Indians are ever-available as sexual objects, it is impossible for sex with an Indian to constitute rape.

Ignoring moments like these in *Sun Chief* that delineate Hopi standards of sexual propriety, Hine surmises that the reason why "Don suffered conflict" in "his sex life" was because "his Hopi mores contrast[ed] with [the] Protestant ascetic morality" imposed upon him by federal schools and other government agents, an interpretation that implies that sexual morality was unknown among the Hopi.²¹⁰ Hine explains that

[a]s a child [Talayesva] was led to believe that sex was the most important function of his body. Even intercourse with animals and masturbation were tolerated. The katchina clowns he loved were given to joking that, next to eating, lovemaking was the greatest joy of life. And as an older man such pleasures even included extramarital 'private wives.'²¹¹

The qualifier "even" in this passage indicates the abject nature Hine and his contemporaries attributed to Talayesva's sexual stories and, by extension, "Hopi mores" more broadly. Hine points out that "[n]one of these [sexual mores] were ideas to be tolerated in the Christian code, especially not by the missionaries" and boarding school officials. As agents of the capitalist American government (which was and is a Protestant institution), missionaries, boarding school officials, Indian agents, and other parties involved with the imperialist policy of assimilating and civilizing the Hopi people prohibited and actively punished boarding school children's sexual behavior. As Foucault

²¹⁰ Hine, "Foreword," x.

²¹¹ Hine, "Foreword," x.

explains, “the development of capitalism” “would not have been possible without” biopower, “the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production.”²¹² Since masturbation and other forms of sex among prepubescent children are non-reproductive behaviors, they were intolerable in the context of the boarding schools, biopolitical institutions that sought to normalize the sexuality of savages by strictly surveilling and rigidly controlling their bodies.

Sun Chief narrates Talayesva’s attempts and successes at thwarting the dominant normalizing society’s sexual regime of power. In the next section, I explore the question of how to read *Sun Chief*’s accounts of Talayesva’s ostensibly illicit experiences of sexual pleasure, which, as Hine notes, Talayesva “detailed . . . in a proud if not boastful manner.”²¹³ Hine’s hint that Talayesva should be ashamed of his illegitimate sexuality, perhaps to the point of censoring his sexual experiences from his autobiography, contradicts his—and many other scholars’—praise of the text as an invaluable source of knowledge about “primitive” or “non-literate” peoples precisely because of its unabashed candor about sexual matters.²¹⁴

Trix are for Anthropologists: Sexual Indiscipline in *Sun Chief*

In this section, I explore the cultural and political significance of *Sun Chief*’s various, detailed accounts of Talayesva’s sexual experiences. My aim in reading erotica in *Sun Chief* is to explore how *Sun Chief* has circulated as an object of biopolitical

²¹² Foucault, *History*, 144.

²¹³ Hine, “Foreword,” x.

²¹⁴ Talayesva, Back cover.

knowledge and suggest ways to recuperate Talayesva as a subject, not a mere object, of this knowledge. Reviewers of *Sun Chief* have expressed anxiety about the truth value of the text due to Simmons' mediation of its production. Clyde Kluckhohn's concern with "distinguish[ing] between what came freely to the consciousness of the autobiographer and what was . . . extracted only under pressure" evinces his conviction that sexuality discourses are true to the extent that they constitute a subject's authentic confessions.²¹⁵ In the preface, introduction, and appendices, Simmons repeatedly and ardently assures readers that he is a mere editor and that Talayesva is the indisputable author of *Sun Chief*. Nevertheless, I surmise that one reason why *Sun Chief* has received scant attention as a work of literature is that readers are reluctant to let go of the idea that Simmons' authorial power outweighed Talayesva's due to his positions as an anthropologist and editor.

As Roland Barthes writes in "The Death of the Author," "the reader" embodies the "one place where" the "multiplicity" of any text is focused.²¹⁶ Collaboratively produced autobiographies like *Sun Chief* are perfect examples of Barthes' definition of a text as "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash . . . a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture."²¹⁷ Since my primary interest as a reader lies not in rehearsing how *Sun Chief* has been received historically but in its potential as a tool for developing decolonial praxis now, I focus on Talayesva's written narration of a sex-positive Hopi culture and his practices of erotic pleasure in order to recuperate his active role in the anthropological

²¹⁵ Kluckhohn, "Review," 268.

²¹⁶ Barthes, "Death," 148.

²¹⁷ Barthes, "Death," 146.

mechanisms of generating sexuality discourse, mechanisms which “produce knowledge, multiply discourse, induce pleasure, and generate power.”²¹⁸ In the context of U.S. settler colonialism, *Sun Chief* has functioned within normalizing sexuality discourses to exemplify the paragon of abnormal or illegitimate sex. Notions of sexual “perversion” and pathology are the specific outcomes of Judeo-Christian principles about policing sexuality. Sin and shame are not present in most Native cultures pre-invasion, but they are alien ideas imposed on Native communities to police behavior. Despite the fact that Simmons published *Sun Chief* in the context of a biopolitical project to produce knowledge about the sexual lives of savages, we can re-center Talayesva’s conflicting interests to remember his role in this power relation as his journey to a sovereign erotic. I read Talayesva’s self-written erotica as what I call sexual indiscipline in the context of sexuality discourses’ normalizing disciplinary function.

In theorizing Talayesva’s sexual indiscipline, I aim to define the strategies of power that are immanent in the anthropological will to knowledge about the sexual lives of Hopi people by focusing on Talayesva’s possible strategies of manipulating the event of power, at the scene of his writing and discourse with Simmons, to his personal benefit. One obvious way that Talayesva benefitted from his collaboration with Simmons was monetarily. Since Simmons paid Talayesva “seven cents a page,” writing his diary was immediately rewarding for Talayesva.²¹⁹ Furthermore, Talayesva’s wife “Irene appreciated the rent money” Simmons paid to stay in their home during his visits to the

²¹⁸ Foucault, *History*, 73.

²¹⁹ Simmons, “Introduction,” 5.

reservation; this money took some pressure off of Talayesva to provide for his family and also helps explain why Talayesva might have wanted to stretch out his time with Simmons (328).

In addition to being a lucrative practice, writing his diary was evidently a pleasurable pastime for Talayesva. *Sun Chief* includes several instances of meta-narrative in which Talayesva writes about writing: “I was . . . able to write down the details of my sickness” (348); “I . . . kept busy with my diary” (355); “I . . . went back to my diary” (372); and “When I am too old and feeble to follow my sheep or cultivate my corn, I . . . would like to keep on writing my diary as long as my mind holds out” (381). This last expression, especially, suggests that Talayesva enjoyed his writing practice and would continue it regardless of whether he was being paid. Perhaps Talayesva relished the cathartic effect of autobiographical writing, which resembles Hopi self-healing strategies to rid oneself of negative thoughts and feelings.²²⁰

Talayesva may also have found it fun to create a self through playful storytelling—to heal not only through truth-telling but also through humor, telling jokes at Simmons’ expense. Considering the financial stakes involved, as well as Talayesva’s position of resistance to the colonial regime of sexual power, some of the stories in *Sun Chief* may constitute *trix* on the anthropologist Simmons. In *They Called it Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School*, K. Tsianina Lomawaima defines the term “trixing” as “student slang for elaborate joking and prank playing within and between groups and

²²⁰ Narrated throughout *Sun Chief*, these strategies include praying, crying, and talking to trusted friends or relatives.

gangs and between students and staff.”²²¹ Extending Lomawaima’s notion of trixing to the scene of a former boarding school student’s writing for a paying anthropologist, *Sun Chief* can be seen to narrate Talayesva’s practice of playing pranks on colonial agents for his personal gain.

Take, for example, a scene in which Talayesva trixes the Indian agency trader. No longer able to live solely off the produce of their crops and herds, Talayesva’s family sheared their sheep and “took [the bundle of wool] to the [agency] trading post and exchanged it for groceries, cloth, and other supplies” (229). On one occasion, Talayesva confides that, in order to make his bundle weigh more, “I had clipped my long-haired dog and mixed his wool with that of the herd, which the trader did not discover” (229).

Though the hair from one dog could not have made much of a difference in weight/value thrown in with the herd’s wool, Talayesva’s hilarious inclusion of its worthless (to the trader) substance performs an act of resistance that skews the relation of power between himself and the trader. Talayesva knows something the trader does not, and he profits from the trick he plays on the trader. This passage hints that Talayesva may have played similar trix on Simmons through his diary work—another source of income based on the quantity of goods, knowledge in particular, he produced for a white man. The trader wasn’t trying to pay Talayesva for dog hair, and Simmons wasn’t trying to pay Talayesva for untruths, or sex jokes rather than sex confessions. Nevertheless, Talayesva may have experienced a degree of pleasure, not to mention monetary profit, from providing more than was asked of him. And, the possible existence of literary “dog hair” mixed in with

²²¹ Lomawaima, *They Called*, 98.

the autobiographical “wool” Simmons paid Talayesva to produce doesn’t nullify the cultural significance of *Sun Chief* as a work of Hopi literature—and resistance.

Foucault writes “that if repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality since the classical age,” as it seems to have been for Talayesva during his experiences at boarding school, “it stands to reason that we will not be able to free ourselves from it except” through “a transgression of laws, a lifting of prohibitions, an irruption of speech, a reinstating of pleasure within reality, and a whole new economy in the mechanism of power.”²²² Although Foucault has disabused us of our adherence to the repressive hypothesis of sexual power/knowledge in the context of European sexuality discourses, *Sun Chief* certainly does constitute “an irruption of [erotic] speech” that portrays Talayesva’s return to Oraibi after his attendance of boarding schools as a sexual emancipation. According to *Sun Chief*, the repression of sexual speech did not exist among the Hopi, but it was certainly a means of colonial disciplining at Indian boarding schools. Foucault surmises that it is “gratifying for us to define the relationship between sex and power in terms of repression” because of “the speaker’s benefit.”²²³ He explains,

If sex is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth in such language places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom.²²⁴

²²² Foucault, *History*, 5.

²²³ Foucault, *History*, 6.

²²⁴ Foucault, *History*, 6.

However, in its celebration of Hopi people's value of pleasure and its condemnation of Protestant Americans' hypocrisy regarding sexual moralism, *Sun Chief* does not place Talayesva outside the reach of power; rather, it positions him squarely within a relation of power with Simmons and, by extension, with the normalizing sexual regime of power more broadly. Through its communication of Talayesva's desires and pleasures, *Sun Chief* constitutes a work of rhetorical sovereignty that narrates Talayesva's journey toward a Sovereign Erotic, a journey of healing from heteronormative disciplining at boarding schools.

Adolescent Sexuality

Whereas boarding school officials prohibited and punished Indian children's sexual behavior, *Sun Chief* narrates how Hopi people recognized and often gratified children's capacity to feel sexual pleasure. Talayesva explains, "every male child was tickled in his private parts by adults who wished to win smiles and sometimes to stop crying. No doubt other children, including my brother and sister, played with me in the same way" (34). Such a view of sexual stimulation as play, valuable for its pleasure-producing capacity and uncoupled from colonial romance plots or biological reproduction, challenges the bourgeois ideology that sexual pleasure is the rightful property of conjugally paired heterosexual adults.²²⁵ This passage also queries the Western, though supposedly universal, notion of what constitutes pedophilia. Talayesva claims that his "crippled uncle Naquima," who lived in the same house, "was a good friend of mine . . . He often picked lice off my head and played with my private parts to

²²⁵ Additionally, the lie that reproductive conception is the natural purpose of sex serves as one of the most insidious sources of homophobia.

give me pleasure” (38). Colonial readers interpreted Naquima’s behavior as immoral, and their sense of its savageness may have been compounded by the image of the lice-ridden child; indeed, Indian students’ lice and experiences of sexual pleasure were both targets for eradication by the boarding school system.

Academics who viewed Talayesva’s stories through a Eurocentric lens pathologized Hopi people as pedophiles or practitioners of incest. *Sun Chief* may have inspired philosopher Richard B. Brandt’s study of Hopi sexual mores in his work, *Hopi Ethics: A Theoretical Analysis* (1954). Brandt’s analysis proposed to provide “information about the ethical or value systems of primitive peoples” for the benefit of his own career and scholarly community.²²⁶ He implies that his project may be futile, and he evinces his prejudice against and disapproval of Hopi people and culture through his choice of language and selection of topics for study. For example, in a section titled “Sex Behavior,” in which “incest” is a major theme, Brandt discredits Hopi people’s testimony; he claims that “[a]ccurate information about Hopi sex behavior and views about sex behavior is difficult to obtain, because some Hopi believe the tribal reputation will suffer if the facts are known and therefore represent practice and ideal as more puritanical than they are . . . It is not easy to know whom to believe.”²²⁷ Insinuating that his informants are liars, Brandt presumes to draw his own “conclusion . . . that the average Hopi view is definitely more permissive [of incest, adultery, etc.] than that of

²²⁶ Brandt, *Hopi*, vii.

²²⁷ Brandt, *Hopi*, 196.

most white Americans.”²²⁸ Clearly, Brandt’s so-called theoretical analysis serves to differentiate the sexual lives of Hopis, ostensibly primitive peoples, as generally immoral compared to the upstanding erotic comportment of civilized “white Americans.”

Female Sexual Desire

Aside from its narration of “incest” and adolescent sexuality, another aspect of *Sun Chief* that Protestant Americans interpreted as excessively sensual or perverse is its depiction of female sexual desire. Take, for example, Talayesva’s narration of his first experience of consensual intercourse, which occurred during summer break after his first year at Keams Canyon boarding school, when he was twelve years old. While watching four nearly-nude girls swimming, one girl named Mae “motioned to [Talayesva] and walked in” to “a chicken house close by,” indicating that he should follow her (103). Talayesva narrates that when he did, “[w]e sat down on the floor of the chicken house and became interested in each other’s bodies. She was about thirteen, and at first I thought she was a virgin, but I quickly changed my mind because she knew so much about what to do” (103). Talayesva makes it clear that Mae initiated their sexual encounter in the chicken house and also that she was more sexually experienced than he was at the time. The furtive nature of the encounter, which was brief due to the couple’s fear of being caught by Mae’s mother, indicates its deviance from reported Hopi standards of sexual propriety, which restricted heterosexual intercourse to couples who were engaged to be married.

²²⁸ Brandt, *Hopi*, 196.

Talayesva's second experience of consensual heterosexual intercourse occurred when he was about fifteen, during his final year at Keams Canyon boarding school. This sex story similarly indicates that his female partner was more sexually experienced than he, and it also introduces an economic thread that is woven throughout Talayesva's sexual tales. During a "Friday night" "social with games" hosted by the school, Talayesva "was talking to Louise," who told him that "she was leading a hard life . . . and made [him] want to save her from hunger" (111). Talayesva told Louise that he loved her and would steal food for her from the school kitchen, where he worked. He reports, "I also told her that I had \$35.80 in my pocket [from farming sugar beets in Colorado during summer vacation] and that I was not a spendthrift. From then on I began to look after her" (111). Talayesva's provision of resources soon leads to lovemaking, and his narrative closely aligns his gifts of food, money, and other presents with Louise's reciprocal gift of sexual pleasure. Talayesva's first sexual encounter with Louise occurred "[a]fter feeding her" food from "the kitchen," where he "worked alone:" "I hugged her warmly for the first time, told her that she was a sweet little thing, and that I wanted her for my wife. Then I moved with her gently into the pantry, and locked the door. The little room was crowded and we had to stand and be quick; but she knew what to expect and seemed experienced. It was the first time that I had found and given real pleasure in lovemaking" (111). With his marital oath, Talayesva assumes Hopi standards of sexual propriety, according to which intercourse is appropriate between engaged couples. The clandestine nature of Talayesva's and Louise's encounter in the pantry demonstrates their fear of being caught by school authorities. Rather than living in fear, Talayesva told the

matron “that I had decided to marry Louise the next fall” (112). When the matron took Talayesva to the superintendent’s office to discuss the matter, Don explained to him “that it was my right to have intercourse with [Louise]. I was not afraid to say this because I knew that for Hopi lovers who are engaged this is the proper thing” (112-113). Nevertheless, the superintendent “insisted that ‘education is more important,’ and said that Louise would have to leave . . . if she became pregnant” (113).

Talayesva’s relationship with Louise ended when he was sent to boarding school at Sherman Institute at age sixteen. Talayesva continued to engage heterosexual romances at Sherman, where he and his partners had intercourse “quickly” and in hiding, “fearing that someone might catch us” (117). Talayesva narrates that his sexual encounters with Dezba, Olive, Ollie, and Mettie were all initiated by the women, inverting the lie that females are naturally chaste while men are naturally libidinous. Talayesva narrates, Ollie “invited me up to her bedroom to play flinch . . . laughing softly and breathing faster, she drew me to her for a moment, stepped over, and locked the door. We had our pleasure, played several more games of flinch, and made love once more” (129). In this scene, Ollie seduces Talayesva by inviting him to her room, locking the door, and pulling his body close to hers. Talayesva clarifies that sexual encounters with Ollie were contingent on her desire when he reveals, “she soon found another friend, and I saw no more of her in private” (129). Talayesva’s tales of female sexual forwardness may have contributed to stereotypes of Indian women as loose or sexually immoral in comparison to true (read: white) women.

Despite Talayesva's subjection to colonial discipline and his resultant, though temporary, internalized racism, he survived to continue on his journey to a sovereign erotic. After three years at Sherman, Talayesva returned home to Oraibi with a large group of his fellow students. While camping during the journey home, Talayesva strikes up a flirtation with Mettie, a girl from a neighboring village, and *Sun Chief* narrates the details of their sexual encounter. Talayesva declares, "I had Mettie for the first time. I was not afraid to do it, because we were back among our own people" (133). Talayesva felt free to enjoy his sexual encounter with Mettie uninhibited by the need to hide, hurry, or otherwise be on guard for school disciplinarians. Talayesva demonstrates his Hopi elders' acceptance of his sexual exchange with Mettie by noting that "[h]er uncle saw" him "lay down with Mettie" when "it was time for bed," "but [he] said nothing. I had Mettie twice more during the night. We could hear others doing the same thing, for we were sleeping close together. All the fellows were with their girls, for we were now free from the school officials and back with our uncles and fathers" (133). This scene marks the sovereignty of the erotic, as it ties the freedom Talayesva felt in his lovemaking to his emancipation from the boarding schools.

Scholarly judgments of Talayesva as "excessively sensual" (by Hine and others) stem from *Sun Chief*'s cataloguing of intimate details, such as methods of foreplay, the number of orgasms achieved during each encounter, sexualized Hopi aesthetics, and material compensation for sexual pleasure. For example, Talayesva explains that he and Mettie "enjoyed each other twice while Claude snored" (136). He also details scenes of arousal, as when he and Mettie "began to whisper softly, kiss each other, and use our

hands to get acquainted, paying no attention to Louis and Elsie. We had intercourse three times and were still enjoying each other when the moon arose” (144). The fact that Talayesva and Mettie routinely engage sexual intercourse in the presence of others also flouts the imperative of privacy inherent in settler colonial ideologies of sexual civility.

In nearly every story of heterosexual intercourse, Talayesva foregrounds his female partner’s desire as more consequential than his own. This detail represents a Hopi imperative of consent (which is also evident in Hopi practices of divorce).²²⁹ In one scene, Talayesva describes a journey on horseback with Euella, who sat in front of him astride the same horse and “became coy, laughed a lot, and led me on to love play” (151). Talayesva claims to have been innocently “[h]olding my arms about her waist to keep her from falling” until Euella seduced him, when he “let my hands play around in front of her and kissed her repeatedly on the neck as we jogged along” (151). Talayesva explicitly portrays Euella’s enjoyment of his manual stimulation, his lips on her neck, and the bouncing of the horse increasing her pleasure. “Suddenly,” Talayesva boasts, “when there was no one in sight, she pressed hard against me, breathed short and fast, and began to quiver with excitement. I held her firmly, smiled to myself, and said nothing” (151-152). Talayesva’s smile does not indicate his own attainment of sexual pleasure at the expense of a woman’s body but rather demonstrates his pride in his skill at attracting and pleasing women. Euella is not a passive recipient in this exchange; she “pressed hard against” Talayesva’s hands, heightening her own arousal to the point of orgasmic climax.

²²⁹ If a woman becomes dissatisfied with her husband, she simply ejects all of his belongings from her house, and he is forced to move back in with his mother. Conversely, if a husband becomes dissatisfied with his wife, he may simply leave her home and return to live with his mother.

Talayesva's carefree sexual experiences at home in Oraibi indicate that despite his subjection to heteronormative disciplining at boarding schools he recovered his sovereign erotic. While lying in bed with Euella, "between our love-making," Talayesva realized, "I was happy now to be a Hopi, and would never again feel ashamed to be an Indian with red skin" (179). Emancipated from colonial educational institutions, Talayesva enjoyed the freedom to make love without fear. This statement expresses free sexuality as decolonial and anti-assimilationist practice. When Talayesva sneezes during the night, Euella's mother discovers his presence in her daughter's room. This scene provides a sharp contrast between Hopi sexual mores and those of sadistic disciplinarians at the boarding schools: "She laughed, scolded me a little, and said, 'When I was a girl, my parents were too strict with me. I don't think I shall deny Euella this pleasure. You may stay, but don't let her father catch you.' Since he was at the sheep camp for the night, we had nothing to fear" (199). Euella's mother acknowledges her daughter's "pleasure" and gives her blessing to pursue it; her "scold[ing]" of Talayesva seems a formality that gestures toward a tradition of propriety which individuals have the freedom to either maintain or modify, according to their desire.

The only sex story in which Talayesva acted as the pursuer instead of the female partner is *Sun Chief's* narration of Talayesva's engagement to his wife, Irene, which may be read as an act of sexual coercion. When Talayesva's old pal Louis visits from Moenkopi and suggests, "'Let's take these girls [Irene and Iola] by force,'" Talayesva "discouraged it and told him that I had never used force on any girl, that I had never been familiar with Irene, and that I might get into trouble. I knew that Irene was marriageable

for me but I did not know whether she wanted me or not. . . . But Louis urged until I finally agreed” (213). Louis’ suggestion of rape disturbs Talayesva, and his conscience rejects the idea; he expresses concern about Irene’s desire—“whether she wanted me or not” is a question of consequence for Talayesva. Yet, he is susceptible to his friend’s peer pressure. Of the incident, Talayesva reports, “I caught hold of Irene and quickly assured her that she had nothing to fear. She remained still and quiet . . . I begged Irene urgently and with words of love and promises of marriage. Finally she said, ‘It is up to you.’ . . . she remained passive but very sweet” (213). Talayesva is careful, here, to demonstrate that he attained Irene’s consent, however indirect, before having sex with her. He also shows how, though her passivity indicates her unwillingness, Irene evinced her self-worth and control over the situation when, “[a]fter some time she said, ‘Now you must ask your parents about our marrying. Let’s go and leave this terrible man, Louis.’ I told her to be a good girl, gave her a nice bracelet, slipped out” (213). Irene’s demand that Talayesva follow through with his obligation to marry her accords with Hopi custom, as premarital sex is acceptable between engaged partners. Her acceptance of Talayesva as her husband and her condemnation of Louis as a “terrible man” demonstrates her understanding of a significant difference between the characters of Louis and Talayesva. Talayesva’s gift of “a nice bracelet” seems to be material reciprocation for sexual pleasure as much as collateral for his promise to procure permission to marry Irene.

Adultery

In a passage that compares various marital transgressions, Talayesva opines that, in the scheme of things, “adultery is not that important” (277). He claims that he

“probably would not have left [Irene] for that . . . even if she had a baby by another man,” but he is “sure” he “would have left her if she had become too lazy, or a drunkard,” and he admits that he “often threatened to leave her for her quick temper, and also for gossip” (277). This passage indicates that, for Talayesva, sexual fidelity is not requisite for married couples, as well as his understanding that he does not own his wife’s body or pleasure. What is important in a marriage, for Talayesva, is amiable companionship—a happy home. For Talayesva, this does not exclude the practice of keeping “private wives.” He explains,

Next to the dance days with singing, feasting, and clown work, love-making with private wives was the greatest pleasure of my life. And for us who toil in the desert, these light affairs make life more interesting . . . People cannot think that a man is doing wrong if he finds a single woman or a widow so long as he uses her right and rewards her. (281)

Here, Talayesva claims that adultery is excusable as long as a man “uses” his mistress fairly “and rewards her” materially.

For all the “pleasure” he gets from “love-making with private wives,” Talayesva’s extramarital affairs pose a financial burden for his family. Talayesva relates his uncle’s advice that the best way “to get so many private wives” is “to ‘win her with gifts,’” and he claims that “he was right” and boasts that he “never accepted a woman’s favors without rewarding her” (282). Unfortunately, Talayesva’s escapades compromise his ability to support his family. He confesses, “[w]e had to kill our sheep to feed ourselves. As I braced myself for harder work, I thought again of all the money—perhaps \$100—that I had spent on women before my marriage. I realized that I was supporting my wife very poorly” (249). Although Talayesva admits that the money he has spent on rewarding

women for their favors could have been saved for his future family life, he nevertheless continues to see private wives and to reward them with money. He confides that “Mettie was also married, but I managed to see her in private—perhaps a dozen times—and paid her in cash” (269). Insofar as Talayesva considers it proper to materially compensate a woman’s favors, he normalizes an economic basis of sexual exchange that seems to mirror prostitution, which dominant ideology pathologized.

Talayesva’s “private [Hopi] wives” don’t seem to be dependent on his money; that is, selling sex is not their sole source of financial security. And interestingly, the white prostitutes he visits during trading trips seem to deploy agency in their profession.²³⁰ During a trip to Winslow to procure supplies, Talayesva’s companion, Freddie, suggests that they “try a prostitute,” and Talayesva agrees because he “had long wanted to make love with a white woman, but had never dared to attempt it while at school” (263). Talayesva depicts the prostitutes’ apparent desire, however contrived; he states that “[t]he girls beckoned and invited us inside where they lined up and seemed eager to be chosen” (263). He demonstrates that the “fair” white prostitute he had chosen initially commanded the transaction on her own terms, requiring him to “[u]ndress” himself and permit her to “carefully” examine his genitalia by “push[ing] back [his] foreskin,” presumably to avoid exposing herself to any sexually transmitted disease; she also demanded that he pay her fee of “two dollars” before she would provide any service. However, Talayesva soon appropriates control of the encounter in order to get what he

²³⁰ Their business-savvy and sensuality sharply contrast with, for example, the destitution of Minna Hooven, a character in Frank Norris’ *The Octopus* (1901), who was “driven . . . to prostitution” by her poverty and claims, “‘I’ve gone to hell. It was either that or starvation’” (Norris, *Octopus*, 650, 588).

paid for; when Talayesva “rested” because the “bed had a sunken place in the center which caused pain to [his] back,” the prostitute promptly ousts him:

‘Say, boy, you’ve had your money’s worth . . . Get up, or I’ll call a police.’ As she got off the bed I protested, ‘This is not fair.’ ‘Give me another dollar and do whatever you like,’ she replied. I told her to put the mattress on the floor and I would do it. She took my dollar, but seemed slow about the mattress. I got impatient, jerked it off the bed, and grabbed her roughly. She became very friendly, complimented me on my powers, and invited me to ‘hurry back.’ I said, ‘You have charged me three dollars when your price is two; may I return for one?’ She agreed. (263)

The prostitute’s threat to call a police suggests that prostitution was a legal, legitimate sector of the Winslow economy.²³¹ The prostitute, aware of her power, demands and receives 50% more money from Talayesva than her going rate requires. Talayesva attempts to even the deal by negotiating the placement of the mattress for his own pleasure, but he doesn’t wait for the prostitute to agree to his terms—he takes what he wants, wowing her with his masculine “powers.” Talayesva’s account of his first visits with a white prostitute portrays sex workers not as sluts or victims of poverty but as savvy business people.

The purchase of prostitutes’ sexual services becomes a routine aspect of Talayesva’s and Freddie’s trips to procure supplies in Winslow. When Talayesva and Freddie “went to Winslow again” “about two weeks” after their second trip, they “went straight to the brothel” (264). On this occasion, Talayesva intended to solicit services from the same girl as on his first two visits, but he and his companion “found that our old girls had been replaced by younger ones worth three dollars. I . . . paid cash to a fleshy

²³¹ A question that will guide my future research is whether the police really protected and served, rather than exploited and punished, prostitutes.

girl of sixteen who inspected me, assured me that she was examined by a doctor every two weeks, and helped put the mattress on the floor” (264). The passive voice Talayesva uses in the phrase “our girls had been replaced” omits to mention the subject who did the replacing, who was in charge of the sexual enterprise, or what had become of the original girls. Similar to the first prostitute’s threat to “call a police” if Talayesva disobeyed her command, this new, younger prostitute’s recourse to “a doctor” who “examined” her “every two weeks” evidences the presence of (probably male) authority figures who presided over the prostitutes’ sexual labor. The involvement of legal and medical professionals in the sex work of these women indicates a certain social tolerance of their profession, at least in the particular time and place of Winslow, Arizona in the first decades of the twentieth century.²³² As Foucault explains, “[s]exuality was carefully confined” to the home” after the dawn of Victorianism; however, “[i]f it was truly necessary to make room for illegitimate sexualities, it was reasoned, let them take their infernal mischief elsewhere: to a place where they could be reintegrated, if not in the circuits of production, at least in those of profit. The brothel and the mental hospital would be those places of tolerance: the prostitute, the client, and the pimp, together with the psychiatrist and his hysteric . . . seem to have surreptitiously transferred the pleasures that are unspoken into the order of things that are counted.”²³³ Talayesva’s testimony of prostitution as a sexual economy overseen and perpetuated by white men, women, and

²³² I wonder, though, was prostitution legal? If so, was there any minimum age requirement which would restrict the solicitation of sex from minors, such as this sixteen-year-old?

²³³ Foucault, *History*, 3-4.

girls challenges colonial rhetoric of Indians as especially sexually unethical, promiscuous, or perverse in contrast to the superior morality of white folks.

During a trade trip to Flagstaff, Talayesva and Mettie's husband, Jimmie, "entered a house with a reputation" in search of prostitutes. This account highlights the problems of race and racism in the sexual economy, as the Hopi men are discriminated against and denied service. Because the brothel was crowded with "so many white men," Talayesva and Jimmie "had no chance at all" to procure the attentions of prostitutes who discriminated against non-white sexual partners. When Talayesva exits the brothel, he sees "a half-breed Negro leave another house" and asks him "if it were a good place to go. He laughed and said, 'Yes, for two dollars.' I thanked him, stepped up to the door, and knocked" (292). The exchange that ensues reveals much about the complicated web of U.S. race relations and women's agency over their sexual behavior, so I represent it here at length:

A woman opened it, and when I asked her where I could find some nice girls, she pointed to the house which I had left. I told her that it was full of customers and asked, 'My friend, are you one of them?' 'No,' she answered. But I reported my conversation with the Negro and begged her to accept me. She said, 'Well, I don't know, but I think I will not.' Then I spoke in a soft voice: 'I am a human being, too, and just as good as that Negro. My money is United States silver, not Mexican. Here is a dollar; see the lady's head on one side and an eagle on the other. Please take me.' 'You are very dirty,' she replied. 'You must take a bath.' She led me to a bathroom where I stripped, washed, and waited. When she returned, she scrubbed my back herself with a rag and some good-smelling soap, and then examined me. As soon as I was dry, I called, 'Can you give me something clean to wear?' 'Here is a nightgown,' she answered. As I pulled it over my head, I looked into the mirror and laughed, wondering whether I resembled the Holy Ghost. (292)

Talayesva defends himself as "a human being" and presents a successful argument that he is "just as good as that Negro," especially because of the equalizing power of the

money in his hand. It is unclear whether the woman's prerequisite that Talayesva bathe before sleeping with her indicates that Talayesva was really unclean, as he may have been after a voyage to Flagstaff from Oraibi, or rather that the woman harbored stereotypes of Indians as filthy savages.²³⁴ Talayesva's joke to himself about resembling the Holy Ghost is as much about the flowing nightgown as it is about his cleanliness, and it recalls the boarding schools' Christian rhetoric of cleanliness as next to godliness. When Talayesva leaves this woman, he finds that Jimmie "had had no luck at all. I told him my experience, and we had a big laugh about how some Whites think Indians are not even human beings" (292). Having a laugh at the ignorance of white people's racism, Talayesva and his friend exemplify how humor serves as a mode of surviving discrimination.

Freddie's gossip about his and Talayesva's visits to prostitutes gets around to Talayesva's wife, Irene, who becomes upset by her husband's infidelity. "Irene kept harping on the subject," Talayesva intimates, and she "cried a little, discouraged love-making for a time, and nearly drove me out of the house" until Talayesva finally "had to admit the truth, act very sorry, and make a promise. After a few weeks she got over her anger, teased me about what happened, and actually joked me about it before other women" (265). Irene's hurt and anger indicate that Talayesva's adulterous behavior is not, in fact, tolerable, and her threat to drive him out of her house indicates that his infidelity does not demonstrate ideal or even typical Hopi behavior but rather constitutes a breach of their marital arrangement. Despite the promise Talayesva made to his wife, he

²³⁴ See McClintock, *Imperial*.

continues to engage adulterous affairs. Talayesva risks (mis)representing Hopi men in general as adulterous when he claims that, “[l]ike a true Hopi man, I realized more and more that a wife is not enough” (268). Considering Irene’s reaction to Talayesva’s infidelity (as well as his public censure for such behavior, which I will explain in the next section), it is clear that Talayesva’s normalization of adultery serves more as a justification of his individual transgressions rather than an accurate representation of Hopi mores.

When Irene becomes pregnant for the first time, Talayesva is “glad” because “she had been slow in getting a baby,” and he is happy to discover that she is not “barren,” as some women, he had “heard,” “are half-men, having testicles inside their bodies . . . I was glad that it was now plain to everyone that Irene could have a baby and that I could be a father” (259).²³⁵ Talayesva’s excitement over Irene’s pregnancy comes, foremost, from the fact that her condition proves that he and his wife are normally gendered. Unspoken here is his possible fear that he is the “barren” one, as it is well-known that he is “half-woman” and may be impotent as a result of his special, anomalous twin identity. Each of Talayesva’s children die in infancy, and after the death of his third child, “[t]he people talked more than ever. They said again and again that I was unlucky with children, and some of them tried to put all the blame on me, hinting that I was careless in the ceremonies, that I ran around with private wives, and that I had arguments with my wife which worried my babies and caused them to pine and die” (284). These charges indicate that members of Talayesva’s Hopi society regarded adultery as a more serious offence

²³⁵ I wonder if these “half-men,” women with internal testicles, are also considered as “twins” or members of the Antelope society.

than he indicates. However, Talayesva's fourth child, born some years later, was perhaps the product of Irene's own infidelity. Talayesva explains that the boy "looked like a white child," and at "first I thought he was an albino" (289). This detail implies that Talayesva was not the biological father of this baby, and such a possibility is strengthened by the fact that "Irene's mother would have nothing to do with us and would hardly look at her daughter. She gave Irene no advice and did not seem to want her to have any more children" (289). If Talayesva was infertile, Irene may have sought "private husbands" so that she could get pregnant.

According to normalizing sexuality discourses, *Sun Chief* represents Talayesva as queer on the bases of his physiology (double-sexed), psychology (homoerotic dreams), and behavior (mutual masturbation with boys, promiscuity, and adultery). Finally, he experiences an outbreak of some sexually transmitted disease(s) that Eurocentric readers may interpret as a fitting consequence of his sexual misconduct. However, his Hopi doctors do not blame Talayesva for his own illness, which they do not associate with his sexual behavior. In his foundational queer of color work, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, José Esteban Muñoz argues that the "point . . . is not to moralize about how [queer of color representations of sexuality] might be harmful . . . Instead, it is far more useful to note the ways in which" such representations function to transfigure dominant sexuality discourses.²³⁶ Rather than moralize about *Sun Chief*'s representations of sexuality, either Talayesva's or that of the Hopi community more broadly, I focus on *Sun Chief* as a powerful autoethnographic performance in which

²³⁶ Muñoz, *Disidentifications*, 87.

Talayasva's autoexoticizing practice of confessing, representing, and narrativizing his body, sexual behaviors, and desires transfigures the history of sexuality in the context of U.S. imperialism.

Hopi Clowns and the (Sexual) State of Exception

Recent work by scholars in the field of Queer Indigenous Studies has extended Michel Foucault's and Giorgio Agamben's theories of biopolitics to the context of settler colonization in the Americas to theorize Native sovereignty, and the position of Native peoples more broadly, as "the state of exception." According to Agamben, the state of exception appears as an aberration "from the regular regime of law" yet "actually exposes the rooting of the law itself in a 'sovereign' will that can decide where, how, and to what the formal 'juridical order' will apply."²³⁷ Through this logic, Native peoples' preexistence as self-governing polities, distinct from the colonial state, seems to expose the limit and arbitrariness of U.S. sovereignty; yet, the U.S.'s conferral of sovereign status upon Native nations, according to Scott Morgensen, "functioned as biopower, positioning Native peoples perpetually in the state of exception"—a peculiar position as autochthonous and self-governing polities that are nonetheless subject to domestic U.S. law—to "control Indigenous people and supplant Indigenous sovereignty."²³⁸ Similarly, Mark Rifkin asserts that the "narration of Native peoples as an exception from the regular categories of U.S. law . . . can be seen as, in Agamben's terms, a form of 'sovereign

²³⁷ Rifkin, "Indigenizing," 89-90.

²³⁸ Morgensen, *Spaces*, 33.

violence” that “forcibly disavows” Native peoples’ “autonomy and self-representations” by consigning them “to a ‘peculiar,’ and thus regulatable” position within U.S. political discourses.²³⁹ To compensate for its vulnerability, illegitimacy, or arbitrariness, U.S. sovereignty depends on the existence of Native peoples in the state of exception; that is, the juridical classification of Native peoples as sovereign nations that are also “domestic dependents” in need of the paternal care and protection of the settler colonial state seeks to justify U.S. dominance over the geographical territory of the continent.²⁴⁰

Sun Chief dramatizes the situation of Native peoples in the state of exception as it played out among the Hopi in the 1920s, when BIA agents, field matrons, school officials, and other ostensibly well-meaning interlopers sought to regulate, restrain, and even legally prohibit certain Hopi ceremonial dances and practices. In this section, I focus on The Secret Dance File as a colonial sex discourse that characterized Hopi clown dances as obscene, immoral, and in need of federal disciplining. The creators of the Secret Dance File sought to repress Hopi practices of self-governance and reinforce the Hopi’s position as the state of exception, thus cementing the “overriding sovereignty” of the U.S.²⁴¹ *Sun Chief* offers a counternarrative to the Secret Dance File that relocates Hopi ceremonial practice out of the state of exception and re-centers it within the sovereign jurisdiction of Hopiland.

Sun Chief narrates Talayesva’s journey toward a sovereign erotic by detailing the continuity between Hopi struggles for sociopolitical autonomy and federal prohibition of

²³⁹ Rifkin, “Indigenizing,” 90, 114.

²⁴⁰ Rifkin, “Indigenizing,” 89.

²⁴¹ Rifkin, “Indigenizing,” 89.

ostensibly immoral ceremonial dances—in particular, the sexually explicit dances of the Hopi clowns. Historian Margaret D. Jacobs explains that “Pueblo dances were solemn occasions in which the participants prayed,” but they “also involved intermittent interruptions by a group of clowns,” or fun-making *katcinas*.²⁴² Don Talayesva’s role as a Hopi clown included performances of dances and antics that non-Hopi, and particularly Protestant, onlookers deemed lewd or sexually obscene. *Sun Chief* details Talayesva’s ceremonial performances of sexual situations, which flouted the public/private binary inherent in settler colonial standards of sexual decency or civility. Colonial agents sought to criminalize Hopi clown performances because they considered them to be savage and detrimental to the Hopis’ progress toward civilization due to the dances’ public displays of sexual behavior, including dramatizations of what they saw as lasciviousness, group sex, rape, and bestiality. As a sacred clown, Talayesva continued traditional Hopi sociopolitical practices that defied settler colonial authorities’ simultaneous and related efforts to Christianize Hopi people and to eradicate traditional Hopi cultural practices. Providing a decolonial counternarrative to Protestant reformers’ disparaging discourses, *Sun Chief* narrates how Talayesva used the knowledge he gained at boarding school and the performative occasion of his clown performances to expose the hypocrisy that lurked beneath the repressive designs of missionaries, moral reformers, and other colonial government agents.

In *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: The Will to Knowledge*, Michel Foucault explains that sexuality was originally a bourgeois construction of self-avowal that was

²⁴² Jacobs, *Engendered*, 114.

then conferred onto lower classes through the disciplining of reproduction, the organization of normative family structures, and the campaign for the moralization of the poorer classes. An examination of the projects of missionaries and moral reformers among the Hopi supports Foucault's theory that the institutionalized production of sex discourses constitutes biopower. Protestant moralists and other settler colonial agents saw the Hopi people not as a tacitly sovereign nation with the right of self-governance but as a minority cultural aggregate, or an ethnic population living within the geographical boundaries of the U.S., that was both economically and morally impoverished—in need of not only food and clothing but also state regulation and disciplining through institutions like schools and churches. In particular, moral reformers sought to rein in what they considered to be deviant sexual behavior and promote the so-called civilization of Hopi people by banning cultural traditions they deemed immoral or obscene. The moral reformers who were involved with the Secret Dance File campaign to ban Hopi clown dances claimed that the dances were to blame for Hopi people's generally "nonchalant attitude" toward sex, indicated by their custom of openly discussing sexual matters during "common conversation" regardless of discussants' age, gender, or location.²⁴³ This charge suggests the reformers' opinion that sex is a special subject to be talked about only during certain restricted times, in certain private places, by certain qualified people. The case of the Secret Dance File perfectly illustrates Foucault's debunking of the repressive hypothesis. According to Foucault, sex and sexuality are

²⁴³ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 119. Throughout her work, Jacobs uses the term "white women" as if it were a transparent and self-evident category, effectively eliding the experiences of, for example, Italian and other immigrant women in America whose sexuality was also being policed at this time, for example, through eugenicist reproductive programs. In quoting Jacobs' work, I do not mean to reproduce her generalizations, so I would qualify the phrase "white women" to mean, in particular, Protestant Anglo-Americans.

constructed, disciplined, normalized, or pathologized not through prohibiting speech about sex but rather through proliferating sex discourses that are institutionalized, categorized, and regulated. It may seem that, according to the Secret Dance File makers, unrestrained sex discourse—and therefore the dances that encourage it—must be repressed in order to civilize the Hopi.²⁴⁴ However, in gathering evidence to present their case, they amassed a collection of stories about the sexual antics of the Hopi clowns and called it The Secret Dance File. This extensive report and the chain of gossip that followed it support Foucault’s critique of the repression hypothesis and his theory that the institutionalized production of sex discourses, rather than the repression of sex, constitutes biopower.

The Secret Dance File is part of an early twentieth century colonial sexuality discourse that aimed to discipline Hopi subjects as the domestic dependents of an overriding U.S. sovereign. Moral reformers, missionaries, and other state agents condemned Hopi clown dances in particular as “impediments to their goal of assimilating Native Americans. Armed with the Secret Dance File,” Jacobs explains, “they hoped to pressure the government to ban Indian dances they deemed harmful to Indian

²⁴⁴ Ironically, Jacobs points out that “[a]lthough moral reformers . . . had worked with the Pueblos since 1888,” they didn’t “express any concern about Pueblo sexual morality until after 1915,” when sexual mores and gender roles became contentious among white society (Jacobs 120). Jacobs suggests that moral reformers “superimpose[d] this view of unfettered sexuality upon the Indians” as a way of “distan[c]ing” “this disorder and sexual immorality” “from white culture and locat[ing] [it] within a ‘primitive’ culture” as a strategy for “properly contain[ing]” it (Jacobs 122). Jacobs’ argument suggests that white women were drawn to aid the colonization of Pueblo Indians due to their lack of political power in their own patriarchal society. This argument recalls to my mind Lauren Berlant’s critique of sentimentalism, a staple of the Cult of True Womanhood, as “paternalism dressed as maternalism.” Convinced of their duty as True Women, white moral reformers sought to “uplift” Indian women through their own internalized misogyny. Despite their good intentions, their angst regarding their political/public powerlessness to affect American culture and law led them to oppress Indian peoples.

progress.”²⁴⁵ The nearly 200-page testimony, compiled in 1920 by U.S. Inspector E.M. Sweet, consists of “sworn affidavits and written statements from about a dozen Hopi Indians and seven white observers.”²⁴⁶ The compilers of the Secret Dance File relied on the testimonies of Hopi Christian converts to substantiate their claims of the dances’ obscenity and immorality. The Hopi people who contributed to the Secret Dance File no longer took part in Hopi ceremony; they had been trained in boarding schools to be ashamed of their ostensibly sinful traditions. Jacobs notes that “[a]lthough the sentiments of the Hopi witnesses seem to be genuine, their written testimonies appear to be edited and embellished by their interviewers.”²⁴⁷ By co-opting converted Hopis to their colonial project, moral reformers sought to demonstrate the need for sexual disciplining as well as the potential for Hopi Christianization and progress toward civilization.

Non-Hopi contributors to the Secret Dance File believed that their efforts to Christianize and civilize the Hopi would be more successful if the temptation to sexual immorality, in the form of ceremonial dances, were eradicated. Evelyn Bentley, who was a field matron at Oraibi, contended that “the Hopi dance is an evil influence in their lives, tending to keep alive all their traditional immorality as well as that which is natural to the flesh.”²⁴⁸ Similarly, the testimony of P.T. Lonergan, the superintendent of the Pueblo day schools, “asserted that the dances . . . were ‘grossly immoral’ and that ‘some of the most disgusting practices are indulged in, the particulars being so bestial as to

²⁴⁵ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 107.

²⁴⁶ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 106.

²⁴⁷ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 115.

²⁴⁸ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 106.

prohibit their description.”²⁴⁹ Bentley’s statement positions Hopi people as adherents of a traditionally immoral culture, and hence as a population in need of Christian conversion and state regulation—for their own good. Furthermore, Lonergan’s testimony implies that Hopi dance practices have the potential to damage the moral fiber of other U.S. citizens, their particulars being so unspeakably “bestial” that mere discussion of them would taint the purity of non-Hopi discussants. These statements assert that although immorality is a “natural” human quality that must be disciplined through Christian civilization, Hopis are doubly immoral because their religious practices constitute “traditional immorality” at the cultural, in addition to the biological, level. Lonergan’s refusal to elaborate on the “disgusting” and “bestial” “particulars” of the dances has the effect of inviting ostensibly innocent Victorian readers to imagine them for themselves, and semblance of repression marks the central irony of the dance controversy.

The clandestine nature of the Secret Dance File, in the form of restrictions on who could read the testimonies, sparked a “chain of gossip” among moral reformers who spread rumors about the possibilities of its contents. In their attempts to repress Hopi dances they considered as representative of the Indians’ sexual immorality, reformers spoke incessantly among themselves about the dances, attesting to what Jacobs describes as “an almost consuming passion on the part of moral reformers to imagine the Indians engaged in all sorts of sexual acts.”²⁵⁰ Although the Secret Dance File was designed to condemn Hopi dances as immoral, it “actually seemed to function as a form of sanctioned

²⁴⁹ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 109.

²⁵⁰ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 123.

pornography for the reformers,” for whom open “discussions of sexuality were theoretically off-limits.”²⁵¹ As agents of the US charged with the duty of civilizing the Indians, reformers considered themselves privileged to discuss the sexuality of savages in order to discipline and contain it. The dances themselves also constituted a form of sanctioned pornography for moral reformers, who took “a voyeuristic interest in attending” them in order to collect more evidence for their case.²⁵²

Colonial agents involved in the attempt to ban Hopi ceremonial practices acted to reinforce U.S. dominance, which claimed jurisdiction over Hopiland as a necessity to police all activity within the geographical boundaries of the settler colonial nation. The banning of Hopi dances infringed upon the Hopi nation’s sovereign right to determine its own governing practices and therefore exemplifies the situation of the Hopi people as the state of exception; though the Hopi nation is sovereign and autochthonous, it is nonetheless susceptible to U.S. domestic law whenever the U.S. deems it so. The U.S.’s habit of acting as an overriding sovereign constitutes sovereign violence, an arbitrary claim of entitlement to determine the limits of Hopi and other nations’ sovereignty.

The injustice of the Hopi dance controversy stemmed from moral reformers’ incomprehension of the governing role of the clowns, whose sexual antics they misconstrued as representative of regular Hopi behaviors and practices. In fact, Hopi clowns served the social function of disciplining villagers’ behavior by publicly performing Hopi people’s misdeeds through humorous reenactments that served to

²⁵¹ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 123.

²⁵² Jacobs, *Engendered*, 138.

chagrin the culprits of wrongdoing and also to warn other Hopi people against committing the same “ka-hopi,” or anti-Hopi, misbehaviors. Clowns’ ceremonial dances were hilarious to Hopi people and scandalous to white onlookers precisely because of the disparity between the clowns’ antics and the real, lived conventions of Hopi people.

White meddlers who mistook the clowns’ performances as accurate portrayals of Hopi life and values failed to get the jokes, of which white people were often the butts. As part of their disciplinary demonstrations of how good Hopi people are not to behave, the clowns often “mocked white sexual behavior” and popular American culture, which they encountered when they left the reservation to attend boarding schools. Jacobs’ study includes the testimony of at least two white observers who were keen to the clowns’ mockery. During a Pueblo dance she attended in the 1920s, Elizabeth DeHuff witnessed “a group of small Indian boys” who were wearing white boys’ clothing and performing a dance that resembled the Charleston.²⁵³ BIA farmer L. R. McDonald, one of the contributors to the Secret Dance File, also seems to have realized that the clowns were not representing Hopi culture but rather mocking their settler neighbors; he writes,

‘it seemed to me that the dancers . . . wished to convey the impression among their people that they were imitating Americans or Mexicans because some of the women bowed and scraped and strutted and attempted to waltz a little, all of which seemed to me to be an attempt to parody an American or Mexican woman at a dance.’²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 137.

²⁵⁴ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 137.

Unfortunately, however, the majority of non-Hopi onlookers failed to grasp the satirical nature of the clowns' performances and viewed them as proof of the Indians' need of Christian salvation and colonial disciplining.

Sun Chief narrates how, as Chief of the clowns, Talayesva trains a young group of would-be clowns to mock the lewdness of white popular culture. He writes,

As I looked around my little partners were playing 'horsy,' and then doing the white man's hoochy-koochy dance. . . . The people laughed at our stunts until tears ran down their faces, while I smiled proudly to myself and watched the Whites. Some were smiling with us, but I heard later that one lady remarked, 'I don't think these clowns will ever go to heaven. (305)

The white lady's damning remark is ironic, as the behavior of the children she dooms mimicked a white man's dance. The lady, and others like her, was blind to the fact that the clowns' parodies of white immorality performed resistance to the white sexual behavior they had the opportunity to observe while away at boarding schools—as well as the white supremacist ideologies to which they were subjected. As Jacob rightly points out, “the clowns' parody of white behavior provided another lesson in how good Pueblos should not behave” and “provided many Pueblo Indians with a humorous means of asserting their autonomy.”²⁵⁵

Hopi clowns' performative inversions of acceptable behavior served several governing functions. In addition to warning and instructing Hopis how not to behave, clowns also acted as police who publicly punished wrongdoers through joking ridicule. Anthropologist Vera Laski claims that the Hopi clowns are “the friendliest, gayest, and

²⁵⁵ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 139.

best liked moral squad any community ever had.”²⁵⁶ *Sun Chief* narrates one such clown performance that was designed to censure Talayesva for adultery:

I enjoyed clown work and often did it to help the people, but once in Shongopavi a painful joke was played on me. I was punished for adultery. Two comic ‘female’ Katcinas charged us with this crime and offered us the choice between Hopi punishment now and the Christian’s hell hereafter. When we decided in favor of Hopi justice, one of the Katcina ‘ladies’ opened a bag and took out four pieces of prickly cactus attached to strings . . . The ‘ladies’ pulled me along to the starting place and, although I made pledges of strict virtue in the future, they told me that they knew my record at Moenkopi and advised me that it was far better to be punished now by fair-minded Hopi than to go to hell forever . . . they fastened [the cactus] to my G-string so that the prickly pieces swung between my legs. Although I ran spraddle-legged, it did little good, for the ‘ladies’ followed close behind, striking the thorny balls to keep them swinging. I had a hell of a time, which the people, and even Irene [Talayesva’s wife], seemed to enjoy. (279-280)

This story indicates that adultery was not socially acceptable among the Hopi, as scholars like Brandt have claimed to assert the general lack of ethics in Hopi culture. Moreover, the Katcinas’ proffered choice of punishment for Talayesva’s misdeed humorously critiques Christian dogma regarding damnation for sexual sins. “Hopi justice,” in the form of Talayesva’s temporary physical discomfort and public censure for his human failings, provides some relief to his wife and a sense that rightness has been restored; indeed, the story implies that there is no justice in the Christian hell.

Sun Chief provides a counternarrative to the Secret Dance File and reasserts Hopi sovereignty and jurisdiction over the cultural, religious, and political goings-on in Hopiland. Talayesva’s narrative condemns school administrators and other state agents who observed the dances with the insidious intent to search for immoral behavior so that they could then condemn and punish it. Federal agents’ surveillance of Hopi dances

²⁵⁶ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 116.

restricted the clowns' freedom to govern their people and often ruined or negated the effectualness of their sacred dances. While discussing possible performance strategies among a group of fellow clowns, Talayesva advises against one clown's suggestion, stating that he "had heard that once . . . the Whites jailed" a clown for performing a similar act (185). This passage demonstrates how colonial interference in Hopi ceremonies led to self-censorship as a measure for avoiding punishment. Due to Hopis' fear of punishment, the mere presence of colonial authorities effectually interrupted sacred ceremonies.

Talayesva also narrates a dance during which he played strip-checkers with a clown dressed as a female Katsina: "We played until we had lost everything except our hair and loincloths. Then the old Katsina won our hair; but when she drew shears from her bosom to clip it, our aunts rushed into the plaza, took them from her, and saved us" (189). Hopi people learned to play checkers while away at boarding school. This scene of being saved from having their hair cut recalls the boarding school agents' shearing of Hopi heads as a primary mechanism of demoralizing them by disciplining their bodies. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the clowns perform a sovereign erotic by humorously reenacting the process of having traditional Hopi clothing, religion, language, and other cultural practices stripped from them upon arriving to boarding schools. Talayesva continues,

The old lady warned us that if she won again, she would take our loincloths. We played and lost. She grabbed my G-string to snatch it off. I looked around for government employees and saw the school principal watching us with a frown on his face. I whispered, 'Stop, there is the principal, and he looks cross.' The old Katsina replied in an undertone, 'That doggone white man should stay away if he can't stand it.' (189-190)

The school principal and other authorities acting as agents of the U.S. nation-state often attended Hopi ceremonial dances in the plaza in order to police the public or religious practices of Hopi life. Although Talayesva is an adult and no longer a student under the jurisdiction of the school principal at the time of this dance, he nonetheless evinces fear of the colonial agent. The old Kacina's assertion that the white man should "stay away if he can't stand it" presents a strong claim of Hopi jurisdiction over the goings-on of the dances, highlighting the tensions surrounding the Hopi's position in the state of exception. Talayesva requests that the old Kacina interrupt the performance to avoid angering the white principal because he is afraid of how he may be punished for publicly exposing his genitals. During this time, many Hopi people were imprisoned for observing practices that were illegal according to United States law. Rather than continue with the performance, the clowns think of something else to do.

As a concession, the female-impersonating kacina challenges the three clowns to a race and promises to allow them to take their pleasure if she loses. When she does lose and the clowns move toward her, Talayesva notices that the "principal was still watching, but we decided to take our reward in spite of him. . . . I claimed first turn as Chief of the Clowns. I made ready, then glanced around and saw the white man had moved to a better view and was leaning forward, looking. The people laughed, but I was angry" (190). The principal's willful surveillance angers Talayesva, whose fear of being punished inhibits his ability to perform his sacred duty. Rather than remain embittered, Talayesva seizes this opportunity to shame the principal for his hypocrisy:

We called off the demonstration . . . Then I turned to my partners and said, 'I'm going to fix that white man.' I walked up to him, shook hands, and said in Hopi,

‘Well, white man, you want to see what goes on, don’t you? You have spoiled our prayers, and it may not rain. You think this business is vulgar, but it means something sacred to us. This old Kacina is impersonating the Corn Maiden; therefore we must have intercourse with her so that our corn will increase and our people will live in plenty. If this were evil we would not be doing it. You are supposed to be an educated man, but you had better go back to school and learn something more about Hopi life.’ He seemed embarrassed, reached into his pocket, drew out a half-dollar, and said, ‘Here, take this and get some tobacco.’ I thanked him and sent a man after the tobacco. (190)

This passage demonstrates Talayesva’s enactment of a Hopi sovereign erotic, as he talks back to the principal’s disciplinary gaze. He clearly expresses to the principal his conviction that the white man’s interruption of the dance compromises the sociopolitical autonomy of Hopi people. Talayesva’s humorous suggestion that the principal “had better go back to school” in order to “learn something more about Hopi life” points out the principal’s ignorance of Hopi politics and governance.

In a way, *Sun Chief* characterizes Hopi clowns as themselves existing in the state of exception to the Hopi moral code. Through inverting social mores of behavior and propriety, Hopi clowns embody a privileged position through which they demonstrate how not to behave and thereby enact moral instruction and disciplining. Talayesva states that clowns can do or get away with anything because of their sacred roles as clowns, not ordinary or typical Hopi people.

According to *Sun Chief*, sex is itself fundamentally humorous, and humor is a legitimate mode of instruction and knowledge production. This paradigm flouts Victorian discourses of sex as a serious subject reserved for discussion by medical, psychological, and juridical professionals. When Talayesva’s friends warn him not to write his sex jokes in his diary for his white “brother,” Simmons, to see, Talayesva replies, “‘He doesn’t

scold me' . . . We were only joking, of course, but jokes have truth in them" (364). This plain statement—"jokes have truth in them"—succinctly summarizes my argument that *Sun Chief* performs Talayesva's journey to a sovereign erotic.

Reviewers of *Sun Chief*, such as Jacobs and Frederick Dockstader, are confounded by the text, which they see as contradicting the claims of Pueblo people who, during the dance controversy, insisted that they were more moral than most whites. Regarding Talayesva's narrative, Dockstader advises that we "must guard against judging the group . . . by the opinions or reactions of a very few of its members, many of whom may deliberately or unconsciously mislead."²⁵⁷ I think it's important to entertain Dockstader's suggestion that Talayesva may have presented false or embellished sex stories to trick Simmons, to play a joke on him, or to endow his life history with humor and also nuanced cultural critique. However, I take issue with Jacobs' and Dockstader's assumption that the morality of two cultural groups can be meaningfully juxtaposed; this misses the point of the Pueblo Indians' critique of white moral reformers as hypocritical interlopers who interfered with their sovereign rights of self-governance.

I wonder if Talayesva's community recognized his fitness for clown work due to his prenatal specialness and his double-sexed appearance at birth. Edward Valandra claims that as-told-to Indian autobiographers were always atypical subjects who existed as anomalies among their traditional communities and that this queer subject position constituted their amenability to collaborate with non-Indian scholars. Valandra argues that as-told-to Native autobiographies constitute "literary embarrassments rather than . . .

²⁵⁷ Jacobs, *Engendered*, 142.

authentic Native voices,” denying a legitimate Native identity to subjects like Talayesva.²⁵⁸ While I agree with Valandra that critics must be careful not to regard the contents of as-told-to autobiographies as entirely factual representations of Native peoples or cultures, I wonder about the consequences of denigrating these texts or condemning them to uselessness.

Isn't it true that any work of literature has its representational limits? Doesn't the identity or intention of the author die, to use Barthes' terminology, once the literary work is released into the world to be taken up by readers as they will? The value I find in *Sun Chief* as a work of literature, as a cultural artifact, is not its verisimilitude to the real life of Don Talayesva or the authentic culture of the Hopi people. I don't doubt that Valandra is right in his assessment of Indians who collaborated in autobiographical projects with non-Indigenous scholars as occupying an anomalous position among their tribal communities. But, rather than imply that such figures are trouble makers who cause the community to be misrepresented, and thus their stories should be ignored, I want to explore the potential that works like *Sun Chief* might provide anomalous readers of today or tomorrow with some strategies for speaking their truth back to colonial power. The sexual tricks and jokes in *Sun Chief* attest to Talayesva's indiscipline and the failure of colonial agents to assimilate his sovereign erotic.

²⁵⁸ Valandra, "The As-Told-To," 117.

Conclusion

To conclude, I want to address the ways that Hopi scholars have recently engaged with *Sun Chief* and pose a few of my still unanswered questions. In his new foreword to the text, Gilbert cites Vine Deloria Jr., who criticized autobiographies like *Sun Chief* for failing to have “correctly informed the reader” on tribal struggles, e.g., protesting resource extraction—like the Peabody Coal corporation operating in Hopi territory.²⁵⁹ Gilbert similarly criticizes *Sun Chief* by stating that “at no point in Talayesva’s narrative does he discuss the establishment of the Hopi tribal government in 1936, the single most important political development for Hopis during the 1930s. Instead, readers learn about Hopi culture and religious practices and superstitions. We learn about life as one Hopi lived it during and after the Indian Progressive Era, but we receive very little information to help us understand the larger issues of Hopi self-determination.”²⁶⁰ I sympathize with this critique, but I wonder how much Talayesva is to be blamed for this omission; after all, *Sun Chief* was produced through collaboration with Simmons, often in response to Simmons’ very narrow questions. And the text of the book constitutes only a small portion of what Talayesva wrote in his diary; the only way to know what Simmons omitted is to read the original manuscript, assuming it exists in the archive.

Gilbert asserts that “[e]very reader of *Sun Chief* should be cognizant of the reality that although Talayesva produced a remarkable book, he did so at great cost to himself and his village community” since many Hopi “despised him for sharing religious

²⁵⁹ Sakiestewa Gilbert, “Foreword,” xiv.

²⁶⁰ Sakiestewa Gilbert, “Foreword,” xiv.

information with Simmons” and “ostracized him for telling privileged Hopi knowledge to the world.”²⁶¹ However, I continue to wonder what use we might make of Talayesva’s engagement of colonial sex discourse as an assertion of Hopi sovereignty and the right to self-govern and determine the propriety of public performances.

²⁶¹ Sakiestewa Gilbert, “Foreword,” xiii-xiv.

CHAPTER FOUR

Decolonizing Voth's Archive: Re-narrating Ethnographic

Photographs in Hopi and Settler Colonial Contexts

American Indian literary scholar Phillip Round has argued that we may usefully regard Indian archives as orphanages.²⁶² Round suggests that, through our decolonial scholarship, we may locate the scattered indigenous archive and, perhaps, repatriate it. To that end, this chapter examines several of the myriad photos included in the archive of Mennonite missionary to the Hopi, Rev. H. R. Voth, which is housed at the Braun Research Library in Los Angeles. In 1893, when Voth founded the first federally appointed mission near Oraibi, Arizona, the practice of creating and maintaining knowledge through visual culture was not a foreign concept to Hopi people.²⁶³ However, photography might have been. But, the Hopi grew accustomed to it during Voth's thirteen-year mission, as he carried his camera with him always. Assisted by his wife and step-daughter, Voth produced over 2,000 photographs documenting his mission work, as well as the landscape, people, and events he encountered.²⁶⁴

Rather than a diversion from his official duties as a missionary and government agent, picture taking was part and parcel of Voth's attempt to uplift the Hopi out of

²⁶² See Round.

²⁶³ For example, patterns in pottery and woven textile tell stories and symbolize a variety of Hopi values and traditions.

²⁶⁴ As part of his mission complex, Voth established a day school, church, and mission house in "New Oraibi," the Hopi village of Kykotsmovi, which is located below the mesa-top village of "Old" Oraibi. According to Trotta, "The sheer volume of extant photographs is evidence that Voth carried his camera everywhere he went, and Martha's [Mrs. Voth's] diary records that she and [her daughter] Frieda developed photographs as part of their daily chores" (Trotta 195).

savagery and into civilization. Voth's efforts as a missionary and photographer were interconnected through his conception of himself as a savior of savages. As a missionary, Voth sought to save Hopi souls through religious conversion and to civilize their minds through formal Protestant education at the Oriabi day school, which he founded as part of his mission complex. Furthermore, as an ethnographer—and a proponent of salvage anthropology—Voth attempted to use photography to save knowledge of Hopi culture from presumably inevitable disappearance. As Native American visual culture scholar Michelle Raheja explains,

Salvage anthropology stressed that indigenous people were destined to disappear off the face of the earth in a matter of years. Therefore, great pains should be taken to preserve any indigenous material or linguistic artifact. This anxiety-driven form of anthropology was less concerned with representing indigenous culture as the indigenous peoples interpreted themselves, but more with the value of future scientific research on tribal/non-Western cultures.²⁶⁵

Preserving information through the collection and organization of material culture in archives is a Western, which is to say colonial and non-Native, practice.²⁶⁶ Archives are

²⁶⁵ Raheja, "Reading," 1184.

²⁶⁶ It is important to note, however, that the Hopi do engage in practices meant to preserve information about historical events, to keep history alive and part of the present. For example, religious ceremonies and kachina dances are concerned with preserving traditions and passing information and instructions about the correct ways of doing things from one generation to the next; to ensure rain and agricultural prosperity, it is important that practitioners conduct ceremonies the right way. Some kachina ceremonies are performed in the open plaza, in view of all villagers, while others are performed in underground kivas where only members of the particular kiva society are invited to watch or participate because certain forms of knowledge are restricted to certain religious societies, which are responsible for remembering information, maintaining practices, and teaching the youth. Hopi songs and stories provide additional examples of Hopi practices of preserving history. See Sekaquaptewa and Washburn, "They Go Along Singing." Talayesva's life narrative, *Sun Chief*, exemplifies the Hopi practice of materially preserving information through carving petroglyphs. Describing the events of an expedition he went on to gather salt at the Grand Canyon, Talayesva records that his party approached "a red stone upon which were the carvings of an old-fashioned fur quilt pattern, with stitches and seams used in ancient times for sewing wildcat skins into robes" (239). Talayesva also describes a "shrine where Hopi salt gatherers carve their clan emblems on the rocks. Our ancestors had gathered salt for many generations, and there were hundreds of clan emblems cut into the rocky base of the shrine" (235).

institutions constructed in anticipation of the disappearance of the peoples whose material cultures they save for future researchers. Like much ethnography produced through colonial frameworks, such as the logic of elimination²⁶⁷ that seems to have informed Voth's photographic practice, Voth's archive presents us with the problem of representation.

Although Voth's photographs were not produced or endorsed by Hopi people as authentic representations of Hopi realities, they nevertheless circulated as such in the American academic world. Voth's photographs were published in multiple ethnological and historical studies, as he sold his prints and negatives to his scholar friends.²⁶⁸ In her unpublished dissertation on the Voths' mission, historian Cathy Ann Trotta explains that "visiting scientists" "often requested photographs from Voth . . . On August 19, 1895, for example, Voth wrote [in his diary] that 'Professor [George Wharton] James would like to have negatives from me and lantern slides.'"²⁶⁹ Raheja asserts that it is "impossible to ignore the important cultural . . . material in the ethnographic and historical record, especially as this material constructs a mass-mediated view of the indigenous world."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ The phrase "logic of elimination" was coined by Patrick Wolfe, who argues that although "the settler-colonial logic of elimination has manifested as genocidal," it should be distinguished from genocide, which can (and does) occur outside of settler colonial contexts (Wolfe 387). According to Wolfe, "Settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal" (Wolfe 387). See Wolfe.

²⁶⁸ These include *The Oraibi Powamu Ceremony* (1901), *The Oraibi Oaqol Ceremony* (1903), *Traditions of the Hopi* (1905), *Hopi Proper Names* (1905), *Oraibi Natal Customs and Ceremonies* (1905), *The Oraibi Summer Snake Ceremony*, *The Oraibi Marau Ceremony* (1912), and *Brief Miscellaneous Hopi Papers* (1912), all authored by Voth, as well as *The Mishongnovi Ceremonies of the Snake and Antelope Fraternities* (1902) and *The Oraibi Soyal Ceremony* (1903), co-authored by George A. Dorsey and H. R. Voth. Voth's study of "Oraibi Marriage Customs" also appeared in a 1900 edition of *American Anthropologist*.

²⁶⁹ Trotta, "Crossing," 196. Voth's photographic archive is housed in the George Wharton James collection at the Braun Research Library, which is part of the Autry National Center in Los Angeles, California.

Indeed, as Trotta writes, “scholars have relied” on Voth’s photographs for over a hundred years, since “photography was prohibited in the Hopi Pueblos after 1914.”²⁷¹ So, what are we to make of Voth’s photographs now?

In the imperialist myth of Indian assimilation as progressive liberation from benighted primitivism to modernity, Indians exist in a state of belatedness and indebtedness to the liberator. I want to re-narrate Voth’s archive outside the colonial logic

²⁷⁰ Raheja, “Reading,” 11.

²⁷¹ Trotta, “Crossing,” 197-198. Trotta’s unpublished dissertation, Titled “Crossing Cultural Boundaries: Heinrich and Martha Moser Voth in the Hopi Pueblos, 1893-1906,” is housed in the George Wharton James collection at the Braun Library along with Voth’s photographs. Though I rely heavily on Trotta’s dissertation because it is a valuable source of information about Voth’s self-declared intentions and activities, I take issue with Trotta’s assumptions and interpretations. I consider Trotta to be a colonial-allied researcher, as her work seems to take as granted the propriety of Voth’s endeavor to convert the Hopis. Trotta rightly characterizes the Voths’ mission as a failure, but the question that drives her research seems to lament this point. She asks, “Why did the [Voths’] evangelical outreach fail?” She conjectures, “The reason, I believe, is that worsening environmental and socio-political conditions [i.e., drought and the Dawes Act] strengthened the traditional Hopi commitment to maintaining ceremonial ritual in order to restore harmony” (Trotta 153). Trotta’s hypothesis demonstrates her efforts, which she sustains throughout her thesis, to exculpate Voth from the common Hopi charge that he played a key role in the colonization of Oriabi by forcibly or coercively recruiting children to attend schools, disrupting ceremonies and trespassing into sacred spaces, misappropriating and stealing sacred objects and images, and personally profiting from his pilfering by publishing his findings in books and selling his collections of Hopi material culture to museums. In short, Trotta seems to be an apologist for the Mennonite missionaries. Trotta posits that whereas “Voth has been generally viewed as an interloper and violator of Hopi cultural life,” the “Voths came to serve as interlocutors and negotiators of change” (7, 5). Trotta’s hypothesis presumes that Voth’s mission failed because he successfully recruited very few souls to the Mennonite religion. By recovering Voth’s role as an “interlocutor,” for example, translating and mediating the exchange of letters between Hopi villagers and displaced Hopi prisoners in jails and boarding schools, as well as facilitating Hopi resistance to the tenets of the Dawes Act, Trotta challenges accounts of Voth as a mere thief. Lest we forget, those who “generally” view Voth as a transgressive and violent interloper are Hopi people. And Voth’s own personal diary entries reveal his strategy of using his role as an interlocutor between Hopi people and federal agents as collateral to gain access to secret tribal knowledge and sacred Hopi spaces, which he subsequently exploited. Trotta’s overall sympathetic view of Voth, and her dismissal of Hopi points of view like Don Talayesva’s as inauthentic or otherwise suspect, demonstrates her colonial biases, including the logic of Hopi indebtedness to Voth and his legacy. Trotta’s conviction that Hopis “strengthened” their “commitment to maintaining ceremonial ritual” in the face of Voth’s proselytization may have been true in spirit, but in fact, Trotta’s assertion contradicts Hopi accounts. As Sekaquaptewa and other Hopis have recorded, leaders of Hopi religious societies that were responsible for conducting ceremonies were imprisoned in jails or boarding schools by colonial agents who wanted to alienate tribal leaders from their communities so that the remaining Hopis would have no way of continuing their traditions in the absence of those who knew how to facilitate them and would be, as a result, more vulnerable to coerced cultural change brought by the government-sponsored schools and churches. Trotta is right, however, in her conclusion that traditional Hopi ways of life survived these genocidal efforts.

of debt, which characterizes each photo as a moment from the past that has been frozen and the collective Indian archive as a record of what has been lost, yet in some way saved by the benevolent white man. According to this logic, Voth's photographs constitute a record of accumulated loss, a temporal debt that the colonial researcher seeks to balance by recovering, interpreting, and evaluating the images, accounting for the past as "an object of tender regard."²⁷² Departing from this view, which naturalizes the present colonial moment as the inevitable effect of progressive historical causes, I propose that we view Voth's archive as what Raheja has termed a "virtual reservation," an "imagined space" where "indigenous people recuperate, regenerate and begin to heal . . . directly under the gaze of the national spectator. The virtual reservation," Raheja claims, can be "transformed by indigenous people into something of value, a decolonizing space."²⁷³ Viewing Voth's archive as a virtual reservation, I suggest that his photographs are not self-evident representations of a past reality, nor are they to be dismissed as mere colonial propaganda, worthless for indigenous peoples. While the production of Voth's photographs was problematic, to be sure, many of them nevertheless hold potential value for decolonial scholarship because they tell us stories about the role that ethnography—which was often conjoined with rather than distinct from missionary conversion efforts—played in the racialization of Hopi people as *Indians*, a U.S. ethnic minority within the broader population of the nation-state, as well as the role that race-making played in the broader context of U.S. settler colonialism.

²⁷² Sontag, *On Photography*, 71. This view resonates with Renato Rosaldo's theory of "imperialist nostalgia."

²⁷³ Raheja, "Reading," 10.

How might we reappropriate Voth's archive for decolonial ends?²⁷⁴ As a queer indigenous researcher visiting the Braun library, I understood my critical occupation of Voth's archive as academic and political insurgency; in Dylan Rodríguez's words, I "understood [myself] to be working in alien (if not hostile) territory."²⁷⁵ The project of decolonization involves disidentification with the archive's colonial logics. It is a necessarily comparative endeavor that aims to correct misinformation, expose erasures, and speak up for those Native voices that have been silenced. In looking at Voth's photographs, I glimpse the possibility that we may repatriate or re-narrate these photographs and create a counternarrative for these images by retelling them through the voices of Hopi autobiographers who were living at Oraibi during the time these photos were taken.

Voth is notorious for the exploitative and thieving tactics he took to procure the photographic images he desired. He often photographed sacred dances, ceremonies, and rites without permission, and he was known to force his way into underground kivas, where only select members of Hopi societies were permitted to enter, to photograph or sketch sacred altars and religious paraphernalia. When Voth did attain permission to enter limited access Hopi spaces, he did so through coercion by threatening to withhold

²⁷⁴ In a forum titled "Academia and Activism" in a 2012 edition of *American Quarterly*, Dylan Rodríguez, among others, contributes to ongoing conversations about the complexity of anti-colonial and decolonizing academic scholarship, an intellectual tradition that includes the work of Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak, Angela Davis, and Trinh T. Minh-ha. In his article titled "Racial/Colonial Genocide and the "Neoliberal Academy": In Excess of a Problematic," Rodríguez posits that "radical intellectuals" can inhabit "existing institutional sites" in order to "enable both ethical opposition to structures of domination and creative knowledge production" (Rodríguez 811). In other words, as decolonial scholars, we may re-narrate these images in order to speak up for the Hopi people who they have historically misrepresented. (I am indebted to Dustin Tahmahkera for the phrase "speak up for," as opposed to "speak for," which perpetuates the problems that Spivak addresses in "Can the Subaltern Speak?")

²⁷⁵ Rodríguez, "Racial/Colonial," 811.

services on which Hopi villagers had come to rely. For example, as a translator, Voth facilitated communication between Hopi people and government agents, and he also helped Hopi people to decipher and reply to the letters, written in English, that their children sent home from off-reservation boarding schools. Many of Voth's photographs are available for public view in the Braun Library's online archive. However, those photographs that depict "culturally sensitive"²⁷⁶ material such as religious practices or artifacts are only available to be viewed in the library by researchers who are granted special permission. Such research appointments are generally restricted to credentialed scholars who have formal affiliation with universities or other academic institutions.

Not all of Voth's photographs depict Hopi religious culture and practices. Many of them record the progress of his mission, such as the building of the mission complex, the digging of wells, etc. Other images portray Voth's wife, children, and himself living and working among the Hopi people. Several photographs portray Hopi people posing, even smiling, for the camera, which indicates their knowledge of photographic technology and their assent to have their likeness reproduced. In this chapter, I distinguish between these photographs, the posing of which I consider to constitute acts of the Hopi subjects' self-representation, and those that Voth captured without the knowledge or consent of Hopi people.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ This is the term that the Ahmanson Curator of Native American History and Culture, Kim Walters, uses to designate restricted material.

²⁷⁷ Voth resided among the Hopi from 1893-1906. The autobiographical subjects of my previous three chapters were born around 1898 (Helen Sekaquaptewa), 1892 (Polingaysi Qoyawayma), and 1890 (Don Talayesva). Voth's photographs do not always indicate the year in which they were taken, nor do they name the Hopi people pictured therein. However, given the date of his active photography, it is safe to



1. “Street Arabs in Oraibi”²⁷⁸

This photograph appeals to my curiosity because, on its reverse, Voth scrawled the title, “Hopi 1897: Street ‘Arabs’ in Oraibi.” Sitting in the research library, far from the village of Oraibi in northeastern Arizona where the photograph was created, and farther still from Arab-speaking countries, I wondered about the significance of this phrase, “Street Arabs,” which Voth used to characterize the three Hopi children depicted in this photograph. My efforts to answer this question led me to a project of comparative ethnic historiography. In penning this title for his photograph, Voth appropriated the term

assume, or at least productive to imagine, that some of these photographs may contain images of Sekaquaptewa, Qoyawayma, and/or Talayesva.

²⁷⁸ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.41136

“Street Arabs” from nineteenth century U.S. immigration discourses, thereby rhetorically juxtaposing U.S. Indian assimilation policies with those of U.S. immigrant naturalization.

“Street Arab” is a term that originated in the 1860s to denote a person, especially a child, who lived a homeless, vagabond life on the streets. Such children were otherwise known as urchins and considered mischievous because they survived, in part, by begging and stealing. More pointedly, in America in the late nineteenth century, the term “Street Arab” was a racial slur that referred to an orphaned or indigent child of immigrant parents who lived in crowded urban centers. Many social reformists of the time argued that such children needed to be removed from the streets, or from the inadequate care of their ostensibly unfit parents, and placed in the foster or adoptive care of good Christian homes, or so the rhetoric goes, to complete the process of civilization that began with their immigration to the U.S.

In 1853, philanthropist and social reformer Charles Loring Brace began the Orphan Train Movement, which is considered to be the forerunner of the modern foster care system. Brace pitied impoverished children in New York City, whose parents he considered to be unfit, e.g., due to their abuse of alcohol or engagement of criminal activity. These so-called Street Arabs helped their parents earn money by begging or selling newspapers and matches in the streets. Many of these children were apprehended by police and placed in orphanages despite the fact that their parents may have been alive and well. Brace disparaged orphanages as institutions that provided handouts rather than rehabilitation, deepening the dependence, or indebtedness, of poor people on charity. As a solution, Brace began the Orphan Train Movement to remove impoverished children

from urban centers and place them into Protestant farm families across the continent, via railroad transit. These children often became an unpaid labor force on these farms, similar to Indian students who labored in boarding schools. By 1929, the Orphan Train Movement had relocated about 250,000 children, separating many siblings in the process.²⁷⁹ Orphan Train riders were encouraged to abandon their past and fit themselves to their new, civilized foster homes.

By applying the term “Street Arabs” to Hopi children living in their traditional village of Oraibi, Voth misrepresents them as homeless and construes their social status as comparable to those of indigent children in America’s urban ghettos. Coupled with his title, Voth’s photograph depicts the Hopi children as orphans needy of the paternalistic care of white Christian missionaries, educators, and other agents of American settler colonialism, insinuating that, in order to become civilized, Hopi children must be removed from their homes and sent by train to boarding schools as a continuation of the social experiment begun by Brace. Voth’s re-contextualization of the term “Street Arabs” signals the pervasive late nineteenth century sentiment that both the children of American Indians and European immigrants must undergo processes of re-education and civilization, i.e., Americanization, before they could be deemed fit for U.S. citizenship. And, according to colonial thinkers like Brace and Voth, both immigrants and Indians owe a debt of gratitude to their benevolent white emancipators. In the

²⁷⁹ In 1872, Brace published his memoir, *The Dangerous Classes of New York*, which documents the Orphan Train Movement. The book’s title demonstrates his philosophy’s criminalization of impoverished and immigrant people living in the U.S.

colonial mind, immigrant and Indian children had nothing to lose and everything to gain through displacement from their savage and impoverished families.

Unlike some of the Orphan Train Riders, the Hopi children depicted in Voth's photograph surely had homes and loving families; they were not homeless, nor were they orphans. But, in the eyes of Voth, their apparently savage lifeways—evidenced by their bare feet and presumed nudity under those blankets—make them no better than Street Arabs. "Hopi 1897: Street 'Arabs' in Oraibi" depicts three Hopi children in front of a rock wall. One child, who appears to be between the ages of five and nine, stands with his/her back to the wall, front facing the camera but not apparently aware of (or acknowledging) its gaze, and wrapping a blanket around him/herself. To the right of this child (viewer's left) stands another child of similar, if somewhat shorter, height. This child seems to be female because she carries a much younger child—perhaps a sibling—on her back. She stands with her back turned toward the first child, so that only the profiles of her and her charge are visible to the camera's lens. She secures the naked toddler to her back with her left arm holding its left leg tightly to her hip while she wraps her right arm behind her and supports its bare bottom with her right hand. Since none of the children gaze back at the viewer, this photograph appears to represent a candid moment—an authentic slice of Hopi daily life. However, the clarity of this image indicates that the children were standing still, as though they were posing.²⁸⁰ Like other photographs in Voth's archive that depict Hopi people smiling for the camera, perhaps these three children consented to allow Voth to produce their portrait. Perhaps the girl

²⁸⁰ Several other images in Voth's archives are blurred, indicating movement of the pictured subjects.

standing in profile did so at Voth's request so that he could get a clear shot of the naked baby on her back.



2. "Street Arabs in sleeping quarters [areaway, Mulberry St.]"²⁸¹

The goal of the Orphan Train Movement was to eliminate the population of Street Arabs living in urban centers by assimilating them into civilized, or Protestant, homes. Voth's photograph of "Street 'Arabs' in Oraibi" proposes a similar civilizing process for Hopi children. This photograph bears an uncanny resemblance to famous photographs of Street Arabs in New York, such as those featured in Jacob Riis' work of photojournalism, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*, which was published in 1890. Both Voth's photo and Riis' "Street Arabs in sleeping quarters

²⁸¹ Riis, "Chapter XVII," authentichistory.com.

[areaway, Mulberry St.]” feature three barefooted children in seemingly quotidian settings. In both photos, the two children on the viewer’s left cling to one another in the absence of an adult caretaker. A rock wall provides the background of both images, suggesting the harsh or cold outdoor lifestyle of these children. Finally, as none of the children in either photograph looks back at the camera, each image presents a sense of candor or authenticity, so as to suggest: this is real life. However, the colonial rhetoric of Voth’s photo, indicated by its title if not its composition, removes it from its Hopi context.

The life narratives of Hopi autobiographers like Helen Sekaquaptewa, Polingaysi Qoyawayma, and Don Talayesva—who were all children living in Hopiland during the term of Voth’s residence—may provide the historical and cultural context that Voth’s title elides. I refute the popular notion, explained by Sontag, that photographs are “more authentic than extended literary narratives” because “they are taken to be pieces of reality.”²⁸² By mobilizing Voth’s photos as vehicles for the voices of Hopi subjects, I create a counterarchive that “*renarrate[s]* racial terror and misery . . . the forms of human suffering, entrapment, and vulnerability that are . . . routinely embedded in . . . institutional protocols, and death-inducing organization of resources.”²⁸³ Narrating Voth’s images through Hopi voices, I aim to demonstrate how Hopi autobiographies may function as Indigenous revisions of Voth’s ethnography.

²⁸² Sontag, *On Photography*, 74. I see a connection between the conventional valuing of documentary photographs and autobiographical literature as real, authentic representations, slices of life rather than visual or literary art. However, the mediated authorship of as-told-to autobiographies seems to announce the artifice of the narratives’ production as a collaborative creative process rather than a spontaneous outpouring of inner truths, while Voth’s photographs still circulate as authentic representations of the past.

²⁸³ Rodríguez, “Racial/Colonial,” 811.

Helen Sekaquaptewa was born in 1898, less than one year after Voth captured this photo. Sekaquaptewa's life narrative, *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa*, paints an image of Hopi childhood that contrasts sharply with that of orphaned children of European immigrants.²⁸⁴ Far from being homeless, Sekaquaptewa reports, "There was love in my home, and I felt happy and secure during my childhood . . . I spent many happy hours playing pleasant games with other children in the village plaza. Sometimes we even ventured out among the rocks and cedar trees in games of chase and hide-and-seek."²⁸⁵ If we read Voth's image through Sekaquaptewa's Hopi voice, we understand that the Hopi children's bare feet and nude bodies do not signify poverty or inadequate care. After all, they lived in the hot desert of what is presently known as northeastern Arizona. Published in 1969, Sekaquaptewa's narrative explains that "In olden days, little Hopi boys wore no clothing until they were five or six years of age. In winter, they stayed inside to keep warm. If a boy went outside he wrapped himself in a blanket," as does the child in Voth's photo.²⁸⁶ Sekaquaptewa's narrative reveals that not only did Hopi children have homes, but their loving parents went to great trouble opposing federal agents in order to keep their children in those homes. She tells that when Hopi children reached "five or six years of age," they, along with their parents,

²⁸⁴ The life narratives of Don Talayesva and Polingaysi Qoyawayma, who were born in Oraibi around 1890 and 1892, respectively, similarly depict their early childhoods as carefree and fun, full of laughter and games, although not without a share of household responsibility and traditional hands-on education—for example, in child caretaking, as performed by the girl in Voth's photo. Indeed, as Talayesva and Polingaysi would have been around seven and five years of age at the time Voth's photograph of "Street 'Arabs' in Oraibi" was taken, one of them very well could be pictured in it.

²⁸⁵ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 7.

²⁸⁶ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 48.

became involved with the school officials, assisted by the Navajo policemen, in a serious and rather desperate game of hide-and-peek . . . Every day the school principal sent out a truant officer . . . going to Hopi homes to take the children to school . . . When September came there was no peace for us. Early in the morning, from our houses on the mesa, we could see the principal and the officer start out from the school, walking up the trail to ‘get’ the children. Hostile parents tried every day in different ways to hide us from them, for once you were caught, you had lost the game.²⁸⁷

By misappropriating these children’s images, Voth sought to justify their kidnapping and displacement to boarding schools as for their own good. According to Sontag, what makes a photograph a melancholy object is the image’s removal from its original context and the re-contextualization of it at the mercy of the viewer’s psychological make-up.²⁸⁸ Removed from the context of daily Hopi life by the literary aid of Voth’s title, this photograph displaces the children it represents from the familiar streets of their home village and re-contextualizes them within the late nineteenth-century discourse surrounding the orphans of the industrialized world, who were shipped via orphan trains to adoptive families across the country and civilized via the inculcation of middle-class Euro-American values and practices. By comparing Hopi children in Oraibi with the “street Arabs” of the Orphan Train movement, Voth deems their removal from home and displacement to boarding schools as progress.

In Voth’s archive, I discovered not only his photographic documents but also his diary.²⁸⁹ Trotta’s unpublished dissertation is most useful for the English translation it

²⁸⁷ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 8.

²⁸⁸ Sontag, *On Photography*, 52.

²⁸⁹ Trotta claims that the diaries of Heinrich and Martha Voth, which were “written between 1893 and 1900,” “are the single most significant archival source for Oraibi history during this period” (Trotta 9). This

provides for many of Voth's diary entries, which he composed in an idiosyncratic mix of Russian and archaic German. For Trotta, the value of Voth's diary lies in its documentation of "his decision to act beyond his responsibilities as a Mennonite and government agent" and the picture it presents of Voth as "a negotiator of change" who "came to represent the Hopi land issues on behalf of the Hopi."²⁹⁰ Paradoxically, Trotta also points out that Voth's diary reveals "the conditions of cultural disintegration . . . at Hopi," such as "[b]reaks in the transfer of . . . knowledge," which "occurred when children were removed to schools away from the mesas and unable to participate in ceremonies and initiation rites," or the hands-on learning they received through daily interactions with Hopi adults.²⁹¹

Voth played a central role in the recruitment of Hopi children to off-reservation boarding schools. Trotta clarifies that "Voth firmly believed that Indian cultures eventually would assimilate into American society" and that "his mission work was predicated on Church and federal government policies that sought to weaken . . . Hopi culture."²⁹² For example, Voth's diary entry of November 24, 1895, states that a Hopi man seemed to suspect "'something of the missionaries real intentions, namely to destroy

is a bold statement of historical authority that privileges the Voth over the Hopis as producers of historical knowledge. See Trotta, "Crossing."

²⁹⁰ Trotta, "Crossing," 9.

²⁹¹ Trotta, "Crossing," 237.

²⁹² Trotta, "Crossing," 5-6. I would add to Trotta's explanation the fact that Hopi religious society leaders were removed from the community and placed in jails or boarding schools for years at a time, hindering them from performing the ceremonies that were their esoteric knowledge or conducting initiation rites to create and teach new society members. See Sekaquaptewa's autobiography, *Me and Mine*, as told to Udall.

their religious structure.’’²⁹³ It was not long before Voth resigned himself to the fact that his proselytization was unwelcome and that his mission would be deemed a failure. On June 20, 1897, Voth wrote, ‘‘There are dark times for me here. I am discouraged, sick nervous and agitated. Oh if I could just leave this place. I become so angry at these people. The doors are not open for mission work here. Not yet! The people don’t want to, not at all.’’²⁹⁴ Voth produced his photograph of Hopi ‘‘Street Arabs’’ during the same year that he wrote this diary entry. I wonder if this photo’s rhetorical advocacy for the displacement of Hopi children reflects Voth’s resignation as a missionary. Since the Hopi weren’t welcoming Christianity into their homes, perhaps he thought that Christianity may be successfully forced upon them by alienating Hopi children from their families and institutionalizing them at boarding schools, where Christian worship was a compulsory part of the curriculum.

²⁹³ Trotta, ‘‘Crossing,’’ 57.

²⁹⁴ Trotta, ‘‘Crossing,’’ 152.



3. “School Boys”²⁹⁵

Hopi people have commonly charged Voth with playing a key role in the colonization of Oraibi through his construction of the mission complex, which included a church, a day school, and a mission house, and also through the recruitment of Hopi children to attend Indian boarding schools. Much of Voth’s photography demonstrates the complex entanglement of mission work and ethnography as related colonial endeavors. Trotta insinuates that Voth strayed from his duties as a missionary out of frustration with Hopi resistance to his proselytizing, so he became increasingly active as a collector of Hopi material culture and an ethnographer and producer of knowledge about Hopi culture through his writings and photography. Indeed, Voth accepted multiple offers

²⁹⁵ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.40802

of employment as an ethnographer from visiting anthropologists who valued him as a translator and point of intimate access to Hopi people and their knowledge. Whereas Trotta distinguishes Voth's original purpose as a Mennonite missionary from his eventual activities as an ethnographer, viewing them as contradictory occupations, these two roles are intrinsically linked modes of U.S. colonization. Rather than a diversion from his official duties as a missionary and government agent, picture-taking was part and parcel of Voth's attempt to uplift the Hopi out of savagery and into civilization.

The issue of schooling created a rift among the Hopi people, who divided themselves into two factions. Sekaquaptewa explains that these "two factions were known as the 'Friendlies' (to the government) and the 'Hostiles' (to the government) . . . Later these groups were known as the 'Progressives' and the 'Traditionals,'" respectively.²⁹⁶ Trotta points out that the "school issue was immediately inflammatory since forced schooling away from home prevented young people from training and participating in daily rituals that would enable their involvement in ceremonies."²⁹⁷ Voth's involvement in the forced schooling of Hopi children is evidenced by photographs such as this one, captioned "School Boys," which depicts two Hopi boys in full suits and bow ties, with handkerchiefs in their pockets and hats covering their newly shorn hair.

The photo of these two boys creates a stark contrast to the previous image of "Street 'Arabs' in Oraibi." Whereas the "Street Arabs" are barefooted, bareheaded, and minimally clad in traditional Hopi clothing of woolen blankets, giving the impression of

²⁹⁶ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 13.

²⁹⁷ Trotta, "Crossing," 224.

poverty to Eurocentric viewers, the “School Boys” are fully clothed in layers of material and accessories so that only the skin of their faces and hands is visible. Furthermore, whereas Voth seems to have captured the image of the “Street Arabs” without their knowledge or consent, the “School Boys” are evidently posed for their photo. They stand side-by-side, rigid and tall, facing the camera, with their arms hanging at their sides. Although the boys are posed, they do not smile; rather, the older boy squints into the camera’s lens, and the younger boy apparently glares from beneath his hat’s brim. There is nothing carefree about these school boys, whose demeanor suggests their restrictedness and discomfort.

The apparent unhappiness of these Hopi boys is likely due to their lack of personal agency. They probably had their hair cut by force and were compelled to don their Victorian-style suits. Trotta’s study reveals that when “Charles E. Burton became Superintendent of the Keams Canyon School [a boarding school located approximately forty miles from Oraibi] in July 1899,” he “successfully instituted a plan to force Hopi children to attend school. Burton also decreed that all Hopi men and boys who refused to cut their hair would be subjected to having it cut by force.”²⁹⁸ The matter of forced hair cutting incited debates between different-minded colonial agents. Voth’s anthropologist friend, George Dorsey, wrote a letter to him stating that Thomas Keam, the English settler after whom Keams Canyon was named,²⁹⁹ ““had been to Washington to secure

²⁹⁸ Trotta, “Crossing,” 224.

²⁹⁹ “Keams Canyon was named after the Englishman Thomas Varker Keam who established a small trading post located at Peach Orchard Springs at the far eastern end of the Hopi Reservation in the 1860s. In 1867 the U.S. government selected the site to build the first government school for the Hopi villages” (4). See Historic American Buildings Survey, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/>.

Burton's scalp and claims that he will have it dangling from his belt within a few months or at least have him transferred.' On March 20, 1902, Dorsey reported that he was 'thoroughly disgusted with the hair cutting proceedings.'"³⁰⁰

Voth also knew and corresponded directly with Burton. In July 1903, Burton requested that Voth support his assimilation tactic of forced hair cutting by writing a letter indicating

'that it is your belief that the only course to pursue to get the hostile Oraibis in school was to use some little pressure; that you had talked for a long time to get them to consent but without avail. I think a letter like that from one who has been with them so long will have its weight. I do not ask or expect you to defend any of Kampmeier's work or my own further than that some pressure was necessary.'³⁰¹

Trotta claims that she could find no reply letter from Voth to Burton in the archival record and that it is unlikely that he did comply with such a request, due to his sensitive position with the Hopis. However, the fact that Burton sought Voth's aid as an authority on this issue suggests Voth's significance to the colonial project of forcibly schooling Hopi children. Although Trotta claims that "it seems unlikely that Voth provided the letters given the close communal ties the Voth family had established at Hopi," she concedes to the existence of "another view": "Col. Hugh L. Scott, [in a] Letter to the Secretary of the Interior . . . recorded a claim by Yukioma (Ukeoma), one of the Oraibi chiefs, that Voth had helped to restrain him while his hair was cut."³⁰² This is but one instance of many in which Trotta consistently defends Voth as innocent in the face of contrary testimony by Hopi people.

³⁰⁰ Trotta, "Crossing," 225.

³⁰¹ Trotta, "Crossing," 225.

³⁰² Trotta, "Crossing," 226.

The apparent unhappiness of the school boys in this photo may be due to their subjection to abuse at the hands of school officials or other government agents, including whipping, slapping, and other forms of physical and discursive violence. The George Wharton James collection at the Braun Library houses Mrs. Gertrude Gates' handwritten correspondence about the issue of boarding school abuses, some of which I transcribe here. In a letter dated 23 January 1903, Mrs. Gertrude Lewis Gates writes the following to Charles Fletcher Lummis:

The people on the reservation are uneasy, and wonder why etc. etc. Mrs. Daudridge has resigned—with her husband—and is in Pennsylvania. . . . A letter from Capt. Keams . . . contains nothing of definite import bearing on the situation. He intends returning to Arizona in May but not to the Cañon if Mr. Burton be there. . . . Mrs. Daudridge writes me that the Commissioner seemed to think there is a conspiracy against Mr. Burton; 'was hard to be convinced' that 'Mr. Burton would be unfair in any way'; thought she 'over painted' the whipping cases, etc. If she told him what she told me . . . and I think she could not have deflected, for she spoke so clearly and concisely to me. I am thinking that my name is abhorred at the office, through Mr. Burton's reports, since I have been made unable to obtain a copy of the Regulations pertaining to Agents and Supt.'s; after several attempts, a friend has kindly offered to obtain it for me without application in my name."³⁰³

Helen Sekaquaptewa's life narrative, *Me and Mine*, identifies Mrs. Gertrude Gates as "an interested observer of Hopi culture" who lived at Hopi and "appears to have been staying at [Voth's Mennonite] mission" around 1906.³⁰⁴ This letter indicates that Mrs.

Daudridge, perhaps a teacher at Keams Canyon school, resigned because she could not stand to be complicit with Mr. Burton's abuses of Hopi students through forced haircutting and whipping. The failure of the federal government to take the teacher

³⁰³ See Braun Library, Lummis/Gates Correspondence.

³⁰⁴ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 71.

seriously and its quickness to side with Burton indicates federal injustice or lack of response to cases of abuse of boarding school children by government agents and school superintendents.

In a letter that Gates wrote to journalist and Indian rights activist Charles Fletcher Lummis³⁰⁵ on 1 April 1903, she suggests that Voth should be employed as an interpreter for the legal investigation of boarding school abuses—which included the gashing of children’s heads during forced hair cuttings and corporeal punishment for students’ perceived misbehavior; one boy even died of complications from a broken rib, an injury sustained from a flogging at school. In her letter to Lummis of 10 July 1903, Gates again recommends that Voth should serve as an interpreter in the case against abusive school officials. Ironically, despite Voth’s involvement with cases of boarding school abuse, his knowledge of the Hopi language made him invaluable to resistance efforts. However, I found no evidence that Voth complied with Gates’ request.

In addition to activists working on behalf of Indian’s rights, some missionaries also took a stance against the abuse of Hopi children in boarding schools. In a letter dated 3 March 1903, J. B. Epp, the Mennonite missionary who eventually replaced Voth when he left Hopiland, wrote a letter to Mrs. Gates detailing several instances of abuse that boarding school students suffered at the hands of government agents. I transcribe the handwritten letter here at length:

I know that wrong has been done to the poor Hopis and is being done right along, and that it was my duty to speak and act . . . I wrote B. that I would not say much more to him, as it did not seem to do any good anyway. But I shall keep my eyes open, and if he comes too near me, then I may speak again. I have no words to

³⁰⁵ Lummis is also known as a historian, photographer, ethnographer, archaeologist, poet, and librarian.

express my admiration of the Hopis when I think that they have and keep faith in me, when dozens of Americans come and go, and almost all of them betray them . . . Mrs. Kolp . . . has a story to tell. Bal. kicked not only Phil but treated other large boys quite cruelly, at least very unjustly. I would hear much worse about that, if the people had not been forbidden—under threats of punishment—to tell me anything about what is going on under gov. auspices. But they tell me many things quite fearlessly. The little chief called me down into his kiva 15 minutes after B had strictly forbidden him to speak to me on any affairs that belonged to the government, to tell me what B. had told him. Today Herman and Charly, two of the large, nice boys told me that they were whipped [at the school] almost every day. One was slapped—with a piece of wood, perhaps a ruler—for speaking Hopi. He, very logically, said that they had not been taught anything yet, they had to do all the work [to maintain the school] and now all at once they were expected to say everything in English. Can the Indians think? [marginal note: Some Indians say he broke two ribs of the boy, do not know yet how much truth there is . . . Miss Watkins said, that she was not ashamed to go; but ashamed of her government to have such men in the Indian offices. She intends to return. I hope Kampmeier does not come back here at all . . . Today a young man of the conservative faction came to our house to have a little wound dressed. Mr. Bal. and Ouyangainiva had been up in the village. They came to a house where there was a girl of about 16 years of age who was not in school yet. They dragged the frightened girl out of the house, while her brother, this young man, tried to hold her back. This made Bal. mad! (I think I use this word correctly here) he struck the young man with his fist. Then the young man began to show spirit, too. B. drew his revolver and struck the young man on the head, causing a wound of nearly an inch in length. Several cartridges [sic] fell out of the revolver, the young man brought them to me. —This is the latest. You will think that I begin to write down such affairs quite coolly. Well, I hardly know how to feel anymore.³⁰⁶

With this letter, Epp openly criticizes government agents at the school. He provides evidence of boarding school abuses—including kicking, whipping, slapping, and bludgeoning with a deadly weapon. He also indicates that student tried to collaborate with missionaries to seek justice for their mistreatment, and school officials threatened to punish students for any such anti-colonial scheming. Epp’s sign-off, “I hardly know how

³⁰⁶ Braun Research Library Collection, “Charles Fletcher Lummis/Mrs. Gertrude Lewis Gates. Correspondence 1903-1907,” MS.1.1.1625B. 2-4.

to feel anymore,” suggests his disillusionment with any notion that forced assimilation was in the best interest of the Hopi people.

Although the “School Boys” pictured in Voth’s photograph may have been subjected to cultural genocide via forced haircutting and compulsory western education, I want to resist the logic of “victimry,” to borrow Vizenor’s term, which is perpetuated in historicist accounts; rather, I want to explore the ways these boys may have been performing self-representative and resistant agency by posing for this photo. Whereas the children depicted in the “Street Arabs” photo appear to have been captured unknowingly, the “School Boys” are obviously posing for the camera. They are fully aware of the presence of Voth’s lens and, most likely, the photographic product. Along these lines, I want to suggest that we read photos like “School Boys” as examples of what Michelle Raheja calls “visual sovereignty,” a strategy enacted in “the space between resistance and compliance,” which “offers up not only the possibility of engaging and deconstructing white-generated representations of indigenous people” but also “intervenes in larger discussions of Native American sovereignty by locating and advocating for indigenous cultural and political power.”³⁰⁷ I agree with Raheja that “[t]he visual . . . is a germinal and exciting site for exploring how sovereignty is a creative act of self-representation that has the potential to both undermine stereotypes of indigenous peoples,” for example as savage, backward, or naked, “and to strengthen what Robert Warrior has called the ‘intellectual health’ of communities in the wake of genocide and colonialism.”³⁰⁸ Rather

³⁰⁷ Raheja, “Reading,” 3.

³⁰⁸ Raheja, “Reading” 3.

than portraying the product of colonial agents' success in assimilating these Hopi boys, to read the "School Boys" as agents of visual sovereignty is to understand them as adaptive, however strategic or situational their posing. To explore "School Boys" as an example of visual sovereignty, I imagine one of the posing Hopi subjects to be Don Talayesva, who was born in 1890 and attended both the Oraibi day school and the boarding school at Keams Canyon. Talayesva would have been between the ages of seven and sixteen during Voth's residence in Hopiland, and so he very well may be one of the boys pictured. I read the significance of the boys' pose through the frame of Talayesva's life narrative, *Sun Chief*.

In his autobiography, Talayesva tells that "A few years before my birth [in 1890] the United States Government had built a boarding school at the Keams Canyon Agency" and that troops—in particular, "Negro soldiers"³⁰⁹—took children "by force" and transported them to the school, which was located about forty miles away from Oraibi.³¹⁰ After Voth arrived, he founded the Mennonite day school "at the foot of the mesa in New Oraibi."³¹¹ "When [Talayesva's] sister started" at the Oraibi day school, he narrates, "the teacher cut her hair, burned all her clothes, and gave her a new outfit and a new name."³¹² Such methods of physical and discursive violence were part of the process of cultural

³⁰⁹ In a larger project, I am interested in exploring the phenomenon in which U.S. agents enfolded black freedmen into national/imperialist/settler colonial projects of subjugating Native peoples. I consider that this strategy obviated any potential for black and Native Americans to unite or form coalitions against the power structure of white supremacy. DuBois' argument in *Black Reconstruction* imagines the coalition of white and black workers that never was yet might have been.

³¹⁰ Talayesva, *Sun Chief*, 89.

³¹¹ Talayesva, *Sun Chief*, 89.

³¹² Talayesva, *Sun Chief*, 89.

genocide meant to “kill the Indian” in order to “save the man” through a process of civilization, which entailed compulsory western education, among other practices of indoctrination and assimilation.

Having his sister as a model of what to expect, Talayesva determined to take control of his own situation rather than be victimized by colonial agents. Talayesva narrates the start of his education at the age of nine, and like Polingaysi, he claims responsibility for his willful—rather than forced—attendance of the day school. “In 1899 it was decided that I should go to school. I was willing to try it but I did not want a policeman to come for me and I did not want my shirt taken from my back and burned. So one morning in September I left it off, wrapped myself in my Navaho blanket . . . and went down the mesa barefoot and bareheaded.”³¹³ Using the passive voice, Talayesva omits the detail of who “decided” that he should go to the day school. But, what strikes me as important is that he commanded agency over the situation in order to minimize his suffering or loss. Talayesva refuses to be forced, coerced, or victimized. Knowing what was in store for him, Talayesva took control of his transition into schoolboy status: “I reached the school late and entered a room where boys had bathed in tubs of dirty water. Laying aside my blanket, I stepped into a tub and began scrubbing myself.”³¹⁴ Talayesva implicitly criticizes the school agents’ practice of bathing Hopi children “in tubs of dirty water” as less sanitary than the Hopi practice of running to the spring to bathe in clean, fresh water. Rather than waiting for a teacher to bathe him, Talayesva indicates his

³¹³ Talayesva, *Sun Chief*, 89.

³¹⁴ Talayesva, *Sun Chief*, 89-90.

independence by “scrubbing [him]self.” “Suddenly a white woman entered the room . . . praising me for coming to school without a policeman.”³¹⁵ By attending school of his own accord, Talayesva singles himself out to his teachers as unique and intelligent, and he earned recognition as a “smart boy” whose teachers “praised [him] again and again for coming to school without a policeman.”³¹⁶

With Talayesva’s narrative in mind, and imagining the possibility that he may be one of the subjects depicted in Voths’ photo of “School Boys,” the photo’s significance becomes ambiguous. It no longer speaks for itself as a portrayal of Voth’s colonial perspective. Rather than an authentic portrait of cultural loss and imperial assimilation, “School Boys” presents the image of two Hopi youths representing themselves as privy to the significance of their pose. Rather than having their images captured without their knowledge or consent, the “School Boys” face forward and confront the camera with gleaming defiance. Reading the photo through Talayesva’s narrative, we are able to understand the school boys otherwise than as victims of colonial violence or artifacts for Voth’s photographic practice of salvage anthropology. In posing, the school boys represent themselves not as photographic, melancholy objects but rather as self-representing subjects who occupy and act in the decolonial space of visual sovereignty.

³¹⁵ Talayesva, *Sun Chief*, 90.

³¹⁶ Talayesva, *Sun Chief*, 90.



4. “Voth with Hopi Girl”³¹⁷

This photo disturbs me much more than the previous two, mostly because Voth’s distorted face seems to materialize his devilish designs. In this image, Voth’s blurred hand gestures toward the Hopi girl, though his smeared face is fixed in the camera’s direction. The pictured girl’s hair color seems lighter than Voth’s, and she is clothed in a stifling Victorian dress, giving her a white appearance; the only way we know she is Hopi is because the photo’s title says so. Her closed-lipped smile and still, forward-facing stance indicates that she, like the “School Boys,” is posing for the camera. In the background of the photo, a line of pupils enter/exit or stand around a low building nestled

³¹⁷ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.41188

at the base of the mesa. Since Voth appears in this photo, this image was probably produced by his wife, Martha.

Photographs often functioned as propaganda in support of the federal project of Indian assimilation. In particular, “before and after” photographs juxtaposed images of Indians in their “natural” or “traditional” state alongside photographs taken after their cultural transformation, or assimilation to a so-called civilized style of life. Before and after photographs represent the pervasive presumption that the colonial transformation was legible on Indians’ bodies. If “Street ‘Arabs’ in Oraibi” may be understood as a “before” photograph depicting the plight of the benighted Hopi children in need of civilization, then “Voth with Hopi Girl” functions as an “after” photograph portraying the successful assimilation of this female Hopi subject to the Victorian style of dress as well as the Euro-American system of education. Unlike the “School Boys,” this Hopi girl is smiling, and her smile further indicates the success of the colonial assimilation project, suggesting that she is pleased with her modernization.

While “School Boys” may also function as an “after” photo, there is a significant difference between that image of the boys’ defiant stares and this picture of the girl’s amicability to be photographed with Voth. What is the significance of the girl’s pose? Smiling for the camera, she represents herself as content or amused, pleased or joyful. Is she proudly displaying her successful assimilation to the white woman’s way of dressing and behaving? Or is she asserting her autonomy as a joyful Hopi person despite her Victorian clothing—her adaptive resilience in the face of change? Since Voth did not identify any of these Hopi children by name, it is possible—provided the dates—that we

may imagine this smiling Hopi girl in the white Victorian dress as Polingaysi. Polingaysi was the daughter of “Fred” Qoyawayma, one the Hopi who worked in the employ of Voth to help him build the mission complex. “Friendly” Hopis in such a mutually beneficial relation to Voth experienced his mission differently than did “Hostile” Hopis.

From Voth’s perspective, this photo suggests that Christianization and education of the Hopis will eliminate their Indianness and transform or convert them into civilized, normative subjects fit for U.S. citizenship. Seen in this view, the photos Voth took to document their existence as Indians also hastened their death as such. Before and after photos ostensibly represent this transformation. Can we haunt or decolonize that dominant narrative of photographs as documents of loss and death by reading them alongside and through living narratives? Can we resist the notion that Voth’s photograph is an authentic and self-explanatory image of the past by letting their autobiographical voices speak through the pictures?

Polingaysi’s autobiography, *No Turning Back*, explains that when “the white man came,” “she was not afraid of them, for her father did not fear them. He worked for the Mennonite missionary, H. R. Voth, and whenever possible Polingaysi tagged along after her father.”³¹⁸ Polingaysi was a frequent guest in Voth’s Mennonite church, and “She enjoyed attending religious services, for she loved to sing, and the missionaries were teaching the Hopi children many songs.”³¹⁹ Polingaysi’s life narrative here clarifies that her engagement of Voth’s mission was voluntary, not forced. She attended Mennonite

³¹⁸ Qoyawayma, *No Turning*, 13-14.

³¹⁹ Qoyawayma, *No Turning*, 14.

services because she desired to do so, and the reason for her pleasure was singing—a common Hopi practice.

Although the Hopi children were being taught to sing Christian songs in the church, this does not necessarily signify their willingness to convert to the Christian religion. In fact, the children made much fun of the missionaries as silly and nonsensical people. “Knowing not a word of English,” the Hopi children who attended Voth’s services “mouthed the strange syllables:”

‘Deso lasmi, desi no,’ Polingaysi sang. The words were, ‘Jesus loves me, this I know,’ but . . . Hopi equivalents of the strange syllables added up to, ‘The San Juan people are bringing burros,’ and this sent the children into gales of giggles. They agreed the white man was very silly . . . but the *Bahanas* gave them candy . . . Besides, whatever the words, Polingaysi loved to sing and to be where things were happening.³²⁰

Read through the light of this passage, the reason for the Hopi girl’s smile in Voth’s photo becomes quite clear. Some Hopi children enjoyed participating in Mennonite church services, not only because they liked to sing, but also because they relished the gifts of candy provided by the missionaries. Understanding the Christian song through their knowledge of the Hopi language, Polingaysi and her friends take an irreverent approach to Christian doctrine as silly. Polingaysi’s autobiography explains that “She did not know the missionaries were on the mesa to teach the Hopis the sinfulness of their ways, to lead them from their ancient beliefs into the white man’s way of worship. She was too young to have understood, had she known” (15). The girl in Voth’s photograph is just that—a girl—and her childish outlook on the situation may uphold the cliché that ignorance is bliss. The Hopi girl’s smile does not necessarily indicate her contentment to

³²⁰ Qoyawayma, *No Turning*, 14.

be assimilated or to abandon Hopi culture for the white man's ways. Her pleasure comes not from Voth's mission, perhaps, but from the familiar Hopi practice of singing.



5. "Voth with Hopi People"³²¹

In this photograph, at least a dozen Hopi people are pictured hanging over the fence that bordered the Voths' Mennonite mission, where Hopi people would arrive by the wagon load for a Christmas gathering. At Christmas time, Voth performed as a sort of inverse Santa Claus; rather than visiting Hopi households one by one, Hopis were required to visit the mission, where Voth distributed gifts of clothing and food. These gifts did not come without a price, however. According to Trotta, the Voths "also

³²¹ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.40943

presented the gospel in readings and in song translated into Hopi.”³²² In this photo, Martha Voth’s back is turned to the camera, as she appears to be hunched over a large box of goods. To her left is a table stacked with clothing and blankets. The gathered Hopi people have their arms leaning over the top of the fence, hands ready to reach out and catch whatever Santa Voth doles out to them. But for the moment, they stand patiently, gazing attentively at Voth, who appears to be reading something.

Helen Sekaquaptewa’s life narrative, *Me and Mine*, explains that the Christmas gathering at the Voth house was the culmination of each year’s attempt to convert more Hopis to the Mennonite church. *Me and Mine* describes the process of receiving Christmas gifts as reimbursement for good Christian behavior or as a reward for attending church or Sunday School services throughout the year. “The Mennonites had a church in Old Oraibi,” and since Helen’s parents, who belonged to the “Hostile” faction, would not allow her to attend, she “sometimes . . . went around the mesa and came to Sunday School by a back path. [The Voths] would give us a little ticket each time we came, and on Christmas they gave a big prize to the one who had the most tickets . . . I received a few tickets but gave them away. I did not dare to accept a present.”³²³ Helen’s narrative reveals that the Christmas celebration depicted is not a simple show of the Voths’ generosity; rather, it was part of a multifaceted, coercive system to fill the reverend’s congregation.

³²² Trotta, “Crossing,” 189.

³²³ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 14-15.

Don Talayesva's autobiography, *Sun Chief*, also offers some insight into the significance of this photograph. Talayesva narrates, "At Christmas we had two celebrations, one in the [Oraibi day] school and another in the Mission Church. Ralph of the Masau'u Clan and I each received a little painted wagon as a reward for good attendance" (90). Talayesva's account clarifies that simple Christian charity or generosity were not the only reasons for the Voths' Christmas present giveaways. Rather, the disbursement of gifts was contingent upon how well the Hopi people responded to colonial disciplining, i.e., how deserving they were of rewards for good behavior in the form of church or school attendance.³²⁴

Sun Chief suggests that the purpose of the Mennonite day school was to discipline Hopi children's behavior and to train them to comply with Euro-American cultural norms rather than to educate them in any intelligent way. Talayesva testifies,

I learned little at school the first year, except 'bright boy,' 'smart boy,' 'yes' and 'no,' 'nail,' and 'candy.' Just before Christmas we heard that a disease, smallpox, was coming west from First Mesa. Within a few weeks news came to us that on Second Mesa the people were dying so fast that the Hopi did not have time to bury them, but just pitched their bodies over the cliff. The government employees and some of the schoolteachers fled from Oraibi, leaving only the principal and missionaries, who said that they would stay. (90-91)

Talayesva's declaration that he learned only seven words of English in one year but was often praised as a 'smart boy' and given candy in return for cutting wood for the school

³²⁴ Scholars who have been trained to read autobiography as the story of an individual's life might elide the significance of other characters' experiences, finding them meaningful only insofar as they bear on the autobiographical subject's individual experience/life. I think it is important to point out that Talayesva's narrative here puts his experience in relation to those of his peers; more specifically, he mentions that Ralph of the Masau'u clan was also rewarded for good attendance, indicating that he was not alone in his compliance with the school's attendance policy. It is significant that Talayesva and Ralph were rewarded with the gift of a wagon, a toy that represents the advancement of American transportation technology and carries a masculine gendered significance in American culture, demonstrating U.S. colonial ideology's conflation of modernity or progressiveness with heteronormativity.

suggests that students were not seen as intelligent scholars with inquiring minds but as savages to be disciplined through labor and Christian indoctrination. English language acquisition, it seems, was not a priority of the school; nor was adequate communication through translation. Rather, the “English only” style of educational instruction served mainly to indoctrinate, subjugate, terrorize, and discipline Indian students. Every word in Talayesva’s list of his learned English vocabulary (except for “nail”) is a term used to discipline, punish, or reward certain behaviors.

The history Talayesva provides of the smallpox epidemic at Hopi lends insight into one possible reason why some Hopis may have been appreciative of the Voths’ Christmas gifts: illness and death negatively impacted their crop production and created a need of the Christians’ gifts of food and clothing. Couched in this testimony is also an implicit blame of the outbreak on the colonial settlers, who had the convenient ability to escape the disease they had probably been responsible for bringing to Hopi.



6. “Digging a Well at the Mission”³²⁵

Despite missionaries’ efforts to persuade Hopis to convert to Christianity, which often included bribery, as I demonstrated above in my reading of the Voths’ Christmas celebrations, the majority of Hopi people resisted Christian proselytization and maintained their commitment to Hopi spiritual and ceremonial traditions. However, Hopis’ resistance to Christianization did not mean that they refused to be involved in friendships or working relationships with Christian missionaries and other colonial agents living in Hopiland. The photo pictured above, titled “Digging a well at the mission,” depicts a man at work bending over the mouth of a new well while two other men, at least one of whom appears to be Hopi, stand nearby and watch or receive instructions.

³²⁵ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.40989

The man in the background faces the camera, and he appears to be an Anglo- or Euro-American, judging from the suit and hat he wears. The man in the foreground, to the viewer's right, stands with his back to the camera, and he appears to be a Hopi man, judging from his long hair.

If one had only Voth's photo as a source of information about the digging of this well, one might be confused by the seeming complicity of this Hopi man's involvement in Voth's colonial project of digging a well, which was intended to supply water for his mission compound. The mission school and church were the primary colonial institutions on the Hopi reservation at this time, and they aimed to uplift (read: pacify, subdue) and civilize (read: colonize, subject) the Hopis through Protestant education and Christianization. Some further insight into the intentions of this Hopi man may be gleaned from reading Talayesva's life narrative, *Sun Chief*. *Sun Chief* narrates that government agents like Voth hired Hopis to help with the construction of mission buildings, and such employment opportunities were accepted by Hopis who struggled financially, as Talayesva did after returning from boarding school. Talayesva explains in *Sun Chief*,

I was in Oraibi in September and helped build a new mission house and drill a well. The missionaries tried to get me to accept Christianity and be baptized. They praised my strong character and said that I would make a fine Christian. I told them that if my Guardian Spirit led me into Christianity, I would accept it, but otherwise never, because I already had a good road to travel, the Hopi Sun Trail. I was willing to be friends with them so long as they did not tire me with their talk about the Holy Ghost, or speak against the Hopi gods. I told them in polite language that nobody could force me into Christianity. (212)

Voth and other missionaries used the work of digging a well as an opportunity to proselytize to Talayesva and other Hopis. Talayesva refuses their advances and declares his devotion to his own spiritual journey on the Hopi Sun Trail. Talayesva claims that if the missionaries would have bothered him too much about becoming a Christian, or if they would have spoken disparagingly about his own beliefs, he would have renounced his friendship and likely quit offering his services and selling his labor to the missionaries. Talayesva's declaration "that nobody could force me into Christianity" claims his sovereign right of self-determination and his refusal to be disciplined by colonial aims to civilize him through compulsory Christianity. Earlier in *Sun Chief*, Talayesva recalls that as a student away at Sherman Institute boarding school, he had been tricked into joining the YMCA. As I discussed in chapter three, while away at Sherman, Talayesva longed to "be a real Hopi again" and to be "free to make love without fear of sin or a rawhide." His narrative compares Christian dogma to imprisonment, and it characterizes Talayesva's return to Hopiland as emancipation.

Talayesva's devotion to Hopi tradition and his simultaneous complicity with the efforts of the Mennonite missionaries may seem conflicting or contradictory. However, *Sun Chief's* lends insight into the reasons why it would have been beneficial for Hopis to cooperate with missionaries as a strategy of maintaining control over their lands and economies. The paragraph that directly follows the one above, about helping to dig a well, clarifies that the missionaries' projects of Christianizing Hopis coincided with the federal government's project to divide communally-held Hopi lands and to allot single-family plots, in accordance with the Dawes Act:

The government surveyors were completing their work and we were to receive our allotment of land in late September . . . We followed the allotment officer around like dogs, each of us trying to get good farming and grazing land. . . . Robert Selema, the Hopi interpreter, decided to quit his job and offered it to me. He earned \$3 a day, plus \$1 extra on certain days for carrying the surveyors' mail. That was a good job, and I took it. (212)

Talayasva's complicity with the colonial government's imperial enterprise is complicated but not uncommon; it is a means of survival. After being away from Hopiland for several years during his time as a boarding school student at Keams Canyon and Sherman Institute, Talayasva felt ill-equipped to succeed as a Hopi farmer or to earn a living for his wife and family in accordance with traditional methods of subsistence. As a result of his alienation from his homeland, Talayasva was also unable to learn the methods and practices of being Hopi that would have enabled him to prosper as a farmer or herder. As a result, it was important for Talayasva to accept jobs from missionaries and other government agents so that he could purchase the means to support his self, his wife, and his family. Talayasva's polite rejection of the missionary's proselytizing demonstrates his maintenance of sovereign selfhood, which seems especially significant in the face of forced land allotment, the situation he discusses in the next paragraph. Talayasva's use of the phrase "We followed the allotment officer around like dogs" expresses the Hopi people's sense of being animalized or dehumanized by this colonial process, which is a blatant breach of the Hopi people's sovereign right to determine their own social, political, and economic structures. The simile, "like dogs," connotes Talayasva's feelings of powerlessness and subordination in the act of begging, and it also contains a critique of the allotment project as one that treats the Hopis as subhuman and undeserving of the right to continue their traditional methods of land use (matriarchal, communal).

Talayesva's new job as an interpreter puts him in a position of power, providing him with employment and an income while also allowing him opportunities to gain inside knowledge of the government's dealings. The interpreter's role is a liminal, culture-crossing one, in which Talayesva puts his new skills of English literacy and fluency to use for the economic and perhaps political benefit of his self and his people.

Helen Sekaquaptewa's life narrative lends insight into how Voth's new wells affected the cultural relationship of Hopi people to water. *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa* explains that water, a scarce resource in the Hopi people's desert homeland, is sacred. "Every drop of water was precious, and there was never enough. From infancy we were taught to drink sparingly; even then, there were times when we were always thirsty."³²⁶ Whereas Voth and other non-Hopi settlers considered the scarcity of water in Hopiland as a threat to the Hopi people's wellbeing and a reason for their "primitive" lifestyle, the preciousness of water was an intrinsic part of Hopi culture and their reverence for rain; for example, the view of water as sacred and valuable informed Hopi farming practices and religious ceremonies. Helen's narrative explains that, historically, Hopi people living in Old Oraibi all shared water that came from a well at the foot of First Mesa; the communal cleaning of this well was a biannual endeavor in which all members of the village participated. "Every spring and fall there was a community cleaning of the well. The sand and weeds that had accumulated within the basin had to be cleaned out and carried away. . . . No one was excused. . . . Lines were formed, and as baskets were filled with sand and weeds they were passed from hand to

³²⁶ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 21.

hand, up and out, to be dumped far away from the rim of the basin.”³²⁷ Helen’s narrative indicates that the advent of the mission and its wells disrupted the community that had previously been solidified by the shared experience of wanting water. “The [old] well has not been used for half a century now. Sand has blown in and piled up on the terraces, and they are grown up with weeds. . . . the old well is abandoned and forgotten.”³²⁸ Along with the old communal well, social practices of gathering water and collectively caretaking the well have also been abandoned. Helen’s narrative clarifies that changes arising from the missionaries’ settlement are the cause for this cultural change. “The government drilled wells when they built schools down off the mesa at New Oraibi. They set up tanks and piped water into the buildings. There are several places about the town where water is on tap. Up at Old Oraibi, they haul their water in cans by wagons or trucks from New Oraibi wells.”³²⁹

Voth’s own autobiographical notes provide additional context for this photograph. In this document, Voth records the dangerousness and difficulty of the project of digging wells, especially in inclement weather. It states that the use of paid Hopi laborers was a last resort due to the lack of mission workers or other government employees available.

Voth writes,

‘In two wells I very nearly lost my life through the carelessness of my Indian helpers . . . Except for some occasional help by some government employees at the wells and the house and some Indian labor I had to do all the mason, carpenter and other work myself assisted by a young Hopi named Tabo and my faithful

³²⁷ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 20-21.

³²⁸ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 22.

³²⁹ Udall, *Me and Mine*, 22.

wife. Fortunately the Indians worked for cheap wages. We worked in good weather and in sand storms (when even the Indians stayed at home).'³³⁰

Voth's autobiographical notes paint his Hopi helpers in a disparaging light, as he blames their "carelessness" for his near death on the job. Voth's whining tone in this passage portrays himself as a victim, as he "had to do all the . . . work" himself, and it seems to insinuate that the Mennonite Board of Missions is to blame for not sending more workers, aid, or resources necessary to make the mission a success. He bemoans his need to employ Hopi laborers, though he admits that he was able to exploit their laborer by paying them only "cheap wages." The detail that his "faithful wife" aided the building projects indicates that Martha Voth could have been the photographer of this image, and Voth could be the man bending over the opening of the well.

³³⁰ Trotta, "Crossing," 140.



7. “Women Visiting the Mission”³³¹

In this photograph, Hopi women are posed outside of the Voths’ Mennonite mission. Four women stand side-by-side in a line, and four additional women are seated side-by-side in a line on the ground in front of the standing women. Each of the eight Hopi women holds a baby or young child in front of them, except for the woman standing in the back row, second from the viewer’s right. I wonder if the photographer—perhaps Martha Voth—instructed these women to hold their babies in front of themselves so that their images could be captured by the camera. Unlike the women, who all have their hair styled according to the tradition for Hopi wives and appear to be dressed in traditional Hopi clothing woven out of wool, the children all seem to be dressed in European-American style clothing, such as cotton dresses and bonnets. As Helen Sekaquaptewa’s

³³¹ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.41003

and Polingaysi Qoyawayma's life narratives explain, Hopi children traditionally went naked or wrapped in wool blankets when necessary for warmth. I wonder if the purpose of this photograph is to demonstrate these women's consent for their children to be dressed in the colonial style.

Don Talayesva's autobiography, *Sun Chief*, also explains that Voth's mission to convert the Hopi people to Christianity included a material effort to clothe the naked "savages." Talayesva reports that "Mr. Voth and the Christians came to Oraibi and preached Jesus in the plaza where the Katchinas danced . . . He said that Jesus Christ was our Saviour and suffered for our sins" (41). One particular Hopi "sin" which the infiltrating Christians sought to correct was nudity: "We were told that Whites (*Bahanas*) did not like to see us naked. But we boys went without clothes most of the time unless someone warned us that Whites were climbing the mesa . . . When no Whites were present, I went naked" (41, 69). Talayesva's explanation that he and other Hopi boys deigned to get dressed only when white people were present indicates not only their acquiescence to clothe themselves on occasion—both to avoid censure and also to appease the outsiders—but also their general resistance to adopting the Protestants' prudishness, which was founded on an overdetermined signification of nudity with sexuality. Trotta tells that, in her 9 December 1893 diary entry, "Martha [Voth] noted that '[her daughter] Frieda spent the afternoon on the mesas distributing clothes for the naked children.'" ³³² Whereas Trotta interprets this entry as a documentation of the Voths' philanthropic concern with the Hopi children's physical wellbeing during the cold winter,

³³² Trotta, "Crossing," 166.

it seems to me that the actual significance of these handouts was to enforce the missionaries' notion of corporeal morality among the Hopi youth.³³³

In a photograph that seems to be displaying Hopi motherhood for the camera, I especially wonder about the significance of the childless woman. Does she in fact have a child, perhaps strapped to her back, out of the camera's view, the way the Hopi child in the "Street 'Arabs' in Oraibi" photo carries her infant charge on her back? If so, perhaps her refusal to carry her child in front of her is an act of defiance. This woman who is not visibly carrying a baby does not appear to be pleased. Her head is bowed deeper than those of the other women, and in lieu of a baby, she holds her right wrist in her left hand.

Whether the women in this photograph posed themselves this way or were positioned by the photographer's direction, in either case, they can be seen as displaying their womanhood or motherhood for the camera in an act of self-representation, however coerced or manipulated. In this way, we may compare this photograph's image of mediated self-representation with that of the amanuenses' framing of Hopi literary self-representation. In both cases, Hopi people are consenting to have their literary likeness or image reproduced through European-American technologies of print publication and/or photography. Perhaps the message behind these women's self-presentation in this photograph is that the affect of the "Friendly" faction is one of resignation to cultural change for the sake of political coalition.

I am particularly fascinated by the image of the Hopi man in the background of the photograph, on the viewer's left. We can tell that this seated figure is a man because

³³³ The female Voths' concern for the "naked [Indian] children" exemplifies the rhetoric that Lauren Berlant describes as "paternalism . . . dressed as maternalism." See Berlant, *The Female Complaint*, 6.

his hair is styled with the bangs cut straight above the eyebrows and with the rest of his hair hanging long and loose, whereas the women's hair is parted down the middle and hangs in wraps over each shoulder. This seated man gazes at the backs of the women posing for the photograph, and he appears to be laughing. What is the source of his amusement? Is he laughing at the women, criticizing them for their compliance to dress their children in such silly costumes or for their consent to be photographed? Is he aware that the camera's own gaze has also captured his own likeness? Or, does his laugh have a meaner significance? Is he making fun of the childless woman who, according to Polingaysi's life narrative, would not qualify as a woman at all, according to Hopi gender norms?



8. “White Man on Chair in Center of Hopi Gathering”³³⁴

The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act formed tribal councils on all Indian Reservations. The purpose of doing so was to transfer the governance of tribes from federal agents to tribal councilors, thereby formally recognizing tribes’ sovereign right of self-governance. However, as Trotta points out, a tribal council was elected at Hopi prior to the Indian Reorganization Act. In 1897, Captain Constant Williams requested that a Hopi tribal council be established, and he “solicited Voth’s help in nominating the leaders to form the council” because Voth was able to act as translator and was acquainted with members of the Oraibi community.³³⁵

³³⁴ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P. 40973

³³⁵ Trotta, “Crossing,” 220-221.

Trotta claims that “Voth’s diary report of the election is the *only archival reference* to this event,” but the photograph above, which I found in Voth’s archive at the Braun library, also appears to document the compulsory establishment of the Hopi tribal council in 1897.³³⁶ Perhaps Trotta was unaware of the existence of this photograph, as well as two others like it in Voth’s collection.³³⁷ Or perhaps, in Trotta’s view, a photograph does not constitute an “archival reference,” at least not the way a written account does. So, what is an archival reference, if a photograph does not count as one? Ann Cvetkovich argues that the practice of preserving an archive is a method of keeping a history “alive and part of the present.”³³⁸ From Trotta’s Western, settler colonial perspective, like that which Susan Sontag describes in *On Photography*, photographs are not representations of history to be kept alive as part of the present but are rather mementos of the dead, records of loss, or “melancholy objects,” to use Sontag’s term. Trotta’s claim that Voth’s diary entry “is the *only archival reference* to this event” of the establishment of the Hopi tribal council in 1897 elides not only Voth’s photographic documents but also Hopi people’s memories and literary representations of the event as valid references of this history.

I wonder if Voth’s photographs may function as archival references, in the sense that Cvetkovich names as keeping history alive in the present, if we consider them as more than mere material objects or paper ghosts of the once-living. In what follows, I

³³⁶ Trotta, “Crossing,” 221. Emphasis in original.

³³⁷ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.40973(4) and P. 40976. These photographs in Voth’s collection also depict Captain Williams sitting on a chair in the plaza amidst the gathering of Hopi people, and in these images the newly elected Hopi tribal council members also sit on the chairs with Williams.

³³⁸ Cvetkovich, *Archive*, 6.

narrate the stories that this photograph tells by contextualizing it among Voth's, Trotta's, and Talayesva's narrations of the event depicted therein.

The following is a translation of Voth's diary's report of the exchange between Captain Williams and the Hopi people, pictured above:

'February 18, 1897 Capt. Williams praised the friendly people and said that it was good to send their children to school.³³⁹ This is the way the government wants it to be and 2) He had warranted the arrests two years ago—not on account that those had not sent their own children to school but that they intended to hinder others and had taken away from others their fields, etc. 3) He thinks more favorable [sic] of those who send their children to school than of those who refuse to do so. But in spite of it, he must and will protect their rights. After reminding Lol. [Loololma] [that he] would not be a chief any longer; both sides shall nominate 5 candidates tonight of which he will nominate 2 Chiefs tomorrow. (Later he said to me that he would consider it a 'kindness' if I would help the people a little with the nomination in the evening, so that peaceful men would be nominated.)'³⁴⁰

Voth's diary also reveals that schooling was, in fact, the predominant issue in the rift among the Hopi "Friendly" and "Hostile" factions. The phrase "both sides" refers to the Friendly and Hostile factions among the Hopi, which were formed as a result of tribal dissention around the issue of sending Hopi children to boarding schools. The federal government deemed those Hopis who complied with government pressures to send their children to school as the "Friendlies," or progressives, while it named those Hopis who resisted the institutionalization of their children as the "Hostiles," or traditionalists. This arbitrary division of the Hopi nation into two parties forced their system of governance into compliance with a U.S. model. Voth's diary narrates Williams' defense of his action of arresting the parents of the Hostile faction who refused to send their children to school;

³³⁹ This term "friendly people" refers to members of the "Friendly" faction of Hopis who were more willing to comply with the demands of the federal government than were their "Hostile" counterparts.

³⁴⁰ Trotta, "Crossing," 221.

according to Helen Sekaquaptewa's narrative, *Me and Mine*, these uncooperative fathers were either imprisoned or used as laborers, as her father was forced to dig pathway for the building of new government roads. Williams declares that the arrest of these men was in compliance with U.S. law; that the men's crime was not their refusal to send their own children to school but rather their obstruction of the right of other Hopi parents to do so. Williams' dubious appeal to the discourse of civil rights segues to his instructions for the ostensibly democratic election of the Hopi tribal council. The Friendly and Hostile factions were to nominate five candidates, and from those groups, Williams would then elect one chief for each party. Voth's diary entry reveals that Williams employed Voth to fix the Hopi election by influencing the nomination of candidates who would be cooperative with the federal government's wishes, leaving no doubt that the formation of the tribal council was an act of colonization, a takeover of Hopi practices of self-governance and a compulsion for Hopis to conform to U.S. political structure under the guise of a democratic election. Voth's role in aiding Hopi nomination of "peaceful men" was meant to ensure that the Friendlies would be kept in a position of power over the Hostiles because "the way the [U.S.] government wants it to be" takes precedent over Hopi interests. Trotta translates Voth's diary's report of the election thus:

'February 19 Lomuh... Capt. nominated first Naioshinima and Lomahungyoma as Chiefs. [Williams] Held a speech for them, telling them to keep peace and to keep the rights for everybody. Then he explained that the other candidates would not be Chiefs and then nominated Kwateima and Tauoknimtewa to be defenders and placed them behind the new chiefs who were sitting on chairs. Then everybody had to shake hands; they did even better and embraced each other what caused much amusement. Towards evening the Capt. came here. He stayed overnight.'³⁴¹

³⁴¹ Trotta, "Crossing," 221.

Voth's diary entry describes how Captain Williams brought chairs out into the plaza upon which the new tribal councilors, one Chief of the Friendlies and the other Chief of the Hostiles, who were to replace the traditional village chiefs, were to sit. In the photo above, Williams appears to be instructing two of the nominees, giving the speech about peace and Hopi citizens' rights, which Voth's entry describes.

Like the majority of her dissertation's content, Trotta's reading of the above diary entry reveals her alignment with or sympathy for Voth and the larger colonial enterprise. She suggests that "Captain Williams' engagement of Voth as an interlocutor to nominate 'peaceful people'—those who supported the acceptance of federal assimilation policies—showed his respect for Voth's judgment," particularly as one who would put U.S. interests above those of Hopi people who were "Hostile" or resistant to compulsory cultural and political changes.³⁴² Indeed, the diary entry evidences Voth's complicity with Williams, especially as he hosted Williams' overnight stay at his mission house. However, Trotta also offers an astute interpretation of "the specter of the Hopi embracing one another in amusement," which "perhaps represents the Oriabi villagers' sophisticated, unspoken understanding of how far removed such a governing system and the selection process itself were from Hopi tradition."³⁴³ I want to highlight the importance of Trotta's consideration of the political significance of the Hopis' embrace, which made a mockery of the formal, somber occasion of creating a federally-ordained version of Hopi governance. Trotta further suggests, "The [hugging] individuals also may

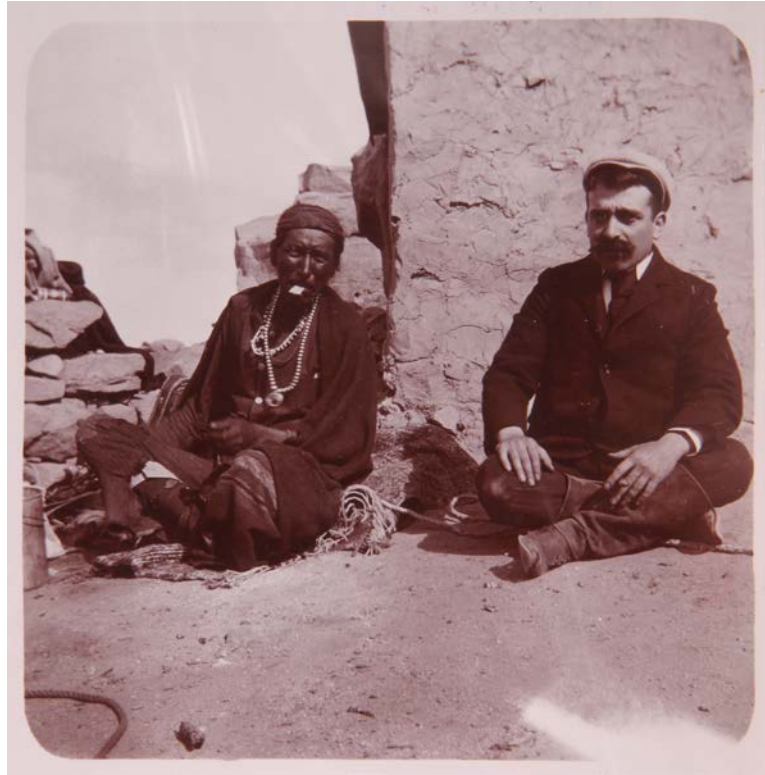
³⁴² Trotta, "Crossing," 222.

³⁴³ Trotta, "Crossing," 222.

have been bemused by this political power that had nothing to do with religious leadership. The Hopi humor may indeed belie the recognition amongst one another that they were just acting out a ‘clowning event’ in the plaza to placate Captain Williams and Heinrich Voth.”³⁴⁴ Trotta’s interpretation of the Hopi councilors’ jovial embrace in the plaza as a “clowning event” constitutes decolonial reading because it puts Hopi ways of knowing and practicing governance into conversation with settler colonial understandings. As I explained in chapter three, ceremonial performances by Hopi clowns, or fun-making katchinas, were a primary method of Hopi moral instruction through irony and inversion. The Hopi nominees who “embraced each other” turned a solemn affair of colonization into one of “amusement,” entertaining the Hopi onlookers and making a mockery of the non-Hopi system of governance to which they were being forced to conform. By turning the Hopi tribal council election into a clowning event, the new Hopi “Chiefs” who were arbitrarily selected by Williams sent a message to their fellow Oriabi villagers by performing or embodying how Hopi Chiefs are not to behave.

Trotta’s translation of Voth’s diary entry and her interpretation of its significance lends insight into Williams’ and the larger U.S. government’s divide-and-conquer strategy of colonizing the Hopi, as well as clarifying Voth’s complicitous role in it.

³⁴⁴ Trotta, “Crossing,” 222.



9. “Man with Hopi”³⁴⁵

This photograph, “Man with Hopi,” pictures an unidentified non-Hopi man, who is not H. R. Voth, sitting cross-legged on the ground beside a Hopi man who assumes a similar pose. Both the Hopi and non-Hopi men in the photo gaze directly into the camera, brows furrowed and eyes squinting in the sun’s light. The non-Hopi man wears a three-piece suit and necktie, tall leather boots, and a flat cap, and he appears to be holding the butt of a cigar between his left hand’s pointer and middle fingers. His big belly strains at the buttons of his suit jacket, and it is difficult to discern whether or not he is smiling beneath his bushy mustache. The Hopi man wears a woolen outfit accessorized with beaded necklaces; he has a blanket wrapped around his shoulders and a scarf wrapped

³⁴⁵ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.41178

around his hair. Whereas the non-Hopi man may be smiling under his facial hair, it is apparent that the Hopi man could not be smiling even if he wanted to, for he is holding a small object in his mouth, pressed between his lips. The occupation of the Hopi man's mouth suggests speechlessness, muteness, powerlessness, or a lack of agency.

I include this photograph in lieu of a different photograph that I want to write about but am unable to include in my dissertation due to the Braun Library's designation of it as "culturally sensitive" and therefore restricted from reproduction. The nondescript, non-Hopi "Man" in the above image is the same man as seen in the restricted photograph titled "Anglo man at Hopi."³⁴⁶ Who is this "Anglo man?" Is he a fellow Mennonite missionary, a historian, an ethnographer, or a museum collector? Trotta's dissertation explains that Voth hosted many "important Euroamerican visitors and scientists such as [George Wharton] James, Fewkes, Stephen," and "Warburg," but she oddly claims that "Interestingly," Voth "did not document" these "visits."³⁴⁷ Voth's photography, including the above image, "Man with Hopi," and the restricted image, "Anglo man at Hopi," as well as dozens of other images in the George Wharton James collection of Voth's photography that depict white visitors to the reservation, contradict Trotta's statement.³⁴⁸

Similarly, Trotta defensively claims that Voth did not "take photos of 'trinkets' unless they were part of a life activity," and she clarifies that "Voth termed as 'trinkets' all objects which the Hopi gave him (e.g., as a gift for caring for a sick child) or traded

³⁴⁶ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.40785.

³⁴⁷ Trotta, "Crossing," 130.

³⁴⁸ For example, image P.40803, titled "Whites Among the Hopi," depicts a large group of Euro-American people in Hopiland, crowded together to pose for the camera.

with him.”³⁴⁹ Whereas Hopi people commonly charge Voth as a thief, Trotta declares that all Hopi artifacts that Voth acquired were received fairly, through gift exchange or trade, rather than stolen. Moreover, her example of a reason why a Hopi person would give Voth a gift of a Hopi artifact—for doctoring an ill Hopi child—paints Voth as a well-intentioned philanthropist rather than a self-interested exploiter of Hopi culture. Trotta seems concerned, throughout her dissertation, to exculpate Voth from charges, common among the Hopi people and their sympathizers, that Voth was complicit with interloping and intrusive scholars; that his motives as a missionary were not pure; and that he profited financially from stealing Hopi artifacts and images and selling them to his scholar friends and other collectors.

Now that I have addressed the issue of Voth as a host of various non-Hopi visitors, and the common charges of Voth as a thief of Hopi cultural objects which he sold to his scholar friends, I return to the “culturally sensitive,” restricted image titled “Anglo man at Hopi,” in which the depicted “Anglo man” is the same person as the non-Hopi “Man” pictured in the above image, titled “Man with Hopi.” “Anglo man at Hopi” evidences Voth’s unauthorized photographic reproduction of a Hopi Katsina mask, which the Anglo man in the photo is wearing on top of his head. Kim Walters, the Braun Library archivist who titled this photo, notes in the record that the photograph was produced in Oraibi, and she has specified that “This record and image should not be released to the web [online archive]” because it constitutes a “culturally sensitive image,” meaning that the Hopi nation does not want images of their sacred objects to circulate in

³⁴⁹ Trotta, “Crossing,” 130.

public, and the Braun Library is complying with Hopi wishes. Walters' record describes the image as "of an Anglo man (perhaps Voth) dressed in a suit with a Katsina mask place [sic] on his head, where you can see his eyes." The Anglo man depicted in this photograph, who is the same as the non-Hopi man in the image I have reproduced above, is most definitely not H. R. Voth; we know this because he bears no resemblance to images of Voth as seen in numerous family photos with his wife and two daughters; Voth is older and thinner than this "Anglo man," and he wore a full beard. This means that Voth was most likely holding the camera, and the identity of the "Anglo man" is unknown. Since I am unable to reproduce the image, "Anglo man at Hopi," nor do I desire to do so, I will attempt to represent it with my words. The Anglo man wears a formal three-piece suit with tuxedo-style tails, a neck tie, a watch chain, and a hip bag; his arms hang at his sides, hands resting on his hips; his eyes gaze directly at the camera; his full mustache extends beyond the corners of his mouth, and the gap between his two front teeth is visible through his parted, smiling lips; his facial expression indicates that he is posing for the camera, that this is not a candid moment, that the photo is staged. The Katsina mask's fir tree fringe falls over the Anglo man's eyebrows, and attached feathers appear to blow in the wind. A cowboy hat lays upside down on the ground, slightly behind the Anglo man, as he apparently discarded it in a hurry to don the Hopi Katsina mask, playing Indian for the photo op. A bundle of Katsina paraphernalia rests on the ground beside the discarded cowboy hat, eagle feathers protruding from the top of the receptacle.

What interests me more than the subject of the “Anglo man” itself, or even his clichéd American practice of playing Indian, are the figures in the images that can be seen in the distance behind the Anglo man. In the photo’s background, the turned backs of three or four seemingly Hopi men’s heads peek over the tops of a group of boulders. It seems apparent that the photographer (Voth) and the visitor (the Anglo man) followed these Hopi men to this location, and once the Hopis’ backs were turned, the Anglo man exchanged his cowboy hat for the Katsina mask, and Voth quickly snapped this image. In this light, the Anglo man’s smirk seems to signify furtiveness, mischievousness, or arrogance. In this captured moment, Voth and the Anglo man are alone together, conspiring against the Hopis’ wishes. The photo of the “Anglo man at Hopi” is a record of Euroamerican irreverence for Hopi spirituality and ceremonial practice, as well as their displacement and commodification.

By donning the Katsina mask, the Anglo man perpetrates a theft of Hopi culture, an appropriation of Hopi practice, an incorporation of the Native, a colonial act of destruction. In *On Photography*, Sontag associates travel photography with “the urge to appropriate an alien reality” through tourism and the collection of souvenir images.³⁵⁰

The predatory site of photography is at the heart of the alliance, evident earlier in the United States than anywhere else, between photography and tourism. After the opening of the West in 1869 by the completion of the transcontinental railroad came the colonization through photography. The case of the American Indians is the most brutal . . . The tourists invaded the Indians’ privacy, photographing holy objects and the sacred dances and places.³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ Sontag, *On Photography*, 63.

³⁵¹ Sontag, *On Photography*, 64.

Sontag's description of the colonization of American Indians through photography is an apt way of characterizing "Anglo man at Hopi." If the Anglo man is a tourist, then Voth is his guide, condoning and aiding his colonization of the Hopi through the invasion of Hopi privacy and the theft of this image of the sacred Katsina mask. Sontag continues, "The photographer both loots and preserves, denounces and consecrates . . . Faced with the awesome spread and alienness of a newly settled continent, people wielded cameras as a way of taking possession of the places they visited."³⁵² As a looter and preserver, Voth as the photographer of "Anglo man at Hopi" takes possession of the Katsina mask through an act of photographic theft.

Despite this photographic evidence to the contrary, Trotta repeatedly attempts to exculpate Voth from "the common Hopi perception" of him as a "violinator of pueblo secrecy" by citing "the fact that the majority of his photographs represented daily communal life in the Pueblos in the 1890s" while only the minority of his photographs depict sacred sites or ceremonies.³⁵³ However, she also admits that during her field research, she discovered that "A form of this rumor [that Voth was a thief] apparently still remains as a part of folk culture mythology among the Hopi."³⁵⁴ She explains that during her "first visit to Oraibi in 1978," she "was told by my Hopi guide and colleague that missionary Voth was presented with a wheel barrow that held the remains of his ceremonial uncle, who upon presentation to Heinrich Voth said, 'you have taken

³⁵² Sontag, *On Photography*, 64-65.

³⁵³ Trotta, "Crossing," 37.

³⁵⁴ Trotta, "Crossing," 209.

everything else, you might as well have this body too.’’³⁵⁵ Trotta’s denunciation of her Hopi guide’s story as “folk culture mythology” has the effect of casting doubt on its veracity and disparaging Hopi oral tradition. Indeed, she upholds the written words of the Voths’ diaries as the most important source of information about Oraibi during this historical period, with no mention of the Hopi people’s version of their own history. When Trotta does briefly mention Talayesva’s autobiography, *Sun Chief*, she invalidates his claim of Voth’s thefts by defaming Talayesva’s character.

In *Sun Chief*, Talayesva implicitly charges Voth with robbery. Talayesva explains that while he was at home on summer vacation from boarding school, he

traded the good bow that my ceremonial father had given me to the Rev. Mr. Voth for a piece of calico, a few sticks of candy, and some crackers. I hated to part with the bow. At the time, however, my father was very poor . . . The same summer I noticed that the arrow with my placenta cord upon it was no longer in the ceiling of our house. I don’t know what became of it. (100)

In this passage, Talayesva stipulates that he only traded his prized bow to Voth (who most likely approached him at home and asked for it) because his father was poor and therefore unable to provide the clothing and food Talayesva desired. It is significant that Talayesva follows this account of poverty-induced, coerced trade with an account of the disappearance of his placenta cord, indicating that he perhaps suspected Voth of stealing said cord. Earlier in his narrative, Talayesva explains the significance of his placenta cord: “When my navel cord dried and dropped off, it was tied to an arrow and stuck beside a beam overhead . . . This was to make me a good hunter and to provide a ‘house’ for my infant spirit in case I died, for my soul could then stay by the arrow in the ceiling

³⁵⁵ Trotta, “Crossing,” 210.

and quickly slip back into my mother's womb for an early rebirth" (30). According to Hopi custom, all Hopi homes had the placenta cords of the resident children placed in the ceiling, as Talayesva describes. I suspect, and I think that Talayesva did as well, that Voth stole—or somehow illicitly acquired—Talayesva's placenta cord from his home, and here is why: Trotta notes that "Voth's knowledge of Hopi drew the attention of the Fred Harvey Company, which had hired Mary Colter, an architect, to design a pueblo at the Grand Canyon ('Hopi House,' which is still open today) . . . Voth was hired to gather objects for the Hopi House."³⁵⁶ In my research, I discovered a book called *The Henry R. Voth Hopi Indian Collection at Grand Canyon, Arizona: a catalogue prepared for the Fred Harvey Company in 1912*, published by Byron Harvey, which lists all of the items and artifacts housed in the Hopi House museum. When I browsed the catalogue, I discovered that among the objects Voth provided to the collection were included several placenta cords.³⁵⁷ Although Trotta adamantly holds that "Voth's diaries reveal that he only sold objects that were brought to him by Hopi and [that] he refused to take stolen objects," it is highly unlikely that any Hopi person would have gifted or sold the umbilical cords to Voth.³⁵⁸

Some of Trotta's translations of Voth's diary entries demonstrate the ways in which Voth coerced and manipulated the Hopi people, who he overruled through his authorization by the U.S. government. Although "Outsiders were expected to request permission from the *kikmongwi* [village chief] to enter the village," Trotta reproduces an

³⁵⁶ Trotta, "Crossing," 211.

³⁵⁷ See Voth, *The Henry R. Voth Hopi Indian Collection*.

³⁵⁸ Trotta, "Crossing," 206.

entry from Voth's diary that narrates an occasion in which he "intrud[ed] into a kiva ceremony without permission":

' . . . I went quick into the snake kiwa. Nobody was there. but somebody must have observed it and soon a woman stamped to the ground on top of the kiwa with a stick and called that I should come out. But I made fast sketches of the displayed idols. Soon Kushhunyniwa arrived and told me not to sketch them. Thereupon I had a long talk with him and scolded him. He gave in and let me sketch as long as I wanted. I reminded him that I had always shown that I was their friend. That I was the only one who had corresponded with the prisoners and for them when they were recently in California [at Sherman Institute]. Lets [sic] wait and see how he will respond in the future.'³⁵⁹

This passage demonstrates the authority Voth commanded as a federal agent, translator, and interlocutor for the Hopi. Interestingly, Trotta offers no commentary on or interpretation of this entry from Voth's diary, which actually enervates her thesis.

However, much earlier in her thesis she claims that Voth's "fluency in the Hopi language" marked him and his wife Martha as "vital conduits *between* Hopi villagers, for example, by reading and translating letters to and from children at Indian boarding schools to their parents, or between the Hopi imprisoned at Alcatraz after 1893 (the so-called 'hostiles') and their Pueblo families."³⁶⁰ Evidently, according to this diary entry, Voth thought that his role as a translator entitled him to take whatever cultural knowledge or objects he wanted as payment for his communication services; in other words, Voth reminded Kushhunyniwa that the Hopis were indebted to him and that they owed him a favor. Trotta seems to share this view, as she points out that "no outsiders consistently communicated Hopi concerns to government officials" until "the Voths arrived."³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ Trotta, "Crossing," 24-25.

³⁶⁰ Trotta, "Crossing," 7. Emphasis in original.

Trotta argues that since Voth “was influential . . . because he was respected by . . . government agents, . . . ethnologists, and other missionaries,” the “Hopi, in turn, recognized him as a valuable political ally in ‘white’ society and sought his assistance in mediating their conflicts with outsiders.”³⁶² Trotta suggests that Hopis cooperated with Voth, making a “temporary alliance” with him as a strategy for resisting the U.S. nation-state’s policies of forced assimilation, including the threat to land rights posed by the Dawes Act.³⁶³ Trotta’s claim that Voth was an important political ally of the Hopis and the evidence she provides through her translation of this diary entry that reveals his disregard of Hopi law and his self-interested manipulation of the people are inherently contradictory.

In the above diary entry, Voth clarifies his irreverence for the Hopi woman and man who safeguarded the sacred space of the snake kiva by asking Voth to exit the kiva and to stop sketching the Hopi “idols.” Voth’s prescient expedience in making “fast sketches” and hurrying rather than taking his time indicates that he understood his action as forbidden, as breaking Hopi law, and that he had anticipated being ejected from the kiva before he finished his task of sketching the sacred images. The fact that Voth “scolded” Kushhunyniwa further reveals his arrogant opinion of himself as a paternal figure who knows better than the childish Hopis. “Reminding” him of his power as a translator and interlocutor, Voth coerced Kushhunyniwa into permitting him to remain in the kiva.

³⁶¹ Trotta, “Crossing,” 87.

³⁶² Trotta, “Crossing,” 87.

³⁶³ Trotta, “Crossing,” 236.

Voth's manipulation of clan leaders, along with other illicit means, enabled him to obtain secret tribal knowledge, images, and objects, off of which he personally profited. This is not the work of a missionary, and Trotta observes that if the Mennonite board had been privy to all of Voth's dealings with collectors and scholars, they may have excommunicated him from the church or dismissed him from his mission.

Due to the Hopis' fear of punishment by the U.S. government if they were to resist him, Voth was able to acquire not only sacred objects but also Hopi tribal secrets—ceremonial knowledge considered to be the exclusive property of certain clan or religious society members. In *Sun Chief*, Don Talayesva intimates the gravity of Voth's exposures. When Talayesva's amanuensis and friend, anthropologist Leo W. Simmons, asked him for details about the ceremonies in which he participated, Don explains, "I had to say, 'What I did in the Soyal is secret. When you ask me about that, it sets the people against me.' . . . I told him no secrets that Voth had not already published, but that damned missionary was a smart man" (374). Talayesva denounces Voth for exposing tribal secrets, which are crucial to Hopi sociopolitical autonomy and the preservation of Hopi knowledge and practice. As Trotta explains, a balance of power among the tribe was assured by a distribution of tribal knowledge among clans. The leaders of each clan were responsible for passing down their portion of tribal knowledge and ceremonial practices to the next generations. Simmons explains in his introduction to *Sun Chief* that

Don [Talayesva] had seen a book in the possession of Dr. Fred Eggan which was published by George A. Dorsey and H. R. Voth in 1901, and which described the Soyal ceremony in elaborate detail . . . Don examined the pictures and drawings of the altars and seemed distressed, making such remarks as, 'This is awful. It makes me unhappy. That man Voth was a thief. The secrets are all exposed.' (6)

Talayesva also writes of this encounter with Dr. Eggan in a diary entry, which appears in the text of *Sun Chief*. In his own narration of the event, Talayesva recalls,

This evil man Voth had written out all the secrets, not only of the Soyal but of other ceremonies . . . These things were of greater value to the Hopi than anything else in the world and the Whites had gotten them away from us. I felt very badly. But I did not blame the Whites for buying them as much as I blamed the old Hopis . . . If those chiefs had not permitted Voth to take the pictures and watch the ceremonies, they would never have been published. (344)

Talayesva's disappointment in the old Hopis is complicated, as it acknowledges both the Hopi complicity with Voth's theft but also their situation of being coerced by the powerful missionary and government agent. The old Hopis' permission for Voth to take his photographs was one of the choiceless choices that people make in situations where they have seemingly no other option, when resistance seems futile.

Talayesva's narrative notes that fear of the federal government, which had and wielded the power to displace, institutionalize, imprison, and otherwise harm and threaten Hopi people, significantly impacted Hopi decision making and daily life. Talayesva explains that "the old chief, with my grandfather and a few others, became friendly with the Whites . . . But it seemed that fear of Whites, especially of what the United States Government could do, was one of the strongest powers that controlled us, and one of our greatest worries" (89). The Hopi were concerned that their sovereignty and autonomy are endangered by the coercive and domineering powers of the U.S. nation-state and its agents, and Voth was indeed powerful and feared. Talayesva reports that

The land was very dry, the crops suffered, and even the Snake dance failed to bring much rain. We tried to discover the reason for our plight, and remembered the Rev. Voth who had stolen so many of our ceremonial secrets and had even carried off sacred images and altars to equip a museum and become a rich man. When [Voth] had worked here in my boyhood, the Hopi were afraid of him and

dared not lay their hands on him or any other missionary, lest they be jailed by the Whites. During the ceremonies this wicked man would force his way into the kiva and write down everything that he saw. He wore shoes with solid heels, and when the Hopi tried to put him out of the kiva he would kick them. (252)

Trotta attempts to discredit Talayesva's claim that Voth's actions were "wicked" by suggesting that "it is important to note that . . . *Sun Chief* represents [merely] one Hopi's opinion" and that "the Voth diaries"—which she privileges as a source of truth—"indicate that it may not represent the opinion of those who knew Voth and his family."³⁶⁴ Besides, she continues, "Talayesva was paid *by the page* for his work," her implication being that he may have included much testimony that was excessive of the truth or otherwise inaccurate in order to earn extra monetary compensation.³⁶⁵ However, Trotta's own translation and citation of Voth's diary, as I have shown, elucidates the criminal and forceful nature of his acquisition of Hopi tribal secrets.

Sun Chief includes a passage that parallels, in my mind, Voth's diary entry narrating his trespass into the snake kiva. In it, Talayesva exemplifies a mode of decolonization that makes Hopi people proud to this day. Employing the knowledge of Christianity that he had gained at boarding school, Talayesva manipulates the logics of colonialism to assert his own sovereignty and to charge Voth with hypocrisy.

[Voth] came back to Oraibi on a visit and took down many more names. Now I was grown, educated in the Whites' school, and had no fear of this man. When I heard that he was in my mother's house I went over and told him to get out. I said, 'You break the commandments of your own God. He has ordered you never to steal or to have any other gods before him. He has told you to avoid all graven images; but you have stolen ours and set them up in your museum. This makes you a thief and an idolator who can never go to heaven.' I knew the Hopi Cloud

³⁶⁴ Trotta, "Crossing," 230.

³⁶⁵ Trotta, "Crossing," 230. Emphasis in original.

People despised this man, and even though he was now old and wore a long beard, I had a strong desire to seize him by the collar and kick him off the mesa.
(252)

In this exchange, Talayesva triumphantly scolds Voth in a similar manner as Voth had scolded Kushhunyniwa, by reminding him of his own beliefs and duties to obey Christian scripture. In accusing Voth of hypocrisy and of failing to practice his own preaching, Talayesva decolonizes the logic of indebtedness that had previously been used to justify Voth's various acts of theft.



10. “Doorway Covered with Buckskin and a Wedding Dress”³⁶⁶

Of all the images in Voth’s archive, this one perhaps comes closest to fitting Susan Sontag’s notion of photographs as “melancholy objects.” Sontag describes a “melancholy object” as that which is born of distance or disjunction from reality, a separateness which may be spatial, temporal, political, or cultural; therefore, a melancholy object is marked by the quality of remoteness. Hanging in the doorway, this wedding dress is displaced from its original context of Hopi ceremonial wedding rites, which included male relatives weaving the cloth, female relatives grinding the corn for the feasts, the mutual washing of the newlywed’s hair, and the communal celebration of the first thirty days of an economic and emotional partnership. In this photograph, the

³⁶⁶ Braun Research Library, Selected photos, P.40905A

dress is removed or distanced from its bridal owner, who would traditionally preserve the dress in safekeeping until her death, at which time she would be buried in it. Absent the bride, this dress hanging in the doorway is an apparition.

However ghostly this image, I resist reading it as a melancholy object because rather than documenting a Hopi tradition that has been lost, it records the gendered cultural changes that took place as a result of colonial pressures. My reading of this photograph as representing such changes is informed by Talayesva's autobiography, *Sun Chief*. In chapter eleven, titled "Subsistence in the Desert," Talayesva laments, "With marriage I began a life of toil and discovered that education had spoiled me for making a living in the desert" (224). During the years that he was away at boarding schools, Talayesva was displaced from his Hopi elders and therefore unable to acquire the hands-on education in Hopi farming practices and shepherding that he needed to support his wife. He continues, "I remembered my easy life at school and the money I had wasted on girls; but I worked on, for we needed food. I wanted a good-looking cornfield" (231). Talayesva also regrets that he "did not know how to sew and weave like the other men," so any clothing that he and his wife needed had to be given to them by male relatives or purchased at new Agency stores (248).

Talayesva's narrative suggests the various ways that his education at boarding schools emasculated him among the Hopi. As a result of Talayesva's failings as a provider, his wife Irene was reduced to making sacrifices to supplement their family's income. Talayesva writes,

At harvest I was disappointed with my corn crop, realized that I was a poor farmer, and wondered whether I would ever be able to support a family. Irene sold

a black dress that my father wove for her and used the money to buy food. She also cut up her fine buckskin moccasins—her wedding gift—and sold them piece by piece. Later she sold her wedding robe for \$15, the one that she should have saved for a burial shroud, and spent the money for food and a fancy Spanish shawl. We went all the way to Winslow with five burros to do this shopping. I had no right to say what should be done with Irene’s wedding property; but I clearly felt that I was a poor provider...” (255)

Irene crosses traditional Hopi gender lines by bringing income, food, and clothing into the household, all of which were conventionally the husband’s tasks. Perhaps this wedding dress hanging in the doorway belongs to a wife in a similar situation, in need of selling her wedding property for the sake of subsistence in the desert, where traditional modes of life were giving way to cultural changes brought on by settler colonization.

Conclusion

According to Susan Sontag in *On Photography*, documentary photographs constitute melancholy objects, “paper phantoms” that depict “moments of lost time, of vanished customs;” therefore, the photographic archive conserves “a vanishing past.”³⁶⁷ “In America,” Sontag writes, “the photographer is not simply the person who records the past but the one who invents it.”³⁶⁸ However, Sontag’s theorization of photographs as melancholy objects, as “instant antiques,” only makes sense according to a Eurocentric conception of time as linear and progressive so that the present slips away into the past

³⁶⁷ Sontag, *On Photography*, 68, 54, 56.

³⁶⁸ Sontag, *On Photography*, 68.

moment by moment, never to return other than through our materialistic clinging via photographic or journalistic representation.³⁶⁹

Voth's photographs and diary entries reveal his profound belief that Hopi people would inevitably disappear as such, through their progressive assimilation to dominant society. But, of course, Voth was wrong. Many Hopi people continue to live traditionally; have adapted to living in mainstream U.S. society; have maintained vibrant lives in multiple cultural contexts; and have even helped non-Hopi people to understand their own place in the world better by viewing it through Hopi perspectives. Indigenous people know that the past lives on in our present moment, through legacies of trauma and colonization, as well as through our legacies of survival. As is evidenced by Hopi-produced documentary films and youtube videos, for example, Hopi people today are not averse to making self-representative images in order to communicate knowledge, continue traditions, and educate diverse audiences.

I wonder what use, if any, Hopi people want to make of Voth's archive. In any case, Voth's photographs in this collection—which were meant to portray Hopi people and traditions as savage, pre-modern, and backward; Hopi parents as unfit; and colonial efforts to assimilate the Hopis as progressive and in the Indian's own best interest—have broad implications for various indigenous communities, for whom the struggles to maintain our rights of self-governance and to keep our children from being orphaned and placed in the homes of non-indigenous people continues to this day.³⁷⁰ In addition to

³⁶⁹ Sontag, *On Photography*, 80.

NPR's recent reporting of the kidnapping of Native children in North Dakota by Child Protective Services and widespread national coverage of the case of "Baby Veronica," indigenous people are documenting the problem of colonial Native orphaning in artistic and critical contexts.³⁷¹ For example, the film *Deep Inside Clint Star* dramatizes the story of an Indian porn star who grew up in the foster care of an abusive and inept non-Native guardian, and Andrea Smith's groundbreaking indigenous feminist work, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* expounds on the colonial practices of Child Protective Services as an extension of the history of Native children's displacement at Indian boarding schools.³⁷² Perhaps our understanding of Voth's photographs in light of these histories and comparative contexts may aid indigenous projects to locate our orphans and bring them home.

³⁷⁰ This struggle is represented by, for example, the recent case of "Baby Veronica," who was taken from the care of her Cherokee father and placed in the home of a non-indigenous adoptive couple, the Capobiancos.

³⁷¹ See Sullivan and Walters, "Incentives."

³⁷² See *Deep Inside Clint Star* and Smith, *Conquest*.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation's tribally specific lens has limitations. Although it was important for me to look at this literature in historically and culturally specific contexts, doing so has hindered my ability to make the explicit connections I want to make between my reading of these stories and my own struggles and attempts to make a different world. My future research will explore the trans-indigenous significance of these stories and the theories and methods I develop here for studying other tribal literatures as well as the autobiographical practices of so-called "mixed-race" Indians, or people who identify as Indian by descent or heritage but may have no formal tribal affiliation, for example due to histories of colonial displacement.

I want to theorize the potential of academic discourse on American Indian boarding schools to remap deceptive literary, historical, and archival borders between geographic spaces and temporal periods that are actually complexly connected. There is much to be said about the commensurability of Native American genocide and detribalization, African slavery and anti-black racism and segregation, and the industrialization of white work forces. However, the histories and political struggles of different ethnic communities in North America are segregated from one another by overly simplistic, dichotomous geographical and temporal boundaries that structure academic fields (e.g., North/South, ante-/post-bellum). My next major research project will entail a comparison of federal Indian boarding school recruitment practices with

those of present-day Child Protective Services' displacement of Indian children to non-Native foster, adoptive, or institutional "care" in group homes.

What can a focus on "mixed-race" Indian identity do to disrupt the contours of American literature and cultural studies? How does memory created through reading compare with memory created through "experience"? How can we champion rather than ostracize historical figures who knew and acted on their knowledge that racial identity is not essential but rather performative? My next project will also compare lived and literary examples of "mixed-breed" Indians with "tragic mulattos" and "white trash." Canonical scholarship on antebellum America, for example, focuses on black-white race relations at the expense of understanding Indian communities in the south, many of which included members who shared African heritage.

My future work will explore the queer temporality of mixed-race Indians. Elizabeth Freeman's theorization of "queer belonging" as both relational and temporal recalls one of Paula Gunn Allen's "major themes or issues that pertain to American Indians," namely that

Indians endure—both in the sense of living through something so complete in its destructiveness that the mere presence of survivors is a testament to the human will to survive and in the sense of duration or longevity. Tribal systems have been operating in the 'new world' for several hundred thousand years. It is unlikely that a few hundred years of colonization will see their undoing.³⁷³

Endurance is the object of the futurism inherent in Freeman's notion of queer temporality, which marks both the desire to belong in the present and also to "be long" in time. The future is denied to both queer and Native folks in a system of settler

³⁷³ Allen, *Sacred*, 2.

colonialism that demands nuclear kinship and heterosexual reproduction and actively destroys Native peoples and lifeways through genocidal policies and institutions.

According to settler colonial temporality, time is structured as a chronological line, and Native peoples are positioned as primitive, or behind the supposedly more developed European-Americans on the timeline of human evolution. Following this logic, Native peoples would disappear through assimilation with the dominant culture or "breed out" through miscegenation with European people. However, "mixed-race" Indians who identify as Native refuse this logic of Indian elimination. Instead, we adhere to a queer temporality in which the past lives on in our present through memories, stories, and traditions that do not vanish--even when they change to accommodate the new. The queer temporality of mixed-race Indians champions Native futurity in the face of colonial attempts to erase us.

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