

“THE LAST DAYS OF THE SUICIDE KID:”  
NATIVE AMERICAN MASCULINITIES, AND NEUROTIC NATION-STATES.

A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of Graduate Studies  
of  
The University of Guelph

by  
KURT KLOTZ

In partial fulfilment of requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
July, 2004

© Kurt Klotz, 2004



Library and  
Archives Canada

Bibliothèque et  
Archives Canada

Published Heritage  
Branch

Direction du  
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file    Votre référence*

*ISBN: 0-612-96178-8*

*Our file    Notre référence*

*ISBN: 0-612-96178-8*

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing the Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

---

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

**Canada**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Patrick Holland for his sound academic advice. His supervision was always thoughtful, his comments were encouraging, and his patience was profound. My second reader, Dr. Cecil Foster, was also an insightful and thought-provoking advisor, and his academic supervision was instrumental in the completion of this thesis. As well, although not on my committee, I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Donna Pennee, whose support during my time at Guelph is very much appreciated.

Of course, much thanks and gratitude also goes out to: my mom, for her abundant enthusiasm and assistance throughout my studies; Karina, Preston, and Jakob for the encouragement via many wonderful letters and birthday cards; my dad and Lorraine, for the kind advice and generous support.

As well, sincere thanks to Bob and Ann Moquin for their timely assistance.

And, with much love, to my wonderful girlfriend, Heather, who I can't even begin to thank enough.

Finally, this thesis is very much dedicated to my uncle, Ernie Quintal.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Chapter One	
Introduction: Native American Texts and Hybrid Interpretive Methodologies.....	1
Overview of Welch's and Alexie's Fiction.....	7
Hybrid Modelling in Relation to Native American Literary Criticism.....	12
Chapter Two	
"Images [. . .] Like Dark Birds:" Symbolic Orders, Sacred Hoops, and Suicide in Welch's <i>The Death of Jim Loney</i> .....	29
"Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt".....	31
Western Theoretical Parallels With Blackfoot Narratives.....	43
Interpretation of <i>The Death of Jim Loney</i> .....	51
Conclusion.....	76
Chapter Three	
"Little Bighorn, Mon Amour:" Trauma, Tricksters and the Neurosis of Failure in Alexie's "Ghost Dance" and <i>Reservation Blues</i> .....	77
Trauma Theory and Suicide at the Battle of Little Bighorn.....	82
Traumatic Repetition in Alexie's "Ghost Dance".....	107
Depictions of the Feminine Principle in "Coyote Tricks Owl".....	114
Trauma and Jungian Quest Theory in <i>Reservation Blues</i> .....	121
First Journey East.....	133
Second Journey East.....	140
Psychic Effects of Jungian Quest for Individuation on the Protagonists.....	146
Conclusion.....	161
Chapter Four	
Conclusion: Looking Beyond <i>House Made of Dawn</i> .....	163
Works Cited.....	177

## Chapter One

### Introduction: Native American Texts and Hybrid Interpretive Methodologies.

This thesis is titled after Charles Bukowski's "the last days of the suicide kid" because the themes put forth in the poem -- broken masculinity, psychic disarticulation, and suicide -- are reflected in the characters and historic events written by James Welch and Sherman Alexie. Regarding these themes and writers, the aims of this thesis are twofold: first, to read the work of two representative male Native American writers with regard to their exploration of a crisis in construction of a viable Native American masculine identity. As work of two of the more prominent Native American male authors, Welch's and Alexie's texts reflect a significant and recurrent concern in Native American-authored fiction: the preclusion of psychically viable male identities, and the inter-relationship between unviable masculinities and paternal characters. This concern is repeated throughout Native American literature, implying a phenomenon not merely incidental, but culturally symptomatic. Thus, analysis of the inter-relation between paternal characters and the crisis in construction of incomplete male protagonists is important because it reflects a gender circumstance that is culturally crucial for Native American society as reflected in aboriginal-authored literature.

To the end of analysing the relationship between incohesive male psychic identities and paternal figures, a hybrid and flexible critical model drawing on both Native American sources, such as the Medicine Wheel and related mythology, and European theoretical concepts, such as Bhabhian post-colonial discourse and Freudian/ Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, is employed in discussion of Welch's and Alexie's texts. Hybrid modelling is utilized because Native American/ First Nations

writing is culturally imbricated through a specific history of Native American and European American inter-relation, such that formalistic, character-based Western criticism alone cannot account for the thick aboriginal culturality of writing, while reading the stories simply for “myth content” ignores the complexity of meaning in North American aboriginal-authored fiction. Thus, the specific historic context of Native America foregrounds an actual *need* for hybrid modelling that encompasses both tribal and Western theory in order to facilitate a more comprehensive interpretation. This reasoning foregrounds the second aim of this thesis: to locate a theory inherent within Native American/ First Nations tribal discourses in order to address and understand aboriginal tropes of identity within Welch’s and Alexie’s writing. Employment of a methodological apparatus that assumes identificatory theory within tribal narratives allows for more comprehensive leverage of interpretation, and is thereby inimical to literary criticism characterized by a perpetuation of superficial analysis through employment of a more casually folklorish approach to Native American fiction.

Deployment of a hybrid interpretive methodology necessitates explanation of key concepts utilized in this thesis; in particular, national typology and psychic disarticulation, as well discussion of the inter-relation between the two terms. In short, typology denotes a “type” of identity constituted by discursive sources such as national or cultural meta-narratives, and, in basic terms, refers to one’s identity, or persona. The manner in which national typology is constructed, and how it defines identity, or the national subject, is explained through methodologies put forth by Homi Bhabha and Judith Butler.

In “Dissemi-nation” Bhabha discusses the “liminality of cultural modernity” (140) inherent to the process of writing the modern nation state. Specifically, he

locates “the ambivalent and chiasmatic intersections of time and place that constitute the problematic ‘modern’ experience of writing the nation” (141); or, in other words, the intersection between the national past, and a national present that continually dislocates itself from history in order to define itself as modern. The national process of continually surmounting, or writing itself, over the temporal, disjunctive fissure of dislocation from the historical past engenders an ambivalence of signification for the national people. Specifically, the nation’s people, are at once, both the “historical ‘objects’ of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the [national] discourse an authority that is based on [. . . a] constituted historical origin *in the past*” (145), and the “‘subjects’ of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate [. . .] contemporaneity” (145). Thus, the national demography is ambivalently constructed by, and fluctuates between, the “accumulative temporality of the [historically] pedagogical” (145) and the “repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative” (145).

With the correlation between the temporal process of writing the national discourse and the ambivalent identity of the nation-people established, the notion of typology, as utilized in this thesis, emphasizes the modern subjective, and performative, national identity. Specifically, typological identity is composed from national symbols and signifiers in the present to temporarily form an identificatory presence before disarticulating due to signifiatory slippage. This performative typology is then repeated in the “following” present moment before disarticulating again, thereby setting a repetitive pattern of performed typological identity and slippage; or, as Bhabha states, “as an apparatus of symbolic power, [the nation] produces a continual slippage of categories, like sexuality, [and] class affiliation [ . . .]” (140).

The Bhabhian notion of a performative typology that must be repeated in order to surmount the slippage of constituting signification, finds a methodological similarity in Butler's "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." Butler, who focuses on gendered subjectivity, puts forth the notion that performative identity is a repetitive imitation without natural origin (21). Instead, naturalized and heterosexualized genders approximate "a phantasmatic ideal of heterosexual identity" (21); and, through repetition of performance, the "illusion of a seamless heterosexual identity is constructed" (24).

The heterosexualized identity, or typology, engenders a division of self between subject and psyche. As Butler explains, inherent to the subject's constitution is the illusion that the subject is preceded by, and expresses, a gendered "psychic reality" (24); or, "coherent gender, achieved through an apparent repetition of the same, produces as its effect the illusion of a prior and volitional subject" (24) even as it "constitutes as an effect the very subject it seems to express" (24). While the notion of a constituting and repetitively performative subject denies a psychic priority, it does not preclude the psyche itself (24). Instead, "the refusal to conflate the subject with the psyche marks the psychic as that which exceeds the domain of the conscious subject" (24). While this "psychic excess" (24) is repetitively denied by typology, it is also that "which erupts within the intervals of those repeated gestures and acts that construct the apparent uniformity of heterosexual positionalities" (24). For Butler, the irruptive psychic excess is that which, "within the heterosexual economy, implicitly includes homosexuality, that perpetual threat of disruption which is quelled through a reinforced repetition of the same" (24).

Thus, typological identity is constructed by the national symbolic apparatus and repetitively reconstituted in the present tense against the slippage of signification.



During intervals of slippage psychic excess may irrupt into the typological subject. In the event that irruption remains “quelled through [. . .] reinforced repetition of the same” typology becomes totalizing of identity; but when typology fails to reinforce repetition it becomes disrupted by psychic excess. While Butler emphasizes the correlation between psychic excess and homosexuality, vis-à-vis Welch’s and Alexie’s literature Butler’s methodologies are altered to correlate psychic excess with Jungian or Native American concepts such as the shadow, or feminine principle, respectively, as detailed in succeeding chapters; and when characters actualise these psychic elements written out of the national story they disrupt the totalizing processes of typology. In contrast, when these elements remain precluded, psychic disarticulation, or psychic incoherence, occurs because the subjective identity and elements associated with psychic excess remain divided.

While psychic disarticulation and psychic incoherence may refer to an effect of totalizing type, the terminology has broader application within this thesis; for example, in relation to trauma theory, psychic disarticulation/ incohesion denotes the fissured ego and temporally uncontextualized moments lodged within the psyche due to psychic impact with traumatic site. As well, implications of psychic disarticulation are expanded when employed in conjunction with the Native American/ First Nations concept of the medicine wheel. The medicine wheel as a metaphor for identity is described in greater detail in Chapter Two, so related discussion here will be brief. In basic terms the medicine wheel is technically similar to the Jungian mandala with its circular and quaternary structure (Mazzola 66). As a metaphor for a whole, cohesive psyche, the medicine wheel is divided into four directions, with each direction corresponding to a particular psychic trait, such as innocence, or insight (Mazzola 65). Through the development of each of these psychic traits, the individual grows into a

whole person (66). Typological totalization engenders a subject staticized with few particular psychic traits, creating a disarticulate psyche in which the self – represented by the medicine wheel – never becomes fully cohered.

Regarding analysis of the correlation between unviable masculine identities and paternal characters, this thesis will discuss how male identification with the father, or paternal icon, contributes to a totalizing typology, which, in turn, engenders psychic disarticulation. In addition to creating psychic incohesion, identification with the patriarch engenders a male typology that is inherently neurotic. In Welch's *The Death of Jim Loney*, neuroticism reflects incestuous implications, as well as an inability to reconcile antagonism against the patriarch, while the male typologies in Alexie's fiction reflect a Lacanian neurosis of failure. While interpretive methodologies vary between chapters and authors, also of significance in relation to analysis of the patriarch is its constitution by the nation-state. Thus, the neuroticisms inherent to male Native American typologies perpetuated through paternal identification also reflect neuroticisms written into the nation-state.

Analysis through hybrid theoretical modelling of the correlation between unviable male Native American typologies and paternal icons within aboriginal-authored literature is organized into four chapters. A more detailed summary of individual author studies is provided below in relation to literary criticism in the field of Native American fiction, so explication here will be brief. The second chapter, focusing on Welch, discusses the correlation between the protagonist's psychic incohesion and paternal icon in Welch's *The Death of Jim Loney*. Reflective of hybrid modelling, the Blackfoot narrative, "Oo-chi-scub-pah-pah, Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt" is employed in construction of a theoretical apparatus to interpret Welch's text; the second chapter thereby begins with summary and interpretation of

“Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” as a narrative about psychic extrication from tribal reality through disavowal of the law of the father. This interpretation is conflated with paternal theory, especially methodologies put forth by Bhabha, in order to analyze the tripartite correlation between typology, national patriarchy, and bird imagery in Welch’s text. Chapter Three, which focuses on Alexie’s fiction, involves analysis of The Battle of Little Bighorn as a site of national trauma, and is thereby grounded in psycho-analytic/ trauma theory. This analysis is carried forward into interpretation of tropes of historic trauma and masculine typologies in the short story, “Ghost Dance.” Examination of the short fiction is followed by discussion of the Okanagan narrative, “Coyote Tricks Owl” in order to explain tropes pertaining to the feminine principle in *Reservation Blues*; and, similar to “Ghost Dance,” analysis of *Reservation Blues* also involves trauma theory. The concluding chapter suggests areas for future research. While the theoretical modelling put forth may seem disproportionate to interpretation of Welch’s and Alexie’s texts, suggestions for future research will indicate that these theoretical models can be extended beyond analysis of texts studied in this thesis. Finally, the remainder of this introductory chapter is sub-divided into a broad overview of each authors’ fiction, and a discussion of the criticism pertaining to both Welch’s and Alexie’s texts, in order to evidence the necessity of hybrid theory to study masculine identity construction in aboriginal-authored texts.

#### *Overview of Welch’s and Alexie’s Fiction.*

In general, Welch’s novels focus on predominantly Blackfoot masculine protagonists in a contemporary northern Montana setting. Even Welch’s first historic

novel, *Fools Crow*, is set in the same geographical area as *Winter in the Blood*, *The Death of Jim Loney*, and *The Indian Lawyer*, and the inter-textual overlap in geographical sites like Harlem, Havre, Malta, and Fort Belknap, as well as personal names such as Yellow Calf, establish a unified Blackfoot “universe” in Welch’s writing through his first four novels. Welch’s fifth fictional text, *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*, is – like *Fools Crow* -- an historical text; however, it departs from the Blackfoot setting of northern Montana, focusing on the displaced Oglala Sioux, Charging Elk, who is left behind in a hospital in France by Wild Bill’s travelling show toward the end of the nineteenth century.

Recurring themes in Welch’s fiction include the immersion of aboriginal males in colonial discourses, cultural alienation and dismembered masculinity, and their effects on sexual relationships. These ideas are often intertwined, with alienation from tribal realities both cause and effect of incomplete identity. Something of an exception to this rule is *Fools Crow*, in which the protagonist develops from a character named White Man’s Dog into the prominent tribal figure after whom the text is named. The impetus behind this metamorphosis is that “presumably [. . .] the [Blackfoot] tribe provides the foundation of [Fools Crow’s] identity and the way for him to evolve into manhood” (McFarland 110); or, as John Purdy states, “the search for identity becomes a group effort” (Purdy in McFarland 110) conducted by the tribe. Specifically, the identified values and philosophies of the Blackfoot culture, supported and endorsed by other tribal actors, facilitate cohesive masculine identity; and when these philosophies are not adhered to identificatory disarticulation, or psychic staticization, ensue. Detachment from tribal reality as a cause of incomplete identity is evidenced in *Fools Crow* through

characters such as Fast Horse and Owl Child who split from the Blackfoot order and develop into psychotic characters.

Incoherent identity resulting from displaced aboriginal concepts of being are also instanced in *Winter in the Blood* and *The Death of Jim Loney*, both of which depict young masculine protagonists experiencing emotional alienation from feminine characters in the novels, and detachment from aboriginal perspectives of self. In juxtaposition with *Fools Crow*, the protagonists' detachment from aboriginal identificatory concepts is more profound in Welch's first two novels, where the lack of knowledge regarding Blackfoot concepts of identity that exist outside the national discourse psychically afflicts the primary characters, as evidenced in the fact that the protagonist of *Winter in the Blood* does not discover a paternal icon that could facilitate a cohesive personal history until his final encounter with Yellow Calf (158), or the manner in which Loney discovers that the maternal icon capable of providing psychic cohesion is "not on this earth" (175) just before his death. The protagonists' immersion within the American discourse, and separation from Blackfoot cultural knowledge, suggests that the national Symbolic order is to blame for perpetuating incohesive identificatory typologies. Thus, the psychic incompleteness characteristic of Welch's protagonists implies a criticism levelled against the American discourse itself, or against what the nameless protagonist calls "this greedy stupid country" (*Winter in the Blood* 169).

Like Welch, Alexie's fiction is centred predominantly on male subjects. The short stories in Alexie's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* focus on the three protagonists, Thomas Builds-The-Fire, Victor Joseph and Junior Polatkin, who are also primary characters in *Reservation Blues*, while the events depicted in *Indian Killer* revolve around John Smith, a Native American adopted into a European-

American family. The collection of short stories, *The Toughest Indian in the World*, also focuses on male characters. More so than *The Lone Ranger*, the stories in *The Toughest Indian* question constructions and boundaries of gendered and racial identity and their pertinence in interpersonal relationships; for example, “Indian Country” depicts a male character’s infatuation with a lesbian; “The Toughest Indian in the World” focuses on a homosexual encounter; while “Assimilation” and “Class” illustrate sexual indiscretions in inter-racial marriages.

Despite intertextual differences, most of Alexie’s fiction explores indigenous identity in relation to the predominant American discourse, and a recurring concern – and one similar to Welch’s fiction -- is the relation of parental icons to protagonists, with particular emphasis on the inheritance of dysfunctional identity between patriarchs and children, with this dysfunction a reflection of the larger national narrative. Specifically, the father in Alexie’s texts usually reflects identity defined by the colonizing narratives. Following identification, the male protagonists either perpetuate, or disrupt, the pattern of psychic dismemberment inherent in paternal icons, as in *Reservation Blues*; or in *Indian Killer* where John Smith, who experiences an irruption in his identifying signifier by psychic (and in light of Jungian implications, archetypal) elements excluded from the national Symbolic order, thereby causing disruption between his self and discourse, is depicted as a lost son to his adoptive European-American parents. Correlations between subjective identity and paternal icons are also evidenced in Alexie’s short fiction, such as “Because My Father Always Said He Was the Only Indian Who Saw Jimi Hendrix Play ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ at Woodstock” and “This Is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona” in *The Lone Ranger*, and “Indian Country” in *The Toughest Indian*.

In addition to the theme of paternal icons and their relation to subjects, another recurrence in Alexie's fiction is imagery of warfare. In particular, tropes grounded in historic American domestic wars against aboriginal groups occur throughout Alexie's fiction, while national narratives, especially those that interpellate aboriginal subjects, are depicted as militaristic; for example, General Philip Sheridan (269), General George Armstrong Custer (269), Colonel George Wright (269) and his slaughter of Spokane horses (9-10), and the murder of Crazy Horse (84-85), all elements of American campaigns against its indigenous populations, are manifested in *Reservation Blues*, while *Indian Killer* alludes to the Ghost Dance (313), Wovoka, Geronimo, and Chief Joseph (219). Even the title, *Indian Killer*, is a reference to Custer ("Ghost Dance" 346). Tropes of colonial violence are also evidenced in "The Sin Eaters" when Native Americans are literally swallowed by military discourse, and the beginning of *Indian Killer*, when John Smith's disassociation from the reservation is described as a military procedure (6-8).

Historic elements are often metaphoric for identificatory processes in Alexie's fiction, and psychic dysfunction, or psychic processes, in male subjects, parallel the national collective failure suggested through reference to the American Indian Wars. At other times contemporary indigenous characters identify with "historic" Native Americans, and the names Chief Joseph, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse recur throughout Alexie's fiction as evidenced at the end of "Crazy Horse Dreams" when Victor "wish[es] he [is] Crazy Horse" (*The Lone Ranger* 42), and during Samuel Builds-The-Fire's basketball game in which he scores a point "for Crazy Horse" (106). Historic events and figures affecting the present are also evidenced throughout Alexie's fiction; some specifics are illustrated when the central characters of "The Toughest Indian in the World" have a sexual encounter at the "Pony Soldier Motel"

(31), which features “a generic watercolour [depicting . . .] the U.S. Cavalry [. . .] kicking the crap out of a band of renegade Indians” (31); and in “Distances” in which “the Ghost Dance actually work[s]” (104).

In addition to their focus on male protagonists and criticisms of the national discourse, a further similarity between Welch and Alexie is their employment of indigenous cultural elements in their fiction. Specifically, both authors use medicine wheel tropes to illustrate psychic identity construction. These tropes are complemented by further cultural elements reflective of each author’s particular background. Bird imagery, as stated, relates to typology and motivation in *The Death of Jim Loney*; and Coyote and Owl references reflect indigenous theoretical notions about identity in *Reservation Blues* and *Indian Killer*. While these tropes contain their own particular connotations, the mythology alluded to in bird and Coyote imagery also carries medicine wheel implications, supplementing medicine wheel colour/ direction motifs in texts. This employment of aboriginal culture-specific elements vis-à-vis concerns of national discourse emphasizes a need for hybrid theoretical methodologies, as explained in detail in the following subsection.

#### *Hybrid Modelling in Relation to Native American Literary Criticism.*

Analysis of tribal-specific imagery manifested in Native American fiction is not unique to this thesis, and previous criticism conducted in this field prompted motivation and inspiration for this study. Kenneth Lincoln’s *Native American Renaissance* provides a technical model of the sacred hoop based on *Black Elk Speaks* (Lakota) applied to Welch’s fiction. Bernd Peyer’s *Hyemeyohsts Storm’s Seven Arrows: Fiction and Anthropology in the Native American Novel* offers an extensive



account of technical and philosophical aspects of the medicine wheel in his discussion of Storm's text; while Lars Charles Mazzola's exploration of the medicine wheel, "Center and Periphery," is also partially composed from analysis of *Seven Arrows*. Paula Gunn Allen's *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* discusses the medicine wheel, or sacred hoop, in Native American narratives as well. Kathleen Sands utilizes Gros Ventre ethnography in "*The Death of Jim Loney: Indian or Not?*" and Patricia Riley In-The-Woods examines Blackfoot mythology manifested in Welch's text in "*The Death of Jim Loney: A Ritual of Re-Creation*." The interpretive apparatus employed in this thesis reflects previous critical analysis by acknowledging tribal-specific tropes, and builds on this mode of criticism by conjoining Native American thought with Western theoretical discourse. The importance of conflating Native American with Western thought is evidenced in the following subsection through description of hybrid methodologies, and the address of knowledge gaps in the literary criticism regarding Welch's and Alexie's texts.

Discussing the condition of Native American literary criticism in Purdy's "Crossroads: A Conversation with Sherman Alexie" Alexie states, "we've been stuck in place since *House Made of Dawn*" (9). Alexie's concern gestures toward a larger polemic regarding the construction, and ownership, of Native American criticism. Purdy recognizes a staticized constitution of Native American fiction, noting that when a Native American author "comes through with a new novel that does [. . .] something that comes around for the first time" (6) academic criticism returns "right back to where [it was] in the '60's and there's a raging debate about 'Is this Indian?'" (7). Alexie's response corroborates Purdy's observation:

Some essays are great [. . .] The bad ones are even more interesting, because they embrace, hang on to old ideas. I mean they're not bad scholarship,

they're not badly written. What I mean is that no one has figured out a new way to look at Indian literatures. Above all *Indians* aren't looking at Indian literatures. There are very few Indian scholars, very few Indian literature critics examining it. Those that do, like Gloria Bird, or Robert Warrior, or Liz Cook-Lynn are still using the same old lit-crit tools. (7)

One “new way [of looking] at Indian literatures” that considers Alexie’s concerns is put forth in Craig Womack’s *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*, in which he endorses a culture-specific analytical framework to interpret contemporary Native American/ First Nations texts -- one designed by “Indian scholars,” or those with access to a tribal corpus of narratives. According to Womack, who claims a Muskogee-Creek background, “one viable approach” (4) of examining Native American literature “is to understand Creek authors to understand Creek texts, or, more generally, Native authors to understand Native textual production” (4). The impetus of grounding an interpretive literary strategy within a tribal discourse lies within the fact that Native American groups have already created “a large body of written and oral work authored and spoken by Indian people” (76) that has “existed for centuries and must surely provide models for interpretation and principles of literary aesthetics” (76). These “models for interpretation” encompass philosophical tropes, and aesthetic concerns such as ideas of plot construction, character development, setting, and theme (76). Womack’s assertion that literary principles are embedded in culture specific discourse is corroborated by Lee Maracle’s claim that tribal narratives “humanize theory by fusing humanity’s need for common direction – theory – with story” (237), suggesting that a theoretical approach to studying Native American texts begins with Native American narratives.

Response to knowledge gaps and debates within the criticism regarding Welch’s and Alexie’s texts further emphasizes the importance of culture-specific interpretation. Obviously, not immersed in a Blackfoot (Welch) or Spokane/ Coeur

D'Alene (Alexie) background, I cannot comment on, or notice, all cultural nuances evidenced in each author's respective texts; nor can I employ a theoretical apparatus constructed entirely from Native American paradigms without extensive knowledge of each culture. However, a culturally hybrid methodological approach is viable in interpreting Native American/ First Nations texts. Indeed, Native American authors are often writing from a hybrid space themselves. Alexie, who "come[s] from a matriarchal culture" (Fraser 61) states, "I know a lot more about being white – because I have to, I live in the white world. A white person doesn't live in the Indian world. I have to be white everyday" (61). In other words, while European-American subjects are excluded from the knowledge base of a matriarchal indigenous culture, Native American writers have access to, and may incorporate, Western philosophies and theories into their texts because of their familiarity with the majority culture.

In reflection of the authors' culturally hybrid backgrounds, the Native American methodologies employed in this thesis also reflect culturally dipartite interpretive apparatuses. For example, like Sherman Alexie, Paula Gunn Allen subscribes to a hybrid perspective. In *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, which, along with Judith A. Antell's "Momaday, Welch, and Silko: Expressing the Feminine Principle Through Male Alienation" is methodologically emphasized within this thesis, Gunn Allen claims that her methods in American Indian Studies are "somewhat western and somewhat Indian" (7), and by "draw[ing] from each" (7) she "often wind[s] up with a reasonably accurate picture of truth" (7) in her interdisciplinary analysis. However, she also provides the caveat that "the basic assumptions about the universe, and, therefore, the basic reality experienced by tribal peoples and Western peoples are not the same, even at the level of folklore" (55). Gunn Allen's conjoinment of incompatible Western and Native

American methodology brings into relief the post-colonial concept of hybrid identities. In discussion of cultural incommensurability Bhabha alludes to Guillermo Gomez-Pena's methodologies of contemporary hybridity:

This new society is characterized by mass migrations and bizarre interracial relations. As a result new hybrid and transitional identities are emerging [. . .] The bankrupt notion of the melting pot has been replaced by [. . .] the *menudo chowder*. According to this model, most of the ingredients do melt, but some stubborn chunks are condemned to float. (Gomez-Pena in Bhabha 218-219)

For Bhabha “hybrid hyphenations emphasize the [culturally] incommensurable elements – the stubborn chunks -- as the basis of cultural identifications” (219). In so doing, hyphenated identities composed of incompatible, or exclusive elements are “neither One nor the Other but something *else besides, in-between*” (219), thereby “remaking the boundaries [and] exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference” (219). By conjoining western discourses such as “anthropology, literary studies, folklore, psychology, sociology [. . .]” (Gunn Allen 6) with Native American thought, which “does not, in any sense function in the same ways or from the same assumptions that western systems do” (7), Gunn Allen’s methodology reflects Gomez-Pena’s “menudo chowder,” or hybrid identity.

In regards to analysis of Welch’s and Alexie’s texts, while Native American thought is represented through medicine wheel theory and related mythology, post-colonial/ psychoanalytic paradigms are organized into three theoretical vectors of Lacanian/ Bhabhian paternal theory, Freudian incorporation theory, and Jungian quest theory, all of which coincide with medicine wheel theory in particular ways. Psychoanalytic and post-colonial paternal theory, and its relation to masculine identity formation are fundamental to the theoretical design for analysis of Welch and Alexie’s fiction, especially in regards to Western thought. For Freud, the ego-ideal, or

conscience (English and English 111), established through identification with the father, “answers to everything that is expected of the higher nature of man [. . . and] contains the germ from which religions evolv[e]” (*The Ego and The Id* 27). The correlation between paternal icon and societal values is paralleled in Bhabhian thought through the displacement of father-love onto “*amor patriae* – the naturalist, phallic identification with the service of the nation” (“Are You a Man or a Mouse” 59). Specifically, the nation state provides the paternal icon in which the “natural love of the child for the father” (Fichte in Bhabha 59) is displaced onto a national “mirror from which his own self-worth or worthlessness is reflected” (ibid 59). In addition to entrenching societal values, identification with the paternal icon facilitates subjective entrance within the Symbolic order. When the subject identifies with the paternal site, s/he acquires the name-of-the-father, a symbolic site that “lays down the basis of the subject’s ‘law,’ in particular the law of the language system” (Lacan in Benvenuto and Rice 133). As detailed in Chapter Two, through the subject’s entrance into the Symbolic order, s/he becomes constituted by signifiers that function as totalizing typologies, “petrify[ing] the subject” (ibid 129). Thus, the paternal icon establishes the subject’s moral law and entrenches him/ her within the societal Symbolic order, facilitating an identifying typology.

Dependent on whether Welch’s or Alexie’s texts gesture toward a Jungian or Freudian emphasis, the medicine wheel as symbolic for the psyche is represented differently in relation to paternal theory. Foregrounding Jungian implications, totalizing typology disarticulates the medicine wheel by staticizing the subject on one “direction” and relegating the precluded medicine wheel aspects to the repressed, thereby suggesting a conflation of relegated aspects with the shadow. In the predominantly Freudian/ Lacanian model employed in analysis of *The Death of Jim*

*Loney* Blackfoot narratives gain resonance from psychoanalytic paternal theories.

While Jungian theory is emphasized in analysis of Alexie's *Reservation Blues*, Freudian paradigms are utilized in discussion of "Ghost Dance" and Welch's *The Death of Jim Loney*.

In Chapter Two, the Blackfoot narrative, "Oo-chi-scub-pah-pah" is correlated with Lacanian/ Freudian theory concerning the psychic function of the paternal icon, thereby contributing to debates regarding bird imagery, and its association with Loney's death as a process to locate a viable feminine icon beyond the Symbolic order of the American nation. In brief, "Oo-chi-scub-pah-pah" details the experiences of two twin brothers named Ashes Near the Fireplace Man, and Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man who, through their paternal association, and implications inherent to Native American medicine wheel tropes, allegorically represent aspects of a united identity. As the boys grow older their biological father warns the children not to hunt in a specific creek, where resides a "strange bird" (Bullchild 110), that, "if bothered, very bad consequences would follow" (110). Ashes Near the Fireplace Man disregards his father's warning and fires an arrow at the "pretty bird" (112), but misses. The bird then extricates Ashes Near the Fireplace Man from his brother (113), thereby creating disarticulation of a unified psyche metaphorically represented by the twins.

The Blackfoot narrative brings into relief the Lacanian paternal metaphor, and the paternal site put forth through psychoanalytically inflected post-colonial theory. Specifically, as it is the name-of-the-father that facilitates entrance into a Symbolic order, or the nationally constructed paternal site that psychically entrenches societal values, and typologies of identity, within subjects, Ashes Near the Fireplace Man's disavowal of the law of the father by hunting the "pretty bird" is metaphoric for

extrication from the tribal Symbolic order and its associated identities. Thus, Welch's allusion to "Oo-chi-scub-pah-pah," through bird imagery, or the "dark bird" (30), in *The Death of Jim Loney* foregrounds a Blackfoot narrative allegoric for Symbolic extrication resultant from disavowal of the law of the patriarch. As well, the dark bird represents a chiasmic junction between a Symbolic order preclusive of a feminine principle -- and, hence, identificatory completion -- and a traditional Blackfoot Symbolic order inclusive of a viable maternal icon that enables psychic wholeness. Regarding Western theory, justification for employment of psychoanalysis is grounded in Welch's allusion to the Electra/ Agamemnon myth with its obvious Freudian implications regarding the defunct Electra Complex and its associated incestuous undertones in *The Death of Jim Loney*. Implications of Freudian neuroticism also figure into undercurrents of incest.

Grounding textual analysis in Blackfoot discourse addresses the lack of detailed knowledge regarding bird imagery, and its relation to identity and motivation, in the academic criticism focused on *The Death of Jim Loney*. Paula Gunn Allen briefly acknowledges the "dark bird" when she associates it with Loney's memories that stem from inability to "survive in a world that is not meant for him, a white world that rejects him, [and] an Indian world that abandons him" (145). Loney cannot fit into either sphere, and "his memories, like the black birds he sees, are too painful for him to continue recalling" (145). In contrast, Kathleen Sands correlates a spiritual tenor to the symbol, while asserting opacity in its significance: "if there is renewal [for Loney] it is solely spiritual, the soaring of the spirit/ bird, a final ambiguity in a complex work" (8). Contentious interpretations are also foregrounded by Dexter Westrum in "Transcendental Survival: The Way the Bird Works in *The Death of Jim Loney*:"

Critics Kathleen Sands and Peter Wild disagree about the importance of [the dark bird]. Sands wonders if perhaps the bird represents the Loney's desire to be free of life's burdens and to soar "to a spirit world." Wild feels the "bird is a heavy-handed and ill-defined symbol." But neither critic explains exactly how the symbol works within the novel. (139)

For Westrum, the dark bird symbolizes the "survival and fulfilment [that] transcend[s] the merely physical" (139), as well as "Indianness" (143); and although "the symbolic value of the bird appears never to be actually known to Loney" (144) Welch's "text offers us the bird [. . .] as a way of explaining what is happening to [the protagonist]. It explains the transcendent reality he is after" (144). By "engineer[ing] his own death" (142) Loney moves into this "transcendent reality" (145) and "symbolically achiev[es] fulfilment through his Indianness" (145). Juxtaposing Westrum's assertions, Louis Owens also claims the dark bird warns Loney "to look beyond human limitations toward the transcendent or spiritual" (148). However, "Loney cannot understand or believe in the mythic reality represented by the bird" (148), because his lack of Blackfoot knowledge "necessary to interpret the vision, creates an unfathomable void between him and the bird, a barrier he cannot cross" (155); and "in the end, the spirit retreats into the distance, leaving Loney still more alone in death" (155). Owens further asserts that by engineering his own death, or "choosing to die 'like a warrior'" (155), Loney "adopts the stance of the Indian as tragic hero, that inauthentic [. . .] imposition of European America upon the Native American" (155).

Bringing into relief a Blackfoot social economy imbuing the structure and imagery of Welch's text, hybrid theoretical modelling implies a specific tenor for the dark bird. Specifically, as textual allusion, it represents extrication from discursive perspective through patriarchal disavowal, thereby suggesting further meaning in Loney's confrontation with Ike, and engineered death. The fact that *The Death of Jim*



*Loney* “picks up” where “Oo-chi-scub-pah-pah” ends -- with *Loney/ Ashes Near the Fireplace Man* in the realm of the “pretty bird,” and *Ashes Near the Fireplace Man*’s extrication from tribal reality mirrored in *Loney*’s actions – stands inimical to Owens’ assertion that the dark bird leaves “*Loney* still more alone in death;” and although not in complete alignment with Westrum’s interpretation, corroborates tenors of transcendence and fulfilment.

Paternal implications correlated with Blackfoot bird imagery within hybrid modelling also acknowledge motivation for suicide grounded in identificatory inherencies. In “Are You a Man or a Mouse?” Homi Bhabha puts forth the idea of a paternal site provided by the nation that, through subjective identification, engenders gendered typology; or, according to Bhabha, “the familial patriarch [. . .] must be understood as an enunciative site – rather than an identity – whose identificatory axes can be gendered in a range of strategic ways” (59). Bhabhian associations between patriarch and national patriarchy bring into relief parallels between neurotic inherencies and precluded feminine aspects within the discourse, and psychic deficiencies located within staticized typologies. Specifically, the feminine principle excluded from the national Symbolic order is a corollary to *Loney*’s psychic incompleteness; and his aggression against Ike, and metaphorically the nation, is motivated by the quest for wholeness. Thus, the analytical leverage into bird imagery facilitated by a culture specific framework encompasses discussion of character action and identity within the text.

The quest for psychic wholeness motivating *Loney*’s extrication from the national Symbolic order is brought into relief through discussion of tribal specific, and pan-tribal, tropes of identity construction; specifically in regards to the medicine wheel, or sacred hoop, and the concept of the feminine principle. The medicine

wheel, represented through quaternary and circular imagery, symbolizes identificatory wholeness through integration of psychological aspects; and inherent to the concept of wholeness is an inclusion of both feminine and masculine principles. Thus, inclusion of a feminine principle within the psyche is integral to psychic cohesion, as the feminine is a source of integration, and connection with the natural universe (Antell 217); and is therefore a significant aspect to Native American tribal identities, or as Gunn Allen extrapolates, “traditional tribal lifestyles are more often gynocratic than not, and they are never patriarchal” (2).

Regarding identity construction, and character motivation, much of the criticism concerning Welch’s text emphasizes Loney’s inability to integrate a “white-Indian” binarism, or locate a viable mixed-blood/ halfbreed identity. According to Thackeray, “Jim Loney’s is the tragedy of any man who is only half-way in a land that recognizes only make-it or not make-it, there or not there” (137); and in the Montana setting of *The Death of Jim Loney* “there is no life on the interstices. In dialectic, dichotomous America we get two choices: White, Indian; White, Black; rich, poor; success, failure; good, bad; alive, dead. There is no life half-way between” (137). Thus, because “being halfbreed is being dead [. . .] death becomes Jim Loney’s mission” (137). Gunn Allen similarly contends that Loney “can’t survive in a [. . .] white world that rejects him, [or] an Indian world that abandons him” (145), and therefore opts to “die like a warrior, out of choice, not out of defeat. Though he could not plan or control his life, he could, finally, determine his death” (145). Cipheric undertones are furthered in Owens’s claim that “for Loney [. . .] there is no room for play, no flexible or creative stylising within the signifier ‘Indian’ that would allow him an inventive, coherent identity as a mixedblood [. . .]” (152).

Emphasis on Loney's suicide as representative of an Indian versus white dichotomy preclusive of hyphenated identificatory possibilities obscures Welch's text as a criticism levelled against the neuroticism inherent to national patriarchies. Specifically, Loney's suicide is not so much a reflection of a halfbreed's inability to function in a European-American society, as it is a quest to locate a viable feminine icon to facilitate psychic cohesion. Hybrid modelling grounded in Blackfoot paradigms, such as psychoanalytic notions of neuroticism conjoined with medicine wheel tropes, gestures toward Loney's typological identity as totalizing and incoherent due to the excluded feminine aspect. Loney's dream of himself, Ike, Rhea and Kate (22-24), gestures toward the four aspects of the medicine wheel, while the fact that he "can't have [them]" (23) implies psychic disarticulation. In *Understanding James Welch*, McFarland states that both Rhea and Kate display maternal characteristics towards Loney, or "tend to mother him in various ways" (92); and the maternal, and incestuous undertones, suggestive of neuroticism, in Loney's relationship with the two principle feminine icons in his life, gestures toward an unviable, unregenerative, feminine principle in his psyche, or individual sacred hoop. As detailed in Chapter Two, this unviable feminine principle is inherent to the national patriarchy, and its typological signifiers, and is also implied in depictions of Clancy Peters, and Ike Loney. Therefore, although Owens's argument about staticized identity is evidenced in Welch's text, the fact is that *all* typologies inscribed within the national Symbolic order in *The Death of Jim Loney* are totalizing and leave "no room for play" within identifying signifiers; and this is not a condition particular to the "Indian," but to a national patriarchal apparatus of signification preclusive of the feminine principle. Correlating Native American, and Western, philosophies of identity opens discussion of Welch's text as a criticism levelled

against an American discourse that denigrates the feminine, while gesturing towards Loney's suicide as a stand against the national patriarchy, and a quest for cohesive identity.

Like Welch, Alexie also criticizes patriarchal inherencies. According to McFarland:

When asked [. . .] what "precisely" about white culture so angered him, Alexie answered, "Pretty much everything patriarchal. We've resisted assimilation in many ways, but I know we've assimilated into sexism and misogyny. Women are the creators. We get into trouble when we deny that." (27)

A predominant theme in Alexie's "Ghost Dance," *Reservation Blues*, and *Indian Killer*, is the repression of the feminine principle in the national patriarchal apparatus of signification as a corollary to incohesive identities and the inability to heal personal and historic trauma perpetuated within the national Symbolic order as a Lacanian neurosis of failure. The American Indian Wars and domestic military campaigns against aboriginal groups often engender the historic trauma depicted in Alexie's works. Polemical implications are also alluded to within the criticism surrounding Alexie's texts. In "Muting White Noise: The Subversion of Popular Culture Narratives of Conquest in Sherman Alexie's Fiction," Cox states that the event of Wright's destruction of the Spokane horses "resonates as a signifier of the cruelty of the [American] Army" (62), and like "an open tribal wound, the ghosts of the horses scream throughout *Reservation Blues*" (62); while in "Magic and Memory in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*" Richardson echoes Cox's concerns: "history remains, in Wellpinit and beyond, the long nightmare from which Alexie's characters are struggling to awaken" (43).

Bringing into relief effects of historic events on the tribal psyche, psychoanalytic methodology, particularly Freudian/ Lacanian and Caruthian trauma

theory, with emphasis on the “unavoidable and overwhelming imposition of historical events on the psyche” (Caruth 58), facilitates insight into the repetitive aspects of historic trauma reflected in Alexie’s works, and how these aspects become defining sites within discourse and subjective biography. Justification for employing such methodology is also grounded in Alexie’s direct allusion to “Freud and Jung” (18) in *Reservation Blues*, emphasizing the importance for utilizing psychoanalytic theory. As well, because Jungian implications are alluded to in *Reservation Blues*, psychoanalytic methodologies encompass Jungian concerns, and discussion of the feminine principle, and feminine aspects of the medicine wheel. Specifically, Alexie conflates the repressed feminine principle with the Jungian shadow, suggesting that individuation is contingent on integration of masculine and feminine aspects.

Tribal narratives relating to the feminine principle foreground the feminine’s inherent healing capacity. The Okanagan story “Coyote Tricks Owl” brings into relief femininity inclusive of regenerative and destructive tenors, with the capacity for healing represented by Coyote, and social extrication and death embodied by Owl. Although the Okanagan are culturally distinct from the Spokane/ Coeur D’Alene, “the paucity of reliable ethnographic material on the Spokane” (Ross 281) prompts data accumulation from peripheral, or relative sources. As well, close geographic proximity suggests that the two nations contain similar culture patterns, with similar mythological/ discursive characteristics. Further, the idiosyncratic and detailed poetics of Harry Robinson’s *Write It On Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller* are more in alignment with Womack’s analytical emphasis on the “literary nuances of [. . .] traditional narratives” (76).

Conflation of the feminine with trickster characteristics implies that the feminine contains aspects for regeneration or healing, while correlation of the

feminine with the Jungian shadow suggests that the actualisation of the feminine is inherent to individuation. However, because the feminine principle is repressed in the patriarchal discourse, the Lacanian neurosis of failure is perpetuated, while wholeness and psychic binding of repressed sites are precluded from national typologies. In “Ghost Dance” a Lacanian automaton engendered by the Battle of Little Bighorn marks masculine typologies, and the dominant discourse. In *Reservation Blues* the Indian Wars are correlated with the traumatic displacement of a paternal enunciative site inclusive of the feminine principle and capacity for individuation.

Interpretation facilitated through hybrid modelling is contentious with critical issues surrounding *Reservation Blues*. In “Magic and Memory in Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*” Richardson posits that Junior’s suicide is prompted by a biography characterized by failure and an inability to translate painful memories into “a strength giving story with power and meaning” (44). According to Richardson:

[Junior’s] thoughts of an ill-fated affair with a white girl in college and the abortion that results from it also plague him; everywhere in his dreamscape is sorrow and loss. When things don’t work out for Coyote Springs, Junior has had enough of failure. (43)

Junior’s justifications for suicide gesture toward “a key point in Alexie’s novel: while memory and historic knowledge [. . .] are painful they can also be a sustaining force if you have the interpretive keys” (44); and when Junior “closed his eyes’ he did see things, but was unable to translate them into a strength-giving story” (44). In juxtaposition, the methodology put forth in Chapter Three suggests Junior’s suicide as predicated on typologically precluded individuation, signficatory totalization, and inability to locate a viable feminine icon, with water imagery as psychic metaphor corroborating these notions.

Further contentions brought into relief through conjoinment of theoretical modelling and historicity concern Alexie's employment of Wright's slaughter of the horses. Bird states that

the horses take on a new metaphorical significance, that of the Indians themselves who fall outside of bars, or as unrecognised veterans of war [. . .] The central metaphor of the novel associates Indians to the slaughtered horses as fallen victims of the bottle and a country that does not love us. (50-51)

By employing such a metaphor, Bird asserts that Alexie's reduction of "Indian existence to defeat" (50) foregrounds "internalised oppression, of buying into a vision of [Native Americans] as dying/ vanishing" (50) thereby reiterating "the representation of Indians as they are produced in American literature and in the media [. . .]" (50-51). Contrasting Bird's argument, psychoanalytic theory employed in Chapter Three gestures toward the slaughter of the horses as metaphoric for traumatic displacement of the traditional Spokane Symbolic order and, hence, relegation of the traditional paternal site which, when identified, could facilitate a more viable masculine identity. Trauma theory suggests that the refrain, "the Indian horses screamed" (213), and recurring horse imagery, instantiates the repetitive aspects of trauma.

Another contention foregrounded by theory focused on the historic displaced traditional paternal site involves the murder of Crazy Horse, depicted in *Reservation Blues* through Chess's dream about the "unpainted one." For Richardson

the "unpainted one" could be Thomas, a gentle lamb among the wolves of the white world, and the Indians that play a part in the "unpainted one's" death could be the reservation Spokanes who turn against Thomas when he and his band initially leave the boundaries of the reservation to pursue success as Coyote Springs. (45)

Like Wright's destruction of the horses, the murder of Crazy Horse is metaphoric for the displaced aboriginal traditional Native American patriarch. As discussed in Chapter Three, Chess's dream of the death of the "unpainted one" alludes to Crazy Horse, and, thus the death of the traditional patriarch. Therefore, historical reference put forth in this thesis is contentious with Richardson's claim that the "unpainted one" refers to Thomas.

The address of knowledge gaps and critical incongruities brings into relief the necessity for employment of sophisticated theoretical modelling to analyze Native American/ First Nations fiction – one that looks beyond the stereotypes of Native American texts as merely humorous, or an address of the failure of masculine characters to locate a third space of identity between incongruous cultures. The protagonist's death in James Welch's *The Death of Jim Loney* is not in totality a consequence of his inability to establish a viable identity between Indian and white worlds, but a reflection of an inherently neurotic and incohesive American national discourse. The recourse to suicide as motivated by a national apparatus of signification that perpetuates incoherent typologies is further reflected in Junior Polatkin's death in *Reservation Blues*, which, like Welch's text, employs psychoanalysis and Native American theory to interrogate identificatory construction within American narratives. Finally, because traumatic sites become defining moments for biography and discourse, Alexie's questioning of the history of the Battle of Little Bighorn in "Ghost Dance" is, in actuality, an interrogation of a signifier central to the American story. These are important topics, and Welch's and Alexie's works demand serious, sophisticated analysis and critical modelling to fully explore their criticism of the colonizing nation and its constructed identities.



## Chapter Two

“Images [. . .] Like Dark Birds:”

Symbolic Orders, Sacred Hoops, and Suicide in Welch’s *The Death of Jim Loney*.

“Let us concentrate, for example, on an act that is unambiguous, the act of cutting open one’s belly in certain conditions – incidentally, it’s not called *hara-kiri*, but *seppuku*. Why do people do that? Because they think it annoys others, because, in the structure, it is an act that is done in honour of something.”

--Jacques Lacan, “Of the Network of Signifiers”

In *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, Paula Gunn Allen asserts that “the significance of literature can best be understood in terms of the culture from which it springs, and the purpose of literature is clear only when the reader understands and accepts the assumptions on which the literature is based” (54). In response to Allen’s statement, methodology that acknowledges tribal-specific elements is employed in analysis of James Welch’s *The Death of Jim Loney*. Specifically, juxtaposition of Welch’s text with the Blackfoot narrative, “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” brings into relief Loney’s suicide as a deliberate self-extrication from the patriarchal, national symbolic order, because both Blackfoot oral narratives, and contemporary texts depict the loss of subjective consciousness as a result of the disavowal of the law of the patriarch. Bird imagery within *The Death of Jim Loney* alludes to “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt,” thereby explaining the protagonist’s suicide as a rebellion against the domestic, and national, patriarch. Loney’s extrication from the national symbolic order is motivated by the fact that the national discourse, including his typology, are written as inherently neurotic within Welch’s text, and do not provide the feminine icon that can facilitate a viable psychic cohesion. Lacanian/Bhabhian methodology foregrounds the patriarch as composed by the nation, gesturing toward his function in facilitating subjective entrance into the symbolic order, while Freudian methodologies foreground paternal/ national neuroticism.

Blackfoot cultural allusions and medicine wheel imagery also emphasize Loney's typology as inimical to psychic growth as indicated in indigenous medicine wheel paradigms and further explain the impetus behind Loney's suicide.

In *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*, Womack proposes the use of a detailed analysis of tribal specific corpora of oral literatures in order to map interpretive strategies for contemporary Native American texts. According to Womack, "certain key [tribal specific] stories need to be examined really thoroughly; and when we have looked at enough of these stories, we need to ask ourselves what we have learned from them that might help us formulate interpretive strategies" (76). Inherent in the tribal traditions of narratives are literary frameworks pertaining to "character development, plot, theme, setting [. . .] structuring of stories; the philosophies that come out of [these] tradition[s]; [and . . .] contexts [. . .] for understanding politics, religion, and society" (76). With these elements embedded in tribal narratives, cognisance of these discourses facilitates a comprehensive interpretation of "literary texts written by tribal people influenced by [these] very tradition[s]" (76).

The transmission of "the accumulated thoughts and values of a people" (235) through the tradition of story-telling is furthered by Lee Maracle, who suggests an explicit communication of social/ philosophical tropes and theory inherent in tribal narratives, as First Nations oratories "humanize theory by fusing humanity's need for common direction – theory – with story" (237). The inherent social interaction in First Nations oratories is a significant aspect in the transmission of "accumulated knowledge [and] cultural values" (235), as it facilitates a more profound social space from which to communicate; or, according to Maracle, "the [First Nations] orator is coming from a place of prayer and as such attempts to be persuasive" (235).

Although written interpretations of Native American oral narratives de-emphasize this cultural aspect of tribal discourses, tribal-specific anthologies of oratories still provide interpretive keys and frameworks for analysis of contemporary Native American texts. Percy Bullchild's *The Sun Came Down*, for example, offers an extensive collection of Blackfoot narratives; and Womack refers to this anthology in his own text, stating, "Bullchild's book of Blackfoot traditional narratives [. . .] deals with an entire corpus of Blackfoot stories and seeks Blackfoot contexts" (63). Thematically, "Oo-chi-scub-pah-pah, Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt," a key story from Bullchild's anthology, brings into relief Blackfoot elements inherent in Welch's *The Death of Jim Loney*, especially with regard to identity, symbolism, and theme. For this reason, Bullchild's rendition of the Blackfoot oratory is employed in this essay as a beginning point from which to construct a theoretical apparatus for interpreting Welch's text.

*"Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt."*

The story of "Oo-chi-scub-pah-pah, Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt" begins with a young married couple who "move away from their camp" (Bullchild 91) to live in isolation in the mountains. The husband's absence from his and his wife's camp is a regular occurrence, as he leaves for extended periods of time to go hunting. Each time he leaves he warns his wife, "not to let anyone in their tipi" (93). However, on one specific hunting trip, taken while his wife is pregnant, the woman hears a "strange sort of cry" (96) from "somewhere far, far away" (96) that sounds like "someone talking and hollering at the same time" (96). As the voice "very slow[ly]" (96) makes its way to her camp she begins to make out the words "which way, which way, I am Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt" (96). The hollering continues until "late in the

afternoon” (97) with “no let-up” (97), and because the woman has “a soft place in her heart, and [. . .] she [is] getting mighty tired of the noise the thing [is] making” (97), she reasons to herself, “I should let the poor man in [. . .] My husband [won’t] know about it, the poor man will be gone after he eats a good meal. I’ll feed him the meat and food I cooked for my husband” (97).

When the woman opens the tipi she discovers a “half man” (97); or, as

Bullchild states:

Just half of its body [is] there, he [doesn’t] have any legs. It [is] walking on its bottom rib cage with the help from his long and strong arms. They [are] well-developed arms. With these arms and the hands the man [swings] himself along, using the bottom ribs to stand on.

He [is] dragging along part of his insides or entrails, and they [are] full of dirt. Some of his lungs [are] showing too, partly on the ground all dirty.  
(97-98)

Before she can close the tipi the half man enters and positions himself on “the very opposite side of the doorway [. . .] where the chief of the tipi usually sits, the man of the tipi” (98), and makes “himself comfortable on the couple’s bed” (99). The woman, “thinking [the half man will] leave as soon as he [has] something to eat [. . .] set[s] a willow mat before him and plac[es] the wooden dish full of” (99) food in front of him. However, Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt replies “no! I don’t use those for a plate” (99). The woman tries “thing after thing” (99) for Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt to use as a plate, eventually including her clothing, breechclout, and hair (99), but the half man’s answer is consistently negative. Finally, she thinks “there is one more that I could try as a plate for this darn man” (99), and “completely naked” (99), she lays “down and put[s] the food on her stomach” (99). The half man states, “yes, yes, that’s the kind that I use for a plate” (99) and proceeds to eat the meal off of the pregnant woman’s stomach. Before the meal is finished the half man stabs his knife

“into [the woman’s] stomach and across it” (100). Then, while “push[ing] her back down” (100) he places “a lot of pressure on her middle, and squeez[es] the [twin] bab[ies] out of [their] womb” (100).

When the father returns home he discovers the body of his wife, as well as his twin sons placed one on the circumference, and one in the centre, of the tipi. The father discovers the first twin behind “the tipi wall liner, from the south side of the tipi” (96), and the second twin “covered with the soft ashes of the fireplace” (96). After locating and punishing Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt, the father leaves his twin sons with a family of beavers, placing “the twin boys of his into the beaver hut [. . . then] pray[ing] to the beavers to raise his twin sons for him” (100) until “they are old enough to take care of themselves, then he [will] take over on them” (100). The father’s relinquishment of his sons to the beavers instances a common motif of Plains Native American mythology, that

of the orphan who, abandoned by family and community, leads a life of isolation and deprivation [. . .] The orphan is then assisted by a spirit animal, often a beaver, who appears mysteriously and [. . .] give[s] the [orphan] knowledge to perform a ritual which restores the broken relationship between self, community, and the spirit world. (Riley In-The-Woods 159)

Following the adoption of the sons by the beavers, the father protects his wife’s remains by closing up the tipi and “weighing the tipi down with heavy stones all around so nothing could enter it” (101).

The father then stays away from the camp for long periods of time, but returns intermittently as “there [is] always that feeling a part of him [is] there too at the camp” (102). His scarce visits to his camp resume for four years, until the day he hears his twin sons “playing around, chasing one another through the bushes near their beaver hut home” (102). The father tries to approach his sons, but the sons no

longer “know their father” (102) and retreat back to the hut home. The father makes several unsuccessful attempts to contact his sons until the day he unwittingly drops one of his arrows (102). Upon seeing the arrow, the twins immediately become interested by it:

For the longest time [the twins] went around the arrow. They would go near it, then jump back from it, around it and around it until they were very, very sure it wouldn't do anything to them. One of them finally got the courage to pick it up. After he touched it, the other twin boy jumped to his brother and wrassled his brother for the arrow. (103)

Noting the twins' interest in the arrow, the man implements a plan of leaving a trail of arrows for the boys to follow, separating the twins from the beaver hut, facilitating their capture (104). During the struggle of their capture the man tells his sons, “taste my arms, I am your father” (105). They are reluctant to do this, but after they “[lick] their father's arms, that same animal instinct they were raised with soon let the boys know that [the man] was their true father” and they “[take] to him like they had always been around him” (105).

The father tells the twins about the mother's death, then names the boys after the manner in which they were found. The first twin is named Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man, and the second twin Ashes Near the Fireplace Man (106). The twins feel remorse for their lost mother, and, using “power from [. . .] the beavers” (107) the boys bring their mother back to life with a ceremony: they reconstruct the skeleton of their mother outside of the old tipi, then heat four rocks to place in a rawhide pot (107). Alternately, the twins take turns shooting an arrow into the air. As the arrow “start[s] back down, about halfway down to the ground” (107), the second twin hollers, “excuse me, excuse me mother your pot is going to boil over” (107) while placing the heated rock in the rawhide pot. The twins repeat this four times, but on

the fourth time Ashes Near the Fireplace Man hollers, “excuse me, excuse me, mother, look at your pot, it has boiled over” (108) loud enough to “scar[e] any spirit back to life” (108), while Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Hollers “excuse me, excuse [me] mother, duck out of the way, it might hit you, that arrow” (108). After this fourth turn the mother returns to life and “[is] whole again and alive” (108).

Eventually, the twins “grow old enough to [. . .] go out alone and hunt around the nearby area” (110), and “one day the father hear[s] them talking about going to a south creek [. . .] quite some way from the camp” (110). The father warns them “about a strange bird that lurk[s] around in that area” (110), telling the twins, “they must be careful of this bird” (110) because “if bothered, very bad consequences would follow” (110). The twins promise their father not to harm the bird, and continue their travels to the south creek (110). However, on the fourth journey to the creek, the twins are “drawn” (112) to the bird, “especially Ashes Near the Fireplace Man” (111), who reasons to himself, “I’m going to shoot it or catch this pretty bird. If I do that, I think Father will think I’m great for doing it. I know there is no harm in doing this [. . .] he [just] wants those pretty feathers on it for himself” (112).

Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man begs his brother not to shoot the bird, and the two spend a “very long time arguing to shoot or not to shoot” (112). Eventually Ashes Near the Fireplace Man decides to shoot one arrow (112). He launches an arrow which “just miss[es] the head of this pretty bird” (112) and gets caught “in some tangled branches” (112). Although Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man tells his brother to leave the arrow in the tree, and to start walking home, Ashes Near the Fireplace Man states, “wait, I don’t want to leave my arrow, let me get it” (112) and climbs up the tree. Just before he can reach the arrow, the bird pulls it just out of his reach, teasing Ashes Near the Fireplace Man further up the tree:

The pretty bird hopped up to another branch just above the arrow. Just before Ashes Near the Fireplace Man could put his outreaching hand on the arrow, for some mysterious reason, from the slight touch of his hand, the arrow slipped upward into the next branch where it got caught again. [. . .] So onward he climbed after the arrow, almost getting a hold of it. But then the pretty bird would get just above the arrow, which seemed to draw [it] ever upward and just barely out of Ashes Near the Fireplace Man's reach. (112-113)

Ashes near the Fireplace Man is "set on getting his arrow back" (113) and continues climbing the tree, his voice "getting fainter to Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man's ears" (113) until "he can hear it no more" (113). When Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man can no longer hear his brother he sits at the base of the tree through the night "crying and crying for him" (113). The next morning he looks up the tree and "sees nothing but the blue sky [. . .] no brother Ashes Near the Fireplace Man. That beautiful pretty bird had taken him away for trying to hurt it" (113). Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man is "too grief-stricken to move" (113) after the loss of his brother, and for "many, many days after he crie[s], not eating anything, just laying under that tree crying until he [shrinks] from his cries" (113), eventually crying "himself back into an infant" (113). Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man loses contact with his parents, who are "never heard from again" (113).

A significant aspect in "Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt" is the motif of the quaternity as indicative of wholeness and unity. When Ashes Near the Fireplace Man and Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man perform the ceremony to resurrect the maternal figure they repeat actions – such as placing rocks in a rawhide pot (108) – four times, thereby making her "whole again and alive" (108). As well, before the husband may become intimate with his resurrected wife he must first be "made whole after taking four separate sweat baths" (109). The connection between wholeness and the quaternity is located in the concept of the sacred hoop, or medicine wheel -- a symbol



that reifies the notion of completion as contingent on the quaternity and circularity (Mazzola 66). Philosophically, the circularity inherent in the medicine wheel emphasizes an holistic worldview in which one is cognizant of his/ her inter-relatedness with all aspects of the universe. According to Allen:

Breath is life, and the intermingling of breaths is the purpose of good living. [. . .R]elationships among all the beings in the universe must be fulfilled; in this way each individual life must be fulfilled. [. . .] This idea is apparent in the Plains tribes' idea of a medicine wheel or sacred hoop. (56)

A correlation between landscape and individual inscape is apparent because recognition of the inter-related aspect of the natural world facilitates wholeness for “each individual life.” For Native American groups “the natural state of existence is whole” (Allen 60), and oratories, ceremonies, and stories emphasize how “each creature is part of a living whole and that all parts of the whole are related to one another by virtue of their participation in the whole of being” (60). A high social, and moral, value is placed on wholeness, as it is equated with beauty, health, and goodness (Allen 60-61), while in contrast “disease is a condition of division and separation from the harmony of the whole” (60). Foregrounding negative connotations pertaining to division, First Nations thought is derisive towards “opposition, dualism, and isolation” (56), while First Nations ceremonies “emphasize restoration of wholeness” (60). In “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt,” the twins, through their ceremony, resurrect a “whole” individual, while simultaneously re-instating social harmony through the reconstruction of the feminine icon, thereby emphasizing inter-relationships between individual integrity and external balance.

Symbolically, individual wholeness is illustrated in the quaternary, circular medicine wheel, which is divided into the four cardinal directions of north, south, east, and west. In association with the four directions is “a quaternity that represent[s]

four psychological powers” (Mazzola 65). For Mazzola, who bases his discussion of the medicine wheel on Hyemeyohosts Storm’s *Seven Arrows* (Cheyenne) and Lynn Andrews’ *The Flight of the Seventh Moon* (Cree), the south represents innocence and trust; the north, wisdom and objectivity; the west, introspection; and the east represents illumination and spiritual insight (65). Also associated with the directions are animal symbols and colours: the south is represented by the mouse and the colour green; the north, the buffalo and white; the west, the bear and black; and the east is represented by the eagle and the colour yellow (Mazzola 65).

The psychological/ symbolic associations of the medicine wheel are nuanced by specific culture groups, and may have varied metaphoric associations. According to Bernd Peyer, the medicine wheel reflects life cycle stages of “creation, infancy, youth, middle age and old age” (65), as well as a “new or green generation, the east [with] further growth and learning, the west [with] ripeness and maturity, and the north [with] old age” (65). The seasonal, or life-cycle, associations of the medicine wheel coincide with the colours in Welch’s *Winter in the Blood*, as suggested by Kenneth Lincoln: “Welch’s seasons of birth, growth, and harvest, imagined in green, yellow, and red, are leached toward winter-snow shadows ‘blue like death’ to a searing white” (159). These colours, through their association with the medicine wheel, are psychically underscored:

The colour red, as used by the Lakota, doesn’t stand for sacred or earth, but it is the quality of a being, the colour of it, when perceived “in a sacred manner” or from the point of view from the earth itself. That is, red is a psychic quality, not a material one, though it has a material dimension of course. (Allen 69)

The psychological function of the medicine wheel is the integration of the “qualit[ies] of being” represented by colours, directions, and animal symbols. According to

Mazzola “tribal lore stat[es] that all members of the community [begin] their life at a particular point on the Medicine Wheel” (65). Each “Beginning Place [. . . is] merely a position [of its] circumference”, and “since all perspectives [point] toward the Centre, there [is] no advantage or disadvantage to any particular point” (65).

Although a tribal member may have his/ her Beginning Point “in the South, in the Power of Innocence or Trust” (65) s/he is taught to “recognize the other [directions] of the Medicine Wheel [. . .] by observing and then imitating the qualities of those who possess Wisdom, Introspection, or Illumination as their dominant traits” (65) In this manner, by “cultivat[ing] the recessive or underdeveloped traits of her or his personality” (66), the tribal member may “grow as a whole person” (66). A final but important aspect of the medicine wheel is that while integration is inherent to the medicine wheel, the diverse psychological aspects representatively located along its periphery are anchored by a centre which lends cohesion by “unif[y]ing the extreme reach of each of the quaternity’s Powers” (66).

According to Peyer, “in direct association with” (61) the cardinal directions is “the concept of a circle” (61). While the quaternity is emphasized in the resurrection of the maternal icon in “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt,” the circle informs the identities of Ashes Near the Fireplace Man and Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man. In Native American thought, the circle “is considered to be holy, representing all the power contained in the universe” (Peyer 57) and its design is reflected in the camp circle, sacred pipe bowls, the base of the tipi, and the medicine wheel (58). In this regard, through association, and technical similarity, the base of the tipi is also metaphoric for the medicine wheel. The association between the medicine wheel and the tipi base is furthered in the Blackfoot Kut-toe-yis narratives, in which the infant

protagonist is transformed into an adult after his parents tie him successively to “each of the twenty-nine tipi poles [located] on the inside of their tipi” (Bullechild 236).

Foregrounding the tripartite association between the tipi base, medicine wheel, and identity, the twins represent two aspects of the medicine wheel. Specifically, Ashes Near the Fireplace Man, originally located in the fire pit, or centre, of the tipi, represents the centre of the medicine wheel, while Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man represents the periphery, suggesting that the twins are metaphoric for the individual psyche as implied in the model of the sacred hoop. The suggestion of the twins as metaphoric for cohesive identity is furthered through their association with Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt. Although the matriarch of the narrative is pregnant before the arrival of the antagonist, implications of fatherhood by Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt are suggested. When Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt enters the tipi he positions himself on the matrimonial bed (99), and takes the seat where the father, “the chief of the tipi usually sits” (98). As well, a sexual element underlies the brief relationship between the wife and the antagonist as he eats food off of her “completely naked” (99) body. Furthermore his violence enacted against the wife with the phallic blade facilitates the birth of the twins (100). The implications of the “half man” (97) fathering two identical entities bring into relief each twin as representative of one “half” of an individual. Thus, Ashes Near the Fireplace Man and Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man represent a “reflection of the ‘twinness’ in every [person’s] personality” (Peyer 104), or “the duality of the universe” (104).

With Ashes Near the Fireplace Man as metaphoric for the centre of the medicine wheel, and Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man as metaphoric of the periphery, the disappearance of the first twin by the mythic bird becomes a corollary to regression to an infantile state by the second twin, as without an anchoring centre the

quaternity lacks cohesion. With the disarticulation of the quaternity identity remains infantile as the agency to grow and develop other personality traits is precluded. Regarding the twins' encounter with the mythic bird, the disruption of the psychic centre is associated with the undermining of patriarchal authority, as Ashes Near the Fireplace Man directly disobeys the father's instructions not to "bother that particular bird" (110). According to Allen:

The tribes seek [. . .] to embody, articulate, and share reality, to bring the isolated, private self into harmony and balance with this reality [. . .] and to actualise, in language, those truths that give to humanity its greatest significance and dignity. [. . .] The artistry of the tribes is married to the essence of language itself, for through language one can share one's singular being with that of the community and know within one's self the communal knowledge of the tribe. (55)

In the narrative of "Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt" the father represents the "communal knowledge" and "reality" of the tribe, as he "teach[es] the twin boys [. . .] all of the Native crafts he [knows . . .] that [are] necessary to their living" (106). As well, the father endows the twins with "Native nam[es]" (106), thereby lending them identities and signifiers within the language of the community. Psychoanalytic theory further emphasizes the father as representative of communal knowledge, because just as the disgruntled brothers in *Totem and Taboo* identify with the primal father by "devouring him" (142), the twins in "Dragging Entrails [. . .]" recognize the paternal icon after "tast[ing] the flesh of their father" (104). Following this moment, "the fear of their father immediately [leaves the] minds" (105) of the twins, whereas previously "they [do not] know their father" (102) and are "even wilder than the beavers themselves" (102).

Juxtaposing the paternal icon as representative of communal knowledge, the bird is metaphoric of agency which extricates subjects from the authority of the father

and, thus, tribal “reality.” The association of the mythic bird with the disregard of parental law is not particular to “Dragging Entrails [. . .]” and is also apparent in the Blackfoot narrative “Scarface” as interpreted by George Bird Grinnell in *Blackfoot Lodge Tales: The Story of a Prairie People*. Here, Scarface and his charge, Morning Star, receive a warning from the matriarch, Moon, telling them, “never hunt near the big water [. . .] It is the home of great birds which have long sharp bills; they kill people. I have had many sons, but these birds have killed them all. Morning Star is the only son left” (Grinnell 99-100). Morning Star disobeys parental authority and puts himself in peril by attempting to “kill those birds” (100). However, Scarface dispatches the mythic birds, thereby facilitating re-emergence with the tribal communal order, as indicated by the fact that the patriarch, Sun, refers to Scarface as his own “son” (100). Similarly, the mythic bird of “Dragging Entrails [. . .]” also motivates Ashes Near the Fireplace Man to disavow paternal law, as is suggested in his statement, “I know there is no harm in [shooting the bird, father] just don’t want us to get it first” (112). As well, the bird inverts the significance of the arrow, by drawing it “just barely out of Ashes Near the Fireplace Man’s reach” (113), leading him further up the tree and metaphorically away from the community, whereas previously the arrow is used as bait by the father to catch the sons (104) in order to enfold them in the communal reality. Thus, in “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” the mythic bird is symbolic for disruption of parental authority, and, in particular, the law of the father. Therefore, although not a totalizing interpretation of the narrative, “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” metaphorically depicts psychic incohesion as resultant from the disavowal of the authority inherent in the paternal icon. Bringing metaphoric implications into relief gestures toward a parallel between Blackfoot mythology and Western psychoanalytic thought regarding identity formation.

*Western Theoretical Parallels With Blackfoot Narratives.*

Lacanian theory posits that the father is not necessarily “the real father” but rather “a symbolic function, less a person than a place, which is responsible for separation from the mother” (Leader and Groves 102). This patriarchal function is integral to disrupting the subject’s Oedipal fixation, and for facilitating the basis for the subject’s entrance into the Symbolic Order. To briefly summarize the paternal metaphor’s function in Symbolic placement of the subject: Lacanian reinterpretation of the Oedipal Complex emphasizes a dipartite subjective desire in regarding the maternal icon. Specifically, “the object of human desire is the desire of the Other in at least two senses: [. . .] as both the Other’s desire (not mine but the Other’s) and as desire for the Other” (Benvenuto and Kennedy 130). For Lacan, the manifestation of subjective desire during the Oedipal Complex, is inherently associated with the phallus, which does not necessarily refer to the male reproductive organ (Benvenuto and Kennedy 131), but to a signifier indicative of that which the mother lacks (130). Although cognizant of the fact that he or she is not identical to the phallic signifier, the child attempts to “identify himself [or herself] with the mother’s object of desire, while in addition [s/he] has desires *for* her” (Benvenuto and Kennedy 130). The function of the paternal operation is to disrupt the child’s identification with the phallus (Leader and Groves 104); or according to Benvenuto and Kennedy:

[. . . T]he father intervenes, either directly or through the mother’s discourse, as the omnipotent and prohibiting figure, putting in question and forbidding the desire of the mother [. . .] laying down the law and permitting identification with him as the one who has the phallus. He says, as it were, to the child, “No, you won’t sleep with your mother;” and to the mother, “No, the child is not your phallus. I have it.” (134)

When the child identifies with the paternal icon, he or she acquires the “name-of-the-father” (Lacan in Benvenuto and Kennedy 133), a symbolic site that “lays down the basis of the subject’s ‘law,’ in particular the law of the language system” (133). Thus, the father facilitates entrance into the Symbolic Order, or as Lacan states, “it is in the name-of-the-father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function, which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the father” (Lacan in Benvenuto and Kennedy 133). As the subject is constituted by the symbolic function it would not be amiss to describe it in brief.

The Symbolic Order refers to “the function of symbols and symbolic systems, including social and cultural symbolism” (Benvenuto and Kennedy 81), as well as language (81). According to Miller, “it is the symbolic [. . .] that is seen to be the determining order of the subject, and [. . .] the subject, in Lacan’s sense, is himself an effect of the symbolic” (279). In other words, the subject’s being is dependent on a signifier located within the matrix of the symbolic order (Benvenuto and Kennedy 129). This signifier “petrif[ies] the subject” (Lacan in Benvenuto and Kennedy 129) functioning as a totalising “I” and precluding other types of identification. Furthermore, because the subject is located within the symbolic order as a signifier, and because a signifier “signifies something only in relation to another signifier” (Benvenuto and Kennedy 129), the subject’s site of identity (where s/he is located as a signifier) becomes a starting point of diffusion, as the signifier becomes attached to signifieds whose meanings are beyond the horizon of knowledge of the subject (Leader and Groves 39). In this manner, “when the subject appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifested elsewhere as ‘fading,’ as disappearance” (Lacan in Benvenuto and Kennedy 129). In “Are You a Man or a Mouse,” Bhabha refers to this Lacanian disappearance explicitly, stating, “my own masculinity is strangely



separating from me, turning into my shadow, the place of my filiation and my fading” (58). Thus, identifying typologies constituted within this Symbolic Order become psychically entrenched in subjects through acquisition of the name-of-the-father. These entrenched typologies are “prosthetic realities” (Bhabha 57) defined within the “closed order” (Miller 279) of the linguistic and cultural parameters of the Symbolic Order.

In locating these cultural/ linguistic parameters Lacan states, “the subject in himself, the recalling of his biography, [. . .] goes only to a certain limit, which is known as the real” (“Of the Network of Signifiers” 49). The real marks the end of the subject’s “biography,” or horizon of symbolically ordered reality, and includes “the domain that subsists outside symbolization” (Benvenuto and Kennedy 81). In other words, “the real is the impossible” (Miller 280) or “that over which the symbolic stumbles” (Miller 280) as it is consistently beyond the categorization of language.

Paralleling Lacanian theory, Bhabha also de-emphasizes the physicality of the patriarch, and posits the paternal icon as an “enunciative site” (“Are You a Man or a Mouse” 59) internalised by the subject and “gendered in a range of strategic ways” (59). For Bhabha, the nation itself facilitates a paternal metaphor which, when psychically internalised, becomes analogous to a super ego in which the subject’s worth is measured; or, according to Fichte, *amor patriae* embodies and engenders “the natural love of the child for the father, not as the guardian of his sensuous well-being, but as the mirror from which his own self-worth or worthlessness is reflected for him” (Fichte in Bhabha 59). With the nation as an “apparatus of symbolic power” (“Dissemination” 140) that engenders its own “potent symbolic and affective sources of cultural identity” (140), the national paternal icon, or enunciative site, is also a

nexus of the national signifiers, and “literary narratives” (140) that temporally formulate the national “story” or meta-narratives. According to Gellner:

Nationalism is not what it seems, and above all not what it seems to itself . . . . The cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions. Any old shred would have served as well. But in no way does it follow that the principle of nationalism is itself in the least contingent and accidental. (Gellner in Bhabha 142)

As an enunciative site, the symbolic paternal is a nexus of “the cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism.” In *The Death of Jim Loney* these cultural shreds and patches inherent within the paternal enunciative site signify both the surmounting of the Native American concept of the “feminine principle,” and perpetuation of Freudian neuroticism. Thus, although the national enunciative site internalised by subjects is patriarchal, typological constitution by the national symbolic order includes irreconcilable antagonism towards paternal authority, thereby perpetuating a neurotic masculinity, as detailed below in Loney’s relationship with Ike.

In his discussion of *The Death of Jim Loney*, Robert W. Lewis states, “the only loose end I perceive is the subplot focusing on Painter Barthelme, the [displaced policeman . . . .] His longings parallel those of other characters, but his lust for Rhea leads us to expect some sort of tie in at the end” (5). Although Painter’s subplot does not directly “tie in” to Loney’s death, Painter thematically informs the masculine typologies of Welch’s text, as his namesake alludes to Donald Barthelme’s *The Dead Father*; specifically, to Barthelme’s “keystone” passage:

Tell me, said Julie, did you ever want to paint or draw or etch?  
Yourself?

It was not necessary, said the Dead Father, because I am the Father.  
All lines my lines. All figure and all ground mine, out of my head. All  
colours mine. You take my meaning.

We had no choice. (18-19)

Discussing this particular passage, Richard Walsh states, “the implication is that language remains an inheritance contaminated by the past. It is no more possible to disown completely the meaning endowed on it by the father than it is to disown [. . .] fatherhood itself” (178). Walsh’s statement corroborates the psychoanalytic notion that law and language are dependent on the subject’s psychic internalisation of the symbolic father, and therefore “all lines,” or all meanings, are shaped through the filter of the national paternal icon.

These psycho-analytic undertones are further manifested in *The Dead Father* through Freudian themes, as suggested by Neil Schmitz: “the Dead Father is finally everyone’s father, the great mutilated self-important, self-indulgent Super-ego [. . .]” (Schmitz in Walsh 174). Freud outlines the psychic function of the super-ego in his text *The Ego and the Id*, defining it as the “super moral” (44) component of the psyche facilitated through psychic identification of the paternal icon. Thematically, though, and as implied through literary reference, *The Dead Father* more closely resembles the antagonism inherent in Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* as opposed to *The Ego and the Id*. Very briefly, *Totem and Taboo* outlines the emergence of “religion, morality and social sense” (*Ego and Id* 27) as a corollary from paternal/ filial antagonism. For Freud, the original, primordial society is a “patriarchal horde” (141) governed by “a violent and jealous father who keeps all the females for himself and drives away the sons as they grow up” (141). One day the “the brothers who had been driven out [come] together” (141) and kill and devour the father. Through the act of devouring the father the sons “[accomplish] their identification with him, and each one of them [acquires] a portion of his strength” (142). In order to prohibit one son from re-enacting the role of the primal father, and perpetuating intra-group strife, the sons renounce “the women whom they desired and who had been their chief motive

for despatching the father” (144) by instating incest taboos. As well, ambivalent emotions for the despatched father surface and become reified as “remorse” (143) for the paternal icon. Resultant from this remorse, the sons establish a totem, or “substitute for their father” (143) and renounce their violence “by forbidding the killing of the totem” (143), and from totemism springs “all later religions” (145). Thus, “the dead father [becomes] stronger than the living one had been” (143) as the sons implement the law of the father, through their own agency.

Paralleling stages of “humanity as a whole” (“The Future of an Illusion” 43) Freud posits an analogy between personal neurosis and religion. Defining neurosis, Freud states that in order for the subject to become a full member of “the social community” (*The Complete Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* 337) he must detach

his libidinal wishes from his mother and [employ] them for the choice of a real outside love-object, and [. . . reconcile] himself with his father if he has remained in opposition to him, or [. . . free] himself from his pressure if, as a reaction to his infantile rebelliousness, he has become subservient to him. (337)

The neurotic is incapable of enacting these psychic tasks and “remains all his life bowed beneath his father’s authority” and “is unable to transfer his libido to an outside sexual object” (337), and in these manners never develops into full adulthood. Paralleling the implementation of the paternal totem, Freud states, “religion would thus be the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity” (“The Future of an Illusion” 43), as the subjects remain bowed beneath the influence of the patriarchy. Thus, society reflects neuroticism grounded in the inability to free itself from patriarchal pressure. Both individual and societal neuroticism are prevalent in *The Death of Jim*

*Loney* especially in regards to masculine typologies, as foregrounded by the Barthelme allusion.

Paralleling the western psychoanalytic notion of neurosis in Welch's text is the First Nations concept of the "feminine principle," an integral component in the concept of wholeness. Native American/ First Nations authors

understand that the power of the Indian woman comes automatically, by virtue of her femaleness, her personal association with blood and her ability to give birth. The ability to give birth is important symbolically as much as literally [. . .] For example, maternity establishes lineage for all tribal members [. . .] Failure to know one's mother is failure to know one's significance, one's reality, one's relationship to earth and society. (Antell 215)

Thus, cognisance of one's maternal icon facilitates contextualization of the subject in the holistic "web of life, in each of its dimensions: cultural, spiritual, personal and historical" (215). An inability to recognize this maternal element results in a "failure to know one's significance, one's reality, [and] one's relationship to earth and society" (215). Therefore, in order to emphasize alienation in the literary context, First Nations writers separate their protagonists from the "feminine principle, indicating that the feminine principle is their source of integration and connection" (217). According to Antell,

the key to [. . .] personal restoration is [. . .] eventual understanding of the relationship of [one's] life to all life, the development of [the] collective consciousness, and the awareness of [this] connection to the universe and feminine power. (218)

As stated earlier, just as cognisance of one's context within the holistic framework of the natural world facilitates wholeness for each individual life, an acquisition of the feminine principle enables psychic unity; or, as stated by Antell, "the protagonist is eventually restored to spiritual harmony, but not before" (218) he is connected to

femaleness, and the feminine principle. Preclusion of the feminine principle thereby indicates a preclusion of psychic wholeness.

The concept of the feminine principle as a facilitating aspect of wholeness is furthered through discussion of the sacred hoop. According to Peyer, the colour red may have two different meanings pertaining to both the domestic (68), or feminine sphere, and “male strength and success in war” (68), or masculine sphere. In regards to feminine aspects inherent in the colour red, Allen states that East represents “red [and] the colour of the earth” (114). In Blackfoot mythology the Earth has feminine implications: “Mother Earth” (Bullchild 36), implying a connection between red, East, and the feminine. The tripartite association of gender/ direction/ colour is further evidenced in Grinnell’s ethnography of the Blackfoot Sundance. In describing the medicine man and medicine woman -- the two principle actors in the ceremony -- Grinnell states that the medicine woman’s “face, hands and clothing are covered with the sacred red paint” (265), whereas the medicine man resides “at the back, or west side [of the Medicine Lodge. . . .] The people come to him, two at a time, and he paints them with black” (266). This connection between West and masculinity, and East and femininity, corroborates the notion of psychic acquisition of the feminine principle as a corollary to wholeness and dualism as measured on the medicine wheel; or the dualism inherent in the universe (Peyer 104) and within each person’s psyche (104). In *The Death of Jim Loney*, these notions of neuroticism and the psychic inaccessibility of the feminine principle parallel one another, as both preclude psychic development into adulthood, and thereby provide the motivation for Loney’s extrication from the national symbolic order. As well, national neuroticism instantiated by the patriarch engenders an unviable feminine principle, and this is a

direct corollary to Loney's psychic schism from the patriarchal enunciative site, as he quests for the feminine aspect of his psyche that facilitates psychic cohesion.

*Interpretation of The Death of Jim Loney.*

The motivation of Loney's renunciation of the national paternal enunciative site is brought into relief through analysis of his relationship with his parental icons: Ike, a representative of both the domestic, and national patriarch; and Eletra, the maternal icon, and metaphoric representative for the feminine principle, who becomes disarticulate through inter-relation with the domestic/ national patriarchy. In regards to Ike as metonymic of the domestic/ national patriarch, the destruction of the feminine principle is underscored through mythic reference. Specifically, Welch rewrites the Electra/ Agamemnon myth with Ike associated with Agamemnon, Sandra, the social worker who adopts Loney as Cassandra, and Eletra as Electra. In short, the story of Agamemnon refers to a Greek chieftain who returns home victorious after the fall of Troy, with Cassandra (Hamilton 354). Agamemnon's military success is predicated on the sacrifice of his daughter, Iphigenia (352). Upon his return home his wife, Clytemnestra, murders Agamemnon and Cassandra to avenge the destruction of their daughter (356). Electra and Orestes are Agamemnon's two other children who remain loyal to the memory of their father. When Orestes returns from a long absence, he avenges his father's death and murders his mother (361).

Ike's marriage to a metaphoric daughter, Eletra, gestures toward incest and related psychological implications. According to Arens, the domestic space

characterized by father-daughter incest implies a de-emphasized identification with the maternal icon:

What is apparent for these [incestuous] families [. . .] is the uncommon exercise of parental authority with the emergence of the father as the sole arbiter of morality and a corresponding withdrawal of the mother from a position of influence. The mother, daughter, and other members of the household become passive bystanders and victims of an over-bearing male [. . .] (146)

The implied incestuous relationship between Ike and Eletra suggests a domestic discourse in which the maternal, or feminine, principle is also de-valued. As well, because the “display of power on the male’s part” (146) in the domestic sphere marked by incest “may also be interpreted from a psychological viewpoint as juvenile and a reflection of an uncertain masculinity” (146); and because “the incestuous male interprets society not as a benefit, but as a danger to his authority” (146), an undercurrent of neuroticism is also suggested in father-daughter incest. Furthermore, just as the patriarchal authority in the incestuous domestic scenario implies

a sad and futile attempt [on the father’s part] to reconstruct a personal universe, which is decaying with [his] own physical decline and the maturity of its female members, who, in the normal course of events establish their own domestic arrangements, (146)

father-daughter incest becomes a corollary to the stagnation of the psychic, and biological, regenerative aspects of the daughter. This stagnation of reproductive agency is further brought into relief by the colour motif in Welch’s fiction. In discussing the Blackfoot world constructed by Welch, an inter-textual reading with *Fools Crow* facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of *The Death of Jim Loney* and *Winter in the Blood* as, according to Welch, *Fools Crow* depicts “a much larger landscape than the other two novels and it shows where some of the younger



characters are coming from” (Welch in McFarland 109), and thereby explains character action in his earlier works. As well, the “Black[foot] mythology is intact in” (McFarland 110) *Fools Crow*, so mythic/ cultural symbols alluded to in Welch’s earlier works are elaborated on in his third novel. Although Lincoln associates the colour green with “birth” (159) in *Winter in the Blood*, and Peyer with “a new or green generation” (Peyer 65) in *The Death of Jim Loney* green is associated with either incest, or a stagnant reproductive agency; or as Lincoln states, “the traditional green of regeneration darkens toward death” (167). This association with the colour green is depicted in *Fools Crow* with the metaphor of the mushroom for Red Paint’s own agency for regeneration:

[The mushroom] gave off a dry, musky odor, and its skin was as smooth and hard as her own thigh [. . .] She had taken it home to her father’s lodge, but soon it became leathery and hard and collapsed in upon itself. One day she squeezed it and it split, sending out a puff of green smoke. (129)

Red Paint’s agency for regeneration, represented by the mushroom, “collaps[es] in upon itself” and becomes “green smoke” when not extricated from the realm of the father. This association between the colour green and regenerative stagnancy is also associated with Ike who lives in “a little green trailer” (69) on the east end of town. Thus, allusion to both Western mythology and colour schemes of the medicine wheel emphasizes the domestic patriarch as destructive toward the feminine principle.

The totalization of femininity by a typology constituted by the patriarchal symbolic order is suggested during Loney’s dream of Eletra when her face is “made up and her lipstick is dark red” (34), because, again, red implies masculinity. This totalization is corroborated in the discrepancy between Eletra’s interiority and enveloping cosmetic exterior:

Loney stared at her face. Beneath the makeup her skin was dark and smooth. It was as though she wore the makeup as a mask, as though she had disguised herself, but for a purpose that eluded him. He found himself attracted to that face beneath the makeup, but he couldn't see it clearly enough to know why. It was not a face he was familiar with, and yet it was a face he had seen before. (34)

The description of Eletra's "makeup as a mask" implies the makeup as metaphoric for persona, or social construction of identity, thereby foregrounding a correlation with national typology, which is also socially, or discursively, constituted. Again, the fact that the mask is composed partially from red lipstick emphasizes a masculine element inherent to the typological construction. Correlation between typology, or "mask," and preclusion of the feminine principle by a patriarchal typology is suggested when, during the same dream episode, Eletra refers to herself as "a mother who is no longer a mother" (34), suggesting biological maternity not inclusive of the more nurturing aspects associated with motherhood, or the feminine principle. The description of Eletra's makeup in Loney's dream contains a dipartite significance because it pertains to Eletra's own occluded maternity; while the fact that Loney cannot see his mother's face "clearly enough" (34) to understand why he is drawn to it refers to his own disassociation from the feminine principle.

Construction of feminine typology is also reflected in patterns of repetition, evidenced by the "young Indian woman" (69) Ike attempts to converse with at Kennedy's:

But that young woman – even with her makeup and her aloofness, she reminded him of Eletra in the good days before the kids came, when they spent all their time in bars [. . .] He should have asked her her name. It wouldn't have surprised him if it was Eletra. (79-80)

Typological recurrence is explicit in the reiteration of name, or the fact that "it wouldn't have surprised" Ike if the bar woman's name is Eletra; while stunted

regenerative agency is gestured toward by the correlation between lack of children and “the good old days.” Repetition is further underscored through the extended personal detail of the bar woman who recalls Loney’s vision of Eletra: “she was small and dark and she wore too much makeup. Beneath that paint and powder, her face was calm and graceful, almost pious, and Kenny thought that she looked an awful lot like Ike’s ex-wife” (69); and this repetitive correlation between the bar woman and Eletra is emphasized when, upon “meeting” Eletra, Loney has “the feeling that she [is] going to ask him to buy her a drink” (34). Historical grounding of typological repetition, and non-particularity, is further suggested in the fact that “there [is] something old fashioned about [Eletra’s] makeup. And Loney notic[es] that her dress [is] old-fashioned, the way women [dress] in pictures thirty years [prior]” (34) during his dream vision.

The negating effects of regenerative femininity due to typology constituted within a patriarchal symbolic order, and resultant in the absence of the feminine principle from Loney’s identifying typology, is suggested in Eletra’s own psychic disarticulation. Present in the text only as hearsay and a dream vision, Eletra’s physical disappearance is associated with her psychic disruption:

[Eletra] just went crazy. A combination of booze and an excess of men. Kenny heard that she was still down in the state hospital in Warm Springs. He also heard that she was in prison in Nebraska. And he heard that she went to Alaska to work with the Eskimos. (70)

The destruction of the feminine principle by an over-bearing masculine discourse is suggested in the fact that Eletra goes “crazy” due to an “excess of men.” As well, her psychic disruption is implied in the hearsay that geographically disperses her from Harlem to the North (Alaska), South (Nebraska) and West (Warm Springs), but not the East, associated with the feminine. Again this geographic scattering into each

direction refers back to the medicine wheel, which posits psychic wholeness through cohesion of each of the directions, or personality traits. Eletra's scattered placement in each of these four directions implies a disarticulation of the feminine principle.

Thus, the patriarchal symbolic order disarticulates the feminine principle through typological machinations. This feminine disarticulation by a patriarchal element is further emphasized through analysis of mythic allusion that implies a neurotic domestic space and paternal icon. Subjective identification with a paternal site that is both neurotic and preclusive of a viable feminine principle is evidenced through gun imagery between Ike and Loney. Specifically, just as the neurotic is incapable of "reconcil[ing] himself with his father if he has remained in opposition to him" (*The Complete Introductory Lectures*. . . 337), Ike employs Loney's destruction of Pretty Weasel as a platform from which to rebel against patriarchal national authority. This neurotic infantile rebelliousness is manifested in Ike's advice to Loney to elude the law, and responsibility, stating, "then you must run. That's it. You must run away from here, lose yourself in a city – Seattle, Portland, California!" (148). The fact that all three of these locations are in the west, or masculine realm, also implies a solution that would perpetuate precluded femininity. Inheritance of neuroticism, and incomplete masculinity, is further evidenced in Ike's passing down of his rifle to Loney (149), as Ike assumes the rifle will be employed against the authoritative national patriarchy (149).

In addition to neurotic connotations, the rifle also metaphorically represents stasis of psychic movement on the sacred hoop, as evidenced in Loney's two visions of his father. The first vision portends the transference of the rifle into Loney's possession:

But the father didn't ask him. He simply looked at Loney and Loney saw the snow sticking to his whiskers. Then that pale grin came back and he pressed something long and heavy into Loney's arms. "You might need this," he said, "where you're going." Loney looked down and saw the dark blue barrel and the burnished wood of a shotgun. (24)

The second contains similar motifs: "Loney saw his father grinning in at him. He wasn't covered with snow and ice, but his face was blue" (108). Particular to both visions are associations with frozenness and the colour blue. The importance of this colour association is foregrounded through analysis of Clancy Peters, a victim of a national typology that halts psychic development on the medicine wheel. Although described in his youth as "tops" (137), or "a pretty fair hand once [. . .] the best" (39), his static typology does not permit growth, or movement on the medicine wheel, and for this reason his masculinity is incomplete in the sense that it is frozen in one direction of the medicine wheel. This association between incomplete masculinity and frozenness is evidenced in the bar woman's statement about Clancy, "this old boy don't get nothin' anymore. You know why? [. . .] Cuz he has a teensy little problem. I believe they call it i-m-p-o-t-e-n-c-e" (35-36) followed by her "singing 'Frosty the Snowman' to the bar" (40). With the association between frozenness and impotence fore-grounded, the rifle represents incomplete masculinity because it is also associated with frozenness, as depicted in Loney's first vision of his father with "snow sticking to his whiskers" passing the rifle onto Loney. The colour/ seasonal associations of the medicine wheel further support this metaphor because the colours "'blue like death' to a searing white" are associated with the north and winter. Like Clancy Peters, associated with blue by his "denim shirt and Levi's" (35), Ike's "face [is] blue" in Loney's second vision, and the rifle is described as "dark blue" with a "cold blue barrel" (149). Ike's relinquishment of the rifle to Loney is metaphoric of the

inheritance of neuroticism, and an incomplete masculinity, between the father and son, as well as between the national patriarch and subject.

Additional to domestic implications, Ike's role as the national paternal enunciative site is suggested when he listens to the Havre "talk show" (136). As a point of facilitation with a larger system of communication, the radio is analogous to an entrance point into the national symbolic order. The fact that the radio is within Ike's trailer, or the realm of the father, brings into relief Ike as metaphoric of the name-of-the-father, which also facilitates subjective symbolic entrance. Ike as representative of the national paternal enunciative site is further implied with the motif of American cheese that underlies the conversation between Loney and Ike. While listening to the radio show "Ike [sits] down and cut[s] himself a slice of American cheese" (136), and "continu[es] to chew the American cheese" (137) for "a long time" (136). As well, during the initial moments of Ike's and Loney's conversation Ike asks his son "you want some cheese?" then "cut[s] a thick slice off the loaf of pasteurized cheese, [sticks] it with the knife blade, then [shakes] it off on the table before Loney" (138). Constant reference to the "American cheese" emphasizes national discursive elements, and foregrounds Loney's encounter with Ike as metaphoric for national phenomena, thereby gesturing toward Ike as a paternal enunciative site.

Identification with the national paternal enunciative site as a corollary to incohesive psychic identity is suggested in Loney's encounter with Ike. When conversing with Loney, Ike obscures both early aspects of the feminine principle in Loney's psychic biography, by dissembling about Eletra's history (141-143), and prompting an emotional disjuncture between Loney and his memory of Sandra, as suggested in Loney's thoughts that "he had deluded himself all these years" (145) by

thinking “that he had been a kind of lover to Sandra” (145). Loney’s detachment from the feminine principle as written into his national subjectivity is echoed in the motif of the American cheese, which is metaphoric of the national discourse and its subjects. While Ike dissembles about Eletra, Loney “watch[es] the old man slice the loaf of cheese into pieces, then slice the pieces into ribbons” (141-142), then watches him “slice the cheese into small squares” (143). As well, after discussion about Sandra, Loney studies a fractured cube of American cheese: “Loney picked up a small cube of cheese. He studied its perfection. It had dried to the consistency of putty. He squashed it and four small fissures appeared where the corners had been” (145). Instead of remaining cohesive, the American cheese is fractured into “four small fissures [. . .] where the corners had been.” Fore-grounding the Native American concept of the sacred hoop, the metaphor of the American cheese implies a national subjectivity that fractures the psyche into four incohesive directions, or factions, thereby halting psychic development.

The notion of a psychically fractured national typology is further evidenced in Loney’s dream vision of himself, his father, Rhea, and Kate (22-24), who metaphorically represent the four aspects of the medicine wheel. In his vision the fact that Loney states, “he weeps for us, for all of us! [. . .] Because he can’t have us”(23) indicates an unconscious lamentation about the preclusion of cohesion which he “can’t have” due to a restrictive typology. Thus, Loney’s statement, “he has no family” (23) refers to the fact that mentally he has no psychic icons which facilitate cohesion. This idea is corroborated by the father’s statement, “I’m his family and he pities me” (23), in that just as the patriarchal national typology is restrictive, freezing psychic movement on the medicine wheel, the father wishes himself, the one point on the medicine wheel, to be conclusive of all the points, or the “family.”

The psychic discord of Loney's identifying typology is furthered in the fact that the four aspects are at odds with one another (22-24), and striations of division delineate psychic fault-lines along identities of "Indian or white" (14) with Kate and Loney juxtaposed with Rhea and Ike. Moreover, just as the medicine wheel is divided into masculine and feminine principles, Loney's self reflects two masculine and two feminine characters. However, in regards to the psychic structuring of Loney's typology, implications of disruptions and duality of wholeness are suggested when these masculine and feminine principles are irreconciled, as indicated in the psychic icon of Kate's attack on the father, "if you hurt, you deserve it [. . .] You deserve to live" (24). Exacerbating psychic incohesion is the disarticulation of Loney's feminine principle, divided into the icons of Kate and Rhea. Whereas Rhea wishes to travel with Loney west to Washington State (44), Kate intends to take him east to Washington D.C. (64), and this metaphorically represents psychic strife in Loney's own typology based, in part, on the disarticulate feminine principle. The fact that both feminine characters wish to take Loney to "Washington," a metonymy of the nation, suggests agency of disarticulation written into the national discourse; or, as Lincoln states, Rhea and Kate "want to hide Loney away in mirroring coastal cities, Washington, D.C., and Seattle, Washington, American capitals named for white and red 'fathers'" (165).

Because it is Loney's inaccessibility to a viable, psychically internalised feminine principle that motivates his self-extrication from the national symbolic order, a brief discussion of Rhea and Kate facilitates analysis of Loney's identificatory incohesion. Just as associations between the unviable feminine principle and the national story are suggested in Rhea and Kate both wanting to take Loney to Washington, their metonymic stance in regard to the national discourse is further



implied by their identities being totalised by the national signifiers of femininity or “Indianness” (Owens 152). The association between Rhea and nationally constructed prosthetic femininity is apparent with the analogy between herself, and the “painting of a girl” (7):

Today, for the first time, the long neck, the slender face, even the hair, although the wrong colour, seemed much like her own. [. . .] She walked into the bathroom and turned on the light above the mirror. Without her lipstick, her eye shadow and mascara, she looked less like the girl than she had imagined. She began to take off her nightgown to look at her body; but she thought, This is silly; a girl on a piece of pasteboard is making me do this. (8)

Prosthetic femininity is explicit in the comparison of the painting and Rhea’s makeup, with both implying a superficial construct. Without “lipstick [. . .] eye shadow and mascara” Rhea feels less feminine and “less like the [painting of] the girl than she had imagined.” This notion of Rhea’s nationally constructed femininity is further illustrated during one of Loney’s visits:

She lit a cigarette with the large crystal lighter that her mother had given her. And it struck her as an odd sort of gift. And it struck her odd that she had replaced it in its precise position on the coffee table. Southern womanhood, she thought, and that seemed most absurd of all. (32)

Here, Rhea’s actions are restricted within the parameters of the national typology of “Southern womanhood.” As a defining type, “southern womanhood” lends to her a secured place within the national symbolic order of signification, as indicated in the statement, “she was at home. And not at home. But at least, she thought, I am something wherever I am” (32).

However, this prosthetic identity restricts psychic development, becoming a corollary to prolonged adolescence. Evidence of Rhea’s juvenile behaviour is exemplified in the episode between herself and her ex-fiancé, where she forces “him

to swim out to her even though she knew he couldn't swim, and he did almost drown" (31). Even though she "shudder[s] to think how silly" she had acted, the fact that this episode occurs "two and a half years ago" (31), undermines her own notions of maturity. Juvenile behaviour is also depicted in Rhea's thoughts about Loney: "Oh, God, I'm just like some high school girl planning to trap an unsuspecting boy" (27). Corroborating implications of psychic stasis, are motifs in reference of the sacred hoop. As her name indicates, a rhea is a "large, flightless South American bird" (*Webster's New World Dictionary*), and the fact that she is from Texas, or the south, (27), and returns there (152), without being able to travel west, implies an inability of psychic movement, and stasis on one direction on the medicine wheel.

Tropes of emasculation characterize Rhea's and Loney's relationship, in that just as Rhea is totalised by national constructs of femininity, she attempts to define Loney with identifying signifiers, immobilizing his psychic development. Indeed, these signifiers often imply a preclusion of humanity and adulthood. During her party, Rhea "runs her fingers through [Loney's] hair, pushing it back into some kind of order" (42) and refers to him as "an angel" (42). At other moments Rhea refers to Loney as a "beast" (11), a "dark greyhound" (12), and as "doggone gorgeous" (12). Furthermore, Rhea also attempts to lock Loney into stereotypic identity, by referring to him as "my Southern gentleman today" (13); or noting his "noble dark profile" (12), thereby emphasizing the staticized identity of the noble savage.

Motifs associated with the sacred hoop further bring into relief undercurrents of emasculation. When Rhea and Loney begin their physical intimacies Rhea sees "a large deer, without antlers" (15) through the "rear window" (15). Here, the description of the deer as "large" implies masculinity, while the lack of antlers suggests this masculinity as incomplete. This relation between emasculation and

the image of the deer is echoed at Rhea's party, in which she gives Loney a sweater that is "dark green with red deer marching across the chest" (42). Again, as green represents stagnant reproductive agency, and red is indicative of masculinity, the Christmas sweater metaphorically represents a national type that perpetuates an impotent masculine identity. Indications of Rhea as an agent for perpetuation of this typology are implied with her "pull[ing] the sweater down over [Loney's] head" (42). Evidence that this typology of masculinity is not particular to Loney, and metonymic of a larger social discourse, is suggested when "for an instant [Loney] thought she had taken [the sweater] off one of her guests" (42).

This undercurrent of emasculation in Rhea's and Loney's relationship is furthered through implications of neuroticism. Just as Welch utilizes western mythology to underscore themes of incest in the relationship between Ike and Eletra, Blackfoot mythology is employed to bring into relief the neuroticism inherent in Rhea's and Loney's relationship. Specifically, images of beavers recur in association with Rhea: in Loney's vision, Rhea is perceived as "a small figure with blond hair, with white teeth and green eyes" (23). In another instance, Rhea says to Loney, "sometimes I think I would like to take a bite out of you" (12); when he replies, "you want to gnaw on my arm?" she answers, "I want to gnaw on your throat" (13). Furthermore, when Rhea "makes a face" (29) Loney sees "her white teeth" (29) and thinks he will "remember them long after she [is] gone" (29). Another reference is made of Rhea's teeth at her party when "she grin[s] and her teeth [glisten]" (45); and when Rhea studies her reflection she notes, "at least I have passion in me. And big white teeth. I could bite through a tree" (8). Again, referring to "Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt" beavers are considered adoptive parents who assist orphaned children. Therefore, Rhea's association with beavers, and her sexual relationship with Loney,

implies a perpetuation of incest, and the related neurotic implications of being “incapable of detaching [. . .] libidinal wishes from [one’s] mother and employing them for the choice of a real outside love-object” (Freud 337). In this manner, Loney’s relationship with Rhea suggests a preclusion from adulthood.

Finally, as development into adulthood is dependant on the subject’s psychic growth, Rhea further prevents development for Loney by instigating psychic confusion. When talking to Rhea, Loney feels her voice “had become a song and it confused him” (12). As well, while Loney attempts to organize his personal history, Rhea’s interjections imply a forgetting as she asks Loney, “would you like a glass of wine” (16), and “this is Chablis. It’s very dry. You might like it” (17).

Juxtaposing Rhea’s association with the south and west, Kate is representative of the east and the north, indicated by Loney and his friends referring to her as “Ice Woman” (111), and when Loney buys Kate “some salt and pepper shakers that [are] bears and made of ivory and [. . .] carved by Eskimos” (45). These associations with the north, or winter, and bears are significant in that they place Kate within the realm of the masculine. As winter in Welch’s text is representative of incomplete masculinity, Kate is also enveloped by an incomplete, masculinized, typology. Psychic incohesion is depicted through medicine wheel imagery, while Freudian implications suggest her typology as masculinized. Kate’s identificatory incompleteness is suggested by way of quaternary imagery with her “three framed paintings by an Indian artist she had met in South Dakota” (164) of Native American “fancy dancers” (164). The three paintings fall short of psychic completion represented by the quaternity, while the “framed” images reflect Kate’s own staticized “Indian” identity; or as Owens observes:

Wearing a squash blossom necklace 'right from the heart of Navajo country,' a turquoise blouse, and a sheepskin jacket [. . .] Kate has become a professional pastiche, her authenticity derived from signifiers determined by the Euramerican culture that has commodified 'Indianness.' (151)

Just as Kate's own identity is composed of commodified Indian signifiers, the three paintings of the fancy dancers are also commodifiable signifiers of Native American identity, suggesting that they reflect her own typological identity, not unlike the correlation between Rhea and her "painting of a girl."

Arrested feminine regenerative agency inherent to Kate's typology is brought into relief through Freudian paradigms. Specifically, Freud defines the female "masculinity complex" as an alternative psychic development that emerges out of the cognizance of castration. According to Freud, female subjects psychically affected by the masculinity complex "cling with defiant self-assertiveness to their threatened masculinity [. . .], and the phantasy of being a man in spite of everything often persists as a formative factor over long periods" ("Female Sexuality" 229-230). Although notions of castration are not relevant to Kate's character, a masculinity complex is manifested because Kate identifies with the masculine roles characterized by Freudian undertones of male adversariality; as is evident in Loney's perception of Kate, in that he cannot "imagine any man being equal to her" (56) because she is "too strong" (56), and in Kate's own reason for not being married, "I never met a man who could stand me" (91). Kate's complicity with the masculine sphere is further evidenced in her concurrence with the phallogentric notion of women's harassment in the male sphere, as stated:

[The men] seemed to think of her as a sex starved gypsy and imagined they were there to satisfy her as no other man could. [. . .] And she knew that she was asking for it, not by innuendo or suggestion but by the nature of things, a woman's in a man's world and so on and on. (65)

Kate's identification with male competition is further indicated in the fact that she does not "know how to compete with a woman" (91).

Just as Ike's and Loney's typologies are inherently neurotic, neuroticism is written into Kate's "masculinized" femininity as implied through themes of incest: "she thought that her love for her brother was that of a lover seeking a perfect love. She had not thought it before. Now she knew that she was crushed as a rejected lover might be" (89). Although physical desire is not apparent in Kate's and Loney's relationship, as suggested in the fact that "she was happy" (65) when she "felt her brother's eyes on her, and [. . .] knew that for a change a man, a young man, was watching her without a trace of desire or lust or whatever" (65), her identification with the male sphere precludes successful location of a love-object outside of the familial realm. Implications of incest in Kate's and Loney's relationship are furthered in the fact that Kate writes to Loney with a "different coloured ink, green" (19), because again, green is associated with incest, and stagnant reproductive agency, suggesting that her own feminine agency for regeneration is incohesive.

Kate's association with the bear "salt and pepper shakers" further emphasizes her masculinity complex, as the bear is the icon for the west, or the masculine realm. Inter-textually, the analogy between the bear and masculinity is brought into relief through analysis of Fast Horse, a character from *Fools Crow*. Although an in depth analysis of Fast Horse is beyond the scope of this essay, Fast Horse is a psychotic character who also suffers from an incomplete masculine identity, and a disassociation from the feminine principle, as metaphorically suggested by the death of his mother by the real-bear:

[Fast Horse] was five or six winters, [when] the real-bear killed his mother. [...] He stood at the edge of the thicket and watched the almost serpentine

slide of speed as the real-bear came out of nowhere to knock his mother down, shake her until her body was as limp as her skin dress, then drag her off. It happened so fast that for years all he could remember was his mother's slender neck in those slavering jaws. (188)

Although the maternal figure is deceased, a sense of external animation coupled with destroyed psychic interiority is apparent, in that she is "shak[en . . .] until her body [is] as limp as her skin dress." This metaphor is paralleled in Fast Horse's psychic destruction of other female characters. Recalling his assault of a "Napikwan woman with the yellow hair" (193), Fast Horse recounts the way she "had fought good for a while" (193), but "after the second day she didn't seem to care where she was or what she was going to do" (193). This notion of psychic destruction that leaves a "shell" of superficial femininity is further evidenced in Fast Horse's participation in the assault on Malcolm Clark and his wife. Here, Mrs. Clark "scream[s] and scream[s] when she [sees] Fast Horse standing over her husband" (216), but afterwards, "she [does] not try to cover herself up. She [does] not scream. [And] she [does] not notice the small boy and girl who [gather] folds of her skirt in their pudgy hands [...]" (216); and following the assault, she is depicted with a "nothing-look in her eyes" (217). Again the psychic destruction of the women echoes the unbalanced masculine principle in Fast Horse when he embodies agency for psychic destruction of the feminine. With these inter-textual elements fore-grounded, Kate's association with the bear suggests a superficial femininity animated by a masculine energy, or discourse. In this manner Kate is similar to Eletra, who is also defined by a typology composed by a patriarchal symbolic order; or, just as Eletra is a "mother who is no longer a mother" Kate also loses feminine agency for regeneration.

Again, the icons which compose Loney's personal medicine wheel, or psyche, as represented by Ike, Rhea, and Kate, are affected by the national patriarchal

discourse: regarding Kate the femininity suffers from a masculinity complex and typology precludes regenerative agency; while Rhea remains in a state of prolonged adolescence. In both cases, undercurrents of incest and neuroticism written into each type characterize each as adverse to wholeness. Masculine typologies, as represented by Ike, are also destructive towards the feminine principle, and neurotic in that infantile rebelliousness is never reconciled with the national paternal icon. These nationally written identities -- psychically internalised by Loney's typology -- indicate a national discourse unbalanced due to its intrinsically hyper-masculine nature. As well, wholeness is further precluded in that all the psychic icons are incohesive.

With the bear representative of domineering masculinity, Loney's destruction of what is initially perceived to be a bear (120) becomes metaphoric for the destruction of a typological biography framed within a patriarchal symbolic order. The analogy between the bear, and Loney's biography, is suggested in that immediately before shooting "the darkness, its immense darkness in that dazzling day" (120), Loney contemplates a life that is void of the feminine principle:

They had a mother in common, Loney's natural mother and Yellow Eyes' stepmother. [. . .] He and Yellow Eyes never talked of it again and she eventually left Yellow Eyes' father and she became a dream one wishes to forget. Loney realized that now; more importantly, he realized that it had not been a dream at all, yet it was the stuff of which dreams are made. A real dream made of shit. Loney thought this. And George Yellow Eyes was dead. (118-119)

Significant in this passage, and that which corroborates the analogy between the bear and Loney's biography, is the connection between George Yellow Eyes's death and the absent maternal icon. With the colour yellow associated with the east, or the realm of the feminine, as well as with Illumination, the disappearance of George Yellow Eyes parallels Loney's inability to find psychic coherence, or illumination,



without a viable feminine principle. Referring back to the Lacanian notion that “the subject in himself, the recalling of his biography, [. . .] goes only to a certain limit, which is known as the real” (“Of the Network of Signifiers” 49), the symbolic national order that sets parameters to Loney’s biography precludes a viable feminine principle. Therefore, Loney is unable to locate psychic coherence, at least within the national apparatus of signification. This lack of psychic, and biographical, unity, is also indicated in Loney’s solitary reflections, as stated:

He had tried to think of all the little things that added up to a man sitting at a table drinking wine. But he couldn’t connect the different parts of his life, or the various people who had entered and left it. Sometimes he felt like an amnesiac searching for the one event, the one person or moment, that would bring everything back and he would see the order in his life. (21)

The “one person” who could facilitate an “order in his life,” and a complete identity, is the feminine icon, missing due to its absence in the national discourse. Loney “faces the impossibility of achieving connectedness in his life” (Sands 131) when he understands that the feminine principle, and thus psychic coherence, will never materialize; or that the dream about his absent mother is not “a dream at all” but a “real dream made of shit.”

Loney’s cognisance of, and extrication from, the national symbolic order is depicted throughout Welch’s narrative, manifesting as a self-reflexive double consciousness. In one episode, Loney “[sits] up in bed” (48) and “[doesn’t] think about thinking” (48) and thinks instead “about Swipesy” (48), his dog who cannot hear, but “understands everything about life” (18). Swipesy, is “an example to” (18) Loney, in that by being deaf he is unaware, and psychically outside of the national apparatus of meaning. Speaking to Swipesy, Loney states, “I just wish I was as smart as you. I used to be. I was as smart as anybody” (18). Loney does not denigrate

himself as stupid, as he is cognizant of the fact that he is “not unintelligent” (35). Instead, he questions the knowledge base inherent in the national symbolic order, stating, “[. . .] I realized I didn’t know anything. Not one damn thing that was worth knowing. Do you understand that? Do I understand that?” (18). In this regard, he begins to displace himself outside of his typology. Loney’s split in consciousness is also evidenced in the statement, “*in the back of his mind, the part he seldom touched*, he knew that they would get along better when the weather warmed” (Emphasis added 117); as well as in the statement, “because his consciousness had dimmed in the past couple of months, along with his thinking, he didn’t know that he had at that moment devised an end of his own” (129-130). Recalling Lacanian thought, the symbolic order divides the psyche into the ego and the subject which represents the individual’s placement within the symbolic order (Leader and Groves 65). Loney’s double consciousness reflects an awareness of this psychic split, and engenders the division between himself and the patriarchal national symbolic order, as he moves towards and “reaches some weird (strange, unholy yet wholly) self-understanding” (Lewis 4) through his stand against, and extrication from, the national patriarchy. Further, just as the viable feminine principle is relegated to the Real, the feminine “half” of Loney located on the medicine wheel is also located outside the symbolic order, or subjective consciousness. Thus national typology divides the dualistic aspect inherent to psyche represented by the medicine wheel.

Loney’s cognisance of falling outside of the national symbolic order is further evidenced in his encounter with Ike as he realizes the disparity in perspectives between himself and his father:

In a way, Loney thought, this old man is innocent. He knows nothing, he cares nothing, and that makes him innocent.

And Loney knew who the guilty party was. It was he who was guilty, and in a way that made his father's sins seem childish, as though original sin were something akin to stealing chocolate bars. (146)

Ike is “innocent” and “knows nothing” because his biography and consciousness are fully framed within the national symbolic order of meaning. Loney's consciousness, on the other hand, is antagonistic to the entire horizon of national signification, and his actions thereby make “original sin [. . .] something akin to stealing candy bars.” Whereas “original sin” may be located within the symbolic order, Loney is antagonistic to the entire national circle of signification. Ike's statement to his son, “you and God don't travel in the same circles” (147) emphasizes Loney's break from the patriarchal national symbolic order. Reflecting his split consciousness, Loney's actions also have a double significance, and this dipartite element to his actions is fore-grounded when he shoots out his father's “small yellow window” (150). On the subjective level defined strictly by his masculine typology constituted within the patriarchal national symbolic order Loney's aggressiveness reflects the Oedipal neuroticism inherent in his typology. However, on the psychic level located outside the symbolic order, Loney's aggressiveness is motivated by psychic aspects – particularly feminine psychic aspects relegated to the Real; and this motivation deriving from the feminine principle located in the Real and manifested as violence reflects a planned action that ensures a moment in which his symbolic break from the national discourse will be concretised through his suicide. Loney's premeditation is explicitly referred to in the statement, “perhaps his father hadn't squealed, perhaps his father felt some loyalty [. . .] But he knew his father was the worst type of dirt – he would squeal and he would enjoy the attention” (163). Furthermore, metaphorically, Loney's shot at his father's trailer also suggests his antagonism towards the contextualizing patriarchal discourse; and his destruction of “the small yellow

window” bordered by the green trailer suggests the disregard of his own national typology which had been stagnant, as indicated by the colour green, and restricting in its capacity for illumination of the self, as indicated by the “small yellow window.”

Finally, Loney’s suicide as metaphoric of his disjuncture from the symbolic order is informed by his vision of the dark bird. Just as Welch alludes to the Electra myth, the story of “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” is rewritten with Loney representative of Ashes Near the Fireplace Man. Referring back to the Blackfoot narrative, the mythic bird alludes to the disarticulation of consciousness by extrication from the symbolic law of the patriarch. When Ashes Near the Fireplace Man disobeys patriarchal law by following the mythic bird he displaces his consciousness from the Blackfoot symbolic order, and, by forsaking his metaphoric half, Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man, forfeits wholeness. Foregrounding Blackfoot mythology, *The Death of Jim Loney* “picks up” where “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” finishes, with Loney’s/ Ashes Near the Fireplace Man’s consciousness in the realm of the mythic bird. The dark bird thereby represents both the protagonist’s consciousness within this realm, as well as the chiasmic junction between the Blackfoot and American symbolic orders. With Welch’s contemporary world an inversion of the Blackfoot mythic one: the pretty bird is rewritten as a “dark bird” (179); the restoration of the feminine principle to the community through resurrection of the maternal icon by Ashes Near the Fireplace Man is paralleled by Loney engendering an individual psychic migration towards wholeness through cognition of the absent feminine principle; and, just as Ashes Near the Fireplace Man falls outside the Blackfoot law of signification by disobeying the patriarch, in order to locate the feminine principle Loney transcends the national symbolic order through disavowal of patriarchal authority.

Implications that Loney's consciousness is located within the realm of the mythic bird are suggested in that "all the people and events [are] as hopelessly tangled as a bird's nest in [Loney's] mind" (21), and although he attempts to "attach some significance to it, the bird remain[s] as real and as elusive as the wine and cigarettes and his own life" (21). The connection between Loney's consciousness as written with the national symbolic order and the mythic bird is also evident in the destruction of the bear/ Pretty Weasel, which, as stated above, is metaphoric of the national discourse. After destroying the "immense darkness" of his biography Loney makes a "wheet wheet" (120) bird whistle.

The analogy between consciousness and the mythic bird is furthered in Loney's relationships with Rhea and Kate. As stated above, Rhea is associated with forgetting and confusion, and in reference to this aspect, Loney's bird "get[s] smaller" (30) when he is in her company. Paralleling Rhea, just before Kate says, "we have no past. What's the point in thinking about it?" (91) Loney watches "a bird [lift] from the cliffs [. . .] and [drive] high into the sky [. . .] the steady rhythm of its wings as it [gets] smaller and smaller" (91). The connection between consciousness written into the national discourse, and the mythic bird is also evident in Loney's meeting with Ike, when he feels "as though the [past] twenty-five years had been nothing more than a bird disappearing in the night" (140). Here, the bird is associated with undermined patriarchal authority, as, following the disappearance the past "twenty five years" of Loney's biography, he is no longer "terrified" (140) of Ike; and in this regard, the paternal encounter emphasizes Loney's double consciousness and extrication from the symbolic order. Foreshadowing this undermined authority, during one of Loney's dream visions the father "sniff[s]" (24), implying indignation, after he states that Loney is as "alone as that bird he would believe in" (24). Loney's confrontation with

Ike is doubly significant in that recalling “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt,” just as the father’s arrow allows the mythic bird to tempt Ashes Near the Fireplace Man away from the authority of the Blackfoot patriarch, Ike provides Loney with the weapon that will signal Doore (Westrum 145), and facilitate Loney’s extrication from the symbolic order, as suggested in Loney’s statement, “it’s a perfect bird gun” (149).

The analogy between the bird and Loney’s subjective consciousness is further evidenced just before he enters Mission Canyon, the place of his suicide, where Loney perceives mental “images [. . .] like dark birds” (168) and thinks, “but they brought me here [. . .] to this place, to this time” (168). These mental images recall the absent feminine principle written into Loney’s biography, as implied in his remembrance of Brother Gerard, and memories from his basketball-playing youth:

The others had laughed at the priest who coached the team because he wore a long black skirt and he had a way of wagging his ass [. . .] In the team bus they laughed all the way back to Harlem at the priest in the skirt. One of the players wrapped a towel around his waist and minced up and down the aisle like a fairy and everybody laughed and tried to grab him. Then they talked about sticking it to the cheerleaders [. . .] (167-168)

Here, Loney recollects moments that epitomize the national discourse’s debasement of the feminine, as the youths denigrate the feminine priest and talk about “sticking it to the cheerleaders.” As it is the search for the feminine principle and its inherent psychic cohesion that motivates Loney’s antagonism towards the national patriarchy, it is the images of the priest that bring him “to this place” of Mission Canyon, an area associated with a balance of masculine and feminine principles. This balance is evident in the statement:

He thought about the Indians who used the canyon, the hunting parties, the warriors, the women who picked chokecherries farther up. He thought of

the children who played in the stream, and the lovers. These thoughts made him comfortable and he wasn't afraid. (168)

The analogy between Mission Canyon and rejuvenation through balanced cohesion of the masculine and feminine is further supported by the fact that during a prior trip to the canyon with the minister and his wife Loney spies on his foster parents and catches "them holding each other" (170) even though "they never touched in the house in Harlem" (170). Mission Canyon as a site of wholeness is further supported in that it is the place where Loney locates the feminine principle of his psyche. Here, I quote at length:

Again he saw her face beneath the makeup and the black shawl and it was easy this time. He did recognize her and he knew who the lost son was. She was not crazy – not now, not ever. She was a mother who was no longer a mother. She had given up her son to be free and that freedom haunted her. [. . .] But there had to be another place where people bought each other drinks and talked quietly about their pasts, their mistakes and their small triumphs; a place where those pasts merged into one and everything was all right and it was like beginning again without a past. No lost sons, no mothers searching. There had to be that place but it was not on this earth. (175)

In discussing suicide, and its relation to the symbolic and the real, Lacan states "that an act, a true act, always has an element of structure, by the fact of concerning a real that is not self-evidently caught up in it" ("Of the Network of Signifiers" 50). Loney locates the feminine principle, realizing it exists on a place that is "not on this earth," as it is absent from the national discourse; and after discovering the impossibility of its incorporation to his psyche in a viable manner, his extrication from the national symbolic order becomes finalized with his self-destruction. This extrication is furthered by reference to the myth of "Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt," in that just as the mythic bird dissociates Ashes Near the Fireplace Man from the Blackfoot symbolic order by "drawing [him] ever upward," the last image Loney sees is "the

beating wings of a dark bird as it [climbs] to a distant place" (179), suggesting his disjuncture from the national symbolic order.

*Conclusion.*

In *Fools Crow*, while hunting, the protagonist comes across two bull elk, as stated:

once he came upon two long-legs who had locked antlers during a fight and were starving to death. Both animals were on their knees, their tongues hanging out of their mouths [. . .] White Man's Dog felt great pity for the once-proud bulls [. . .] He drove an arrow into each bull's heart and soon their heads dropped and their eyes lost depth. (47)

Thematically, this metaphor significantly informs *The Death of Jim Loney*, in that a psyche, or nation, becomes untenable when unbalanced by two masculine principles "locked" together. The neurotic national discourse of America in Welch's text engenders this untenability by masculinizing feminine aspects, or creating a stasis of psychic identity for its feminine actors which becomes a corollary to prolonged adolescence. Without this feminine principle wholeness of identity is precluded, and it is the search for wholeness that provides the impetus for Loney's extrication from his typology as written in the patriarchal national symbolic order. Analysis of culture specific Blackfoot allusions, as well as pan-tribal Native American criticism, brings into relief themes of psychic cohesion and extrication from the symbolic realm of language and meaning.



Chapter Three  
 “Little Bighorn, Mon Amour:”  
 Trauma, Tricksters, and the Neurosis of Failure in Alexie’s “Ghost Dance” and  
*Reservation Blues*.

“Later, I shall give you the facts that suggest that at certain moments of that infantile monologue, imprudently termed egocentric, there are strictly syntactical games to be observed. These games belong to the field that we call pre-conscious, but make, one might say, the bed of an unconscious reserve – to be understood in the sense of an Indian reserve – within the social network.”

--Jacques Lacan, “The Split Between the Eye and the Gaze.”

In *Almanac of the Dead* Leslie Marmon Silko asserts, “The Indian Wars never ended in the Americas” (Silko in Krupat 102). Vis-a-vis Silko’s statement, this chapter focuses on the perpetuation of colonial violence engendered by the Indian Wars and other American military subjugation of its indigenous populations, with emphasis on involuntary aspects; in particular, traumatic repetition and its psychic effects on majority and minority subjects. In relation to European-American subjects, a specific aspect of the Battle of Little Bighorn is discussed: the phenomenon of mass suicides amongst American soldiers engendered by psychic fright and the incorporation of a national discourse that displaces indigenous subjects in order to justify assumptions to territory; and how this psychoanalytic interpretation of the Battle of Little Bighorn is reflected in Alexie’s “Ghost Dance.” Regarding contemporary aboriginal subjects depicted in Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*, imagery reflective of the Indian Wars metaphorically represents the traumatic displacement of the traditional aboriginal paternal icon by the patriarchal national discourse.

In his review of *Killing Custer* Alexie echoes Silko’s statement concerning the historic American military campaigns against its indigenous populations: “Welch confirms and mourns the fact that the war between Indians and whites has never ended” (14). Emphasis on discursive instigations of perpetuated violence foregrounds analysis of historic effects on national psyches; specifically, the fact that “the war

between Indians and whites has never ended” gestures toward a Lacanian neurosis of failure that, when psychically internalised by subjects, becomes embodied as an automaton. As well, psychic incorporation of a paternal enunciative site composed in part by a Lacanian *petit a*, or signifier fluctuating between the real and symbolic, prompts anxiety regarding assumptions to naturalization inherent in masculine typologies.

Having reviewed *Killing Custer*, Alexie is familiar with the phenomenon of mass suicides committed by the American soldiers during the Battle of Little Bighorn, discussed in detail below, while his reference to psychoanalytic tropes such as “shadow[s]” (*Indian Killer* 71), phallic “snake[s]” (*Reservation Blues* 71) and direct reference to “Jung and Freud” (*Reservation Blues* 18) in his fiction implies a knowledge base of psychoanalytic thought. Thus, it would not be erroneous to assume an interpretation of historical events based on a psychoanalytic paradigm by Alexie that is reflected in his fiction. For this reason, interpretation of “Ghost Dance” necessitates an analysis of the events of the Battle of Little Bighorn grounded in psychoanalytic theory.

Texts employed in this thesis regarding the Battle of Little Bighorn do not focus on psychoanalytic interpretation of the battle or the mass suicides, and, aside from *Killing Custer*, tend towards descriptive emphasis. These historical texts include popular historic accounts of the Indian Wars, such as Dee Brown’s *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and Stephen E. Ambrose’s *Crazy Horse and Custer: The Parallel Lives of Two American Soldiers*; as well, texts acknowledged by Alexie in *Reservation Blues* are utilized, such as Mari Sandoz’s *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas*, and, in reference to the American campaign against the Spokane, Benjamin Franklin Manring’s *Conquest of the Coeur D’Alene, Spokanes and*

*Palouses*. Of these, only Welch and Stekler's, and Sandoz's, texts mention the suicides: Welch discusses the suicides in detail, while Sandoz makes reference in brief: "two young Lakotas [. . .] had been chasing a soldier who got away on horseback and were feeling cheated because he put the revolver against his head and fired" (330).

Welch and Stekler also relate the Battle of Little Bighorn to ideological concerns, claiming that the mythical status of the event is due to the military loss at the hands of "savages" (22). According to Welch and Stekler, The Battle of Little Bighorn

ranks right up there with such martyr myths as the Charge of the Light Brigade and the Battle of the Alamo. The thought of a large number of bloodthirsty savages slaughtering a small but noble band of white heroes becomes a powerful battle cry. (22)

Correlation between the historic events at Little Bighorn is also discussed by W.S. Penn, who relates the mass suicides committed by the soldiers at Little Bighorn to national concerns, illustrating disparities between popular depictions of Custer, such as the Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show, and the events of Little Bighorn:

The fantasy of Cody's show begins to destruct in contextual concert with the Indian accounts of Custer's soldiers shooting themselves or their comrades, committing suicide and murder in their fear, rather than the Anheuser-Busch image of them fighting bravely to the last man. (200)

As a theoretical text relating to literary criticism, Penn's *Feathering Custer* alludes to ideological reasons for perpetuating the Custer myth within the dominant narrative. For Penn, Custer's death facilitates a "mobilizing nostalgia" (196) in a manner similar to the Alamo or Pearl Harbour, by "turning uninformed public sentiment against romanticized Indians, the way the Alamo and Pearl Harbour did against Mexicans and Japanese" (196).

The ideological implications regarding the Little Bighorn battle suggested by Welch and Stekler and Penn are encompassed here in post-colonial modelling employed to interpret the mass suicide phenomenon and its relation to Alexie's fiction. Psychoanalytically inflected post-colonial theory enables discussion of the link between the phenomenon of mass suicide committed by American soldiers with the contextualizing national discourse. Specifically, the American colonizing effort to displace North American indigenous populations involves a Freudian psychic incorporation of Native Americans within the national psyche. As detailed below, traumatic implications of fright involved at the battle create ego disarticulation, enabling intra-psychic strife between incorporated icons, which is, in turn, actualised as suicide. Analysis of the American suicides at the Battle of Little Bighorn does not suggest "debunking" of the Custer myth, which, according to Welch and Stekler, "has been done countless times even if not many have paid attention" (20). Instead, mobilization of Lacanian/ Caruthian trauma theory facilitates explanation of why the Custer myth often recurs through the national discourse, and accounts for its profuse signification despite disparity between actuality of event and phantasy depictions. Thus, Freudian/ Butlerian methodologies explain the impetus for the mass suicides, while a Lacanian/ Caruthian trauma theory apparatus describes how the phenomenon, and the phantasy signifiers used to obscure its recognition, are repetitive and central to the American discourse.

As to the historical events Alexie uses, and the manner in which he depicts them, the Freudian interpretation of the Little Bighorn mass suicides, and trauma-related implications that explain the obfuscating discursive influx of phantasy signifiers, are both reflected in "Ghost Dance." Specifically, medicine wheel tropes conjoined with violent imagery metaphorically illustrate the mass suicides instigated,

in part, by mechanisms of displacement within the national apparatus, while Freudian death instinct and automaton imagery reflect the compulsion to repeat traumatic history. Further, Alexie implies a national paternal enunciative site composed, in part, by the phantasy signifier of popular depictions of Custer, thereby directly correlating the events of Little Bighorn with masculine identity construction. Thus, the psychoanalytic interpretation of historic events, and their discursive reverberations, are reflected in subjective, psychic effects in Alexie's "Ghost Dance."

While Alexie discusses a specific colonialist event and associated effects in his fiction, he also conjoins Freudian-inflected psychoanalytic paradigms with Native American and universalist thought. Specifically, Alexie suggests that the feminine principle, or feminine aspects of the psyche implied in medicine wheel theory, inherently contain aspects to disrupt traumatic repetition. Alexie's correlation of medicine wheel imagery – which inherently encompasses the concept of the feminine principle – with Jungian individuation and the archetypal mandala gestures toward two warrants for the slippage between historic trauma and discursive identity construction, and universalist psychoanalytic paradigms. First, in "Ghost Dance" and *Reservation Blues* Alexie conjoins Freudian and Jungian concerns to illustrate the manner in which totalizing national typologies preclude recognition of unconscious aspects. Second, due to the fact that individuation implies spiritual concerns, Alexie suggests that psychic binding and healing necessitate spiritual aspects.

Conflation of universalist concerns and psychoanalytic interpretation of specific aspects of colonialist history is also evidenced in *Reservation Blues* when Alexie utilizes imagery relating to the Indian Wars and military campaigns against the Spokane, as metaphoric for the displacement of a traditional paternal enunciative site by the colonizing discourse. Typology constituted, in part, by identification with the

American paternal site engenders a totalizing effect that prohibits psychic binding, or healing, of traumatic sites and precludes individuation. A quest motif in *Reservation Blues* allegorically depicts the process of individuation, and recognition of the feminine principle within the psyches of Spokane subjects. Thus, whereas “Ghost Dance” focuses on a specific historic event and its effect on European-American subjects, *Reservation Blues* alludes to historic subjugation of indigenous groups through the Indian Wars and American military campaigns in a general sense, and how subsequent displacement of a traditional paternal site by a patriarchal American discourse engenders totalizing masculine typologies.

Discussion of Alexie’s texts is subdivided into sections. The first section involves interpretation of the Battle of Little Bighorn vis-à-vis psychoanalytic paradigms. The second section pertains to psychoanalytic interpretation of Little Bighorn as reflected in Alexie’s “Ghost Dance,” and how traumatic repetition is psychically bound through psychic correspondence with the feminine principle. The succeeding section is analysis of the Okanagan narrative, “Coyote Tricks Owl,” and how Coyote and Owl imagery reflect dual aspects of the feminine principle. The last sections involve analysis of *Reservation Blues*, and recall theoretical models put forth in discussion of the Battle of Little Bighorn, especially pertaining to trauma theory and psychic incorporation. As well, interpretation of the larger text involves analysis of Coyote imagery in relation to the feminine principle and the Jungian quest motif.

#### *Trauma Theory and Suicide at The Battle of Little Bighorn.*

A detailed account of the Indian Wars cannot be addressed here, so its analysis as a site of trauma is limited to the Battle of Little Bighorn in “Ghost Dance,” and to the murder of Crazy Horse and Colonel George Wright’s slaughter of the Spokane

horses in *Reservation Blues*. Historically speaking, Alexie's own tribal affiliations, the Coeur D'Alene and Spokane groups, are detached from the military events of Little Bighorn. Indeed, a legend particular to the Coeur D'Alene/ Spokane locality describes how

in the days of the Sioux wars an envoy from that tribe came over the mountains to induce the Coeur D'Alenes to join in a general uprising, but that Chief Seltice [of the Coeur D'Alenes] after hearing his proposal, ordered him to be conducted to the reservation line and from there [the Sioux] started in no gentle manner toward the land from whence he'd come. (Manring 224-225)

However, in *Reservation Blues*, Alexie implies an historical amalgamation of the conquest of the Spokane and Sioux groups through his re-presentation of Colonel George Wright and General Philip Sheridan in a fictionalised partnership in which they are employees of "Cavalry Records" (189). In so doing, Alexie positions both Wright and Sheridan as synecdochal of a collective American discourse of military subjugation of indigenous populations. In corroboration of this idea, Hafen states that "[Alexie's] people were not at Sand Creek or Wounded Knee; neither are the Spokane related to Crazy Horse. Yet these are events and figures that have impact upon all Native peoples" (73).

In brief, the Battle of Little Bighorn was instigated by settler invasion into Paha Sapa, or the Black Hills, a place of spiritual significance for the Oglala Sioux (Brown 264). Although the American government ceded the Black Hills through treaty to the local indigenous populations in 1868, by 1872 miners "were violating the treaty" (264) and "searching the rocky passes and clear-running streams" of the region for gold (264). When Native Americans found trespassers in Paha Sapa they "killed them or chased them out" (264); but by 1874, "there was such a mad clamor from gold-hungry Americans that the Army was forced to make a reconnaissance into the

Black Hills” (264). This military reconnaissance, which never obtained “consent from the Indians before starting this armed invasion” (264) was composed of the Seventh Cavalry and headed by General George Armstrong Custer (264). According to Brown, the Black Hills was also the “country of the Cheyennes, Arapahos, and other Sioux tribes’ (264), and when they heard about Custer’s expedition into Paha Sapa their outcry was “strong enough that [. . .] Ulysses Grant announced his determination ‘to prevent all invasion of [the Black Hills] by intruders so long as by law and treaty it [was] secured to the Indians’” (264-265). However, Custer’s report that the Black Hills were laden with gold “from the grass roots down” (Custer in Brown 265) fomented mining activity in the region, and by 1875 the Black Hills were populated with hundreds of miners (265).

General “Three Stars” Crook made an expedition into Paha Sapa, and politely informed the miners that they were violating the law, but made no effort to stop activity (265). Outraged by the invasion of the Black Hills, and by military inaction, Red Cloud and Spotted Tail, two agency chiefs, “made strong protests to Washington officials” (267), and in response, the American government sent “out a commission to treat with the Sioux Indians for the relinquishment of the Black Hills” (265); or “in other words, the time had come to take away one more piece of territory that had been assigned to the Indians in perpetuity” (265). The governmental commission failed, as the chiefs of the indigenous groups in the region refused to sell or lease the Black Hills (271). The commission thereby returned to Washington, where it reported its failure then recommended that Congress dismiss the concerns of the Indians, suggest a monetary sum for the Black Hills, and present this sum “to the Indians as a finality” (Brown 271). According to Brown, “thus was set in motion a chain of actions which would bring the greatest defeat ever suffered by the United States Army in its wars



with the Indians, and ultimately would destroy forever the freedom of the northern Plains Indians” (271).

Following the return of the commission, Secretary of War W.W. Belknap warned of conflict in Paha Sapa unless “something [was] done to obtain possession of that section [of land] for the white miners” (Belknap in Brown 271). On December 3, 1875 Commissioner of Indian Affairs Edward P. Smith “ordered Sioux and Cheyenne agents” (272) to “notify all Indians off reservation to come in and report to their agencies by January 31, 1876” (Brown 272). This notification was extended to nonagency Indians as well, such as Crazy Horse’s Oglala Sioux, and Sitting Bull’s Hunkpapas (272-273). However, due to the blizzard conditions of the northern plains both groups refused to move their camps until the spring (272-273). When the January 31<sup>st</sup> deadline passed the War Department authorized General Sheridan to commence operations against the “hostile” Sioux who had refused to return to the reservations (272). Sheridan ordered Generals Crook and Terry to begin “military operations in the direction of the headwaters of the Powder, Tongue, Rosebud, and Bighorn rivers ‘where Crazy Horse and his allies frequented’” (272).

Although “the January 31 ultimatum was little short of a declaration of war against the independent Indians, and many of them treated it as [such . . .] they did not expect the [American Army] to strike so soon” (273). On March 17, 1876 “Crook’s advance column under Colonel Joseph J. Reynolds” (273) attacked a “mixed band of Northern Cheyennes and Oglala Sioux” (273) from the Red Cloud agency. The mixed band of agency Indians met with some nonagency Indians near the Powder River to hunt buffalo and antelope (273). Reynolds’ column attacked “at dawn” (273) and “without warning” (273) and destroyed the encampment. According to Wooden

Leg, a survivor of the attack, “our tepees were burned with everything in them . . . . I had nothing left but the clothing I had on” (274).

The survivors of this group moved and amalgamated with Crazy Horse’s village, which was also made up of a mix of Cheyennes and Oglala Sioux (274). From here the entire group moved to “the mouth of the Tongue River, where Sitting Bull and the Hunkpapas had been living through the winter. Not long after that, Lame Deer arrived with a band of Minneconjous and asked permission to camp near by” (274). As the weather warmed the collective tribes moved northward to the Rosebud River, and en route were joined by bands of Brulés, Sans Arcs, Blackfoot Sioux, and additional Cheyennes (275). As well, “while these several thousand Indians were camped on the Rosebud, many young warriors joined them from the reservations” (275). On June 17 a conflict occurred between General Crook’s soldiers, and Crazy Horse’s village, which resulted in Crook “returning to his base camp on Goose Creek to await reinforcements or a message from Gibbon, Terry, or Custer [because] the Indians on the Rosebud were too strong for one column of soldiers” (277). In turn, the conglomeration of Indian tribes moved west to the Greasy Grass, or Little Bighorn, River (277).

When Custer arrived at the Little Bighorn River with Captain Frederick Benteen and Major Marcus A. Reno (Welch and Stekler 149) the collected Indian village stretched for three miles along the west side of the river and numbered no less than ten thousand people with approximately three, or four, thousand warriors (Brown 277). However, Custer ignored his scouts’ warnings about the immensity of the village (Welch and Stekler 166) and ordered Reno and his one hundred and forty troops to attack the southern end, with Captain Benteen’s troops following behind to prevent any “Indian escape” (Welch and Stekler 149). Custer, and his column of two

hundred and ten soldiers attacked the northern end of the village (Welch and Stekler 149).

There is much historical speculation about Custer's military decisions, and the actual events of Little Bighorn. Of pertinence to this essay, though, is the reaction of the American soldiers during the battle. Inimical to popular depictions of Little Bighorn that portray Custer as "being a strong leader who inspired his men with derring-do and who fought a strong tactical fight" (169), Custer's men were quickly surrounded by Native American troops, and disintegration of military order followed soon afterwards. According to Pte-San-Waste-Win, one of the surviving Indian women from the village, hundreds of Cheyenne warriors rushed into the Little Bighorn River to meet Custer's forces:

Soon I saw a number of Cheyennes ride into the river, then some young men of my band, then others, until there were hundreds of warriors in the river and running up into the ravine. When some hundreds had passed into the river and gone into the ravine, the others who were left, still a very great number, moved back from the river and waited for the attack. And I knew that the fighting men of the Sioux, many hundreds in number, were hidden in the ravine behind the hill upon which Long Hair [Custer] was marching, and he would be attacked from both sides. (Brown 281)

Another Native American, Crow King of the Hunkpapas, supports this account: "the greater portion of our warriors came together in the front and we rushed our horses on them. At the same time warriors rode out on each side of [the American soldiers] and circled around them" (282). This large-scale attack by Native American forces resulted in military, as well as psychic, disarticulation of Custer's troops. According to Welch and Stekler, who base their interpretation of the battle on recent archaeological findings, "Custer's troops panicked almost immediately when the Indians attacked in force" (169), and this panic was manifested in several ways: a description of the battle from a Native American soldier depicts the American soldiers

as acting “foolish[ly], [with] many throwing away their guns and raising their hands, saying, ‘Sioux, pity us; take us prisoners’” (Brown 282) while the Sioux “killed all of them” (282) and left “none [. . .] alive for even a few minutes” (282); while another report indicates that American soldiers “bunched together in helpless clusters, shooting wildly in all directions until their guns were empty” (169) before running on foot, or remaining in bunches and “allow[ing] themselves to be killed” (169). Further accounts from White Bull, a Cheyenne, posit that “the white men acted as if they were intoxicated, or ‘beside themselves,’ shooting wildly in the air” (168).

Psychic incohesion in regards to the soldiers’ behaviour at the Battle of Little Bighorn is also suggested through mass suicides. Although the suicides of the American soldiers are a controversial historical event at the Little Bighorn battle, Cheyenne informants claim, “many of the [American] soldiers killed themselves or each other” (Welch and Stekler 171). According to Wooden Leg:

all around, the Indians began jumping up, running forward, dodging down [. . .] all the time going toward the soldiers. Right away, all of the white men went crazy. Instead of shooting at us, they turned their guns upon themselves. Almost before we could get to them, every one of them was dead. They killed themselves. (Welch and Stekler 171)

The same informant reports a similar occurrence at another section of the battlefield:

“by the time I got there, all the soldiers were dead. The Indians told me that they had killed only a few of those men, that the men had shot each other and themselves”

(171). Kate Bighead, a member of the village, witnessed the mass suicides at the south skirmish line. Here, I quote at length:

I think there were about twenty Indians to every soldier there. The soldier horses got scared, and all of them broke loose and ran away toward the river. Just then I saw a soldier shoot himself by holding his revolver at his head. Then another one did the same, and another. Right away, all of them began

shooting themselves or shooting each other. I saw several different pairs of them fire their guns at the same time and shoot one another in the breast. For a short time the Indians just stayed where they were and looked. (Welch and Stekler 171)

The phenomenon of suicide was also evidenced in circumstances where the outcome of the soldiers' lives ending with violence was not necessarily inevitable, as indicated in the testimony of Turtle Rib, a Minneconjou Sioux who claims that a retreating soldier was pulling away on a "strong American horse [. . .] when he took out his pistol and shot himself in the head. Foolish Elk, an Oglala, confirms this" (171). Finally depictions of military leadership parallel the psychic disarticulation of the troops. According to Welch and Stekler, a warrior's bullet struck the American scout, Bloody Knife, "in the head, splattering brains and blood all over Reno's face. And it was here that [Captain] Reno came apart, shouting orders to mount up, dismount, then mount again" (158). Regarding Custer, an interview with Sitting Bull in 1877 suggests that he was laughing before he died:

REPORTER: How many stood by him?

SITTING BULL: A few.

REPORTER: When did he fall?

SITTING BULL: He killed a man when he fell. He laughed.

REPORTER: You mean he cried out.

SITTING BULL: No, he laughed. He had fired his last shot. (Ambrose 408)

Stephen E. Ambrose glorifies Custer's death, stating, "if his life flashed in front of him [. . .] no wonder Custer laughed [. . .] He had many achievements to be proud of [. . .including] his key role at Appomattox, the Washita, [and] opening the Black Hills" (408-409), but in light of the soldiers' behaviour, Custer's last actions may also gesture towards psychic incoherence. Although the mass suicides may be explained, in part, by the veteran Indian fighter's adage to "save the last bullet for yourself rather than fall into the Indians' hands" (Welch and Stekler 172), the soldiers'

behaviours also gesture towards trauma and its corollary to ego disarticulation.

However, before analysing trauma as a catalyst for psychic incoherence, a brief discussion of ego formation is necessary in order to correlate trauma with ego disruption.

Judith Butler outlines psychic mimesis and psychic incorporation in “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” noting that “identifications are always made in response to loss of some kind, and [. . .] they involve a certain mimetic practice that seeks to incorporate the lost love within the very ‘identity’ of the one who remains” (26). For Butler, psychic identification “*precedes* identity” (26), and implies a constitution of a self which is intrinsic with the other (26). The notion of the “Other *in* the self [. . .] implies that the self/ Other distinction is *not* primarily external [. . . In fact,] the self is from the start radically implicated in the ‘Other’” (26). Therefore, the Other psychically “installed in the self thus establishes the permanent incapacity of that ‘self’ to achieve self-identity [because] it is as it were already disrupted by that Other” (27). Self-identity is therefore never self-created because “the disruption of the Other at the heart of the self is the very condition of that self’s possibility” (27).

The impetus to psychic incorporation is constituted by an “intense emotional attachment” (26) to an Other, or love-object (26) which becomes separated from the ego. Describing the cathexis, Butler states:

Some psychoanalytic theories tend to construe identification and desire as two mutually exclusive relations to love objects that have been lost through prohibition and/ or separation [. . . However] it is important to consider that identification and desire can coexist [. . .] (26)

This desire of wanting to have/ wanting to be someone results in psychic incorporation when the ego suffers a separation from the love-object. For Butler, “the self only becomes a self on the condition that it has suffered a separation [. . .or] a loss

which is suspended and provisionally resolved through a melancholic incorporation of some ‘Other’” (27). In order to compensate or “suspend” temporary loss, the ego incorporates the missing Other into the self.

Butler modulates from Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia” by implying a less profound element to the loss preceding incorporation. For Freud, a melancholic incorporation is engendered when “an attachment of the libido to a particular person [. . . exists]; then, owing to a real slight or disappointment the object-relationship [is] shattered” (“Mourning and Melancholia” 249). The result of this shattered relationship is not the normal withdrawal of emotional attachment from the object, and subsequent replacement of the love-object (249). Instead, free libido is withdrawn into the ego where it “establish[es] an identification of the ego with the abandoned object” (249). In this way, “the shadow of the [abandoned] object [falls] upon the ego” (249), and the ego is thereby judged by the super-ego as though it is “the forsaken object” (249). Through incorporation an object-loss becomes an ego-loss, “and the conflict between the ego and the loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego altered by identification” (249).

For Freud, ambivalence is inherent in psychic incorporation when the object relationship is destroyed through disappointments such as “being slighted [or] neglected” (251). When this occurs, the incorporated, substitutive love object that “takes refuge [in the ego through] narcissistic identification” (251) may be targeted by the super-ego as an object of hate; and, through its antagonistic relationship with the super-ego, will thereby engender the self-torment characteristic of melancholia (251). Butler also suggests an ambivalence inherent in psychic identification:

If incorporation in Freud’s sense in 1914 is an effort to preserve a lost and loved object and to refuse or postpone the recognition of loss and, hence, of

grief, then to become like one's mother or father or sibling or other early "lovers" may be an act of love and/ or a hateful effort to replace or displace. (Butler 27)

What the ambivalence of psychic incorporation gestures towards is the intra-ego strife suggested by Freud in *The Ego and the Id*. In his discussion of multiple psychic identifications, Freud states:

If the [object identifications] obtain the upper hand and become too numerous, unduly powerful and incompatible with one another, a pathological outcome will not be far off. It may come to a disruption of the ego in consequence of the different identifications becoming cut off from one another by resistances. (20-21)

Even when internal conflict of the ego is not pathological, or manifested in the extreme lack of icon integration manifested in "multiple personalities," "there remains the question of conflicts between the various identifications into which the ego comes apart" (21).

Although intra-ego conflict between incorporated icons can occur, the ego identifications have "a great share in determining the form taken by the ego" (*Ego and the Id* 18) and make "an essential contribution towards building up what is called [the ego's] 'character'" (18). The character, composed, in part, of incorporated object-cathexes (or Others), is united by sublimated libidinal energy stored in the ego. Sublimated energy is sent to the ego by the id, which attaches a cathexis to the substitutive, and narcissistic, identification taking refuge in the ego, as opposed to cathecting an external Other. According to Freud, the "transformation of an erotic object choice into an alteration of the ego [. . .] is also a method by which the ego can obtain control over the id" (20). When the ego posits traits of the object-cathexis, and forces itself "upon the id as a love-object [it] is trying to make good the id's loss by saying, 'look, you can love me too – I am so like the object'" (20). This transference



of cathexis from an external object to a narcissistic ego component by the id, or a “transformation of object-libido into narcissistic libido [. . .] obviously implies an abandonment of sexual aims, a desexualization – a kind of sublimation” (18) of libidinal energies.

Through their relation to the Eros, and death, instincts, the libidinal, cathecting energies deriving from the id – sublimated or not -- have an inherent ambivalence. According to Freud, “the opposition between the two classes of instincts” (32) may be reflected in the “polarity of love and hate” (32); and this ambivalence is evidenced in libidinal cathexes, as implied in the observation that “love is with unexpected regularity accompanied by hate (ambivalence), and not only in human relationships hate is frequently a forerunner of love” (33). As well, in a number of circumstances “hate changes into love and love into hate” (33). Freud states that this ambivalent cathecting energy is in itself “neutral” (34), and “displaceable” (34), as it “can be added to [. . .] differentiated erotic or destructive impuls[es]” (34). In other words, this ambivalent energy is “desexualized libido” (35) or “sublimated energy” (34) residing in the ego; and this energy “retain[s] the main purpose of Eros – that of uniting and binding – in so far as it helps towards establishing the unity, or tendency to unity, which is particularly characteristic of the ego” (35). To recapitulate: the ego, or character, is composed out of psychic identifications and internalisations of Others external to the self. These identifications occur when the id cathexes a love-object with instinctual/ libidinal energy. The object-relationship is shattered, and to recompense the ego posits similar characteristics of the love-object. The id thereby attaches its libidinal energy to the Other now residing in the ego. Through this process, the instinctual/ libidinal energy becomes desexualized, although psychic energy is still “flowing” into the ego, or, more properly, to the identificatory Other

residing in the ego. The sublimated energy, now stored in the ego, enables the ego to remain cohesive.

Sites of trauma result in the disruption of sublimated energy located in the ego, and may cause ego disruption when identificatory icons are inherently adverse to one another. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud defines a traumatic event as any external excitation that is “powerful enough to break through the protective shield” (29) of the *Pcpt.-Cs.* (perceptual-consciousness system). If perceived as occupying a position of space, the *Pcpt.-Cs.* “lie[s] on the borderline between outside and inside; it must be turned toward the external world and must envelop the other psychical systems” (24). Obviously, the *Pcpt.-Cs.* includes the medium for consciously experiencing external feelings and sensations (*The Ego and the Id* 12); while at the same time it encompasses the ego (ibid 13).

The *Pcpt.-Cs.* is a protective shield that houses the interiority of the psyche and defends it against surplus of external excitations. According to Freud:

Protection against stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than reception of stimuli. The protective shield [or *Pcpt.-Cs.*] is supplied with its own store of energy and must above all endeavour to preserve the special modes of transformation of energy operating in it against the effects threatened by the enormous energies at work in the external world [. . .] (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 27)

The *Pcpt.-Cs.* prepares for a potentially dangerous, or traumatic, event through a “hypercathexis” (31), in which cathecting energies imbue the protective shield to strengthen it against over-stimulation. However, preclusion of hypercathexis is evidenced in episodes of fright, or “the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it; it emphasizes the factor of surprise” (12). In the occurrence of a frightening event external stimulus breaches the *Pcpt.-Cs.* (29) and engenders “a continuous stream of excitations [. . .] to the central apparatus of the

mind” (30). In other words, trauma fractures psychic temporal contextualization (Caruth 61) by puncturing the “barrier of consciousness” (ibid 61) or “the barrier of sensation and knowledge that protects the organism by placing stimulation within an ordered experience of time” (61).

In order to restore the fractured *Pcpt.-Cs.* “cathectic energy is summoned from all sides to provide sufficiently high cathexes of energy in the environs of the breach” (30). An “‘anticathexis’ on a grand scale” (30) is implemented, impoverishing the other psychical systems, “so that the remaining psychical functions are extensively paralysed or reduced” (30). From here, Freud infers “that a system which is itself highly cathected is capable of taking up an additional stream of fresh inflowing energy [and of] binding it psychically” (30) by converting it into “quiescent cathexis” (30). Therefore, the “higher the system’s own quiescent cathexis, the greater seems to be its binding force” (30), while conversely, “the lower its cathexis, the less capacity will it have for taking up inflowing energy, and the more violent will be the consequences of such a breach in the protective shield against stimuli” (30).

Although consciousness is housed in the *Pcpt.-Cs.*, when a breach in the psychic “protective barrier” occurs, peripheral aspects of the ego become impoverished by the anticathexis. This is suggested in the behaviour of the American soldiers during the Battle of Little Bighorn. While the disintegration of reason may also reflect the fractured condition of the ego, as the ego encompasses “what may be called reason and common sense” (*The Ego and the Id* 15), the fact that the soldiers were acting “intoxicated” and “shooting wildly in the air” gestures towards the egos’ impoverishment of sublimated energy due to anticathexis.

Furthermore, recalling the fact that sublimated energy retains “the main purpose of [. . .] uniting and binding the ego” or establishing the “tendency to unity

which is particularly characteristic of the ego;” and that intra-ego strife is often present due to the psychic incorporation of inherently antagonistic icons, the suicides of the soldiers also suggest ego impoverishment of cathecting energy. In *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*, Renée Bergland states, “by writing about Indians as ghosts, white writers effectively remove them from American lands, and place them, instead, within the American imagination” (4). The impetus behind this ghosting is because the “internalisation of national space is one of the central characteristics of nationalism” (4); by necessity then, Indians need to be displaced in order to naturalize assumptions of national identity and inherent claims to national space. Again, according to Butler, the desire to displace provides the impetus towards psychic incorporation, as identification “may be an act of love and/ or a hateful effort to displace.” With the Indians incorporated into the ego, and the ego’s impoverishment of binding energy prompted by trauma, the identificatory icons of the soldiers -- inherently antagonistic -- are unbound to one another, or incohered. As well, psychic fissures are exacerbated through impact with traumatic energy. With ego disarticulation foregrounded, the acts of suicide reflect one icon of the soldier’s ego’s, (or perhaps super-ego’s) attempt to destroy the internalised icon of the Indian. Finally, the Battle of Little Bighorn as a site of trauma is implied in the fact that Custer ignored the scouts’ warning as to the size of the village, and this engendered a lack of preparedness that led to fright.

In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* Caruth equates trauma with “the unavoidable and overwhelming imposition of historical events on the psyche” (58). Specifically, Caruth alludes to Freud’s analysis of war trauma as an historical repercussion of World War I. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud states:

Dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright. This astonishes people far too little . . . . (Freud in Caruth 59)

For Caruth the recurring dream does not instantiate a wish fulfilment, or unconscious meaning “but is, purely and inexplicably, the literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits” (59). The repeating traumatic nightmare thereby reflects “the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way” (59) due to the anticathexis. The return to the traumatic event through the dream is attributed, in part, to the fact that the traumatically fractured *Pcpt.-Cs.* allows excitations into the psyche without first psychically binding them with conscious signification, and, therefore, “in trauma [. . .] the outside has gone inside [the psyche] without any mediation” (59). The objective of the recurring dream is thereby to acquire a cathexis around the traumatic event, and to allow the event to be mastered through psychic contextualization. In other words, the dreams “are endeavouring to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis” (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 32).

However, as Caruth indicates, traumatic fright is not only attributed to the dream, but to the act of awakening. As stated, traumatic dreams cause the patient to wake up “in another fright” (Freud in Caruth 64). The manifestation of fright in awakening suggests that

if fright [. . .] defines the traumatic effect of not having been prepared in time, then the trauma of the nightmare does not simply consist in the experience *within* the dream, but in *the experience of waking from it*. It is the experience of *waking into consciousness* that, peculiarly, is identified with the reliving of the trauma. (64)

The compulsion to repeat the traumatic nightmare, and the psychic return to the site of non-consciousness, reflect Freud's notion of the death, or ego, instinct.

In brief, the death instinct instantiates Freud's idea that all life is originally derived from inorganic matter. The death instinct is thereby the conservative drive to return to an inorganic state (*Beyond* 38). According to Freud: "an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things [. . .]; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life" (36); and in corroboration of this idea, he states:

If we are to take it as a truth that knows no exception that everything living dies for internal reasons – becomes inorganic once again – then we shall be compelled to say that 'the aim of all life is death' and looking backwards, that 'inanimate things existed before living ones.' (38)

In contradistinction to the death instincts is Eros, or the sexual instincts, which tend toward perpetuation of life, unity of the self, and conjugation with other organisms. The sexual instincts are "the true life instincts" (40), and "operate against the purpose of the other instincts, which leads, by reason of their function, to death" (40). The life instincts compel the organism to avoid danger "to assure that the organism shall follow its own path to death, and to ward off any possible ways of returning to inorganic existence other than those which are immanent in the organism itself" (39). In other words, while the death instincts rush "forward so as to reach the final aim of life as swiftly as possible" (41), the sexual instincts jerk the organism "back to a certain point and so prolong the journey" (41) after "a particular stage in the advance" (41) of the death instincts is made.

The compulsion to return to the psychic site of trauma is analogous to the death instinct's repetitive nature, because, just as the death instinct strives toward a

state of non-being, the return to the traumatic event is also a return to a location uncontextualized by consciousness, a non-conscious state. The repetitive return to the state of psychic non-being is instantiated in both personal and historical manifestations. For Freud, an uncanny phenomenon occurs when repressed complexes are revived by an impression, or when surmounted beliefs are re-confirmed (“The Uncanny” 249). As a reification of the repetitive death instinct, the automaton instantiates the psychic projection of a surmounted, or repressed, state of non-being, and when the individual encounters an entity whose actions are predetermined by the compulsion to return to the state of non-being, he, or she, becomes “dimly aware of [said actions] in remote corners of [his/ her] own being” (243); or according to Jay, “involuntary repetition [. . .] expresses in displaced form [. . .] the ‘death instinct.’” The uncertainty produced by the uncanny concerning the boundaries between our living selves, and our dead, automaton-like simulacra demonstrates the link” (21).

In regards to historical repetition, according to Caruth, the traumatic site becomes a defining moment both for the conscious individual subject, as well as national historic discourse. Due to the breach in consciousness caused by impact with traumatic energy, and, in part, to the anticathexis, the traumatic experience is placed in the psyche without the “mind’s experience of time” (61). In this regard, the traumatic phenomenon is experienced “one moment too late” (62), and the “shock of the mind’s relation to the threat of death is thus not the direct experience of the threat, but precisely the *missing* of this experience” (62). Therefore, because the return to the traumatic nightmare is the “attempt to master what was never fully grasped in the first place” (62), the process of surviving trauma implies a “repeated confrontation with the [. . .] impossibility of grasping the threat to one’s own life” (62) unless the traumatic experience is psychically bound. With this perspective foregrounded,

survival of the trauma is not the “passage beyond a violent event” (63), but a defining moment which engenders repetition back to the traumatic site. According to Caruth, once consciousness is “faced with the possibility of its death [it] can do nothing but repeat the destructive event over and over again” (63), because the site is equated by the death instincts as a state of non-being. “As a paradigm for the human experience that governs history” (63) then, “traumatic disorder is indeed the apparent struggle to die” (63); or, in other words, history is “the endless repetition of previous violence” (63).

Jacques Lacan corroborates Caruth’s notion of the traumatic site occupying a centrality in regards to history. For Lacan, the site of trauma lies within the realm of the real, and from this locality engenders repetition within the symbolic order. The real itself is inherently characterized by repetitiveness, as it is “that which always returns to the same place” (Lacan in Miller 280). As well, the real encompasses “that which is lacking in the symbolic order, the ineliminable residue of all articulation, the foreclosed element, which may be approached but never grasped” (Miller 280). Lacan explicitly associates the real with trauma, stating that “the place of the real [. . .] stretches from the trauma to the phantasy – in so far as the phantasy is never anything more than the screen that conceals something quite primary, something determinant in the function of repetition” (“Tuché and Automaton” 60).

Lacan locates trauma and the real in the gap between the subject and ego, or the division between representation and consciousness of the individual. Representation refers to a constitutive junction between the self and the external world; or, as Ragland-Sullivan states, “image, sound, effect, and sensory response combine to form individuality as an identificatory composite – or representational entity – somewhere between [psychic] inside and outside” (22). Lacan constructs a



chiasmic relationship between consciousness and representation as constituted by experience:

The other day, I was awoken from a short nap by knocking at my door just before I actually awoke [. . .] And when I awake, it is in so far as *I reconstitute my entire representation around this knocking* – this perception – that I am aware of it [. . .] When the knocking occurs, not in my perception, but in my consciousness, it is because *my consciousness reconstitutes itself around this representation* – that I know that I am waking up, that I am knocked up. (“Tuché and Automaton” 56, Emphasis Added)

Lacan implements two spheres: one metaphoric of representation, and the other of consciousness. The first sphere, representative of representation encapsulates, and is constituted by, knocking. The second sphere encapsulates, and is constituted by, representation. The two spheres thereby each suggest “a sort of involuted reflection” (57) of the other. The gap between these two spheres (which also joins them) is the home of the real, and the site of trauma, and it is this traumatic, real gap that “constitutes awakening” (57).

From its privileged position as the psychically non-contextualized, “non-temporal locus” (56) residing on the “rupture” (56) in between the spheres of representation and consciousness, the traumatic site of the real motivates awakening in both directions (60). To demonstrate, Lacan alludes to a Freudian case study of a father whose son died from a fever. After a spell of standing vigil at his son’s wake, the father falls asleep. While asleep, a candle is knocked over and the deceased’s body catches on fire. While the travesty occurs in the next room, the father has a dream in which the son addresses him, saying, “Father, can’t you see [. . .] that I am burning?” (58). As representation passes through the site of the real into, and reconstituting, consciousness, the external images reflect the original trauma – that of the son’s death. In doing so, the representation is transformed into “an act of homage

to the missed reality [of the trauma] – the reality that can no longer produce itself except by repeating itself endlessly” (58). Within the realm of consciousness, the phantastic voice of the child, and the flames of the representation, “blind us to the fact that the fire bears [. . .] on the real” (59). In other words, “the terrible vision of the dead son taking the father by the arm designates a beyond that makes itself heard in the dream” (59).

In reality, and the sphere of representation, the trauma located in the real is instantiated in “the term[s] neurosis of destiny or neurosis of failure” (Lacan, “The Split Between the Eye and the Gaze” 69). Just as trauma is missed by consciousness in the Caruth/ Freudian models, yet instigates repetition due to its association with the death drive, the non-recognizable encounter with the real, or *tuché* (ibid 69), perpetuates “good or bad fortune” (69) throughout a biography. This is exemplified in the case of the father, who, after surviving the trauma of not being able to save the son “burning” with fever, once again misses the burning of his son by the over-turned candle. Employing this incident to exemplify the father’s encounter with the real, Lacan states, “where is the reality in this accident, if not that it repeats something actually more fatal by means of reality [? . . .]” (“*Tuché and Automaton*” 58).

Analogous to its centrality between representation and consciousness, the real occupies a nucleus in relation to the subject and ego (“The Split. . .” 68), and it is this nucleus which reverberates through the subject’s syntax in condensed language.

According to Lacan:

When the subject tells his story, something acts, in a latent way, that governs his syntax and makes it more and more condensed. Condensed in relation to what? In relation to what Freud, at the beginning of his description of psychical resistance, calls a nucleus. (Ibid 68)

Condensed syntax gestures towards the Lacanian concept of transference, or the syntactical slips and mistakes that centrifugally indicate the signifier *qua* real/ trauma/ non-being (Leader and Groves 138). This signifier, standing in for the real, is a phantasy object, or a *petit a* (“Tuché. . .” 62). Although the subject’s syntax will gesture towards the *petit a*, it motivates an influx of linguistic material to block its recognition as a signifier *qua* real within the unconscious (Leader and Groves 138). By gesturing towards itself, yet pushing away its recognition, trauma, as veiled by the *petit a*, is “a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality [. . .] that is not otherwise available” (Caruth 4); paradoxically, through the production of a repelling influx of linguistic material, the *petit a* signals itself. Further, as the *petit a*, as a signifier, is located in the symbolic order, and partially constitutes the subject, the compulsion to repeat, or *zwang* (“The Split. . .” 67), is written into the “very structure of the [symbolic] network” (ibid 69), and is reified as the *automaton* (ibid 67).

Recalling historic applicability of trauma theory vis-à-vis the Little Bighorn battle, and surrounding events, the construction of a national signifier *qua* real/ traumatic site, or *objet petit a*, occurs almost immediately after the destruction of the Seventh Cavalry. According to Brown, “when the white men in the East heard of [Custer’s] defeat they called it a massacre and went crazy with anger” (283). Emphasis on Custer’s defeat as a massacre is evidenced in the earliest newspaper accounts of the battle. Welch and Stekler provide a copied excerpt from the *Bismarck Tribune* dated July 6, 1876, eleven days after the battle. Headlines include: “Massacred” (191), “Gen. Custer and 261 Men the Victims” (191), and “Squaws Mutilate and Rob the Dead” (191). *Killing Custer* also includes extensive newspaper

excerpts with commentary on the disparity between actual events of the battle and journalistic depictions. I quote at length:

Of those brave men who followed Custer, all perished; no one lives to tell the story of the battle. Those deployed as skirmishers lay as they fell, shot down from every side, having been entirely surrounded in an open plain. The men in their companies fell, with their officers behind them in their [. . .] proper positions. General Custer, who was shot through the head and body, seemed to have been among the last to fall [. . .] The Indian dead were great in number [. . .] as they were constantly assaulting an inferior force. The camp had the appearance of being abandoned in haste [. . .] The Indians were certainly severely punished. (*Bismarck Tribune* in Welch and Stekler 189-191)

Of note in the above passage is emphasis on the maintenance of order, suggesting compensation of a dipartite disarticulation in the symbolic order: first, “the only known survivor, human or animal, of the Custer forces was a horse belonging to Captain Miles Keogh named Comanche” (Welch and Stekler 174). The lack of national witnesses, and, thus, immediate psychic contextualization of the traumatic events, and eye-witness accounts dependent on Indian, as opposed to American, testimony implies a subjective rupture within the symbolic order. Second, according to Welch and Stekler, “in stating that the officers and men of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry deployed themselves properly, the article intends to portray the soldiers as calm, brave and fighting to the death” (192), even though mass suicides suggest psychic incohesion, while “Captain Benteen, on viewing the battlefield two days later, states that the soldiers reacted in ‘clear panic’ and did not conduct themselves as courageous soldiers of the United States Army” (192-193) further suggesting lack of ordered behaviour. Thus, the article writes over the Symbolic incoherence implied in the psychic disarticulation of the American soldiers at the traumatic site, thereby establishing a phantasy signifier over the site of the Real, or an *objet petit a*.

Implications that the Bismarck Tribune article is a phantasy signifier/ *objet a*, are furthered in the profusion of signification regarding the Battle of Little Bighorn, especially that which attributes structured and courageous behaviour to the Seventh Cavalry in a manner similar to journalistic depictions. Pictorial representations especially perpetuate ideals of courage and order, such as *The Death Struggle of General Custer* printed in New York Graphic Newspaper in July 1876. Even though no evidence suggests that Custer was one of the last soldiers standing (Welch and Stekler 191), he is illustrated in the centre of the painting and accentuated in white light, holding a sabre and firing a pistol (ibid 16). Two American soldiers are in his immediate vicinity, firing at the Indians (16). Although the Indians are in close proximity, circling Custer and his remaining troops, and on the verge of overwhelming the soldiers, the expressions on the Americans' faces remains concentrated and collected (16), recalling the phantasy that the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was "calm, brave and [fought] to the death" at Little Bighorn. Similar imagery is put forth in Cassily Adams's *Custer's Last Fight*, which also features Custer in the centre of the battle, wearing white, swinging a sabre and holding a pistol (Welch and Stekler 281). Again, a handful of 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry soldiers, with determined countenance, are in Custer's immediate vicinity, firing at the Indians closing in (281), thereby reflecting the *objet petit a* by perpetuating the phantasy standing in for the site of trauma. As well, just as the *petit a* instigates an influx of material to block recognition of trauma, Adams's painting was mass produced as an "Anheuser-Busch poster [. . .] hung over the bars in saloons all across the country" (Welch and Stekler 281), instantiating a profusion of signification that paradoxically gestures toward the *objet petit a*, or site of trauma, while perpetuating phantastic imagery.

Signification of The Battle of Little Bighorn suggestive of the *objet a* is also evidenced by the 1904 poster for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which illustrates similar characteristics of *Custer's Last Fight* and *The Death Struggle of General Custer* (282). The Wild West Show itself featured a re-enactment of "Custer's Last Stand" (282) that depicted Custer favourably, as suggested when Custer's widow – who considered the show "a great and true representation of history" (Penn 201) -- sent Buffalo Bill Cody a correspondence stating that she, appreciated him keeping her husband's memory "green" (Welch and Stekler) and that the show had "done so much to make him an idol among children and young people" (ibid 283). Sitting Bull, present at the Battle of Little Bighorn, was also included in the performances at the Wild West Show. While his participation "had nothing to do with acting" (Welch and Stekler 263), and mostly included sitting "on the stage or on the horse, dressed in Indian finery, [ . . . watching] the show going on around him" (ibid 263), he was occasionally invited to speak (263). According to Welch and Stekler, Sitting Bull's speeches were concerned with "peace, of his people's lives, [and] of his desire to get along with America. But what came out of the 'translator's' mouth was a blood-curdling account of savagery at Little Bighorn" (263). The "translation" of Sitting Bull's discourse perpetuates the *objet petit a* by recalling the savage descriptions of Native Americans from the Bismarck Tribune article as "'red devils' and 'screeching fiends, dealing death and destruction'" (*Bismarck Tribune* in Welch and Stekler 192). The fact that the Wild West show "travelled all through American and Europe" (ibid 281), and contributed to making Custer's name a "household word" (281), further gestures toward the influx of signification created by the *petit a*, and instantiated as the Custer myth.

In short, the profusion of signification instigated by the phantasy Custer myth/*objet petit a*, that paradoxically reflects an historic “wound that cries out,” centrifugally reverberates into contemporary times. According to Welch and Stekler, “the Battle of the Little Bighorn may be the most depicted event in [American] history” (22). Hundreds of books, including Custer biographies, have been written on the topic, “at least forty films, from *They Died with Their Boots On* to *Little Big Man*, have played in theatres around the world” (22), and “thousands of illustrations” concerning the Battle of Little Bighorn have been manufactured (22). Just as the traumatic site becomes a defining moment in subjective, as well as historical, biographies, constant reference to Custer’s Last Stand clearly indicates a centrality to the American story. How the signifier central to the American discourse becomes deconstructed in Native American fiction, and depicted as the *petit a*, is apparent through analysis of Sherman Alexie’s “Ghost Dance,” which illustrates the psychic effect of historic trauma on masculine subjects. Specifically, the national discourse marked by traumatic repetition, and instigated by the *petit a* of the Battle of Little Bighorn is instantiated in “Ghost Dance” through illustrations of the subjective automaton. Thus, the discursive compulsion to repeat trauma, as depicted in detail above, motivates the character action of masculine identities in Alexie’s “Ghost Dance” through psychic incorporation of a paternal site composed, in part, by the traumatic *petit a*.

*Traumatic Repetition in Alexie’s “Ghost Dance.”*

The automaton, and “the unavoidable and overwhelming imposition of historical events on the psyche,” manifested through historical repetition are both

evidenced in Alexie's "Ghost Dance." Psychic undertones in "Ghost Dance" are immediately foregrounded by the two sets of twins: the "two cops, one big and the other little" (341); and the "two Indian men" (343), a "young man with braids and [. . . an] older man with a crew cut" (343), who are "lying [. . .] for hours through the limitless dark" (343) in the trunk of the police car (343). Like the Blackfoot, the Spokane also celebrate a Sundance (Ross 279), so the model of the medicine wheel as metaphoric for the psyche is applicable to Alexie's fiction. With implications of the medicine wheel brought into relief, the quaternity composed of the two sets of twins is metaphoric for a unified psyche.

Recalling Lacanian / Bhabhian methodologies (Previous Chapter 16-17), the nation provides a paternal enunciative site incorporated by its subjects and "gendered in a range of strategic ways." The paternal site is a nexus of national signifiers, of "cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism," and, in a Lacanian sense, once the enunciative site is internalised its composite signifiers eventually extend beyond the subject's horizon of knowledge (Previous Chapter 16). Underscoring its Symbolic constitution, the paternal site, as a facilitator of "masculinity," creates a "prosthetic reality" once subjectively cathected and psychically incorporated (ibid 17). However, although this prosthetic reality is written by the nation as natural and normative, it engenders a neurotic performative aspect. According to Bhabha, "my analytic sense that masculinity normalizes and naturalizes difference turns into a kind of neurotic 'acting out' of its power and powerlessness" ("Are You a Man [. . .]"58). Bhabha's concepts of national masculinity are analogous to Butlerian methodologies. According to Butler, "compulsory heterosexuality sets itself up as the original, the true, the authentic" ("Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 20), and anything extraneous to it implies identificatory incompleteness, or "a kind of miming" (20) of the



authentic. Masculinity then, especially heterosexual masculinity, is “powerful” through its self-positioning as the central typology against which to measure difference. Simultaneously, it is “powerless” since attempts to question masculinity reveal it as “the ‘taking up’ of an enunciative position, the making up of a psychic complex [. . .] the apparatus of a cultural difference” (Bhabha 58), and, in short, its constructed prostheticism.

In order to prohibit analysis of masculinity and staunch Symbolic fading, or the slippage of signification, masculine typologies are marked by a “blocked reflexivity” (Middleton in Bhabha 58), often engendered as a “compulsive interrogation” (Bhabha 58). This interrogation may take the form of re-affirmed father-love (59); or, love for the incorporated paternal icon prototypical of masculinity. Again, this paternal icon is provided by the nation. In “Ghost Dance” the quaternity composed of the two cops and two Indians is a metonymic abstract for the masculine psyche defined by the psychic incorporation of the paternal enunciative site. The fact that the big cop drives with one hand “in his crotch” (342) because he “[feels] safer that way” (342) reflects the powerlessness of masculinity because he constantly needs to reaffirm his prosthetic typology; and this reaffirmation is paralleled in the performative implications of the “speech he [is] always rehearsing” (343) pertaining to the death of Custer: “If it wasn’t for these damn Indians [. . .] Custer would’ve been president of these United States [. . .] We’d be living in a better country right now, let me tell you what” (343). In this speech the big cop affirms admiration for Custer, who, by virtue of his military leadership, and his association with presidency, connotes a national paternal icon. Thus, the big cop’s affirmation of the national paternal is a self-affirmation of his own masculinity against historical trauma, or the site of the Real.

The Lacanian automaton is reified in the quaternity's return to Little Bighorn (343), while a Lacanian word play implies that the compulsion to repeat is inscribed in the abstract psyche. While *zwang* denotes the compulsion to repeat ("The Split [. . .] 67), it also means "to haul [or] to draw" (67); and as the big cop and little cop drive toward the "Custer Memorial Cemetery" (342) they literally haul the "Indian" icons associated with trauma in the trunk of the car (343), thereby suggesting that the automaton written into the national discourse is psychically internalised and manifested by its subjects. The repetition of historic trauma is furthered when the "big cop [. . .] pull[s] his revolver and [shoots] the older Indian in the face" (344). Foregrounding the sacred hoop as metaphoric of the psyche, the murder of the Indian by the big cop gestures toward self-destruction, with one icon of the psyche destroying another icon – just as the suicide of the soldiers at Little Bighorn reflects the destruction of the "Indian" icon by the super-ego.

The Lacanian automaton, or the compulsion to repeat trauma as inscribed in the symbolic network, and represented by the actions of the quaternity, is paralleled in "Ghost Dance," by the Freudian automaton when the undead Seventh Cavalry "[rise] from their graves" (345) and destroy the two cops and young Indian (345). Just as the Freudian automaton engenders "doubts as to whether an apparently animate being is really alive" (Jentsch in Freud 226) the Seventh Cavalry is described as "dead for over a century and now alive and dead at the same time" (345). Again, the automaton represents "in displaced form" the repetitive death instinct which, like trauma, expresses non-being. Cephalic imagery regarding the Seventh Cavalry emphasizes its psychic tenor, as the small cop "blast[s] the skull off one soldier" (345), and fires a bullet through the "empty eye socket of a sergeant" (345), while the soldiers are

described as “pick[ing] at their own brains through arrow holes punched in their skulls” (345).

The Seventh Cavalry automatons are paralleled by the description of the “pretty little squaw-bitch” (342) fed the “Lysol sandwiches” (342): “[a Lysol sandwich] will kill you, but slow. Make you a retard first, make you run around in a diaper for about a year, and then it will kill you” (342). Imagery pertaining to the young woman and the Seventh Cavalry both suggest uncertainty as to whether an animate being is “really alive,” and instance traumatic repetition as the “apparent struggle to die.” The correlation between the automatons and the young woman is significant because it expresses the condition of the feminine principle in Alexie’s fiction. Specifically, the feminine principle is precluded from the national symbolic order, and located in the site of trauma, or non-being. Thus, the feminine is relegated to signification *qua* non-being/ trauma, or the *objet petit a*. Analogous to the site of non-being engendered in the psyche by trauma, there is a psychic gap where the feminine principle should be located on the medicine wheel.

The substitution for the feminine principle by the *objet petit a* is suggested when the two cops drive “the patrol car east along Interstate 90, heading for the Custer Memorial Battlefield on the banks of the Little Bighorn River” (342). Recalling that the feminine is located in the east on the medicine wheel (Previous Chapter 21), the fact that the quaternity travels east to the Little Bighorn implies a substitution of the feminine by the site of trauma. The relegation of the feminine principle to the real is corroborated by the quaternity’s, or psyche’s, preclusion of a feminine icon (341-345), and the incompleteness of a masculine identity composed of both masculine and feminine principles is manifested as concrete metaphor when the soldier “with a half-decayed face framing one blue eye, feed[s] the big cop’s cock and

balls to a horse” (345). The half decayed face framing “one blue eye” is doubly significant because it seems to recall the colour related elements of the medicine wheel manifested in Welch’s *The Death of Jim Loney*, with blue associated with impotence, and incomplete, or frozen masculinity (Previous Chapter 28). The correlation between blue and incomplete masculinity is furthered in the “half-paralyzed” (344) Indian described as a “cockroach in blue jeans” (344).

The motif of division is furthered by the small cop’s heart torn “into halves” (345), and the big cop’s psychic schism: after the big cop “push[es] his right index finger into the facial entrance wound” (344) he feels “himself split in two and become twins, one brother a killer and the other an eye witness to murder” (344-345). The deceased old Indian is metaphoric for the location of the *objet petit a*, or the signifier for non-being located on the medicine wheel. As the Lacanian traumatic site, located in the nucleus, instigates awakening in both representation and consciousness, the big cop’s non-recognizable encounter with the real constitutes the experience of awakening in both directions, facilitating a feeling of being “split in two.” Further, as the feminine principle constitutes psychic cohesion, the replacement of the feminine by a signifier *qua* non-being engenders identificatory division.

Placement of the feminine in the site of trauma by the national discourse is also suggested in Edgar Smith’s dream. Historical trauma is alluded to explicitly in the setting: “inside the dream it [is] June 1876 all over again, and Custer [is] the last survivor of his own foolish ambitions [on] a grassy hill overlooking the Little Bighorn River [. . .]” (346), and the feminine principle within the traumatic site is represented by the “Cheyenne woman, a warrior whose name has never been spoken aloud since that day” (345). Edgar’s incorporation of the paternal enunciative site, which includes the *objet petit a* of trauma is suggested in the identificatory transference when “Custer

is no longer Custer [. . . but] Edgar Smith lying dead in the greasy grass of his dream” (346).

Lacanian theory further brings into relief the feminine principle as located in the Real. Just as the site of trauma resides in the nucleus between representation and consciousness, Edgar Smith locates a feminine actor, a “seven-year-old-Indian girl” (351), inside “the white hot centre of [a] fever” (351) engendered by images of historic traumatic repetition. The vision concerning the seven-year-old Indian girl is also significant in that, metaphorically, it depicts Edgar Smith’s mastery over historical trauma through contact with the feminine principle. Smith’s ability to disrupt the pattern of historical repetition occurs after he decides to protect the Indian girl, as depicted in his commands to the soldiers to “stop” (352), and “leave her alone” (352), and the narrative intertwines Smith’s concern for the feminine character with manipulation of the traumatic icons: “he knew the girl would die unless he stopped the soldiers, and then he knew, without knowing why he knew, how to stop them” (352).

Like “Ghost Dance,” *Reservation Blues* depicts an historical traumatic neurosis of failure, and its inscription within subjects and historical narratives. However, whereas Alexie’s short fiction emphasizes the tuché inherent to the majority national Symbolic order, and the return to the traumatic place of the real by European-Americans, *Reservation Blues* focuses on biographies of Native American subjects, and the “unavoidable and overwhelming imposition of historical events on the psych[es]” instantiated as traumatic displacement of the traditional aboriginal patriarch.

Another parallel between “Ghost Dance” and *Reservation Blues* is the acquisition of a viable feminine icon to disrupt neurotic repetition. In “The

Exaggeration of Despair in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*" Gloria Bird states that in Alexie's text "there is no evidence of Spokane culture or traditions, or anything uniquely Spokane" (49), while "pan-Indian" (51) elements that are included, such as "sage-smudging, stickgame, [and] sweetgrass" (51) are "intermittently sprinkled throughout the novel like bait" (51). Thus, obviously, a more culture specific reading of Alexie's text, as posited in the preceding chapter, may not be as viable. However, structurally, and thematically, *Reservation Blues* parallels the Okanagan myth, "Coyote Tricks Owl." Although the Okanagan is a distinct cultural form from the Spokane, due to their close proximity of each other geographically (Walker ix), they are part of the same culture area (1), and thereby share similar patterns, such as "relatively uniform mythology, art styles, and religious beliefs and practices focused on the vision quest [. . .]" (3). Therefore, analysis of an Okanagan myth may prove beneficial in discussion of Alexie's works.

*Depictions of the Feminine Principle in "Coyote Tricks Owl."*

In *Reservation Blues*, the search for the feminine principle and its relation to the psychic binding of trauma is structurally related to themes of transformation inherent to the Okanagan myth, "Coyote Tricks Owl." Specifically, Coyote and Owl represent the dual capacity of the feminine principle, with Coyote analogous to the feminine agency of social and biological rejuvenation, and Owl an embodiment of death and social expulsion. Although textual analysis of Alexie's *Indian Killer* is beyond the scope of this essay, both of Alexie's novels emphasize a particular aspect of the dualism of the feminine principle – *Indian Killer*, with its predominant owl imagery, suggests a feminine principle which can only be actualized outside of the

national Symbolic order through death and social expulsion. In juxtaposition, *Reservation Blues*, with its allusion to Coyote imagery, emphasizes an imbueement of the feminine agency for transformative, healing aspects into the social discourse. Brief discussion of Coyote and Owl imagery, and summary and analysis of “Coyote Tricks Owl,” facilitates insight into the thematic structuring of *Reservation Blues*.

Much criticism is already written regarding Coyote as a literary trope and trickster figure. According to William Bright, Native American tricksters are culture heroes whose “accomplishments may include the slaying of monsters, the theft of natural resources for the benefit of [humanity], the teaching of skills, and the ordaining of laws” (35). Yet despite these accomplishments, Coyote is not an ideal hero figure:

If he slays monsters it is through guile rather than bravery. He does not create the world of the First People, but rather “fixes it up” so that it becomes the world of humanity. Thus Rickets calls him the “trickster-fixer” [while] Ramsey rejects the term “culture-hero” and applies the Levi-Straussian concept of bricoleur, “a sort of mythic handy-man who ‘cobbles’ reality in the form of *bricolage* out of the available material.” (35)

Foregrounding the concept of *bricolage*, Coyote is a “healer and comic liberator in narratives” (Vizenor in Horne 128), and s/he “embod[ies] imagination and enabl[es] readers and listeners to imagine alternative paradigms, a liberated world” (Horne 130). Through his/ her actions, and psychic influence on others, Coyote is capable of altering reality, and by adding “disorder to order [. . . s/ he] render[s] possible, within the fixed bounds of what is permitted, an experience of what is not permitted” (130).

Coyote embodies the inherent dualities of humanity, and may display negative traits such as lechery (Bright 65), as exemplified in his scheme to sleep with his son’s wife in Robinson’s “Coyote Plays a Dirty Trick” (86) or gluttony, as depicted in Bright’s “Coyote Cooks His Daughter.” However, Coyote’s gross transgressions

contain purpose in that his/ her “challenge of cultural customs remind[s] listeners and readers to heed them” (Horne 130), while at other times “trickster’s transgressions signify [. . .] the need to question boundaries and limits, and to adapt customs and conventions to the changing times” (131).

In “Oratory” Lee Maracle suggests a high social value of human interaction in First Nations thought, stating, “a child learns that if she doesn’t obey the laws of the people, she will suffer great nothingness in her interaction with women and men” (236). This “great nothingness” is dually instantiated in Owl, who, in juxtaposition to Coyote – an embodiment of social and biological regeneration and transformation – represents death and social expulsion. Associations between Owl and death are suggested by Levi-Strauss’s observed correlation between owls and periodic phenomena in First Nations thought, or “the alternation between day and night on one hand, and the measured duration of human life on the other” (88). The link between Owl and biological flux is underscored in that for the Inland Salish screech owls portend “a coming death” (88); and this correlation is also suggested in the description of the Owl in Robinson’s “Coyote Tricks Owl” as a “big woman or big man” (66) who “kills people” (66).

Owl in Plateau stories is also an abductor of children (Levi-Strauss 88), evidenced in the Thompson Indian narrative, “Owl and Ntsaa.z” in which an owl steals a boy who “always cries” (Boas 26); the Sahaptin narrative, “The Owl,” in which a Screech Owl, “kills everybody that comes along, and [. . .] is particularly on the lookout for children” (176); and in the Nez Percé story, “The Owl-Monster,” similar in plot to the Sahaptin narrative. Owl narratives often communicate themes of disavowed parental authority. However, whereas the children in “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” and “Scarface” seek the mythic birds of their own accord, the parents in



the Plateau narratives summon Owl to dispatch insolent children (“Owl and Ntsaa.z” 27); or the children’s abduction is preceded by parental abandonment predicated on children’s disavowal of communal law (“The Owl” 176, “The Owl-Monster” 192-193). Thus, although not a totalizing interpretation, Owl suggests punishment for social discord; and this association between Owl and social expulsion is indicated in the narratives, “The Owl,” and “The Owl Monster.”

In brief, both narratives depict a family of husband and wife, brother and sister. “One day the woman [comes] home quite late [. . . and] ask[s] the children to get her some water” (“The Owl” 176, “The Owl Monster” 192). The children disobey her request, and in anger the mother uses her husband’s eagle feathers to grow wings, or become a raven, and fly away (“Owl” 176, “Monster” 192). When the husband returns home he discovers his missing feathers, and learns of his children’s impudence as the cause of the mother’s absence. In “The Owl” the husband, who is described as “a Bow” (176) leaves the children (176), and in the second narrative he turns into a “flint-lock gun” (193).

Eventually, the children decide to locate their grandfather (176, 193), and during this quest encounter “Screech-Owl” (“The Owl” 176), or the “Owl-Monster” (193). The children attempt to hide by turning themselves into worms (176) or grubs (192), but the Owl locates them and places the children into a “basket” (176) or “pack-bag” (193). In order to facilitate escape, the children make “themselves very heavy” (176), or turn into “real persons” (193), then shout, “a widow’s children are on fire” (176). The Owl, believing this statement to be a reference to her own children, hangs the basket in a tree to hurry home, and the children take the opportunity to break free (176, 193).

The children then locate their grandfather, who lives on the far side of a river (177, 193) and who allows them across by extending a giant foot (177), or leg (193) over the water. As soon as Owl discovers that her own children are safe she tracks the brother and sister down to the river (193) and asks the grandfather to let her across as well (177, 193). The grandfather agrees, but secretly enlists animal helpers to aid in tricking Owl (*ibid*). The animals begin to ferry the Owl across the river in a canoe the grandfather manufactures (*ibid*), but halfway across it is sunk by a Crawfish, and the Owl drowns (*ibid*).

According to Neumann, “the archetypal feminine is not only a giver and protector of life but she also takes back; she is life and death at once. The feminine contains opposites [ . . . ]” (Neumann in Antell 219). In both narratives feminine dualism is implied by the transference of the children from their original domestic space to Owl’s possession. Through virtue of her maternity, and provision of the children’s sustenance by “digging roots” (176, 192), the maternal figure is associated with procreation and nurturing; whereas through her desire to kill “everybody that comes along,” particularly “children” the Owl is associated with death. The fact that the children’s encounter with Owl is motivated by maternal abandonment, and the fact that the Owl abandons the children to rescue her own, suggests that the Owl and mother figure are dual aspects of the maternal icon. This duality of the feminine as “life and death at once” is also evidenced in “Coyote Tricks Owl.”

Although part of a larger cycle of myths, the narrative, “Coyote Tricks Owl” begins when Coyote hears about Owl’s destructive tendencies and “looks for [her]” (66) to prevent her from killing more people. However, Coyote realizes that Owl is “too strong” (67) for him, so he changes himself into an “Owl Woman” (67). When Coyote encounters the real Owl Woman and asks, “where are you going?” (68) Owl

Woman replies, “I’m going along to look for some people. / I kill ‘em and I eat ‘em. / I eat people” (68). In order “to fool [Owl]” (68) Coyote tells her the lie, “I’m the same. / I’m looking for some people. / I eat people too. / So we both the same. / We can go together” (68).

After Coyote and Owl Woman travel for a while Coyote tells her, “We stop here. / Then you build a fire [. . .] Then I’m going to look around here [. . .] If I find something to eat, / maybe I’ll let you know” (68). While Owl Woman builds a fire Coyote moves out of sight and “us[es] his power” (69) to create “two girls and two boys, / just young people” (69). Coyote and the young individuals return back to Owl Woman’s camp, and while Coyote sings a song, and “the whole bunch of ‘em [. . .] They dance around the fire” (70).

After Coyote sings four songs, and Owl Woman sings two songs (70), Coyote instructs the young people to retrieve a “fork[ed] stick” (70). While the group continues to dance around the fire, Owl Woman states, “I was so happy, and I danced that way and that way” (71). Coyote then pushes Owl Woman “about halfway” (71) into the fire, places the forked stick “at the back of [her] head towards the fire / and he leave her there” (71), and kills Owl Woman by burning her face (71). The young people, because they are “not real” (72) soon disappear: “so after that these other people, / they disappeared. / They disappeared on the air. / That’s not a real people. / Just himself, you know” (72). The next morning Coyote collects Owl Woman’s bones, “then he get the water, / and he put water and he wrap ‘em on something” (72), and places the bones in the forked limbs of a tree (72). Coyote tells Owl Woman she will thenceforth remain an ordinary owl, and that she will be relegated to scaring children (73): “now you’re there. / You not going to kill people no more. / When the

human people come [. . .] You going to be Owl only. / At night you can be sitting on the limb like that” (72).

Analogous to the mother/ Owl association in “The Owl” and “The Owl-Monster” the relationship between Coyote and Owl in Robinson’s narrative also gestures toward Neumann’s idea that the feminine principle contains the opposites of life and death. While Coyote represents regeneration, as suggested in his “power” (72) to manufacture the four youths (69), Owl Woman explicitly embodies destruction as evidenced in her propensity to “kill [. . .] and eat” (66) people. The feminine inclusion of opposites is further underscored in the Okanagan narrative through the trope of twinning, which, although not stated explicitly, is implied by Coyote’s transformation into an Owl Woman (68); as well as his statements to Owl which emphasize similarities, “I eat people [. . .] I do the same” (68) and “I eat people too. / So we both the same”(68). The twinship of Coyote and Owl is corroborated by Levi-Straussian thought:

In the whole of Europe, popular ideas pertaining to twins embroider on the theme of their complete identification: they are physically indistinguishable from each other except through recourse to their clothing or to cosmetic means [. . .] Amerindian thought, on the other hand, rejects this notions of twins between whom there would be a perfect likeness. [. . .] They might have been identical in the past, or they might have been so during [. . .] the process of undergoing opposite transformations. In both hypotheses, their likeness is a revocable or temporary state; it cannot last. (229-230)

As well, Native American philosophy “gives to symmetry a negative, even evil value” (230), and in order to preclude symmetry an “unstable dualism” (231) will often “yield another unstable dualism” (231). This inherent instability is often reified in twin myths with one of the twins acting as a trickster figure (231). “Coyote Tricks Owl” reflects Levi-Strauss’s definition of twinning through the inclusion of a trickster, and an unstable power balance finalized by Coyote overcoming Owl.

Establishing the relationship between Owl and Coyote as one of twinness is significant because it brings into relief a “duality [that] resorb[s] itself into the image of the unity through which it is represented” (Levi-Strauss 226). Specifically, the dualities embodied by Coyote and Owl represent a unified feminine principle.

*Trauma and Jungian Quest Theory in Reservation Blues.*

Tropes inherent to the “Coyote Tricks Owl” narrative are paralleled by the structuring of *Reservation Blues*, with imagery pertaining to Coyote and her quaternity of two men and two women reflected in the predominant quest components of Alexie’s text. Specifically, the two journeys east to Montana and Manhattan, and west to Seattle and Spokane recall medicine wheel structuring, with west indicative of masculinity and east representative of femininity. The return home to the Spokane Reservation to confront the paternal metaphor is central to the journey motif, and “rounds out” the imagery implied by Coyote and her quaternity, also indicative of the medicine wheel. As well, in a manner similar to “Coyote Tricks Owl,” an unstable duality engenders another unstable duality when masculine elements represented by Thomas, Junior, and Victor are compounded with feminine subjects, Chess and Checkers, to form the “unstable” union of Coyote Springs, only to disarticulate into dipartite fission of Chess, Checkers and Thomas, and Victor and the three dogs. Dualistic conflation and schism is furthered in the partnership of Big Mom and Father Arnold, and the disjuncture between Sheridan and Wright -- dualities both of which Coyote Springs serves as a catalyst for creation or disbandment.

As stated, the band members of Coyote Springs also imply components of the medicine wheel. Similar to *The Death of Jim Loney* in which Kate, Rhea, Ike, and

Loney represent the sacred hoop, and are metaphoric for Loney's identity, the five characters that comprise Coyote Springs also reflect a quaternity and centre, and are thereby metaphoric for an abstract psyche. Indeed, multiple depictions of the band often refer to Coyote Springs as a single unit; and statements such as: "Coyote Springs's stomach growled" (194); "Coyote Springs walked on stage with confidence" (79); and "Coyote Springs [. . .] fell in love with the power, and courted it" (80) emphasize the band members as components of a singular entity. Thus, the creation and disbandment of Coyote Springs suggests a psychic allegory: while the five central characters confront personal trauma, the narrative relating to Coyote Springs symbolically represents the quest of the psyche to locate a viable feminine principle in order to achieve psychic cohesion curtailed by national typologies. Typological preclusion of the feminine principle is predicated on incorporation of a paternal metaphor characterized by a traumatic neurosis of failure. Psychic extrication from the paternal metaphor, and its inherent neurosis of failure, is grounded in location of a viable feminine principle; and in *Reservation Blues* Alexie conflates the quest for the feminine principle with the Jungian process of individuation. Specifically, the feminine principle is excluded from the national patriarchal discourse, and national typologies, and relegated to the repressed as a shadow. Thus, the quest for the feminine principle to achieve psychic cohesion as measured on the medicine wheel is conjoined with Jungian individuation, also a process of psychic unification. Study of *Reservation Blues* thereby necessitates brief discussion of Jungian paradigms conjunctive with Freudian/ Lacanian methodologies and Native American thought. As well, in accordance with Native American ideas, a "healing" and transformative aspect is inherent to a feminine principle inflected by trickster imagery. Therefore, Coyote Springs's journey is an allegorical quest for the

feminine principle; or a quest for individuation to achieve extrication from the paternal metaphor whose psychic incorporation becomes a corollary to instantiated totalizing type. Finally, Coyote Springs's quest for the feminine is paralleled by a national attempt to reconcile historic moral deficiencies. However, although the discourse attempts to psychically bind repression, due to its preclusion of a viable feminine element it is unable to "heal" repressed sites. Thus, phantasy signifiers are constructed around sites of repression, or icons associated with trauma.

Discussion of *Reservation Blues* is structured below in relation to the journey motif depicted in Alexie's text, followed by analysis of psychic effects of the quest for Jungian individuation on the five members of Coyote Springs. Interpretation begins with a brief summary of Jungian terminology and paradigms, followed by discussion of prominent symbolism – specifically, water and horse imagery. As metaphoric for the unconscious, water imagery figures prominently in Alexie's text, and, in relation to the protagonists, helps explain character action. Regarding horse imagery, as stated above, Alexie employs tropes related to the Indian Wars and historic American military subjugation of the Spokane as metaphoric for traumatic displacement of a paternal site and aboriginal Symbolic order that could facilitate psychic completion as measured on the medicine wheel. Horse imagery in *Reservation Blues* alludes to the historic event of Colonel Wright's slaughter of a large number of Spokane and Coeur D'Alene groups. Thus, Wright's slaughter of the Spokane/ Palouse horses is an appropriate metaphor for traumatic displacement of a traditional aboriginal symbolic order.

Acquisition of the feminine principle is allegorically suggested by Coyote Springs's first journey east to the Flathead Reservation – because, again, east

represents the feminine aspects on the medicine wheel -- as well as by inclusion of Chess and Checkers Warm Water into the band. Psychic association with repressed elements, such as the feminine principle, disturbs totalizing effects of masculine typologies engendered through identification with the paternal enunciative site. For this reason, Thomas's correspondence with the feminine principle, represented by his relationship with Chess Warm Water, precedes his disruption of typological repetition suggested during Samuel Builds-The-Fire's wake. Thomas's father, Samuel Builds-The-Fire is metonymic for the national paternal enunciative site characterized by the inability to provide psychic cohesion for characters whose typology is engendered through identification with the patriarch; and for this reason the chapter depicting his wake, "Father and Farther," also reflects relationships between the remaining protagonists and their respective patriarchs. While Thomas and Chess are capable of disrupting typological repetition, in juxtaposition, Victor's, Junior's, and Checkers's identities remain totalised through entrenched identification with the paternal site.

After travelling west to Seattle, Coyote Springs's journey to Manhattan reflects larger ideological implications, specifically, the national desire to psychically bind repressed moral deficiencies. Wright and Sheridan, instantiations of the Indian Wars, reflect nationally discursive mechanisms to bind repressed sites represented by Coyote Springs and furthered through spatial depictions, such as the Spokane Reservation, and Cavalry Records recording studio. However, whereas Wright is able to bind sites of repression, Sheridan continues to construct phantasy signifiers to stand in for repressed sites and icons. Paralleling national discursive mechanisms, aspects of Coyote Springs are also incapable of binding personal repressed sites related with trauma; specifically, just as Sheridan constructs phantasy signifiers to stand in for repression, Victor foregoes individuation, as suggested through his continued



utilization of Johnson's guitar -- itself symbolic of phantasy signification substituting the shadow and repressed feminine principle.

Finally, analysis of the five central characters in *Coyote Springs* follows discussion of the allegorical quest motif, the paternal site, and national attempts to bind repressed moral deficiency. Focus on character analysis involves study of psychic effects of incorporation of the paternal site on capacities for individuation. Specifically, while Thomas, Chess, and Checkers are able to achieve individuation and acquisition with the feminine principle, Victor and Junior remain totalised by typology.

Before analysing *Coyote Springs*'s journey as allegorical for the quest for a viable feminine aspect, a brief definition of Jungian individuation is necessary. Although peripheral to the predominantly Freudian/ Lacanian apparatus employed in this essay, Alexie correlates Freudian and Jungian theories, as implied in the statement, "Junior had learned from Freud and Jung that dreams decided everything. Freud and Jung must have been reservation Indians because dreams decided everything for Indians, too" (18). Further, the Jungian self represented by the persona is analogous with typological construction, while the process of individuation parallels Native American paradigms inherent in the medicine wheel. For Jung, the process of individuation "is essentially a spiritual journey" (Storr 19) whose goal is facilitation of personality through synthesis of the dipartite psyche of consciousness and unconsciousness, thereby taking into account "those parts of the whole [self] which have been neglected" (21). The notion of self-unity through incorporation of neglected psychic aspects parallels the Native American medicine wheel, which also emphasizes a "whole" self by developing latent psychic components (Previous chapter 8). Indeed, the mandala, a Jungian archetype, represents "an integrating

factor” (Storr 20), symbolizes “unity and totality” (20) of the self; and, similar to the medicine wheel, “express[es] itself in quaternity symbols and circular structures”

(20). According to Jung:

[. . .] if we can live in a way that conscious and unconscious demands are taken into account as far as possible, then the centre of gravity of the total personality shifts its position. It is then no longer in the ego, which is merely the centre of consciousness, but in the hypothetical point between conscious and unconscious. The new centre might be called the self. (19)

The new centre of the self reflects, “the God within; and the individual, in seeking self-realization and unity, becomes the means through which ‘God seeks his goal’”

(Storr 21). Thus, the “new centre” of the self entails a “realiz[ation] [of] the meaning of life” (21) as well as the “fulfill[ment] of God’s will” (21).

In the societal context, consciousness is housed in the persona, which, similar to nationally constructed prosthetic typologies, is also an “artificial personality” (*The Essential Jung* 94). According to Jung:

The persona is a complicated system of relations between individual consciousness and society, fittingly enough a kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make an impression upon others, and on the other to conceal the true nature of the individual. (94)

In other words, the persona is an “arbitrary segment of [the] collective psyche” (*The Basic Writings* 138), or national apparatus of signification that “feigns individuality, and tries to make others and oneself believe that one is individual” (ibid 138), when in essence the persona is a function of the national collective consciousness (ibid 138).

The unconscious aspect of the psyche, located “behind” the persona, is two-tiered into the personal and collective. The personal unconscious contains “repressed contents [and] all psychic material that lives below the threshold of consciousness” (*The Basic Writings* 108). The contents of this psychic stratum “are of a personal

nature in so far as they have the character [. . .] of acquisitions derived” during the course of a biography. The process of individuation necessitates “bring[ing] into consciousness the contents of the personal unconscious [to widen] the scope of [one’s] personality” (ibid 117). In juxtaposition, the collective unconscious “lies at a deeper level and is further removed from consciousness than the personal unconscious” (*The Basic Writings* 373). It is not particular, or individual, but an “ancestral heritage [. . .] common to all men, and perhaps even to all animals” (*The Essential Writings* 67). Jung describes the collective unconscious as a spiritual amalgamation between the self and others, extraneous to binary categorizations of the collective psyche:

[The collective unconscious is] a boundless expanse of unprecedented uncertainty, with apparently no inside and no outside, no above and no below [. . .] no good and no bad. It is the world of water, where all life floats in suspension; where [. . .] the soul of everything living begins; where I am indivisibly this *and* that where I experience the other in myself and the other-than-myself experiences me [. . . .] There, I am utterly one with the world, so much a part of it that I forget all too easily who I really am. (305)

Correspondence with the collective unconscious occurs during the process of individuation, when, through unification of repressed aspects with the ego, one encounters the shadow, or “narrow doorway” (*BW* 305) between the self and collective unconscious. The shadow is an archetype, or aspect of the collective unconscious that reifies itself in “the individual psyche as [an] organiz[er]” (Storr 25).

#### Archetypes

manifest themselves [. . .] through their ability to organize images and ideas, and this is always an unconscious process which cannot be detected until afterwards. By assimilating material whose provenance in the phenomenal world is not to be contested, they become visible and psychic. (Jung in Storr 25-26)

As an instantiation of the personal unconscious, the shadow embodies the “repressed tendencies” (*EJ* 90) of the psyche, and represents an inverted self, or “‘negative’ side of the personality” (*ibid* 87), as well as “the sum of all those unpleasant qualities we like to hide” (87) which may be “inferior, primitive, unadapted and awkward; but not wholly bad” (93).

The shadow conjoins the personal and collective unconscious, because “the contents of the personal unconscious (i.e., the shadow) are indistinguishably merged with the archetypal contents of the collective unconscious” (*EJ* 281-282). Thus, through integration of consciousness with the personal unconscious, or self-unity through individuation, one encounters the collective unconscious. Finally, it would not be amiss to include discussion of water imagery in Jungian psychology, which figures prominently in *Reservation Blues*. According to Jung, “water is the commonest symbol of the unconscious” (*BW* 302); and water imagery, such as a “lake in the valley [represents] the unconscious, which lies, as it were, underneath consciousness” (*ibid* 302).

Tropes of repression and journey are depicted early in *Reservation Blues*. One of the first images is “the softball diamond, with its solitary grave hidden deep in centre field” (3). With its four bases, the softball field metaphorically implies the directions of the sacred hoop, while the solitary grave “hidden in deep centre field” suggests a repressed, or “buried” element in the psyche. The “crossroads” (3) where Johnson first meets Thomas, symbolizes both the medicine wheel and travel, and underscores quaternary imagery. The quest for the feminine icon is suggested in Robert Johnson’s introductory statements: “been looking for a woman [. . .] I dream ‘bout her [. . .] I think she can fix what’s wrong with me” (5). Description of “the woman in his dreams” (6) as “a shadow on a shadowy horse, with songs that he

lov[es] but [cannot] sing because the Gentleman might hear” (6) alludes to Jungian psychology and brings into relief the feminine as repressed, while the fact that “the Gentleman” bars Johnson from singing the woman’s song suggests that a patriarchal element provides the impetus for that repression. The detail of the shadowy woman being able to “fix what’s wrong with” Johnson implies a healing capacity inherent in the feminine.

Conflation between the feminine and Jungian unconscious is furthered in Thomas’s description of Benjamin Pond and Turtle Lake:

Indian teenagers build fires and camp at the water. They sometimes hear a woman crying but can never find the source of the sound. Victor, Junior, and I saw Big Mom, the old woman who lives on the hill, walk across Benjamin Pond. Victor and Junior pretend they don’t know about Big Mom, but we heard her sing all the way. (27)

Foregrounding the Jungian unconscious represented through the shadow and water imagery, the feminine as repressed is implied when Big Mom is depicted “walk[ing] across Benjamin Pond.” Implications that the feminine is repressed are furthered by the disembodied voice of the “woman crying” heard by teenagers camped beside the lake, which recalls Freud’s theory regarding haunting. Freud correlates the definition *unheimlich*, or uncanny, with haunted (“The Uncanny” 241); and hauntedness is “perhaps the most striking of all, of something uncanny” (241). The haunting of Benjamin Pond by the disembodied woman’s voice implies repression of the feminine, because “[the] uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression” (241). Thus, the disembodied woman’s voice corroborates the repression of the feminine principle as written into the national typologies of Native American subjects.

Associations between water and psychic imagery are furthered when Junior's older brother, James, fractures "his skull and [wakes] up as somebody different" (27) after he "slip[s] on the dock at Benjamin Pond" (27), as well as in Thomas's description of the giant turtles: "the tribal elders say that Benjamin Pond and Turtle Lake are connected by a tunnel. Those turtles swim from pond to lake; they live in great caverns beneath the reservation and feed on failed dreams" (27). The depiction of the "great caverns beneath the reservation" brings into a relief a dipartite psyche of external ego/ persona and internal id/ unconscious by recalling Thomas's previous thoughts relating to buried trauma in the discourse of the reservation: "Thomas thought about all the dreams that were murdered here [in the reservation], and the bones buried quickly just inches below the surface" (7). The turtles that "feed on failed dreams" underscore psychic implications, while the description of Turtle Lake as bottomless (27) foregrounds a metaphoric association with the id/ unconscious, or "the deepest part of the psyche" (English and English 247).

The correlation between water and the unconscious implicit in depictions of Benjamin Pond and Turtle Lake is paralleled by denotations inherent in Coyote Springs's name. While Coyote refers to "a trickster whose bag of tricks contains permutations of love, hate, weather, chance, laughter, and tears, e.g., Lucille Ball" (48), spring denotes "an ultimate source of supply, especially of water issuing from the ground" (48). Thus, the feminine characteristics of Coyote, such as those implied in "Coyote Tricks Owl," are emphasized in the correlation between Coyote and Lucille Ball. The fact that Coyote is associated with a "spring," or an "ultimate source" of water corroborates the correlation between the feminine principle and the unconscious.

The psychic undertones of Benjamin Pond and Turtle Lake are also suggested in Thomas's story about the "horse that [falls] into Benjamin Pond, drown[s] in the water, but wash[es] up on the shore of Turtle Lake" (27). As stated, horse imagery recalls a specific historic event, thereby necessitating a brief historic account to illustrate the correlation between event and trauma. In *Reservation Blues*, Alexie employs the historical event of Colonel Wright's slaughter of eight hundred Native American horses in 1858 as synecdochal for traumatic displacement of the traditional Spokane order by the colonizing discourse, as suggested by this event immediately preceding a treaty signing between Spokane/ Coeur D'Alene groups and the United States. According to Manring, whom Alexie acknowledges in *Reservation Blues*, Colonel Wright's troops defeated seven hundred Indian warriors composed of "Spokanes, Coeur D'Alenes, Pelouses, and Pen d'Oreilles" (Wright in Manring 202) at the battle of the Spokane Plains on September 6, 1858 (202). By September 10, Wright followed the defeat of Indian forces with the destruction of eight hundred captured horses:

I found myself embarrassed with these 800 horses. I could not hazard the experiment of moving with such a number of animals (many of them very wild) along with my large train; should a stampede take place, we might not lose our captured animals, but many of our own. Under those circumstances, I determined to kill them all [. . .] I deeply regretted killing these poor creatures, but a dire necessity drove me to it. (Wright in Manring 214)

A week following the destruction of the horses, and military subjugation of the Coeur D'Alene and Spokane, a large portion of the Coeur D'Alene met with Colonel Wright, and "the chiefs and head men" (Wright in Manring 220) signed the *Preliminary Articles of a Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between the United States and the Coeur D'Alene Indians*.

In *Reservation Blues* Wright's slaughter of the horses is explicitly alluded to in reference to historic trauma:

One hundred and thirty four years before Robert Johnson walked onto the Spokane Reservation, the Indian horses screamed [. . .] The song sounded so pained and tortured that Big Mom could never have imagined it before the white men came and never understood it later, even at the edge of the twenty-first century. (9)

Traumatic correlation with Symbolic displacement by the colonizing discourse is implied in the fact that the "song" of the horses could not be "imagined [. . .] before the white men came," while undertones relating to trauma are furthered when the destruction of horses is described as witness of "the future and the past" (10), suggesting a defining moment that engenders repetition back to the site of trauma, or the "repetition [to] previous violence." Traumatic repetition is concretely instantiated in the motif, or recurring phrase, "the horses screamed" (123, 193, 213) throughout *Reservation Blues*. Foregrounding the destruction of the Native American horses as metaphoric for displacement of the traditional symbolic order by the dominant national discourse, the motif recurs during scenes of further possible entrenchment of national typologies by the Spokane subjects, such as after Chess and Thomas's decision to abandon Victor and Junior (123). Recalling that Coyote Springs is metaphoric for the psyche, the threat of disbandment metaphorically suggests further psychic incompleteness inherent to incorporation of national typologies. The motif also recurs after Armstrong agrees to allow Coyote Springs studio time in New York (193). Entrenchment of national typologies for the Indian subjects is implied when Sheridan and Wright attempt to contextualize the band into a discourse where their identity is dependent on static signification of Indianness: "we can really dress this group up, give them war paint, feathers, etc., and really play up the Indian angle"



(190). Fame as a corollary to entrenchment of static typologies is implied in Thomas's statement, "for the rest of our lives all we can hear are our names, chanted over and over, until we are deaf to everything else" (211); and this statement is also followed by the motif, "the horses screamed" (213). Thus, the description of the horse that drowns in Benjamin Pond but washes up on the shores of Turtle Lake suggests that historical trauma is repressed in the id/ unconscious of Spokane subjects.

*First Journey East: Acquisition of Feminine Principle Enables Disruption of Typological Repetition Engendered Through Paternal Identification.*

Cognizance of the repressed feminine principle, and its acquisition as a corollary to individuation, is implied by the journey east to the Flathead Indian Reservation (49), and inclusion of Chess and Checkers into Coyote Springs. While the "Warm Water" namesake connotes the shadow, or unconscious often associated with water imagery, the allegorical quest for repressed elements is underscored when Coyote Springs encounters the "Flathead woman and her granddaughter [standing] outside in their near-yard, hand on hips, waiting" (49) while travelling on a "road [that] ain't on the map" (49). The grandmother and granddaughter foreground dual aspects of the feminine principle when described as "sisters, except the granddaughter [is] forty years younger and two feet shorter" (50). The search for individuation is furthered when, recalling the colour red as indicative of femininity (Previous Chapter 21), Coyote Springs is directed to "take a left at the first intersection after a big tree stump painted red" (50). Finally, extrication from totalizing type is implied in Coyote Springs's encounter with Jimmy:

The owner of the bar [. . .] took a minute getting out of his pickup because of his enormous cowboy hat and dinner-plate belt buckle engraved

with the word Jimmy. The cowboy hat and belt buckle walked up to Coyote Springs and the old man.

“You must be Coyote Springs,” he said.

“Yeah, we are. You must be Jimmy.”

“Nah,” the man said and looked down at his belt buckle. “I ain’t Jimmy. Not really.” (52)

Disjuncture between self and typology is implied in Jimmy’s cognisance that his constituting signifiers, the cowboy hat and belt buckle, do “not really” identify him. Thus, the encounter with Jimmy brings into relief the quest for individuation as inimical to totalizing identity.

Psychic inclusion of feminine icons facilitates extrication from the paternal site, as indicated in detail below by Thomas’s disruption of the neurosis of failure inherent to Samuel Builds-the-fire’s typology following his return from the east and relationship with Chess. The disruption of neurosis parallels Victor’s, Junior’s, and Checkers’s perpetuated identification with the patriarch. Recalling that typological construction is grounded in identification with the paternal site and engendered in a “range of strategic ways,” continued identification with the patriarch suggests entrenchment of type regarding the latter trio of characters. Foregrounding Coyote Springs as metaphoric of the medicine wheel, the return to Spokane, and wake for Samuel depicted in the “Father and Farther” chapter, allegorically depict liminal stages of a psychic break from totalizing elements inherent in the nationally constructed paternal site.

Themes of typological repetition inherent to paternal identification with sites preclusive of the feminine are established in the outset of the “Father and Farther.” The statement in the preceding epitaphic song, “sometimes, father, you and I/ Are like a warrior/ Who can only paint half of his face/ While the other half cries [. . .]” (93) suggests psychic incompleteness, because the crying “half” recalls the “crying” (27) repressed feminine represented by Turtle Lake; while conflation of the plural with a

singular identity in the statement, “you and I / Are like a warrior” (93) implies typological repetition. Constructed paternity and non-particularity of type is suggested in the identificatory inter-changeability that abounds during the wake: Victor initially wonders if Samuel is “[his] dad or [Junior’s] dad” (95); Chess “look[s] at Thomas, at his father” (114) and “sees her father, Luke, in both their faces” (114); and although Thomas’s “father lay on the table, it could have been any Indian man. It could have been a white man on the table” (116). Again, the transitive nature of the paternal signifier emphasizes repetitive type, while identity of type between an “Indian man” and “white man” gestures toward all paternity as metonymic for one national paternal site.

Inherent to the paternal site is preclusion of the feminine principle, and, thus, incompleteness of self written into typology. For Native American subjects, relegation of the feminine principle is predicated on traumatic displacement of a traditional indigenous paternal enunciative site, metaphorically suggested through Indian War tropes. Displacement of the feminine is corroborated in the fact that reflection of characters on the paternal site all include memories of an absent maternal icon: Victor dreams of his mother locked in a car “trunk beside the dead body of [his] real father” (107); Junior’s “mother-and-father” (112) die in an auto crash; Thomas’s mother is deceased from cancer (22); and Chess and Checkers’s mother walks “into the woods [. . .] and [finds] a hiding place to die” (69). While all members of Coyote Springs reflect on paternal icons, the predominant narrative in “Father and Farther” pertains to Samuel Builds-the-fire’s basketball game, which is metaphoric for assimilation of the traditional patriarch into the colonizing discourse.

Implications that the basketball game is metaphoric for paternal loss of the capacity for association with the feminine are established at the outset of the narrative.

Samuel's association with feminine aspects is implied because he is "getting married to that Susan" (101), while the feminine capacity for regeneration is suggested in that for Samuel and Susan "there's already one [kid] on the way" (101). The fact that Officer Wilson -- described as "fake" (102), and not a "real Indian" (102) -- "suddenly appear[s]" (101) to reprimand Samuel after Lester congratulates him on his marriage implies Wilson as metonymic for a narrative marked by inimicality to masculine incorporation of feminine aspects, and surface signification of Indianness. Wilson association with the colonizing discourse is further suggested in his teammate's names -- Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle Heavy Burden, and David WalksAlong-- all of which connote the western discourse, or assimilation.

Undercurrents of conflict between traditional aboriginal concepts of self and colonizing narratives are furthered with allusion to the Indian Wars, manifested in Samuel's statement, "For Crazy Horse" (106). As an historic icon, Crazy Horse is suitably metaphoric for the traditional indigenous patriarch: he was never defeated in battle by the United States (Brown 294) and was the last of the Sioux leaders to surrender to reservation life (Brown 294). He opposed Native Americans serving as scouts for the American military (294), and, disliking the obvious potential for assimilation, relocated his tribe off the reservation (294). Historic reference thereby brings into relief the basketball game as metaphoric for traditional paternity against assimilation. These metaphoric "stakes" are also suggested by reference to "old Moses [. . . who] had to pawn one of his eagle feathers to pay [a] fine" (110), while the assimilative tenor of the Tribal Cops is implied in Samuel's statement, "That was for every one of you Indians like you Tribal Cops [. . .] That was for all those Indian scouts who helped the U.S. Cavalry" (117). Like the reference to Crazy Horse,

historic parallel between the Tribal Cops and Indian scouts emphasizes the game as metaphoric for traditional aboriginality against assimilative processes.

Although an open-ended narrative concerning the basketball game is implied in Thomas's question "who do you think won that game?" (129), automaton imagery implies a traumatic loss for Samuel. This imagery is implied when Samuel automatically "groan[s] in his sleep, and raises his hands in a defensive position" (100), thereby suggesting repetitive return to the basketball game as a traumatic site. Automaton imagery is furthered when Checkers remembers the "Indian zombies [. . .] in Missoula" (99), and ponders how "quiet and polite some of those zombies [are], just as quiet as Samuel passed out on the table" (99), and how "Samuel Builds-the-Fire look[s] like a zombie on the kitchen table" (99). In this regard, traumatic imagery correlates the basketball game and historic displacement of the traditional Symbolic order inclusive of the feminine principle.

Samuel's loss of psychic feminine aspects is paralleled through reference to Luke Warm Water, who also loses psychic feminine aspects. Although not stated explicitly, mention of the nuns who teach Luke "scales between beatings" (63) implies residential schooling as partial cause of distorted masculinity; and just as his piano remains "out of tune" (63) his psychic identity is inharmonious in adulthood. Social impotence is implied when Luke is unable to save his son, which becomes the catalyst for his expulsion of the feminine principle:

[Luke] shouted until his wife raised backgammon up to him like an offering [. . .] Luke Warm Water started to scream then, a high-pitched wail that sounded less than human. Maybe it sounded too human. Colours poured out of him. Red flowed out of his mouth, and black seeped from his pores. (65)

Recalling red as indicative of femininity, the "red flow[ing] out of [Luke's] mouth" indicates an expulsion of a feminine aspect, and a loss of regenerative agency. Like

Welch's *The Death of Jim Loney*, in which winter motifs and incest underscore incomplete masculinity, or impotence due to preclusion of the feminine, similar imagery is employed to imply Luke's psychic deficiency. The burial of Backgammon in the "frozen solid" (66) ground suggests Luke's "frozen" regenerative agency; while incestuous undertones between Checkers and Luke are implied when Checkers recalls "memories of her father's breath after he came home from a long night of drinking" (161) and his statement, "Checkers? Little one? Are you awake?" (161), indicating Luke's sexuality as grossly "out of tune." Implied sexual dysfunction is further corroborated when Luke "forc[es] himself on his wife" (68). Psychic incompleteness is also suggested through comparison between Luke and the reservation:

"Where's your dad, now?" Thomas asked.

"He's gone."

The word *gone* echoed all over the reservation. The reservation was gone itself, just a shell of its former self, just a fragment of the whole. (96)

Luke is also a "fragment of the whole" because the feminine principle is absent in his psyche due to totalizing typology. A further correlation between the reservation and Luke underscores psychic incompleteness, or absence of the feminine. When Luke is described as "AWOL" and "MIA" (97), the "secondhand furniture in Thomas's house mov[es] an inch to the west" (97). The furniture's movement to the west, or masculine realm, suggests de-emphasis of feminine elements inherent to Luke's typology. Thus, the aboriginal paternal enunciative site – reflective, in a larger sense, of all patriarchal icons within the colonizing discourse -- is characterized by preclusion of the feminine principle. In addition, the Native American paternal site also embodies a neurosis of failure, wherein the displacement of the feminine, caused by colonial processes such as the Indian Wars, is traumatically repeated by paternal icons through loss of "all the imagined and real wars [the] fathers fought" (120).

Victor's unwillingness to disrupt identification with the paternal site is emphasized in his suggestion to "stick an apple in Samuel's mouth and roast him up" (122), a Freudian allusion to incorporation of patriarchal law through consumption of the father. Junior's inability to expulse psychic effects of internalized icons is implied when he "crawl[s] beneath [Samuel's] table with Checkers" (123), metaphorically suggesting he is "under" the influence of the patriarchy. However, Thomas juxtaposes Victor and Junior by disavowing the paternal metaphor, suggested in his statement, "I hate this [. . .] I hate my father" (114). This disavowal as a corollary to individuation is suggested when Chess, Thomas's feminine shadow, wants to tell Thomas, "you don't look anything like your father. You're much more handsome. Your hair is longer, and your hands are beautiful" (116).

Psychic integration between the masculine aspects and feminine shadow is allegorically implied in Coyote Springs's journey west to Seattle. Recalling the west as symbolic of masculinity, and water as representative of the feminine/ shadow, the fact that "it rains a lot" (127) in Seattle suggests correspondence between the masculine and feminine. However, while Thomas engenders individuation through psychic incorporation of Chess, a traditional feminine subject, Victor and Junior locate the feminine within the national patriarchal discourse, implied through their relationship with the "Doppelgangers" (44). Simultaneously, Checkers' inability to relinquish the paternal metaphor is paralleled in her relationship with Father Arnold.

*Second Journey East: Division Between Subjects Capable of Individuation and Those Totalized by Typology.*

Coyote Springs's second journey east emphasizes ideological and spiritual concerns, as suggested by the involvement of Sheridan, Wright, Big Mom and Father

Arnold. As historic figures, Wright and Sheridan represent Jungian concerns regarding nationally repressed moral inferiority. According to Jung, psychological elements incompatible with the conscious self, “are liable to repression and therefore become unconscious; but on the other hand we also have the possibility of making the repressed contents conscious once [. . .] recognized” (*BW* 116). Repression of incompatible elements engenders a moral inferiority “that always indicates that the missing element is something which, one feels, should not be missing, or could be made conscious if only one took enough trouble” (116), and reflects, “the conflict with one’s self which, for reasons of psychic equilibrium, demands that the deficit be redressed” (116).

Foregrounding implications of moral inferiority, Sheridan and Wright represent discursive machinations that attempt to redress moral deficiency by psychically binding repressed sites and related icons. The process of psychic binding is metaphorically depicted in attempts to “help” Coyote Springs, and in conspiratorial incidents that suggests national agency manipulating the direction of the band to, ultimately, the Cavalry Records studio, the potential site of binding. Sheridan’s attempt to help Coyote Springs is explicit when he tells Victor, “Hey [. . .] I’m trying to help you” (229). This sentiment is furthered in his statement, “I tried to help these goddamn Indians. But they don’t want help. They don’t want anything” (229). Wright’s answer, “I think they want the same things we do” (229) gestures toward mutual desire for psychic completion: Coyote Springs wants integration with the feminine principle/ shadow precluded by the national paternal site; while the dominant narrative wants to psychically bind repressed sites associated with moral inferiority.



In *Reservation Blues* the Spokane Reservation and its population are correlated with sites of repression; and this correlation is implied through spatial enclosures and disparities. Discursive inaccessibility of the reservation to predominant national narratives is suggested in the fact that “Wellpinit, the only town on the reservation, [does] not exist on most maps” (3); while political disjuncture is emphasized when Thomas thinks of the Spokane Reservation as “the little country he [is] trying to save, this reservation hidden away in the corner of the world” (16). Spatial and discourse-related separation is furthered when Sheridan and Wright’s driver takes “more than an hour to find a place on the reservation where the reception [is] good” (193) in order to use the car-phone, and in New York when “hundreds of people just [flow] passively around” (230) Coyote Springs on the sidewalk. Disjuncture between repressed icons and the national Symbolic apparatus is also suggested by Coyote Springs’s aural disconnection from the external world when placed within the Cavalry Records studio, as indicated when Coyote Springs watches Wright and Sheridan “arguing violently, silently” (226), and when “Thomas watch[es] Sheridan and Wright talk, although he [can’t] hear them through the glass” (223). Thus, the Cavalry Records studio is analogous to a site of repression within the discourse.

Inherent preclusion of the feminine principle within the Symbolic order undermines “healing” of moral deficiency and national repression, especially where Sheridan and Armstrong are concerned. Detail regarding the aural disjuncture of the enclosed space of the recording studio suggests construction of a phantasy object around the repressed site. The fact that the engineer is capable of making “the music sound exactly like she want[s] it to sound” (224) from the recording studio implies that signification of the site of repression may be distorted by elements within the

national symbolic order. Cavalry Records's association with phantasy construction over sites of repression is corroborated by the company's relationship with Betty and Veronica. Perceptual distortion of nationally repressed icons is implied by the reconstruction of Betty and Veronica into Indians, as suggested in Sheridan's statement, "we dress them up a little. Get them into the tanning booth. Darken them up a bit. Maybe a little plastic surgery on those cheekbones [. . .] Dye their hair black. Then we'd have Indians" (269). Implied phantasy construction is furthered when Sheridan explains, "that's the business we're in. The dream business. We make dreams come true" (272).

The national inability to bind repression is paralleled by individual aboriginal incapacity to confront trauma, as suggested when Victor's guitar "buck[s] in his hands" (225) and "slic[es] across his palms" (225). Similar to the reconstruction of Betty and Veronica as phantasy Indians, the guitar is also a manifestation of the patriarchal national discourse that distorts cognition of repression, and is substitutive for the viable feminine principle. Correlation between the guitar and a patriarchal element is suggested through its association with the "Gentleman" (6, 7, 173), while inimicality with the feminine principle is implied when Big Mom encounters the guitar and "watch[es] it carefully" while it "nuzzles Victor's neck" (202).

Substitution of the guitar with the feminine is implied when Victor refers to the guitar as Thomas's "woman" (13); and, foregrounding water imagery as indicative of the unconscious feminine principle/ shadow, substitutive aspects of the guitar are furthered when its song rises "above the reservation, [makes] its way into the clouds, and rain[s] down" (24), and the reservation "[drinks] deep because the music tast[es] so familiar" (24).

The correlation between the guitar and water imagery is juxtaposed by the effect Johnson's song has on the reservation without the Gentleman's guitar:

[Johnson's] music stopped. The reservation exhaled. Those blues created memories for the Spokanes but they refused to claim them. Those blues lit up a new road, but the Spokanes pulled out their old maps. Those blues churned up generations of anger and pain: car wrecks, suicides, murders [. . .] Thomas listened closely, but the other Spokanes slowly stretched their arms and legs, walked outside, and would not speak about any of it. They buried all of their anger deep down inside, and it festered, then blossomed, and the bloom grew quickly. (174-175)

A connection between Johnson's song and trauma is implied, because just as trauma represents "unclaimed experience," the Spokane "refus[e] to claim" the memories Johnson's song recalls. The correlation between Johnson's song and the feminine principle—also a repressed element -- is suggested when he sings from "Big Mom's rocking chair" (173). This association is corroborated by the fact that "Thomas hear[s] something hidden behind [Johnson's] words. He hear[s] Robert Johnson's grandmother singing backup" (174). Thus, the tripartite correlation between the song, feminine principle, and traumatic sites suggests that the feminine principle, or music as an expression of the feminine principle, creates access to repression; or, as Big Mom states, "music is supposed to heal" (208).

In contrast, Johnson's guitar, like Betty and Veronica, functions as a Lacanian *objet petit a* by gesturing toward the traumatic, or repressed, site, yet blocking psychic binding. Phantastic associations are implied in the relationship between Victor and the guitar at Cavalry Records:

that guitar had scarred his hands, yet he had mastered the pain. He thought he could have placed his hands into any fire and never felt the burning. But then [. . . the] guitar bucked in his hands, twisted away from his body. (225)

Victor's inability to master the "pain" of the guitar parallels his inability to forgive the priest who abused him as a child, as indicated in his conversation with Big Mom. After Big Mom advises Victor to "forgive that priest [. . . because] that will give you power over him" (203) Victor "[cannot] talk" (203) because although "he had prayed for his death for years, had even wanted to kill him, [he had] never once considered forgiveness" (203). Again, Victor's inability to confront trauma is paralleled by national discursive mechanisms, represented by Sheridan and Armstrong, which are incapable of binding repressed sites.

Sheridan's inability to confront repression is suggested in his continued subjugation of indigenous people. In this manner, he juxtaposes Wright, who addresses moral deficiency, thereby breaking from the dominant colonizing narrative. Repetitive, traumatic subjugation of the traditional aboriginal symbolic order perpetuated by the inability of the national discourse to recognize sites of repression is instantiated in Checkers's nightmare about Sheridan, when he states, "I never wanted to hurt anybody. But it was war. This is war. We won. Don't you understand? We won the war. We keep winning the war. But you won't surrender" (237). Correlation with traumatic loss of the traditional patriarch is furthered when Sheridan ties Checkers's "hands behind her back with a necktie" (237), then "kiss[es] Checkers, bit[ing] down hard on her lips" (241) and "pull[s] at her clothes" (241), thereby reflecting the repetitive aspects of traumatic paternal displacement correlated with sexual abuse within Checkers's biography. Traumatic repetition is also manifested when "Phil Sheridan [. . .] com[es] back again and again" to Checkers's dreams" (248).

Confrontation with repressed moral deficiency is suggested after Wright wakes Checkers from her nightmare about Sheridan. When asked by Chess, "why

you helping us?" (244) Wright states, "because I owe you" (244), then "look[s] at Coyote Springs" (204) and sees "the faces of millions of Indians beaten, scarred by smallpox and frostbite, split open by bayonets and bullets" (244) before noticing "his own white hands and [. . .] the blood stains there" (244). Wright's desire to recognize repression is indicated in his desire "to go home" (270), an allusion to the Freudian *unheimlich*; while cognition of moral deficiency is indicated when Wright states, "I was the one. I was the one who killed them all. I gave the orders [. . .] Oh God. I'm a killer" (271). Implications that the feminine principle facilitates recognition of repressed elements are suggested when the cab driver, "an old white woman" (270) delivers Wright to the site of his own grave (270), and association of the feminine with the repressed site is implied in Wright's statement, "Margaret [. . .] I'm home. I'm home" (270). The feminine principle's "healing" capacity is indicated when Margaret "forgiv[es]" (271) Wright's slaughter of the horses, the historic act that engenders traumatic repetition of the displaced traditional patriarch.

Ideological concerns represented by Wright and Sheridan suggest the necessity of correspondence with the feminine principle in order to bind sites of repression in Alexie's text. Sheridan, who constructs phantasy signifiers to stand in for repressed icons, is destructive toward the feminine principle, as implied in his assault of Checkers. In juxtaposition, Wright, who does not "have anything to do" (270) with the reconstruction of Betty and Veronica as phantasy signifiers, is able to bind repressed sites, as suggested when he aids Checkers against Sheridan; the correlation with confrontation of repressed sites, or the shadow, and the feminine principle is implied when he returns "home" to his wife immediately after admitting he is a "killer." Discursive implications represented by Wright and Sheridan reflect the notions of twinship, and structuring, of "Coyote Tricks Owl," in which an unstable

duality engenders another unstable duality when the partnership of Wright and Sheridan is transformed into the duality of Sheridan and Armstrong, and Wright and his wife. The schism between Wright and Sheridan is also reflected in the quest motif concerning Coyote Springs, when Thomas, Chess, and Checkers split from Victor and Junior; or when the medicine wheel components of the psyche capable of individuation extricate themselves from components totalised by typology. Victor's and Junior's association with totalizing typology written within a patriarchal discourse, and Thomas, Chess, and Checkers's association with individuation are evidenced through individual character analysis. This character analysis necessitates interpretation of the protagonists' dreams and nightmares, because just as traumatic events psychically recur through nightmares and "other repetitive phenomena" (Caruth 91), the dreams and nightmares suggest traumatic displacement of a traditional aboriginal patriarch.

*Psychic Effects of Jungian Quest For Individuation on the Protagonists.*

Metaphoric correlation between Victor and totalizing typology is implied in introductory depictions of his character when Victor's clothes suggest staticized identity and halted psychic development:

Victor was the reservation John Travolta because he still wore clothes from the disco era. He had won a few thousand dollars in Reno way back in 1979, just after he graduated from high school [. . .] and had never had any money since then to buy anything new [. . .] His wardrobe made him an angry man. (12)

Correlation between Victor's wardrobe and chronological stasis is furthered when Chess states that Victor "looks like he got in a fight with the seventies and got his ass

kicked" (76), and when Sheridan and Wright state that "Victor Joseph looks like a train ran him over in 1976" (190). Implications of Victor's wardrobe as a type that prohibits psychic growth is corroborated in Junior's reference to Victor "as a kid sometimes, even though he's a grown man" (216). The paternal site as impetus behind Victor's inability for individuation and adversity to the feminine is implied in Thomas's statement, "I watched Victor learn to swim when he was ten years old. His stepfather threw him in Turtle Lake [. . .] Victor's screams rose like ash, drifted on the wind, and blanketed the reservation" (27). Again, water, especially Turtle Lake, represents the feminine and unconscious. The fact that Victor's stepfather creates a fear for water suggests that identification with the paternal site obviates individuation.

Totalizing prosthetic masculinity manifested by identification with the paternal site is also suggested in Victor's dream during the "Father and Farther" chapter:

[Victor's] stepfather was packing the car. Victor had sworn never to say his parents' names again. But his stepfather, **Harold**, roared to life and threw Victor's mother, **Matilda**, into the trunk beside the dead body of Victor's real father, **Emery**. Victor struggled to leave the nightmare, the naming, but his mother's cries pulled him back. **Matilda** held tight to **Emery's** body in the trunk. (107)

Similar to "Ghost Dance" in which unconscious elements are suggested through placement in the trunk of the car, repression of the traditional paternal icon, and feminine principle inscribed into the national paternal enunciative site is metaphorically suggested when Harold throws Victor's parental icons "in the trunk." Totalising identitificatory signification is implied when Victor cannot leave "the naming." This totalizing effect of symbolic placement, or naming, is underscored through bold type (107, 109), and corroborated when Victor "lift[s] his shirt and reveal[s] his own name tattooed on his chest" (88). The fact that Victor's mother's

“cries [pull] him back” into the nightmare implies that Victor locates the feminine as a signifier within the patriarchal national discourse, again affirming his identity as totalised by national signification.

Repetitive traumatic displacement of the traditional patriarch suggested in Victor’s nightmare is also implied in imagery suggestive of the Indian Wars: “[Victor] galloped down the pavement, his suddenly long hair trailing in the wind. He ran until his body lathered with sweat. He ran until he fell on all fours” (108). Description of Victor reflects Wright’s slaughter of the horses, thereby implying that his typology is defined by a discourse marked by traumatic displacement of the traditional aboriginal paternal site. The fact that Victor physically instantiates historic trauma further suggests his typology is defined by this historic event.

Dream imagery involving the black robes (108-109) also suggests paternal displacement grounded in historic trauma, particularly in consideration of the black robe’s “favourite” (108) painting of, “guns, horses, men, flags, horses, smoke, blood” (108) which recalls Wright’s slaughter of the horses. Psychic metaphoricity of the painting is suggested when Victor looks at it then immediately notes his head is “bleeding” (108). The correlation between the painting and head wound emphasizes psychic deficiency -- particularly the absence of a viable feminine icon – or psychic wounds predicated on historic trauma. The dream sequence involving the black robes is doubly significant because it directly links historic with personal trauma. Specifically, it foreshadows Victor’s sexual abuse: “Victor looked up at the priest and smiled. The priest smiled back, leaned over, and kissed Victor full and hard on the mouth” (148). Just as trauma “emphasizes the factor of surprise,” Victor’s experience emphasizes danger without preparation.



Trauma as a defining element in Victor's biography is also implied through quaternary imagery. Recalling that Native American thought endorses an unstable dualism to engender another dualism, Victor's ownership of the three dogs following Junior's funeral suggests composition of a new quaternity, or self, distinct from Checkers, Chess and Thomas (whose name, again, means "twin" [Jorgensen 20]). The namesake of Victor's dogs – the "Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost" (281) -- foregrounds Victor's experience of abuse by the priest. The fact that each psychic component in the quaternity refers to a religious aspect -- and, thus, for Victor, sexual abuse and trauma -- suggests a self totalised by the traumatic experience. Finally, perpetuation of the neurosis of failure in Victor's biography is indicated when he "giv[es] up" (255) Junior, the person he "lov[es] the most" (255) for the guitar. Just as Victor is abandoned by his adoptive father in the dream because Harold "don't want no Indian kid hanging around" (107), Victor abandons the person for whom he metaphorically "took turns being the dad" (215), suggesting an identification with Harold, a representation of the national paternal enunciative site.

Like Victor, Junior also manifests a neurosis of failure. Specifically, the psychic incompleteness engendered by incorporation of parental icons totalised by the colonizing discourse is metaphorically repeated in Junior's suicide. In contradistinction to Victor's adversity to the feminine shadow, Junior desires individuation through incorporation of the feminine, but lacks the parental icons to facilitate entrance into a Symbolic order inclusive of the feminine principle, as suggested when "Junior tri[es] to remember his parents' names, but they elud[e] him. Those names always elude him, even in waking" (111). As icons to facilitate psychic cohesion, Junior's parents are psychically "missing" due to typological totalization, as suggested by his dream in which his parents abandon Junior and his siblings in the car

to socialize at the Powwow Tavern (111). Psychic incompleteness is underscored when the abandonment by “mother-and-father” (111, 112) becomes a corollary to the dispersal of his siblings, who metaphorically represent Junior’s own psyche. The correlation between siblings and psyche is suggested through quaternary imagery. Just as the medicine wheel is composed of masculine and feminine principles, Junior’s siblings are composed of “two brothers and two sisters” (110). Medicine wheel imagery is again implied when Junior repeats the word “gone” four times to describe the whereabouts of his siblings (112). The fact that Junior “struggl[es] to remember his siblings’ names” (110) emphasizes the correspondence between the unremembered missing parents, and the “missing” aspects of Junior’s psyche. The correlation between historic trauma and Junior’s psychic incompleteness caused by identification with parental icons totalised by type is further implied when the disappearance of Junior’s brothers and sisters is described with horse imagery: “[Junior] cried as each of his siblings climbed out of the car and ran way on all fours. They ran into the darkness; hands and feet sparked on the pavement” (111). Reference to Wright’s slaughter emphasizes displacement of traditional parental icons engendered by historic trauma; and traumatic repetition is instantiated when Junior’s parents are made psychically absent due to the car accident, when the car “suddenly roll[s]” (112) -- an event which “emphasizes the factor of surprise.”

Junior’s attempt to locate psychic completion within the national discourse is implied when he animates his deceased parents with radio music: “[Junior’s] parents stared with fixed pupils. They danced on the bed. Their arms and legs kicked wildly, until their fingers locked, and they pulled each other back and forth, back and forth” (113). The national Symbolic order, metonymically represented by the radio, provides sole agency for Junior’s parents, as indicated when the music compels them

to movement. Automaton imagery, such as the “fixed pupils” and repetitive “back and forth” movement underscores traumatic implications inherent in the national Symbolic order, and simultaneously suggests identificatory totalization as a corollary to psychic death, or “emptiness.” Junior’s attempt to speak, when “nothing [comes] out” (113) parallels the psychic “nothingness” inherent in Junior’s incorporated parental icons.

Implications that American military campaigns against the Spokane are a corollary to traumatic displacement of the traditional paternal metaphor, and, thus, totalization of identity, are furthered in Junior’s nightmare involving Wright and Sheridan. Just as Junior’s dream about his parents suggests a psyche “overwhelmed” by incorporation of icons totalised by national type, Junior is overwhelmed by the invisible soldiers that come from “everywhere” (143) in the nightmare about Wright and Sheridan: “Junior whirled his horse, looked for the source of the bugle. Everywhere. Junior heard a gunshot [. . .] The gunshots came from all angles. The bugles increased. *Where are they?* the Indian men screamed as the bullets cut them down” (143). Thus, the dream metaphorically represents Junior’s psychic subsumption within a colonizing discourse established in Spokane subjects during the Northwest Indian wars. As well, just as Junior animates his parents by increasing the volume of the radio music until the “walls and bed [shake]” (113), the voice of the soldiers is “so loud that [. . .] Junior clap[s] his hands to his ears in pain” (143), thereby suggesting a parallel between “mother-and-father” (112) and Junior, and further emphasizing an identity totalized within the colonizing discourse.

Totalization is entrenched through Junior’s identification with a feminine icon constituted as an empty signifier within the national Symbolic order. Specifically, Junior’s college girlfriend, Lynn, represents a feminine icon preclusive of

regenerative agency, as suggested through the abortion of Junior and Lynn's child (242). Psychic incorporation of Lynn is implied through Junior's conversation with Victor, in which he unknowingly repeats Lynn's statements: "I'm pregnant, Lynn had told Junior after they dated for a few months during that first year in college [. . .] 'I'm pregnant,' Junior said aloud as he sat with Victor [. . .]" (240). Incorporation of an unviable feminine icon as a corollary to psychic incohesion is suggested when Lynn "wav[es], and Junior [feels] himself break into small pieces and [blow] away uselessly in the wind" (240).

Despite totalised identity, Junior desires individuation, as suggested in his statement, "water [. . .] can you help me?" (19). Initially a response to Victor's preceding question, Junior's answer serves a dual purpose by implying a request for the unconscious, or feminine/ shadow. This desire is corroborated by associations between water imagery and Junior in the description of the reservation's "West End" (16): "[Junior] needed to drive the water truck down to the west end [. . .] The west end ran out of water every summer. Indians and pine trees competed for water down there, and the pine trees usually won" (16). As the west indicates masculinity, and water the unconscious, the fact that the west end runs out of water parallels Junior's absence of the shadow. The desire for the feminine is also implied in the description of Junior knowing "how to drive his water truck, but [. . . not] much beyond that and the wanting. He wanted a bigger house, clothes, shoes, and *something more*" (18, Emphasis added).

Junior's suicide is a response to his inability to achieve individuation through incorporation of the feminine principle located in the national apparatus of signification. When asked why he commits suicide, Junior's reply suggests lamentation for precluded individuation: "because life is hard [. . .] Because when I

closed my eyes like Thomas I didn't see a damn thing. Nothing. Zilch. No stories, no songs. Nothing" (290). Junior's comparison of himself with Thomas is significant because Thomas's stories are derived through correspondence with the shadow, as suggested in the statement, "Thomas looked into himself. He knew the stories came from beyond his body and mind, beyond his tiny soul" (167). Thomas's capacity to "[look] into himself," and cognisance that the stories come from "beyond his [. . .] soul" suggests acquisition of the feminine/ shadow, or incorporation of the "narrow doorway" to the collective unconscious. Therefore the fact that Junior "[doesn't] see a damn thing" when he closes his eyes suggests lack of correspondence with the feminine principle. Junior's death as a reflection of inaccessible psychic integration with the shadow, is also suggested when he "watch[es] the sunlight reflecting off Turtle lake" (290) before explaining his suicide, as again Turtle Lake is metaphoric for the unconscious. Psychic incompleteness as the impetus for Junior's suicide is furthered when he self-destructs on a "water tower that had been empty for most of his life" (247); and the manner of the suicide – placement of "his forehead against the mouth of the barrel" (247), followed by his ghostly instantiation when Junior "look[s] like someone who had shot himself in the head with a rifle" (288), emphasizes psychic incompleteness, and finalizes the neurosis of failure engendered by his parental icons, who embodied psychic absence.

Juxtaposing Victor and Junior, who are metaphoric for totalizing type, Thomas represents agency for individuation through integration of the feminine principle. As stated, Thomas's namesake means "'twin'" (Jorgensen 20), connoting duality inherent in his identity, and foreshadowing his capacity to psychically correspond with the shadow. Thomas's desire for individuation through psychic incorporation of the feminine principle is suggested in his statement, "I am in love with water; I am

frightened by water. I never learned to swim” (27). Like Victor, who is also frightened by water, Thomas’s statement implies repression of the feminine. However, although repressed, a traditional maternal icon is incorporated in Thomas’s psyche, as indicated when he recollects his mother singing “traditional Spokane Indian songs” (22), and “rocking him to sleep with stories and songs” (22). This correlation between story-telling and the feminine principle is further suggested by Thomas’s “disease [caught] in the womb that forc[es] him to tell stories” (6).

Thomas’s capacity to achieve psychic integration with the feminine principle/shadow is actualised through his relationship with Chess Warm Water. Recalling psychic incorporation based on cathexis of a love-object, Thomas’s identification with Chess is suggested by the fact that he is “in love” (159) with Chess; and this psychic internalization is corroborated by medicine wheel imagery when Thomas “brush[es] slowly” (67) with Chess’s red toothbrush (67). Psychic integration is further implied when, immediately following their decision to live in Spokane, Chess sits “at the table with an empty cup” (260) and “bring[s] the cup to her lips, forgetting it contain[s] nothing” (260), suggesting that Chess imbues Thomas with “water,” the symbol for the unconscious. Integration of masculine and feminine principles are suggested when Chess and Thomas decide to “get married” (284), as well as in Chess’s desire to perpetuate psychic unity as suggested in her statement, “let’s have lots of brown babies. I want my children to look up and see two brown faces” (284).

Foregrounding the theme of parental icons representing enunciative sites of discourse, and facilitators of individuation, inherent to Chess’s statement is the suggestion that “the best thing [. . .to] give” their children is psychic cohesion through incorporation of a viable feminine icon and patriarch that reflects the traditional capacity for individuation.

Implications that Chess is a traditional feminine icon are suggested by her “Indian grandmother eyes that stay clear and focused for generations” (60), while a disjuncture between self and national discourse, or perspective, is implied by “her glasses [. . .that] continually [slip] down her nose” (60) and make “her feel like her whole life tilt[s] a few degrees from centre” (60). Traditional associations are furthered through historic allusion. Chess’s dream about the “unpainted one” (84-85), parallels historic narratives concerning Crazy Horse, who is, again, metaphoric for the traditional Native American patriarch -- one inimical to assimilation, and capable of facilitating psychic cohesion. This correlation between Crazy Horse, and traditional indigenous paternal icon is suggested in the historic detail of Dee Brown’s *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, a popular historic text that emphasizes an American Indian perspective, and Mari Sandoz’s *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas*, which Alexie alludes to in the acknowledgements of *Reservation Blues*. Correlation between Crazy Horse and the traditional paternal element is foregrounded in the fact that as a tribal chief and military leader, Crazy Horse was the last of the Sioux leaders to surrender to reservation life (Brown 294). As well, after surrendering to the U.S. military at Fort Robinson Crazy Horse showed dislike for the chiefs who “went to the Great Father’s house in Washington” (294) and “came back fat from the white man’s way of living” (294); and this caused tension between himself and the other reservation chiefs. These tensions were exacerbated by jealousies over the younger braves who still adulated Crazy Horse for never being defeated in battle by the United States (294). Further, Crazy Horse became disgusted with Native Americans who continued to serve as scouts for the American military (294), and, disliking the obvious potential for assimilation which reservation life could cause for his people, he decided to take his tribe North to the Powder River (294). When General Crook heard

of Crazy Horse's decision to leave, he ordered his arrest. This prompted Crazy Horse to tell his followers to disperse (295) before he travelled to the Spotted Tail agency (295). There, he was arrested and taken back to Fort Robinson where he was told he would have a meeting with Three Stars Crook (295).

When Crazy Horse arrived at Fort Robinson he was informed that it was too late to speak with Crook, and was then taken away to a shelter where he was told he would not be harmed (295). When he realized he was actually being led to a prison he began to struggle against his captors (Sandoz 408). Crazy Horse was grabbed from behind by one of his former followers, Little Big Man, and other Brule tribesmen, while the chiefs who were adversarial towards Crazy Horse shouted "Shoot in the middle; shoot to kill!" (408). He was then stabbed three times by an American soldier with a bayonet (408), and taken away to a cabin on the reservation where he was visited by his father (413).

Crazy Horse's murder is alluded to explicitly in Chess Warm Water's dream of the murder of the "unpainted Indian" (84). In her dream, the "unpainted one" (84) is grabbed "from behind" (84) by an "angry Indian" (84) in front of the prison house (84) and "speared [. . .] three times" (85) by a soldier. Then a "very tall Indian man" (85) takes the unpainted one to a lodge (85); and, while at the lodge, the unpainted one asks to see his father. When the father arrives he is "greet[ed]" (85) by the "tall one" (85), and both "[watch] the unpainted one die" (85). When Chess awakens she "call[s] out her father's name" (85) and thinks to herself, "*he's dead*" (85) but is "not sure who she mean[s]" (85). This connection between the death of the metaphoric traditional patriarch and Luke implies Chess's cognizance that her father lacks the traditional aspect of masculine-feminine psychic integration, and further implies a disjuncture between herself and the National paternal site. Again, theoretical



conjecture encompassing historicity lends insight into paternal tropes employed in Alexie's text; specifically, Chess's dream implies that the "unpainted one" as re-enactment of Crazy Horse's death which, in turn, is metonymic for the displaced traditional indigenous paternal site.

Individuation through integration of masculine and feminine principles as conducive to disruption of historic traumatic repetition is suggested in the final scene of Alexie's text, when Chess, Thomas, and Checkers leave the reservation and see "shadows [take] shape" and become "horses running alongside the van" (305). The fact that Chess "reach[es] out to touch that shadow, that horse" (305) suggests confrontation with repressed sites of trauma. Disruption of historic trauma is furthered in one of the final statements, "Thomas, Chess, and Checkers sang together [. . .] They sang together with the shadow horses: we are alive, we'll keep living" (306). Here, the final statement counters the self-destructive neurosis of failure marking the biographies of Victor and Junior.

Finally, in contrast to Chess, Checkers represents the feminine aspect of the psyche defined by incorporation of the paternal site. Through identification with the national patriarchy Checkers loses feminine regenerative agency, as suggested in her relationship with Father James's twin nieces. Checkers's statements, "I wanted to be just like them, those white girls, and I'd follow them around town while Mom and Dad shopped" (140); and, "I just looked at that white blond hair and blue eyes and knew I wanted to look like that. I wanted to be just like those white girls" (140) explicitly recall psychic identification grounded on the desire to be a love-object.

Freudian thought also foregrounds Checkers's identification with the national discourse. For Freud, the double, or *doppelgänger*, is engendered "by the fact that the subject identifies [her]self with someone else, so that [she] is in doubt as to which

[her] self is" ("The Uncanny" 235). Doubling of Checkers's self is suggested in her story about the spilled Communion wine, when she recalls how "those nieces pushed [her] over" (141) causing her to drop "the wine and [spill] all over everything" (141). Immediately following her story, she states, "I knew if I was like them, I wouldn't have to be brown or dirty and live on the reservation and spill Communion wine" (141). Checkers's admission to spilling the wine suggests that her identification with the nieces, and metaphorically the American discourse, engenders doubt as to which her real self is. Thus, the twins represent doubles, or doppelgangers, caused by feminine identification with the patriarchal symbolic order.

Identification with the national discourse as a corollary to preclusion of feminine regenerative agency is suggested when Checkers states, "I wanted to go with [the nieces . . . ] I knew I wouldn't get in the way. I'd sleep with their perfect dolls and eat crackers" (141). Checkers's compliance to become doll-like suggests negation of individuation through identification with the colonizing discourse. Psychic disarticulation is furthered in Checkers's statement, "but I hug those nieces, and the big one pinches my breast, my little nipple" (142), again implying distorted feminine sexuality caused by identification with the national patriarch.

Distortion of the feminine agency for regeneration is furthered through incestuous themes between Checkers and the paternal site, as indicated above through discussion of Luke; and in relationships with surrogate patriarchs, such as "Barney Pipe, a Blood Indian old enough to be her grandfather" (104). Narrative imbrications between Checkers's sexual abuse and Father Arnold's mass (161), and the undercurrent of abuse explicit in Checkers's dream in which she has sex with Father Arnold (155-156) suggest the continuation of Checkers's loss of regenerative agency through cathexis of the paternal site. Again, foregrounding *Reservation Blues* as

allegorical for the effects of national typology on the psyche, incestuous undercurrents emphasize Checkers's loss of regenerative agency caused by incorporation of the paternal enunciative site.

A correlation is implied between Checkers, who "see[s] white women" (139) "everywhere she look[s] these days" (139), and Victor, who "see[s] some good looking white women" (56) at the Tipi Pole Tavern, even though Junior and Thomas do not "notice any white women and wonder what Victor [sees]" (57). This correlation further suggests the members of Coyote Springs as allegorical components of the medicine wheel, or psyche. Specifically, the doubling of the feminine represented by Checkers's relationship with Father James's nieces is reified in Victor and Junior's relationships with Betty and Veronica, because they are all aspects of the same psyche. Just as Checkers represents degeneration from regenerative agency to "doll-like" empty signification of the feminine, caused by identification with the paternal site, Betty and Veronica represent "empty" feminine agency, or ersatz shadows, comprised entirely of signification within the patriarchal discourse, without facilitation of individuation and access to the repressed unconscious. Descriptions of Betty and Veronica, such as "both had long blonde hair and wore too much Indian jewellery" (41), and "they got more Indian jewellery and junk than any dozen Indians" (158) imply static signification of Indianness; while associations with the shadow and double are explicitly suggested by their ownership of the "Doppelgangers" (44) bookstore, Victor's reference to them as "white shadows" (44), and Junior's definition of them as "shadow[s] of you" (44).

Unlike Chess and Thomas, the agency to reform the neurosis of failure is external to Checkers and resides within a metonymic aspect of the paternal site – specifically with Father Arnold. The automaton marked by the displaced traditional

patriarch, reified as sexual abuse, and incorporated through the paternal site totalizes Checkers's psyche. Thus, removal of the automaton through extrication of the paternal site engenders a psychic gap that cannot be corrected without the capacity of individuation. The extrication of the paternal site from Checkers's biography is suggested when Father Arnold tells Checkers he is leaving the reservation, and Checkers immediately feels a "winged thing" leave her body:

[Checkers] felt some winged thing bump against the interior of her ribcage. She felt the slight brush of wingtips as it struggled between her ribs and left her body. She had no name for it. Checkers heard that winged thing flutter against the stained-glass windows [. . .] She closed her eyes, and the winged thing was gone. (251)

The correlation of the winged thing with father Arnold's impending absence suggests that it is metaphoric of the identified paternal site. Incorporation of the site based on traumatic displacement is furthered in the fact that Checkers has "no name for it," suggesting a psychically uncontextualized element. The fact that Checkers "[doesn't] know how much she [has] left" (251) after the departure of the "winged thing" suggests that traumatic associations preponderate her psyche.

For Checkers, extrication from the paternal site is replaced by its transformation through correspondence with the feminine. Father Arnold's communication with the feminine is explicit in his "partnership" with Big Mom, as indicated in her statement, "listen [. . .] you cover all the Christian stuff; I'll do the Indian traditional stuff. We'll make a great team" (280). The fact that Big Mom "leads" (280) Father Arnold to Coyote Springs suggests that the feminine principle provides the impetus for healing of trauma; and healing is also suggested when Father Arnold apologizes, stating, "I'm sorry for everything" (286). As well, although ambivalent, a process of healing is implied in Checkers's statement to Father Arnold,

“well then. I don’t think I do [forgive you]. Not yet” (287). Thus, individuation is allegorically depicted with the last feminine aspect extricated from the paternal enunciative site: totalised aspects of the psyche, represented by Victor and Junior, are de-emphasized, and a new identity is depicted through the quaternity of Thomas -- whose name, again, means twin -- Chess, and Checkers.

*Conclusion.*

In *Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth defines trauma, in general terms, as “the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomenon” (91). Foregrounding national discursivity, a psychoanalytically-inflected post-colonial interpretation of the Battle of Little Bighorn brings into relief a correlation between the repetition of signification regarding the specific historic event and the Symbolic *petit a*. This correlation between the historic event and traumatic *petit a* is corroborated by the influx of phantasy portrayals regarding the battle and Custer. Despite the fact that the historic event was characterized by traumatic fright, panic, and suicide, popular depictions perpetuate the Custer myth of an ordered military assault with every American soldier nobly fighting to the death. Just as the *petit a* stands in for the Real, further evidence suggesting that popular depictions of the Battle of Little Bighorn are characteristic of the *petit a* is foregrounded through correlation between the historic event and the traumatic Real. Specifically, implications that the battle is a site of the Real are evidenced in the lack of subjective witness to the event, thereby creating a rupture in

the national symbolic order, and in the suicides suggestive of ego disarticulation engendered by fright.

Alexie's "Ghost Dance" reflects the psychoanalytic interpretation of the Battle of Little Bighorn by illustrating the effects of phantasy depictions of Custer on national subjects' psyches, as well as the undead Seventh Cavalry, who represent the psychic state of non-being engendered by the traumatic site. Slippage between depictions of a specific colonial historic event framed by a psychoanalytic interpretation and universalist psychic elements brings into relief the Native American concept of the feminine principle. In "Ghost Dance" the feminine principle enables disruption of traumatic repetition within the national psyche. A similar theme is evidenced in *Reservation Blues*, which emphasizes Jungian paradigms over Freudian psychoanalysis. In the larger text the feminine principle is correlated with the Jungian shadow, and psychic correspondence with the shadow/ feminine principle enables disruption of totalizing typology engendered through identification with the paternal site.

## Chapter Four

## Conclusion:

Looking Beyond *House Made of Dawn*.

A dipartite problem was addressed in this thesis regarding studies of Native American/ First Nations literature: while tribal-specific tropes are employed in analysis of North American indigenous writers by critics such as Kenneth Lincoln, Bernd Peyer, and Patricia Riley In-The-Woods, the critical analysis is generally characterized by superficiality in, or lack of, acknowledgement of aboriginal cultural elements. Second, literary criticism is sometimes marked by disparity between the significance of thought and questioning put forth by aboriginal writers, and the sophistication in modelling employed to analyze these texts. As suggested through discussion of criticism pertaining to Welch's and Alexie's fiction, hybrid methodologies composed of Native American and Western theories enable a more comprehensive interpretation of literature by indigenous North American writers. However, employment of Native American/ First Nations tribal narratives to locate more viable theoretical apparatuses of interpretation is still emergent, and while some academics, as stated above, utilize North American aboriginal culture elements to study works by indigenous writers, most criticism leans heavily on Western concepts of literary analysis. This is not to attempt to disparage previous academic literature pertaining to contemporary Native American texts, which is still very significant. However, as Alexie describes the state of Native American literary criticism: "we've been stuck in place since *House Made of Dawn*" (Purdy 9), emphasizing the importance of constructing new methodologies for interpreting aboriginal contemporary texts.

Regarding Welch's fiction, culturally specific implications of the "dark bird" in *The Death of Jim Loney* include Blackfoot thought relating to identity construction;

especially concerning the medicine wheel and the role of the paternal icon in positioning the subject within tribal reality. Native American apparatuses of identity construction, as depicted in “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt,” gain resonance from Lacanian paradigms of the name-of-the-father and the paternal metaphor’s function in subjective placement within the Symbolic order with *The Death of Jim Loney*; and these Lacanian implications are compounded with Freudian psychoanalytic thought concerning neuroticism. Theory pertaining to identity construction explains character motivation, and gestures toward Loney’s suicide as an act of rebellion against a national patriarchy that writes typologies as neurotic, and perpetuates psychic disarticulation as measured on the medicine wheel, by precluding the feminine principle.

The correlation between character motivation and bird imagery corroborates Sands’s link between the bird and spirituality: “if there is renewal [for Loney] it is solely spiritual” (8) manifested as “the soaring of the spirit/ bird” (8). The spiritual tenor associated with the bird by Sands parallels Dexter Westrum’s notion that the bird symbolizes a “transcendent reality” (144). For Westrum, the dark bird symbolizes the “fulfilment [that] transcend[s] the merely physical” (139), facilitating an identity of “Indianness” (143). By engineering his suicide Loney transcends physical reality and “symbolically achieves fulfilment through his Indianness” (145). While the meaning of the bird eludes Loney, Welch’s “text offers us the bird [. . .] as a way of explaining what is happening” (144) to him, by symbolizing the “transcendent reality he is after” (144). While Owens agrees with Westrum’s contentions that Loney lacks the knowledge necessary to uncover the dark bird’s symbolic meaning to “look beyond human limitations toward the transcendent” (148), he diverges from Sands’s and Westrum’s criticisms with the argument that through



his suicide, Loney reflects “the stance of the Indian as tragic hero, that inauthentic” (155) construct imposed onto Native Americans by the dominant culture; and in his death, “the spirit retreats into the distance, leaving Loney still more alone [. . . .]” (155).

Criticisms posited by Gunn Allen and Thackeray emphasize an inability to locate a viable definition of self on the interstice between European American and Native American identities as Loney’s motivation for suicide. Gunn Allen correlates identificatory unviability with bird imagery, asserting that Loney’s “memories, like the black birds he sees, are too painful for him to continue recalling” (145); and these memories are composed of a European American “world that rejects him” (145) and a native American realm “that abandons him” (145). Thackeray also suggests Loney’s suicide is representative of an inability to locate “life on the interstices” (137). Because there is “no life half-way between” (137) Indian and white identities, or that “being halfbreed is being dead” (137) Loney’s suicide reflects his status as a “non-being.” Again, interpretation of Loney’s dark bird as a North American indigenous literary allusion addresses these criticisms by emphasizing his suicide as a stance against the national paternal enunciative site, or name-of-the-father, that engenders neurotic typologies through identification. Through his death Loney achieves connection with the feminine principle excluded from his personality.

Sherman Alexie also analyses the exclusion of the feminine principle from national masculine typologies. Like Welch, Alexie depicts the national discourse as inimical towards psychic cohesion measured on the medicine wheel. In order to illustrate discursively caused psychic disarticulation Alexie implies a relegation of the feminine principle to the site of repression, or Lacanian real, by conflation of medicine wheel tropes and First Nations imagery relating to dualistic implications

inherent in the feminine principle with Jungian archetypes in *Reservation Blues*, while the location of the feminine within the traumatic site suggests its correlation with the Real in “Ghost Dance.” Evidenced in both novel and short story is the suggestion that feminine agency enables psychic binding of repressed, and traumatic, sites as well as Jungian individuation. Correlation of the feminine principle with Coyote imagery in *Reservation Blues* corroborates the transformative, regenerative aspects of feminine agency to “heal” trauma, or interrupt patterns of traumatic recurrence, and this association between the feminine and halted repetition is furthered in “Ghost Dance” when Edgar Smith’s connection with the feminine enables him to command the automatons.

Discussion of Alexie’s texts as criticisms of national trauma brings into relief the recurrence of historical events in “Ghost Dance” and *Reservation Blues* as instantiations of the Lacanian neuroses of failure. The repetition of tropes pertaining to Wright’s slaughter of the Spokane horses in *Reservation Blues* foregrounds this event as metaphoric for the traumatic displacement of a tribal paternal enunciative site that is not inimical to the feminine principle and could thereby enable psychic completion. Thus, notions put forth in this thesis about historical metaphor do not coincide with Gloria Bird’s assertion that “the horses take on a new metaphorical significance, that of the Indians themselves who fall outside of bars, or as unrecognised veterans of war” (50-51). Metaphoric correlation of historical events with traumatic displacement of the paternal enunciative site is also evidenced in *Reservation Blues* through imagery relating the death of Crazy Horse, arguing against Richardson’s suggestion that Checkers’s dream about the “‘unpainted one’ could be Thomas, a gentle lamb among the wolves of the white world [and the . . .] reservation Spokanes who turn against [him]” (45). Further, analysis of typological construction

suggests a commonality between the suicides of Junior Polatkin and Welch's Loney, in that both are instigated by a lack of psychic completion. Assertions put forth in this thesis are thus contrary to Richardson's argument that Junior's suicide is motivated by excess of individual failure and an inability to turn this failure into "a strength giving story with power and meaning" (44).

In regards to hybrid interpretive methodologies for contemporary Native American fiction, possibilities for further research could take several directions. Future areas of study into Welch's fiction could focus on the complementary relationship between *The Death of Jim Loney* and *Winter in the Blood*. Indeed, several critics notice comparative inversions between the two texts. Robert W. Lewis notices that both texts feature "an alienated Native American trying to find his cultural and psychical bearings" (3) while the "families in both stories seem to offer fulfilment in and yet seem to thwart his quest for identity" (3). As well, "both protagonists have desultory affairs with women, and both seem to have little capacity for joy in bleak lives often anesthetized by alcohol" (3). Despite these similarities, the "differences are profound" (3), particularly regarding the protagonists' outcome: while Loney commits suicide, the narrator of *Winter in the Blood* "turns out to be luckier in his quest for identity" (3). Slight differences in setting are also noteworthy: "Loney ends in winter, in physical and spiritual torpor, whereas the winter of the first novel is finally cleansed from the blood" (3). Owens (148) and McFarland (84) also notice an antithetical, or complementary, relationship between the two texts. Contrasting psychic undertones are also evidenced between *Winter in the Blood* and *The Death of Jim Loney*. Specifically, while the Electra Complex is apparent in *The Death of Jim Loney*, *Winter in the Blood* emphasizes Oedipal concerns, as indicated in A. LaVonne Ruoff's observation that the nameless protagonist experiences an "Oedipal jealousy"

(66) that is “part of his inability to separate himself from [his mother] and to see himself and his mother as they really are rather than as his distorted perception makes it seem” (66). Related to psychoanalytic implications of parental identification is the fact that the “unnamed protagonist of *Winter in the Blood* has a mother [. . .] and a deceased father, [while] Loney has a father [. . .] and no mother” (McFarland 86). Finally, while *Winter in the Blood* is comically structured through the protagonist’s return to community and family, *The Death of Jim Loney* has tragic elements (86).

The fact that *Winter* and *Loney* “form a sort of antithetical pair” (McFarland 86) brings into relief Native American concepts regarding twinning, such as implied in “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt.” According to Peyer, the “‘twinness’ in every man’s personality” (104), and the “duality of the universe” (104) are reflected in tribal narrative structures, which may feature the “separation of twin stories into two halves” (104), as illustrated in Hyemeyohsts Storm’s interpretation of “The Buffalo Wives,” a universal Plains story (103). “The Buffalo Wives” is subdivided “into two almost identical sections, each one featuring a young man, the second of whom is called Contrary” (104). Recalling Chapter Two, this duality of self is also reflected in “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” through the twins, Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man and Ashes Near the Fireplace Man.

The protagonists of Welch’s contemporary texts parallel the antithetical twins of “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt.” While Loney, through symbolic renunciation of the national paternal site and his images of the dark bird, reflects Ashes Near the Fireplace Man, the nameless protagonist of *Winter in the Blood* mirrors Behind the Tipi Wall Liner Man, in that just as the “peripheral” twin shrinks “back into an infant, [. . .] loses] his speech” (Bullchild 113) and becomes “almost completely helpless again, just like a newborn baby” (113) without the centre of the medicine wheel

represented by his brother, the nameless protagonist suffers from “a case of arrested development, frozen in time by the traumatic death of his brother, Mose” (Owens 132), and, therefore, “has never matured” (132). Future research could extrapolate from Blackfoot-based methodology, discussing *Winter* and *Loney* as “twin” texts reflecting the duality implicit in “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt.” Compounded with Blackfoot methodology, employment of paternal theory could facilitate analysis of patriarchal icons in *Winter* such as Lame Bull, First Raise, Yellow Calf, and Teresa’s friend, “the priest [from] Harlem” (19). Finally, the “twin” relationship between *Winter* and *Loney* could be extended to encompass discussion of Welch’s *Fools Crow*, and *The Indian Lawyer*, as McFarland notes that, *The Indian Lawyer* “might be said to be the antitype, perhaps even the complement, of *Fools Crow*” (129). Discussion of Welch’s first four novels as two sets of “twin” texts, all of which involve Blackfoot characters and settings, suggests that his texts also reflect a medicine wheel quaternity. Thus, a larger research project would involve analysis into how Welch’s texts influence, and explain, one another as components of a medicine wheel apparatus.

The notion of complementary “twin” texts is also evident in Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues* and *Indian Killer*. While *Reservation Blues* contains Coyote references, Owl tropes preponderate in *Indian Killer*. Thus, the two novels reflect the duality of the feminine principle implied in “Coyote Tricks Owl.” Specifically, *Reservation Blues* depicts personal, and discursive, transformation through imbuelement of the social order with feminine regenerative agency, while the realization of the feminine principle is enabled through social extrication, and death – ideas associated with Owl -- in the latter text. The association with Owl and death and social, or Symbolic, extrication in *Indian Killer* is suggested during the murder of

Justin Summers (54), and in the kidnapping of a secondary character, Mark Jones (193). Thus, analysis of owl imagery in *Indian Killer* would recall previous discussion of “Coyote Tricks Owl.”

Similar to Welch’s *The Death of Jim Loney*, *Indian Killer* also employs mythic bird imagery as metaphoric for Symbolic extrication contingent on the disavowal of the law of the patriarch. Indeed, Alexie refers to “that Blackfeet guy, Loney” (220) in *Indian Killer*, implying connections between the two texts. While not as blatant as Loney’s dark bird, mythic bird imagery is suggested during John Smith’s separation from his maternal icon by helicopter:

The sky is very blue. Specific birds hurl away from the flying machine. These birds are indigenous to the reservation. They do not live anywhere else. They have purple tipped wings and tremendous eyes, or red bellies and small eyes. (6)

The birds “indigenous to the reservation” during the protagonist’s placement in the national symbolic order parallel Loney’s dark bird as metaphoric for inter-symbolic subject transference. As well, similar to *The Death of Jim Loney*, the tripartite correlation between the patriarch, the mythic bird, and the law of the father is also evidenced in *Indian Killer* in Reggie Polatkin’s relationship with his adoptive European-North American father, Bird Lawrence. The name of the patriarch, “Bird,” brings into relief the correlation between bird imagery and subjective placement within the symbolic order contingent on psychic incorporation of the paternal site. Association of the patriarch with Symbolic placement is suggested in Bird’s violent indoctrination of Reggie concerning the national story:

“[. . . What] was the name of the name of the Indian who led the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 through 1692 [. . . ?]”  
“His name was Pope [. . . .]”

“What was the name of the Spanish commander who ended the revolt?”

“Uh, Diego. Diego.”

“Diego what?”

“Diego . . . I don’t remember.”

Bird had punched Reggie in the stomach, knocking the wind out of him [. . .]

“You remember that crazy Indian’s name but not the name of the white man who saved thousands of lives? Why is that?” (92-93)

Indications that, through incorporation of the paternal site, Reggie is extricated from a traditional aboriginal discourse and written into a symbolic order preclusive of the feminine principle are suggested in the fact that “over the years, Reggie [. . .] ignore[s] his mother” (94), does not attend “local powwows” (94), “pretend[s] to be white” (94), and “bur[ies] his Indian identity so successfully that [he] becom[es] invisible” (94). Comparable to Welch’s Blackfoot tropes in *The Death of Jim Loney*, the transference between symbolic orders in *Indian Killer* is emphasized through mythic bird imagery, which is, again, metaphoric for agency of inter-Symbolic movement, often caused by the disavowal of paternal law, or incorporation of the paternal enunciative site. Thus, methodologies constructed around “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” may be conjoined with identificatory paradigms inherent in “Coyote Tricks Owl” to facilitate an interpretive apparatus for *Indian Killer*.

Another avenue of future research involving *Indian Killer* could include analysis of the national Symbolic order as haunted. In *The National Uncanny* Bergland gestures toward a haunted national symbolic order through analysis of the American Declaration of Independence:

In the Declaration, Jefferson alluded to Locke, who had written on the fundamental rights of life, liberty, and property. But he changed the words to [. . .] life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The erasure of the troublesome concept of property speaks volumes about the vexed relation that the United States has to its territory. It also gestures toward one of the most basic reasons

that American nationalism must be predicated on haunted grounds: the land is haunted because it is stolen. (9)

As stated in Chapter Three, European-Americans write Indians as ghost to justify assumptions to national territory. Psychic incorporation, as a hostile act of displacement, naturalizes placement within the national space. Partial impetus behind this psychic incorporation is based on the displacement of a European heritage for a “substitutive ancest[ry]” (Sollers in Bergland 19); and, thus, displacement of the Indian constitutes Americanization of subjects. However, an unpredictable element is inherent to this ghosting and incorporation. Indian ghosts instantiate a “dynamic of unsuccessful repression” (5), and “ghostly Indians present us with the possibility of vanishing ourselves, being swallowed up into another’s discourse [. . . thereby] serv[ing] as constant reminders of the fragility of national identity” (5). Further, “ghosts are impossible to control or evade. When Indians are understood as ghosts they are also understood as powerful figures beyond American control” (5).

In *Indian Killer* the haunting of the national symbolic order is implied through correlation between construction of the city, and construction of a discourse, illustrated when John Smith thinks “about the beauty of myths and the power of lies, how myths told too often become lies, and how lies told too often become myths” (132) then “looks at the city’s skyline” (ibid) and “understand[s] the myths and lies of its construction, the myths and lies of its architects” (132). Foregrounding the city as national discourse, the haunted symbolic order is instantiated by the “Mohawk construction workers who had passed from ordinary story into outright myth” (132); and implied when the “Old Mohawk grandfathers scar[e] children with tales of relatives, buried alive in building foundations, who come back to haunt all of the white office workers” (132-133).



Notions of a haunted Symbolic order are also evident in Reggie Polatkin's description of the Modocs, and brought into relief through Fichtean thought, as well as ideas of radical maroonage. Foregrounding Fichtean notions of landscape as inscape, that "'the external frontiers of the state' have to become the internal frontiers of the citizen" (Fichte in Bergland 4) in order to engender nationalism, Reggie Polatkin's narrative of the Modocs metaphorically implies the haunting of the American Symbolic order:

[Captain Jack] led about two hundred Modocs from a reservation in Oregon and set up camp in northern California, where they were supposed to be [. . .] Yeah, old Captain Jack had about eight warriors and the rest were women and children. Anyway, the Cavalry came after Jack. Captain Jack ran from them and hid in these lava beds, you know? Great hiding places. Miles and miles of tunnels and mazes. Captain Jack and his people fought off the Cavalry for months, man. (408)

The guerrilla warfare of the Modocs is analogous to Houston Baker's depiction of "radical maroonage" discussed in Bhabha's "Dissemination." When discussing Baker's text, Bhabha states, "for 'warriors' read writers or even 'signs'" (145):

These highly adaptable and mobile warriors took maximum advantage of local environments, striking and withdrawing with great rapidity, making extensive use of bushes to catch their adversaries in cross-fire, fighting only when and where they chose, depending on reliable intelligence networks among non-maroons (both slave and white settlers) and often communicating by horns. (Baker in Bhabha 145)

Radical maroonage serves as an "extended metaphor" (145) for the discursive signification inherent in the Harlem Renaissance (144), or a black national text that thrives on "rhetorical strategies of hybridity, deformation, masking and inversion [. . .] 'on the frontiers or margins of all American promise, profit and modes of production'" (144). Analogy between the Fichtean landscape and Symbolic order – both of which define national psychic geographies – gestures toward Captain Jack's

ordeal as metaphoric for the ghost-like “Indian,” or Indian Killer, haunting the national symbolic order, “striking and withdrawing with great rapidity,” and moving through unconscious sites metaphorically implied in the maze of “lava beds.” Similar to the maroons, or ghost-like Indians, the killer also relies on “masking and inversion,” implied in the fact that “the killer believes in all masks” (420); while notions that the killer irrupts into the Symbolic order from sites of repression, or the Real, are evidenced when s/he is referred to as a “shadow” (71).

Finally, although such an avenue of research would necessitate a more substantial investment of time, general study of Native American/ First Nations authors, including Welch and Alexie, could include academic involvement with tribal communities whose members produce contemporary fiction. This correspondence could contribute to insight of aboriginal writing, especially by way of transcribing oral narratives. While The American Folk-Lore Society collected several volumes of tribal data, this work tends toward summary as opposed to detail; for example, in *Folk-Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes* an aboriginal story called “Tceleku’tsen,” or “The Runners,” is literally transcribed in two sentences: “Three men were running a race. While they were running, they were transformed into stars” (126). While summaries are useful – indeed, “The Owl,” “The Owl-Monster,” and “Owl and Ntsaa.z,” all collected by The American Folk-Lore Society, are utilized in analysis of *Reservation Blues* – they lack the detail of indigenously written corpora of stories such as Percy Bullchild’s *The Sun Came Down*, which facilitate deeper understanding of aboriginal narratives. As well, ethnographic collections of aboriginal texts often reflect what Wickwire defines as “purist” (23) reading, characterized by editing “some or all of the ‘modern contaminants’” (23) from the “otherwise traditional body of knowledge” (23). This process of editing reflects “the scientific tendency to

crystallize living, evolving oral culture – to transform myth into a static artefact” (23) representative of what “a native North American culture *is* (was)” (23) to the Western perspective. I bring attention to early academic work in the field of aboriginal oral culture, because by suggesting research involving transcription of Native American texts I do not wish to perpetuate objectification associated with some instances of ethnography; but, instead, to promote a collaborative, dialogic process resultant in a data base for both tribal, and academic, spheres, such as suggested in Womack’s *Red on Red*, and exemplified by Robinson’s *Write It On Your Heart*. This would allow for inclusion of textual nuance and detail, and do more justice to the complexities of tribal narratives.

In *The Story of Lynx* Claude Levi-Strauss states, “it only seems to me that in societies without writing, positive knowledge fell well short of the power of the imagination, and it was the task of myths to fill this gap” (xii). The utilization of Native American/ First Nations tribal narratives in this thesis suggests that Levi-Strauss’s assertion regarding the function of aboriginal mythology is inconclusive. “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” and “Coyote Tricks Owl” do not explain natural phenomena in order to address a scientific gap. Rather, these narratives communicate philosophies, and theories, concerning identity construction and psychic processes: “Dragging Entrails Full of Dirt” illustrates the relationship between paternal identification and subjective placement within tribal reality, while “Coyote Tricks Owl” represents the duality of the feminine principle. Conjoinment of aboriginal theory with Western methodologies facilitates new interpretive strategies for contemporary Native American fiction, and provides a basis for more sophisticated theoretical modelling, thereby allowing the address of knowledge gaps within the academic criticism surrounding contemporary Native American texts. In short, these

myths can enable literary criticism of Native American/ First Nations fiction to evolve beyond being “stuck in place since *House Made of Dawn*.” And what of the state of Native American literary criticism if it does not construct new strategies for interpretation? In the words of Victor Joseph paraphrasing Jim Morrison: “this is the end, my friends, this is the end” (208).

## Works Cited

- Alexie, Sherman. "Ghost Dance." *McSweeney's Mammoth Treasury of Thrilling Tales*. Ed. Michael Chabon. New York: Vintage, 2002. 341-353.
- Alexie, Sherman. *Indian Killer*. New York: Warner Brothers, 1996.
- Alexie, Sherman. *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1994.
- Alexie, Sherman. *Reservation Blues*. New York: Warner Brothers, 1996.
- Alexie, Sherman. Review of *Killing Custer*, by James Welch. *The Bloomsbury Review*. 15 (November/ December 1995): 14.
- Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.
- Ambrose, Stephen E. *Crazy Horse and Custer: The Parallel Lives of Two American Warriors*. New York: Double Day and Company, 1975.
- Antell, Judith A. "Momaday, Welch, and Silko: Expressing the Feminine Principle Through Male Alienation." *American Indian Quarterly*. 12. 3 (Summer 1998): 213-220.
- Arens, W. *The Original Sin: Incest and Its Meaning*. New York: Oxford UP, 1986.
- Barthelme, Donald. *The Dead Father*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975.
- Benvenuto, Bice and Roger Kennedy. *The Works of Jacques Lacan: An Introduction*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.
- Bergland, Renée L. *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects*. Hanover and London: New England, 2000.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "Are You a Man or a Mouse?" *Constructing Masculinity*. Ed. Berler, Maurice, Brian Wall, Simon Watson. New York: Routledge, 1995. 57-65.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "Dissemination: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation." *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994. 139-170.
- Bird, Gloria. "The Exaggeration of Despair in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*." *The Wicazo SA Review*. 11. 2. (Fall 1995): 47-52.
- Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1972.
- Bright, William. *A Coyote Reader*. Berkeley: California, 1993.

- Bukowski, Charles. "the last days of the suicide kid." *Mockingbird Wish Me Luck*. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1998. 35.
- Bullchild, Percy. *The Sun Came Down*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985.
- Butler, Judith. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." *Inside/ Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*. Ed. Diana Fuss. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1991.
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1996.
- Cox, James. "Muting White Noise: The Subversion of Popular Culture Narratives of Conquest in Sherman Alexie's Fiction." *SAIL* 9. 4 (Winter 1997): 52-69.
- Eisenstein, Paul. "Finding Lost Generations: Recovering Omitted History in Winter in the Blood." *MELUS* 19. 3 (Fall 1994): 3-18.
- English, Horace B. and Ava Champney English. *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms: A Guide to Usage*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1958.
- Farrand, Livingston and Theresa Mayer. "The Owl." *Folk-Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes*. Ed. Franz Boas. New York: The American Folk-Lore Society, 1917. 176-177.
- Fraser, Joelle. "An interview with Sherman Alexie." *Iowa Review* 30. 3 (Winter 2000-2001): 59-70.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Complete Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Trans. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1966.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 18. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1961. 3-64.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Female Sexuality." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 21. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1961. 225-247.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Future of an Illusion." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 21. Trans. James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1961. 5-59.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*. Trans. James Strachey. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961.
- Grinnell, George Bird. *Blackfoot Lodge Tales: The Story of a Prairie People*. Lincoln: Nebraska, 1961.

- Hafen, P. Jane. "Rock and Roll, Redskins, and Blues in Sherman Alexie's Work." *SAIL* 9. 4 (Winter 1997): 71-78.
- Horne, Dee. *Unsettling Literature*. Vol. 6 of *Contemporary American Indian Writing*. Ed. Elizabeth Hoffman Nelson and Malcolm A. Nelson. New York: Peter Lang, 1999.
- Jay, Martin. "The Uncanny Nineties." *Salmagundi: A Quarterly of the Humanities and Social Sciences*. 108 (Fall 1995): 20-29.
- Jorgensen, Karen. "White Shadows: The Use of Doppelgangers in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*." *SAIL* 9. 4 (Winter 1997): 19-25.
- Jung, Carl. *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung*. Ed. Staub De Laszlo, Violet. New York: The Modern Library, 1959.
- Jung, Carl. *The Essential Jung*. Ed. Storr, Anthony. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Of The Network of Signifiers." *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. Ed. Miller, Jacques-Alain. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Hogarth, 1977. 42-53.
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Split Between the Eye and the Gaze." *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. Ed. Miller, Jacques-Alain. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Hogarth, 1977. 67-78.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Tuché and Automaton." *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. Ed. Miller, Jacques-Alain. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Hogarth, 1977. 53-64.
- Leader, Darian and Judy Groves. *Introducing Lacan*. Cambridge: Icon Books, 1996.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Story of Lynx*. Trans. Catherine Tihanyi. Chicago: Chicago, 1995.
- Lewis, Robert W. "James Welch's *The Death of Jim Loney*." *American Indian Literatures*. 5. 3 & 4 (1981): 3-5.
- Lincoln, Kenneth. *Native American Renaissance*. Berkeley: California, 1983.
- Manring, Benjamin Franklin. *Conquest of the Coeur D'Alenes, Spokanes and Palouses*. Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1975.
- Maracle, Lee. "Oratory: Coming to Theory." *By, For and About: Feminist Cultural Politics*. Ed. Wendy Waring. Toronto: Women's Press, 1994.
- Mazzola, Lars Charles. "The Medicine Wheel: Center and Periphery." *Journal of Popular Culture* 63 (Fall 1988): 63-73.

- McFarland, Ron. "Sherman Alexie's Polemical Stories." *SAIL* 9. 4 (Winter 1997): 27-38.
- McFarland, Ron. *Understanding James Welch*. Columbia: South Carolina, 2000.
- Miller, Jacques-Alain. Translator's Note. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. By Jacques Lacan. Ed. Miller, Jacques-Alain. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Hogarth, 1977. 277-282.
- Owens, Louis. *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel*. Norman: Oklahoma, 1992.
- Penn, W.S.. *Feathering Custer*. Lincoln and London: Nebraska, 2001
- Peyer, Bernd. *Hyemeyohsts Storm's Seven Arrows: Fiction and Anthropology in the Native American Novel*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1979.
- Purdy, John. "Crossroads: A Conversation with Sherman Alexie." *SAIL* 9. 4 (Winter 1997): 1-18.
- Richardson, Janine. "Magic and Memory in Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*." *SAIL* 9. 4 (Winter 1997): 39-50.
- Riley In-The-Woods, Patricia. "The Death of Jim Loney: A Ritual of Re-Creation." *Fiction-International*. 20. (Fall 1991): 157-66.
- Robinson, Harry. *Write It On Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller*. Ed. Wendy Wickwire. Vancouver: Talonbooks/ Theytus, 1989.
- Ross, John Alan. "Spokane." Vol. 12 of *Handbook of North American Indians*. Ed. Deward E. Walker. Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1998. 20 vols. 271-283.
- Sands, Kathleen. "The Death of Jim Loney: Indian or Not?" *James Welch*. Ed. Ron MacFarland. Lewiston: Confluence Press, 1986. 127-135.
- Sandoz, Mari. *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas*. New York: Hastings House, 1942.
- Spinden, Herbert J. "The Owl-Monster." *Folk-Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes*. Ed. Franz Boas. New York: The American Folk-Lore Society, 1917. 192-194.
- Storr, Anthony. Introduction. *The Essential Jung*. Ed. Storr, Anthony. Princeton: Princeton, 1983.
- Teit, James A. "Owl and Ntsaa.z." *Folk-Tales of Salishan and Sahaptin Tribes*. Ed. Franz Boas. New York: The American Folk-Lore Society, 1917. 26- 30.
- Thackeray, William. "The Dance of Jim Loney." *James Welch*. Ed. Ron McFarland. Lewiston: Confluence Press, 1986.



- Walker, Deward E. Introduction. Vol. 12 of *Handbook of North American Indians*.  
Ed. Deward E. Walker. Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1998. 20 vols. 1-7.
- Walsh, Richard. "The Dead Father: Innovative Forms, Eternal Themes." *Critical Essays on Donald Barthelme*. Ed. Richard F. Patteson. New York: G.K. Hall and Company, 1992.
- Welch, James. *The Death of Jim Loney*. New York: Penguin, 1979.
- Welch, James. *Fools Crow*. New York: Penguin, 1987.
- Welch, James. *Winter in the Blood*. Toronto: Penguin, 1974.
- Welch, James and Paul Stekler. *Killing Custer: The Battle of the Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians*. New York: Norton, 1994.
- Westrum, Dexter. "Transcendental Survival: The Way the Bird Works in *The Death of Jim Loney*." *James Welch*. Ed. Ron McFarland. Lewiston: Confluence Press, 1986.139-146.
- Wickwire, Wendy. Introduction. *Write It On Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller*. By Harry Robinson. Ed. Wendy Wickwire. Vancouver: Talonbooks/ Theytus, 1989. 11-28.
- Womack, Craig S. *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*. Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1999.