

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

NATIVE AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Gordon Sayre, PhD

Course Description

The goal of this course is to provide an in-depth review of Native American autobiographical writing.

About the Professor

Gordon Sayre is a professor of English at the University of Oregon. Dr. Sayre is a specialist in colonial and Early American Literature from the sixteenth through early nineteenth centuries with a particular interest in French colonial history and literature, in the exploration and cartography of North America, in Native American literature and ethno-history, and in natural history and eco-criticism.

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Readings

John Tanner, *The Falcon* (Penguin Classics)
George Copway, *Life, Letters, and Speeches* ed. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Donald B. Smith (University of Nebraska Press)
William Apess, *A Son of the Forest and Other Writings*, ed. Barry O'Connell (Wesleyan University Press)
James Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* ed. June Namias (U of Oklahoma Press)
Black Hawk, an Autobiography ed. Donald Jackson (U of Illinois Press)
Geronimo: His Own Story ed, S. M. Barrett (
Etahdleuh Doanmoe, *A Kiowa's Odyssey: A Sketchbook from Fort Marion*, ed. Phillip Earenfight (Trout Gallery/U of Washington Press)
Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (Chalfant Press)
Charles Eastman, *Indian Boyhood* (Corner House Publishers); *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (Dover)
Zitkala Sa, *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings* (Penguin Classics)
Maria Campbell, *Halfbreed* (McClelland and Stewart)
John Fire Lame Deer, *Lame Deer Seeker of Visions* ed. Richard Erdoes (Washington Square Press)
N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (U of New Mexico Press)
N. Scott Momaday, *The Names* (Harper and Row)

Electronic texts

On Google books (search by title; it is more effective than for names like "Peter Jones")
Albic Researches (1839) by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft "Manabozho"
History of the Ojibwa Indians (1861) by Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby)
The Ojibwa Narratives of Charles and Charlotte Kawbawgam and Jacques Le Pique 1893-1895.
"The Arrowmaker," the first story in *The Man Made of Words* by N. Scott Momaday
Samson Occom's life narrative is at: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5788/>

Week One: Nanabozho tales

Henry Schoolcraft, *Algic Researches* (1839) "Manabozho, or The Great Incarnation of the North"

Basil Johnston, *Ojibwa Heritage* (1976) "The Vision of Kitche Manitou" pp 11-20

Arthur Bourgeois, ed., *The Ojibwa Narratives of Charles and Charlotte Kawbawgam and Jacques Le Pique 1893-1895*. "Nanabozho" "Kawbawgam's Remarks on Nanabozho" "How Nanabozho came to have a Wolf Companion" and "Nanabozho in Time of Famine" 25-35

Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby), *History of the Ojebway Indians* (1861) Chapter two: "Traditions of their Origins"

We begin the course with tales of the Ojibwa culture hero Nanabozho, a mythical figure who can appear as an animal, a human, or a god, as a divine creator, or as a devious trickster. Nanabozho (whose name can be spelled or pronounced in many different ways and is also closely related to the Cree trickster Wisahkacahk) is not a person, has no birthdate nor place of death, and his exploits are told in a potentially infinite corpus of variations. But these stories celebrate a life and series of achievements, just as American Indian autobiographies do.

Why start this way? What is to be learned from these Nanabozho tales? I propose four reasons:

1. A traditional Native American Indian form of autobiography, where such does exist, would be oral-formulaic and episodic. Both before and after the colonial period, native people have told traditional stories of creation and of mythic heroes in the same settings and the same styles as they told stories of their own lives (of hunting, of visions, of self-examination, of grief, of family). They told them aloud to others, many times repeated, with evolving variations.
2. There is no rigid distinction between biography and autobiography. Autobiography as a separate genre of literature in English did not exist until the early 19th century, and many prominent autobiographers (Julius Caesar, Captain John Smith, James Boswell, Gertrude Stein) wrote of their own lives in the third person, or of their life alongside that of a close friend. We will see that Charles Eastman and Zitkala-Sa also did so.
3. In Native American cosmologies, as in other mythologies including the ancient Greek, animals speak and interact as humans do, and humans change into animal form and vice versa. In studying these Nanabozho tales we will learn to read stories without assuming or insisting that a character is human or animal, is divine or mortal.
4. In the Nanabozho myths, and Native American spirituality in general, there is no rigid separation between sacred and profane, spirit and body, pure and impure, such as are familiar from the Abrahamic religions most of us were raised in. Nanabozho (like other tricksters) engages in sexual acts, defecation, pranks and crude violence, and yet remains no less heroic and divine. He does cruel and stupid things, and suffers for his errors. Therefore it can be difficult for students to accept him as a divine and dignified figure, even though he is.

As you read the tales told by Kawbawgam in the volume edited by Arthur Bourgeois, notice how he is telling versions of stories also included in Schoolcraft's text. Match up each story with the corresponding episode in Schoolcraft. (Schoolcraft's text runs the stories together and does not provide separate titles or headings.)

One of the episodes constitutes an "Earth Diver" myth, where the loon, muskrat, beaver (and other animals in other versions), are sent down to the bottom of a primordial lake or sea by Nanabozho to seek dirt with which to construct the terrestrial world. Sometimes the platform on

which the dirt is planted is the shell of a turtle, and the concept of the world as "Turtle Island" is common in Iroquois mythology and has been taken up by poet Gary Snyder, whose most famous book of poetry bears that title, and by others. These earth diver creation myths are common across Native North America and also among the indigenous peoples of north Asia as far east as Finland. For obvious reasons they are not often told by people living in arid regions. Do you think this fact supports the idea that Native Americans migrated to the continent from Siberia ten thousand years ago or longer? Modern anthropologists affirm this theory, which was widespread as long ago as the seventeenth century and is embraced by Peter Jones also. How does Peter Jones interpret it?

In modern America stories, talking animals are often perceived as intended for children, even though among Native people such myths were told to listeners of all ages. What are the consequences of this for modern adult readers of Native creation stories? How might we have to change our reading practices as a result?

Peter Jones, a Methodist preacher and missionary whom we will read again in week 4, writes "the reader will observe many resemblances in this tradition of Nanahbozhoo to that beautiful account of Noah's flood handed down to us in sacred history" (35). Why does Jones make this assertion? Are the resemblances really so close as to convince you that the two stories have a common origin? What are the differences between a trickster and a biblical prophet such as Noah, or Jonah, whom Schoolcraft evokes in analyzing one of the Nanabozho tales he writes down?

Week Two: John Tanner part 1

Tanner's narrative is a unique text in American Literature. The original title from 1830, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner*, put the book in genre of captivity narratives, which had been very popular in Anglo-America since the late 17th century. Mary Rowlandson's account of her captivity during King Philip's War in New England in 1676 is acknowledged as the first American Indian captivity narrative, and was a bestseller. But Tanner's story is not like these other texts, is not a brief captivity among "savages" followed by a return to his family and home community. It is a story of profound cultural transformation. American Indians held strong tribal identities, but they did not restrict tribal membership to the "native born," and instead actively sought to increase tribal population through captives taken in battle, or through the wholesale annexation of smaller bands. Tanner was fully adopted and learned the skills of an Ojibwa man. He left behind the English language and any Christian beliefs he may have absorbed from his father, a minister. In no other text of nineteenth-century American literature do we learn so much about the lives and beliefs of Native hunter-gatherers, and Tanner conveys the challenges of a world where tribes were mixed up and reconfigured by the harsh mortality of European diseases and the merciless capitalism of the fur trade. This is why the book qualifies as a Native American autobiography.

Later in the course we will learn about the role of white editors and translators in the composition and publication of American Indian autobiographies, and so you should know now that Tanner, who could not read and write at the time, delivered his story orally in 1827 to Edwin James, a doctor, botanist, and explorer who had participated in an expedition led by Stephen Long to explore the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains in 1819-1820. In the edition we are reading, titled *The Falcon* and published by Penguin, James's introduction and appendices have been left out, and in fact James is not mentioned anywhere in the book! I recommend that readers consult an electronic version of the original, available free on Google books.

Tanner's narrative can be a challenge to read. He was so immersed in Native life that he did not appreciate how alien it would be to most contemporary readers, much less those living two centuries later. Here are two lists of key persons and places. Note the practice of separating syllables in Indian words with dashes, a common practice in 19th century texts:

Manito-o-gheezik, his captor and first adoptive father (there's another man with the same name who appears in the second half of the text)
unnamed wife of Manito-o-gheezik, his first adoptive mother
Kish-kau-ko, son of Manito-o-gheezik, whom Tanner finds at Detroit years later, on p235
Pe-shau-ba, war chief of the Ottawas, p34
Net-no-kwa, his second adoptive mother
Taw-ga-we-ninne, her husband, seventeen years younger than her, p16
Kee-wa-tin, his son, whom Tanner calls "my brother"
Wa-me-gon-a-biew, older brother of Kee-wa-tin, and a central character
Waw-be-be-nais-sa, introduced p53, and he marries Netnokwa's niece p63
Wah-ge-tote (spelled variously and introduced in chap. 6) wants Tanner to marry his daughter.
Shawnee, of Ohio Valley, p 7
Cree, of the northern forests of Canada, around Hudson Bay
Ojibbeway, of the area around Lake Superior
Assiniboine, of the Canadian Plains in today's Saskatchewan
Ottawaw, a subgroup of the Ojibway, the tribe of Net-no-kwa, from northern Lake Huron
Sioux, and subgroup Yanktons, longtime enemies of the Ojibway, in Minnesota and Dakotas

Tanner is first captured at his father's farm along the Ohio River by Saginaw Ojibwa, and taken to the Saginaw region of southeast Michigan. He endures some harsh treatment in the kind initiation rites that (not unlike today's fraternity hazing) worked psychologically to instill a sense of loyalty in the new member. But on p15 he is purchased by Netnokwa, who is looking for a replacement for her deceased son. Anthropologists call this phenomenon requickening; the adopted child was meant to take the same name and identity as the person he or she replaced. Thus when Tanner meets Peshauba p35, Peshauba tells of things that his predecessor did as if Tanner would remember them.

Netnokwa, Tanner's adopted mother, is tragic, heroic, and mystical. Read what Native writer Louise Erdrich writes about her in her introduction, p. vii. Tanner is very loyal to her, and sticks by her even as her son Wamegonabiew leaves, or wants to, on p45. Tanner shows a rivalry with Wamegonabiew, as on p42 where he almost kills him, thinking he is a bear. Why does Tanner respect Netnokwa so much? Does he believe that she has special spiritual powers? Look at the stormy crossing of Lake Winnipeg p28, is it Netnokwa's prayer that gets them to shore safely? Also p24 where Tanner nearly freezes to death (first of several times).

On pp32-34 and many times subsequently Tanner tells of the spirit hunt (or medicine hunt as others call it). In the first few instances it is Netnokwa who locates game through her dream visions, and tells her sons to go hunt it. Read the account of the spirit hunt on pp47-48. The spiritual helper who appears in one's dreams is known by the Cree word *Pawakan*. In the second half of the book we will see that Tanner acquires his own, although he never uses the word *Pawakan*. This may prompt you to say Tanner is skeptical of the spirit hunt, but look at p54.

Tanner's book is often called a captivity narrative, but has not been considered a conversion narrative, given the fact that he does not join any Protestant church. (You should know however that later in life, after the book was published, he worshipped in a Baptist church in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.) But the narrative tells us a great deal about Tanner's assessment of Ojibwa spiritual beliefs. One notable instance is the story beginning on p92, of the "place of the two dead men." How does the book address readers who may be dismissive of Indian "superstitions" and how does it portray Tanner's own beliefs?

Among the distinctive spiritual practices of Ojibwa were shamanic societies including the Midewiwin, which Tanner and James spell as "Metai." A chief of the Metai is introduced p100. Those

who wished to join a Mide society had to pay for lessons from an accomplished shaman, but the special powers thus acquired were worth the price, Tanner believed. A competing cult was called Wawbeno (see p122), but Tanner was quite dismissive of it.

On p71 and 97 are two episodes of Tanner's self-recognition, moments particularly important in an autobiography. What was your reaction to these? How did it change your assessment of him?

Week 3: John Tanner part 2

In the readings for the following few weeks we shall meet Native Americans (such as Copway, Apess, and Occom) who converted to Christianity, a religion of a sacred book, and renounced indigenous beliefs that, in the eyes of most Europeans, were based on superstition, magic, and oral traditions. One thing that Tanner's narrative can teach us is that many Indians of North America in fact did use forms of writing, often hieroglyphic symbols, and that they believed that writing, reading, and manipulating these hieroglyphs could give them access to great power. Tanner tells us of two techniques of using inscribed symbols to obtain knowledge of and exert power over people, animals, and objects at a distance: the kosaubunzitchegun, a kind of divination map used to locate enemy warriors (see pp164-166), and the muzzinineensuk, a method of drawing animals that was useful for medicine hunting (see pp181-184). The latter includes a lengthy footnote which is one of the few spots in the Penguin edition where Edwin James' voice speaks to the reader. James believed that he could find correspondences between the religion of the Ojibwa and those of Asia, notably the Hindus.

Consult in the on-line version pp348-363 of the original 1830 edition. The two songs in the appendix of songs, sung at Midewiwin rituals or for medicine hunts, are based on hieroglyphic texts. The book provides the hieroglyphs, the words as they would sound in Ojibwa, an English translation, and a commentary that, especially in the second of these songs, is laden with Edwin James' commentary and footnotes. We can see in the songs how the hieroglyphs were used as muzzinineen, how Nanabozho was invoked in prayers or rituals, and how the Mide practitioner had to spend much time and expense in learning to use these symbols.

It is a challenge to study Native American religions, because if one is coming from a Judeo-Christian or Islamic perspective (all are religions of the book and of prophecy), certain types of activity and worship are considered "religious" and certain types of writing considered sacred, while others are relegated to "superstition" or "magic." Tanner portrays himself both as skeptical of some Indian beliefs (recall the story of "the place of the two dead men" or the beliefs about lightning), and as a strong believer in certain forms of prayer or magic, such as the two we've just examined.

The "prophet of the Shawneese" whose revelation Tanner learns of on p144 was a real man, Tenskwatawa. We will hear from him again when we read Black Hawk, and Charles Eastman. His message of Indian revival spread all over eastern North America from 1806 to 1810. How does Tanner react to this message? It is just one of several spiritual movements that Tanner tells of, such as the "revelation from the Great Spirit to Manito-o-gheezik" (177), and "a new revelation from the Great Spirit" to "Ais-kaw-ba-wis, a quiet and rather insignificant person" (185). Tanner at this time was not a Christian, but he expressed strong opinions about what kind of Indian spiritual beliefs he found compelling, and which were bogus. Why do you think he believes in certain kinds of spirituality, and rejects others?

The story of Tanner's marriage is told on pp84-85, p94 and pp100-104. As he says, "the commencement of our acquaintance was not after the usual manner of the Indians" (101). How in fact does this courtship differ from Indian custom? Do you think he is anticipating what his readers would think about marriage? How does he describe and justify shifting his affections and allegiance from Netnokwa to his wife?

Thinking about the formation of Tanner's marriage is important for the second half of the book, where his marriage and family fall apart. He wants to take his children with him back to the U.S. but his in-laws (and likely his wife) do not want him to. Tanner tells us little of his wife's sentiments on this matter, and even leaves it ambiguous whether he has had two wives or only one. But we do see how the conflicts with in-laws lead to violent clashes. How do you think you would react if you were one of Tanner's sons or daughters? Would you want to follow him?

Giahgewagomo twice kidnaps Tanner's son p203 and then tries to keep Tanner from taking his daughters when he goes back to the United States pp. 266-7. What do you suppose Giahgewagomo's motives were? Does Capt. Bulger on p267 defend Tanner's right to take the girls simply because he is white? Keep in mind that traders and soldiers treated the Indians paternalistically (U.S. policy still does) but that in cases of divorce most tribal customs gave the children to the mother. Is "the children's mother" as he insists on calling her, his first wife Miskwabunokwa? In the gruesome events of pp268-276 his daughters don't really seem to want to go with him. They leave him for dead on the island; they become worried that Omezuhgwutoons may be waiting to ambush Tanner, but they don't warn their father or try to help him escape Omezuhgwutoons's attack. We read of Tanner's tears p254 but not of theirs. This starts to look like a sordid custody battle, in which the white traders who take his side don't seem to have the children's best interests in mind, not on p276 anyway.

Let's conclude by thinking again of the overarching question of whether Tanner should be considered an Indian, for some have claimed he was not.

On p158 a man named Wagetone confronts Tanner and says "You are a strangers, and one of many who have come from a distant country to feed yourself and your children with that which does not belong to you." This is one of only a few instances where Tanner is singled out by Indians as being an outsider. But does Wagetone mean that he is a white man? What evidence can you find that he was recognized as being distinct among the Indians he lived with?

Week Four:

George Copway, *Life, Letters, Speeches*

Peter Jones, "A Brief Sketch of the Life of the Author" and chapter 1

This week we turn to two Ojibway autobiographers who were born and raised just north of Lake Ontario, in the Missassauga region. They shared the language, mythological traditions, and some of the cultural practices of Tanner's Odawa band, far to the northwest, but in regards to their Christian faith and their efforts to find respect and remuneration as preachers and writers, their lives were much more like Pequot William Apess, whom we will read in the following weeks.

The Nebraska press edition of Copway's work combines his 1847 book *Life, History and Travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-gowh (George Copway)* with some of the speeches and correspondence which were added to the 1850 re-edition of his book. Please read the Life and the Speeches, pp65-163 and 189-201. I also recommend reading the introductions by A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Donald Smith, prominent Native Studies scholars in the U.S. and Canada, on pp1-60.

Ruoff provides an excellent introduction not only to Copway but to the genre of American Indian autobiography. For instance, she explains how and why Copway (like Jones and other Indian autobiographers in this course from Occom to Lamé Deer) combined his life story and spiritual experiences, whether Christian or otherwise, with ethnographic descriptions of tribal customs. Smith describes the meteoric rise and fall of Copway as a literary and political celebrity in New York City from 1848-1850. During this brief period, Copway lectured to large crowds, enjoyed favorable reviews of his book, and met prominent men including Francis Parkman and Henry

Wadsworth Longfellow (who used information gleaned from Copway in writing his epic poem *Hiawatha*). Because his tribe was being forced out of southern Ontario, he proposed to found and lead a homeland for displaced Ojibwa in the Dakotas, land already occupied by their traditional enemies the Sioux. The new reserve was to be named Ke-gah-ga, after himself. (Note how he writes, a propos of the afterlife, that "The future state of the Ojebwas, was in the Far West" [91]). But beginning in August 1849, three of Copway's four children died within six months, and by late 1850 he was sinking into depression, poverty, and obscurity. Some scholars, including Smith, find evidence in Copway's writings of his later psychic instability, depression or desperation. Do you see any evidence for this, and if so where?

Autobiography was a new genre in the 1840s but many readers were accustomed to reading biographies of important political or spiritual leaders. Autobiographies by American Indians often faced the challenge of justifying why an obscure and disadvantaged man of a "savage" race would seek to publish his life story. Copway writes on p73 that "I cannot boast of an exalted parentage, nor trace the past history to some renowned warrior in days of yore." In the following two pages, how does he promote the romantic idea that the gifts of nature can make up for his family's lack of cultural prestige?

In chapter 3 Copway describes two Ojibway spiritual practices that should be familiar from reading Tanner's narrative: the Midewiwin society, which he calls "the Me-tae-we-gah-mig or Grand Medicine Lodge" (82), and the medicine or spirit hunt. How does his account of these two practices differ from Tanner's?

In chapter 9 Copway writes of his conversion experience. You may or may not be familiar with the conversion narrative genre, which is so important in Western literature since the Bible and St. Augustine's *Confessions*. Either way, think about these questions: How does nature provide appropriate settings for the conversion experience? What metaphors does Copway use to describe the emotional rush of that moment? What lines from the Gospels or popular hymns does he include in his text?

Peter Jones' *History of the Ojebway Indians* was published in 1861, five years after the author's death, and as the title indicates, the book was not primarily a narrative of the author's life but an account of his tribe and its culture that is more thorough than Copway's effort. He includes much more about the Ojibwa language than Copway does. The Methodist missionaries who published the book provided the life of the author in the introduction. Examine how the biography of the Indian convert follows the formula of the conversion narrative, that Copway was also participating in, but adds elements of hagiographies or pious tributes to devout men and women written by and for members of a church.

The two Ojibway Methodist preachers, Jones and Copway, differed in personal style, but shared the same missionary movement, and worked together to promote it. Copway mentions his work with Jones on p144. The task of defending Ojibwa culture and rights while at the same time promoting Methodism was a difficult one. How did each writer try to reconcile Ojibwa mythology (including Nanabozho tales) with Christian beliefs?

You can learn more about Peter Jones in Donald B. Smith's biography *Sacred Feathers: The Rev. Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians*. Bernd Peyer's *The Tutor'd Mind* is an excellent source for biographical information about George Copway and William Apens.

Week Five:

Samson Occom, "A Short Narrative of My Life" (1768)

Lives of Hiacoomes, Momonequem, and John Tackanash, from *Experience Mayhew's Indian Converts* (1727, ed. Laura Liebman, 2008) pp91-106

William Apess, *Experiences of Five Christian Indians* (1833)

This week we read about the lives of Christian Indians in New England, from the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries. From the first arrival of the Mayflower in 1620, Puritan colonists of New England were most concerned with building their own Christian community, but among them were a few missionaries devoted their lives to converting the local Indians to their radical strain of Protestantism, and interpreted the results of their efforts as indicative of God's design for New England. John Eliot (1604-1690) supervised the translation of the Bible into the native Algonquian language of Massachusetts, and published a grammar of the language as well. He worked to establish "praying towns" where Indian converts settled and practiced agriculture and trades after the manner of the colonists, yet were kept apart from the English colonists in nearby towns. Thomas Mayhew Jr. (1621-1657), and his grandson Experience Mayhew (1673-1758), pursued missions on the island of Martha's Vineyard, home to a community of Wampanoag Indians. Experience published in London a book containing brief life stories of 128 Indian men, women and children whom his family had known on the island, including 22 men who preached the new faith to their tribe.

The methods used by these missionaries to the Indians in New England were in contrast to the famous Jesuits of New France and to French and Spanish Catholic priests elsewhere in North America. Catholic missionaries often immersed themselves in remote Indian villages to learn the local languages or traveled with hunters and fishers. As celibate priests they did not hesitate to risk captivity and martyrdom. While they wrote some of the most erudite recorded grammars and glossaries of Native languages, they rarely tried to teach their converts to read and write in French, Spanish, or Latin. Protestants, on the other hand, placed great importance on being able to read the Bible in the vernacular, and therefore a translation of the Bible was instrumental to the mission cause. Experience Mayhew spoke Wampanoag fluently and used Eliot's translation among his converts. In fact, he complained that copies of it were scarce by the early 1700s.

Mayhew observes in his Introduction that "tho Considerable numbers of the Indians have learned to read and write, yet they have mostly done this but after the rate the poor Men of the English are wont to do: Nor have our Indians the same Advantage of Books as the English, few of them being able to read and understand English books in any measure well. Moreover, there be but few Books comparatively yet published in the Indian tongue" (94).

Literacy, education, and conversion were all bound together in the lives of the Indian converts of New England, and the processes were at first carefully managed by the missionaries. The Mayhews' early converts such as Hiacoomes learned basic English but preached to the Wampanoag in that language. Their life stories were printed and come down to us only in the brief speeches and edifying portraits recorded in *Indian Converts*. The Mohegan minister Samson Occom (1723-1792) achieved the status of a formally ordained minister with his own parish and missions, and published two works in his lifetime, a sermon and a collection of hymns. Occom was born in southeastern Connecticut and educated in the 1740s at Eleazar Wheelock's Indian Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut. The school moved to Lebanon and Hanover, New Hampshire around 1770 and was renamed Dartmouth College.

The life stories of Occom, of Apess, and of most of Mayhew's flock are structured around a conversion experience. For the New England Calvinists neither church membership nor salvation of one's soul could be taken for granted. Congregants were supposed to deliver public declarations confessing their sins and confirming their true faith. Because the Indians were perceived as

heathen pagans, their conversion experiences could be all the more powerful evidence of divine favor toward the New England project. Mayhew finds in the life of Hiacommes evidence of God's Providence, not only in his own piety but also trials he meets, the death of his child and in the resistance he meets from Wampanoag Pawows who cling to traditional beliefs. In Occom's brief narrative he writes of his work teaching reading and piety to his Indian students on Long Island, passing along to a younger generation the instruction he received from Wheelock. The misfortunes and financial hardship he faced are evidence of his own piety in the face of adversity, but also protests aimed at the donors who were providing much more money to white missionaries than to Occom.

When Natives became ministers among their own people, working to gather them into the Christian church of their particular denomination, we see the genres of autobiography, the conversion narrative, and the missionary relation merging, and the Native subject becoming more autonomous. In the work of Apess, the "Five Christian Indians" the missionary is Apess himself, and he is one of the five converts. How does the structure of these autobiographies, each of which includes a conversion moment, differ based on the relationship between subject and narrator?

The form of the conversion narrative can help us understand one of the key concepts of autobiography, the distinction between narrator and protagonist. The narrator is the autobiographer as he or she looks back over his or her life and writes the text. The protagonist is the same person at the moment in the past that is being narrated. You might think of the protagonist as a character in a novel, and the narrator as the author of the novel, except that the narrator works from his or her memory to (re)create the protagonist. In conversion narratives a similar contrast exists between the subject post-conversion, and the protagonist in his or her earlier, sinful state. Compare the conversion experiences of the five. Do you find certain common elements?

Apess was raised by foster parents after his grandparents abused him. His wife "had to be placed out among strangers," Hannah Caleb "was placed in a white family to be brought up." Sally George appears to have been raised speaking Pequot and therefore with her parents or close kin. We will see in later weeks that in the 19th and 20th centuries many Indian children were sent to boarding schools. Being separated from one's parents has regrettably become a common element in Native American autobiographies. How does this orphan status change the process of identity formation? Does an adoptee acquire the religion and ethnicity of the adoptive parents?

Week Six:

William Apess, *A Son of the Forest*, and "Eulogy for King Philip."

William Apess's five publications from the 1830s were re-issued in 1992. Editor Barry O'Connell and the University of Massachusetts Press have published both *On Our Own Ground*, *The Complete Writings of William Apess, A Pequot*, and an shorter version titled *A Son of the Forest*. Either one is fine for this course for they both contain the three texts we are reading, but page numbers here refer to *On Our Own Ground*.

Before 1992 few scholars were aware of Apess, and some were reluctant to include him among Native American Autobiographers. Arnold Krupat in *The Voice in the Margin* (1989) wrote (using the alternate spelling that William himself used during his life) that "Apes proclaims a sense of self, if we may call it that, deriving entirely from Christian culture" (145). Krupat and H. David Brumble had concentrated on Indian autobiographers like Geronimo, Black Elk, and Black Hawk, who were not literate and told their life stories to amanuenses. In *Ethnocriticism* (1992), Krupat writes, "every aspect of the Indian autobiography, including the particular sense of self conveyed, is at least theoretically ascribable to its non-Native editor as much as to its Native subject" (220).

Apess, like both George Copway and Peter Jones a few years later, became a Methodist preacher. The Methodists were an evangelical sect founded by John Wesley in the 1730s, and they sought out converts among Native Americans and African Americans, disadvantaged peoples whom others often spurned. But this often aroused a hostile response from established churches and from the ruling classes in the society, in England and America. Apess complains that he was persecuted not so much for being an Indian as for being a Methodist. Compare p22: "the abuse heaped upon me was in consequence of my being a Methodist," with p130: "the burden that was heaped upon me" because he was Indian.

Religion and Ethnicity:

What makes one Jewish or Catholic or Methodist, Native American or African American? Is it the characteristics of your body, the assessment of your peers, the genetic heritage from your parents, the judgment of some distant authority, or your own free choice? Apess's life provokes these basic questions, for he chose his faith and cultivated his ethnicity after being raised by non-Indian foster parents. Consider these questions and contrast how each of these five categories is defined.

Autobiography, Literacy and Identity:

What is required to make an autobiography (or memoir, or life story) authentic? If the person follows a formula, does this make the autobiography inauthentic, or false? Does the person have to be literate to write it himself or herself? Or can she/he dictate to another person, an amanuensis, to write down? What degree of intervention by an editor is permitted before the text becomes the editor's text rather than the story of the person herself? How would you classify Anne Wampy and Hannah Caleb's stories according to the answer you develop?

In Apess the difference between narrator and protagonist is as strong as in any of our other autobiographers so far. The protagonist as a young man was lonely, distraught, spiritual, but not political and only vaguely aware of his tribal culture. "I was nothing but a poor ignorant Indian" 42 a line written with a lot of irony. He gives only a romantic, idealized, and inaccurate account of his father and mother. His grandparents, evidently Pequots, abused him. Only when he spent time with Aunt Sally George (one of the "five Christian Indians") does he appear to have received an introduction to tribal culture.

Thus Apess is among the first American Indian autobiographers to write of being alienated from his tribal culture, and of working to relearn and restore it. He employs several ironic figures to this purpose. The "forest" of his title should be his homeland but he is unfamiliar with it, and afraid of the Indian women he meets picking berries there. He recalls being ashamed of the label "Indian" and of the color of his skin, even as "our nation retains the original complexion of our common father, Adam" (34). His conversion to Methodism brings along with it a conversion to Pequot identity, and the power to know and speak proudly of his racial heritage.

I have included Apess' *Eulogy for King Philip* to show how, at a time when the genres of autobiography and biography still overlapped, Apess practiced both. Metacom, aka King Philip, was a Wampanoag Indian from Rhode Island who led an Indian war of resistance against the New England colonists in 1675-76. Apess delivered his Eulogy as a public oration before large crowds in Boston, and after the fashion of such oratory, elevated his subject to the status of a great war hero, such as Napoleon and George Washington. His rhetorical argument asks his audience to venerate King Philip as a hero even if he fought against their own ancestors, or, at a time when more and more Americans were recent immigrants with no ancestry among the Puritans, to acknowledge King Philip as their own patriotic ancestor: "as the immortal Washington lives endeared and engraven on the hearts of every white in America, never to be forgotten in time— even such is the immortal Philip honored" (277). Because the English invaded Indian New England

in the 1600s much as the English army attacked in the Revolutionary War, Apess argues that it was the Indians' patriotic duty to resist. Apess himself claims descent from Metacom, "King of the Pequot tribe of Indians" (3) even though Metacom was a Wampanoag.

First paper topic:

1. We have read examples of Native American cosmology in the Nanabozho tales, and then some efforts by Christian converts (Ojibwa and others) to reconcile their tribe's beliefs with their new religion. How do the Christian Indian autobiographers, Copway, Occom, Jones and Apess, appeal to their readers to accept the validity of Native Americans as Christians? What elements of Christ's gospel support their goals, and how do they critique the behavior of Christians in the dominant colonial society?
2. We also read John Tanner's explanations of his own spiritual practices among the Ojibwa. How does Tanner's book handle the inherent conflict between presenting belief systems of the Indians, and anticipating to the skeptical or dismissive attitude which his non-Indian readers would likely have toward these beliefs? Some examples are: beliefs about the moose pp82-83, the night that Tanner camped at "The Place of the Two Dead Men" pp92-93, and beliefs about lightning pp123-24, but there are many other passages that could be used to answer this question. Your analysis should not simply state whether or not Tanner believes what the Indians believe, but how the writing in his narrative shifts between the two competing world views.
3. In reading Apess I posed basic questions about the relationship between religious, family, and ethnic identity. In the United States, which has a long history of evangelism and a proliferation of Protestant sects, we tend to think of religious identity as a matter of individual choice, whereas ethnicity is determined by one's ancestry. Native Americans may have different ideas. Describe this contrast, working with the texts by Apess, Tanner, and Copway. Consider how adoption can change identity, as well as how Native American spirituality differs from church-based worship.

Week Seven: Mary Jemison

This week and the two following feature "as-told-to" autobiographies, which are the result of a "bicultural composite composition" as Arnold Krupat puts it, and a "three part collaboration." The three parts are: the Native autobiographical subject who provides the narrative; a white editor-amanuensis who edits, polishes, revises" the form of the text; and a "mixed-blood interpreter/translator." (*Native American Autobiography: an Anthology* [3]). Krupat adds that this third role is the haziest and least understood, and in some cases, I would add, it may have been fulfilled by either of the first two. In the anglophone literary tradition translators are meant to remain invisible, and accordingly we never learn whether John Tanner spoke to Edwin James in English or in Ojibwa, or if a translator worked with the two. In the case of Black Hawk, the role of interpreter Antoine LeClaire was minimized in the published volume. For Jemison's story, James Seaver tells us in his introduction that she spoke to him in English, but that "we should have been unable to have obtained her history" (57) if not for the presence of Thomas Clute, her advocate or attorney. Clute was supposed to ensure that she did not get swindled out of more of her land, but it is not clear that he performed this function to her benefit.

In considering Copway and Apess, we looked at how each acknowledged the literary conceit that life histories are written only about great men, for warriors and leaders, and that nonetheless the lives of the humble, such as American Indians who undertook to write and publish their own life histories, could still be worth reading. In the Preface and Introduction James Seaver tackles a similar question; Mary Jemison is a humble woman who has taken up life as an Indian, yet Seaver

is trying to sell her life story as a text that can be educational for young readers. How does he do this? Note what he says about statues of great people (and recognize the irony that Mary herself is now memorialized in a bronze statue at Letchworth State Park in New York). The Preface can be confusing but try to untangle what Seaver is saying. Are common people the true source of virtue? Or is the proper reading of p49 that this is a negative example, that "a knowledge of the lives of the vile and abandoned" show us what not to do in our lives?

Jemison's story as captivity narrative:

The Indian captivity narrative was a popular genre in early America, and even the basis for an oral tradition, as Seaver evokes it p53. Mary's parents are aware of tales of barbarities inflicted upon captives, and warn her of it p63. The other captivity narrative we have read was John Tanner's. Among common elements we find in that text and this is on p64, the white sheet is an instance of the foreshadowing common in spiritual autobiographies, and the premonitions recall the opening pages of Tanner. After Jemison comes to feel at home among the Seneca she views the prospect of being redeemed or sold back to the Anglos at Niagara p93 as another captivity; the cultural contrast has been turned inside out. Chapter 9 has another offer for her to end her captivity, "to go to her friends" (119), but she does not want to.

Fighting for her land:

The second half of the book tells of Jemison's grief for lost sons, and of contests for her land. How would you describe the contrast among her sons, by two different fathers, Thomas, John and Jesse? Can you sense how some move more toward white society while others prefer the Seneca ways? John murders Tom, and then is himself murdered. It's hard to imagine a more severe trial for a mother.

What is the basis of Jemison's claim to the Gardow Flats? As a Seneca she claims it, but she seems to have some extra privilege as a white woman, and she seems to move further away from daily interaction with the Seneca when she goes there. By U.S. law referred to on p154, only the federal government could negotiate with Indian tribes for land cessions, and individual Indians not only could not hold title to property, they were not even recognized as U.S. citizens. Mary Jemison's status as a white woman made it possible for her to sell her land directly, and so the speculators in chap. 15 may be simply taking advantage of her. The land on the Gardow flats "became my own in a few years, by virtue of a deed from the Chiefs of the Six Nations" in 1797 (106). Later, Micah Brooks and Thomas Clute get the NY State legislature to pass an "act for my naturalization, and ratifying and confirming the title of my land" in 1817 (154). Rather than doing her a favor, this may have simply made it easier for men to take her land, using deeds she could not read.

Men and Women, Sons and Daughters:

James Seaver used gender stereotypes to overcome the prejudice against American Indians that he held and believed his readers held. Regardless of racial identity, men in the book are violent, ruthless, greedy, whereas women are sentimental and emotional, are mothers and caregivers. How does this contrast affect the way Jemison's children are represented? Notice how her four daughters are scarcely mentioned between p95 and p160.

To what degree is this text authored by Mary Jemison herself, to what degree by James Seaver? Where do you see evidence of Seaver imposing his ideas on her narrative? For the life of Hiokatoo, and of Simon Girty, Seaver credits George Jemison, the man who may or may not be related to Mary. So it's clear that those sections are not Mary's words. But in other parts of the book it is harder to tell. Look at pp157-158, for example. Which lines do you think are Jemison's words, and which are Seaver's. What evidence do you use for your decision?

Week Eight: Black Hawk

It is in Black Hawk's narrative that the tripartite relationship Arnold Krupat describes--between autobiographical subject, the translator, and the editor--becomes most complex and important. Krupat calls Black Hawk's life narrative "the first of those compositely produced texts I call Indian autobiographies" (*Native American Autobiography: An Anthology* 5). Black Hawk spoke of his life in his own Sauk language to Antoine LeClaire, a government interpreter who had also interpreted at the treaty ending the Black Hawk War in 1832. LeClaire, or LeClair, was the son of a French-Canadian father and a Potawatomie mother, and reputedly spoke French, Spanish, English and a dozen Indian languages. He benefitted from the treaty he worked on by obtaining large tracts west of the Mississippi River, where he subsequently founded and laid out the streets of Davenport, Iowa. He was a more prominent man than John B. Patterson, the Galena, Illinois newspaper editor who obtained LeClaire's translation of Black Hawk's words and published it in 1833, proclaiming himself "editor and sole proprietor" of the text. Notice how in the frontmatter to the text we read LeClair's certification that the text is "strictly correct, in all its particulars" and then Patterson's claim that "he has written this work according to the dictation of Black Hawk, through the United States' Interpreter...He does not, therefore, consider himself responsible for any of the facts, or views, contained in it." Patterson passes the buck to LeClair for any possible problems arising from the book. LeClair's own notes and manuscripts have been lost, frustrating any modern efforts to recapture a Black Hawk unaltered by Patterson.

Having read James Seaver's account of Mary Jemison's life last week, compare the style of John Patterson's book, for example his generous use of exclamation points! In comparing the two, what are the consequences of the fact that Jemison was a woman who, Seaver insisted, retained the emotional sensitivity of her white parents, whereas Black Hawk was a man, and a stoic warrior?

In John Tanner's narrative we read briefly about the message of the Shawnee Prophet, the brother of Tecumseh and the spiritual leader of the Indian resistance to United States conquest of the lands of Old Northwest (roughly Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois) before and during the War of 1812. You will recall that Tanner was rather dismissive of the Prophet's spiritual instructions, and was too distant from the war to be concerned by the military strategy. How does Black Hawk respond to the message of the Shawnee Prophet, whom he first mentions on p58?

Most of Black Hawk's narrative tells of the treaties, deceptions, battles and flights of his Sauk people from around 1800 to 1832, but a section in the middle of the text (pp. 87-97) offers the kind of ethnography we also see in other autobiographies such as Copway's. What does Black Hawk choose to emphasize among his tribe's customs, and how does he use it to send a message to readers about the failings of the United States government in treating with the Sauks?

In 1832, as the Black Hawk War in Illinois was reported in newspapers of the East and Midwest, there appeared two large books entitled *Indian Biography*, one in New York, in two volumes, written by B. B. (Benjamin Bussey) Thatcher, and the other in Boston by Samuel Gardner Drake. Both were hugely successful. Thatcher's work saw thirteen editions by 1870, and Drake's reached its fifteenth, in 1880, five years after his death. Several different publishers in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia published the books, under various titles, most often in inexpensive editions designed to reach a broad audience. This gives a hint at the enormous popular interest in the lives of American Indians, particularly the tribal chiefs and warriors who had been either the allies or foes of Anglo-American explorers and leaders. The brave defiance and ultimate defeat experienced by Tecumseh, Osceola, Black Hawk (and later in the 1870s and 1880s by Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Geronimo) made them cult heroes, the kind of Indian names that inspired young boys in their play, and were bestowed on many towns and commercial products (nine U.S. states have towns named "Osceola" and eight "Black Hawk"). As far as literature goes, this marketing phenomenon

resulted in strong sales for Indian autobiographies including Black Hawk's, as well as the anthologies of Indian Biography compiled by Thatcher, by Drake, and the lavishly illustrated series by Thomas McKenney and James Hall, *History of the Indian tribes of North America, with biographical sketches and anecdotes of the principal chiefs : Embellished with one hundred and twenty portraits* (1836-1844). Journalists, entrepreneurs, and anthropologists sought out such Indian leaders and tried to get their stories.

The final twelve pages of the autobiography, as well as the introduction by Donald Jackson, details the tour that Black Hawk was forced to make in 1833, while a prisoner of the U.S. Army. He was taken to meet President Andrew Jackson in Washington, and shortly after that, in Baltimore, "The Indians and the president attended the theatre the same night, and it was remarked, that the attention of the house was pretty nearly equally divided between them....Considerable inconvenience was experienced from the meeting of two such conspicuous characters as the PRESIDENT of the United States and Black-hawk, at the same time, in populous places." Those lines are from one of Samuel Gardner Drake's books, cited above. The "inconvenience" was so great that the latter's departure for Philadelphia was delayed so that President Jackson might go ahead unchallenged. As Black Hawk tells us of his trip, "On arriving at Albany, the people were so anxious to see us, that they crowded the street and wharves...it was almost impossible for us to pass to the hotel which had been provided for our reception" (149). What do you think drew these crowds? Were the people expressing support for Black Hawk and his people and condemning the actions of the Army and the government that seized the Sauk lands? Or did they regard Black Hawk as a curiosity, a kind of trophy claimed from the vanquished Indians?

Week Nine:

Geronimo: His Own Story, edited by S. M. Barrett; and Etahdleuh Doanmoe, *A Kiowa's Odyssey: a Sketchbook from Fort Marion*, edited by Phillip Earenfight

These two works emerge out of the Indian Wars of the 1870s and 1880s, when the U.S. Army in the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountain West aggressively pursued Native peoples in an effort to "pacify" and "civilize" them. The Army's methods included starving tribes by destroying their crops and food supplies, such as the Buffalo, and imprisoning their leaders, as happened to Geronimo and to Etahdleuh Doanmoe. Both men were held prisoner at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and in Florida, as well as at other sites. The two texts are very different in format, however, and need to be read in different ways.

Geronimo was born in 1829 in what is today southeastern Arizona, the homeland of the Chiricahua band of the Apache, whom he calls "Bedonkohe" in his narrative. The opening chapter tells the origin story of his tribe, and although the Apache were a mobile, raiding people, Geronimo recalls no conflicts with colonists before he reached maturity and became a warrior. Before 1848 the region was part of Mexico, and Part Two of the text, entitled "The Mexicans," recounts a series of battles beginning with the massacre at Kaskiyeh. The effect is to cast the Mexican army as a different class of enemy from the Americans or "white men" introduced in chapter 12. In 1875 these troops began trying to force the Chiricahuas onto a reservation at San Carlos, Arizona. After the betrayal of the band led by chief Magnus-Colorado recounted in chapter 13, Geronimo had good reason to be suspicious of the Army's promises, and he preferred to stay at Fort Bowie, near Apache Pass, which he describes in chapter 14. He and his ally Victoria, leader of another Apache band, fled from this captivity, first in 1876, and again in 1881 (misdated as 1883 in chapter 15). General George Crook was sent out to recapture Geronimo, and in a meeting at Cañon de los Embudos in March 1886 he thought he had accomplished his mission. But as Geronimo explains at the beginning of chapter 16, he did not trust in these promises either, and his band continued to run from the U.S. Army, now commanded by General Nelson Miles, until Sept. 4, when he surrendered and his captivity began. Like the Kiowa eleven years earlier, Geronimo and his Apache were sent by train to Florida, After eight years there and in Alabama, they were moved again to

Fort Sill, Oklahoma. It was there, in 1904, that Stephen Melvil Barrett met Geronimo, and conceived the project of taking down his life story.

I propose that we read Geronimo's Autobiography as an example of the literature of testimony, or *testimonio* in Spanish. This is a prominent sub-genre of 20th century world autobiography, particularly in Latin America, which has suffered so many *coups d'état* and repressive dictatorships. Testimonio literature includes many memoirs by political prisoners, and the *Los Desaparecidos*, those whom the regimes imprisoned without trial and attempted to "disappear," such as Nora Strejilevich and Jacobo Timmerman in Argentina. Now Geronimo was by no means disappeared, and in fact his fate was widely publicized, as the U.S. government permitted S. M. Barrett to solicit and publish Geronimo's story while the latter was in prison. Therefore Barrett as amanuensis walks a political fine line. He tries to shift any possible blame for Geronimo's protests by insisting that Geronimo's criticism of U.S. Army and of government injustice does not come from Barrett but from Geronimo himself. Find some of these passages, and describe how this position may in fact connect Barrett with some of the other amanuenses we have read earlier in the course.

The genre of testimonio is also interesting because it shows how the sub-genres of life writing we have read, dating from Occom in the 18th to Zitkala-Sa and Geronimo in the early 20th centuries, move from a limited to a wider and wider audience: Spiritual autobiography was intended for a limited audience: often immediate family or those of one's own faith. Captivity narrative, like Jemison's story, was written for audience made up of one's own ethnic or political group, to rally "us" around the threat posed by "them." Seaver did not expect his book to be read by Seneca Indians. American Indian captivity narrative might be better defined as narratives by Indians who have been captured and imprisoned by the U.S. as Geronimo was, and appeal to their captor's people for justice. Testimony is directed to the whole world, and appeals for sympathy and political action based upon universal ethical principles: "I hope that he (Pres. Roosevelt) and those in authority under him will read my story and judge whether my people have been rightly treated."

Etahdleuh Doanmoe's sketchbook does not qualify as a testimonio inasmuch as he did not intend it for publication. It is one of many examples of "ledger art" created by captured Indians who were allowed or encouraged to draw in the pages of accounting ledgers (the most readily available large-format paper), sometimes for sale or as mementos for their military captors. In this case it was Richard Henry Pratt, famous for subsequently founding the Carlisle Indian school, who collected and preserved this book, which he gave to his son Mason. It may seem surprising to read a picture book in this course, but there are good reasons for considering Doanmoe's art alongside the textual American Indian autobiographies. Scholars of the genre including Krupat and Brumble as well as Gretchen Bataille and Kathleen Sands, have often contrasted the individualism of autobiography in the European tradition with the collective and self-effacing values of Native Americans. Doanmoe's sketchbook supports this idea, for he portrays not his own struggle but that of his entire Kiowa band as they were forced to surrender to the Army and as he was incarcerated along with other leading men. Compared to other examples of ledger art, this book presents more of a sequential narrative, although the 31 drawings are bound to read right to left, like a Hebrew book. In this volume the original sketchbook appears on the black pages in the middle, while four scholars have contributed essays about the book and its author. I recommend reading chapters 1, 2, and 5, although the entire book is worthwhile, particularly if you are interested in the history of the manuscript itself, which was divided between two libraries before being reunited for exhibit and publication.

The typed captions were added after Doanmoe completed the drawings, and the editors believe that the ledger book was cut apart so that the pages could be inserted into a typewriter. It is not certain if Doanmoe provided the text or if it was Pratt or another man. Doanmoe was learning to read and write English during the same period he was making the drawings, and in page 29 he draws one of his classes. What clues do you find in the text that might suggest Doanmoe is or is not the author of it?

Many of the images show large numbers of small human figures, and there are only a few, such as page 22, that are large enough to show facial expressions. How does Doanmoe nonetheless show the contrast between the Indians, the U.S. Army soldiers and officers, and the white civilians, and the relations of power and emotion between the three groups in the scenes?

Week Ten:

Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, *Life Among the Paiutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883)

Sarah Winnemucca was born in 1844, and became visible a public figure in the United States from 1879 to 1884, when she gave lectures first in San Francisco and Nevada, and then on the east coast. During this period federal Indian policy was frequently in the news and the topic of political debates in the U.S., due in part to sensational events like the defeat of General Custer at Little Big Horn, and the flight of the Nez Perce under Chief Joseph, which occurred in 1876-77. There was a sharp regional division of opinion between western homesteaders who feared Indian attacks and easterners who saw injustice in the persecutions of the Indians. Among those working for the defense of the Indians were influential women such as Mary Tyler Peabody, editor of *Life Among the Paiutes*, and Helen Hunt Jackson, a poet, novelist, and activist whose book *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings with some of the Indian Tribes* (1882) was the most influential statement of the movement. Sarah Winnemucca's lectures, at which she also sold copies of her book after it was printed, helped to authenticate the claims made by these "friends of the Indians" as they were sometimes called. As we read the book, however, we will find references to her lectures and political activism only at the very end.

Like other skilled Indian autobiographers, Sarah Winnemucca was able to narrate her early years from the perspective of a child who knew little of the world outside her tribe and homeland in western Nevada. She uses circumlocution to show how strange this world was, such as in the way her grandfather refers to a letter written for him by whites as his "rag friend." Her grandfather Truckee (for whom a river and city on the Nevada/California border are named) tells an origin story that explains how white Europeans were sent to live "across the mighty ocean" (7) apart from their Paiute siblings. Then her father tells of a dream in which he saw "my men shot down by the white people" who "have houses that move" (14). The California gold rush beginning in 1849 brought large numbers of white people into the eastern Sierra Nevada mountains for the first time. Why is it significant for Winnemucca to show that her people foresaw and understood these events, which might otherwise be unpredictable?

The editor/amanuensis for the book was Mary Tyler Peabody Mann, sister-in-law of the writer Nathaniel Hawthorne, and wife of the politician and educational reformer Horace Mann, whose work in Massachusetts established the template for the system of free, non-sectarian public schools in the United States. Horace died in 1859, but Mary Tyler Peabody continued for almost thirty years to work for progressive causes such as American Indian rights and the abolition of slavery. She contributes much less of her own voice to this volume than James Seaver did to Mary Jemison's book or even Edwin James to John Tanner's. Based on what she writes in the one-page "Editor's Preface" and in footnotes, such as on page 51-52, how do you think she may have shaped the text we read? Notice the style of language in the spoken dialogue, for example.

Sarah Winnemucca learned English at a young age when she boarded with white families in California and Nevada, and briefly attended a mission school in San Jose. She tells us how she was employed at several times and places as an interpreter between U.S. officials and military officers and the Paiutes and other tribes. What does she say are the difficulties of this job? Look for example at pp. 235-242. Note also how on p. 148 a man named Paiute Joe speaks to her in English, and his language is printed in stilted "eye dialect," which suggests that all the other dialogue by Paiute characters was originally delivered in Paiute, and translated into standard English by Sarah.

At several points in the book Sarah Winnemucca expresses respect for U.S. military officers and soldiers, and anger and contempt toward the civilian agents of the Indian Bureau, with the notable exception of Mr. and Mrs. Parrish at the Malheur Agency, whom she calls her "white father" and mother (110). What reasons does she give to explain why the military is better qualified to administer Indian policy, and more fair toward the Indians?

When Sarah Winnemucca traveled to the East she (like Helen Hunt Jackson) aimed some of her activism at Carl Schurz, the Secretary of Interior. Later she lobbied Senator Henry Dawes, author of the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887. This act stipulated that the land on Indian Reservations would be divided up and allotted to individual Indians, who were supposed to farm and develop the land. Most historians of Native America see the Dawes Act as disastrous for the tribes, because it caused much reservation land to be sold to non-Indian speculators, or seized for back taxes. But Sarah Winnemucca supported the Dawes Act, as did Charles Eastman. Why do you think she did?

Sarah was described by those who met her or saw her lecture as an attractive woman, and she was married three times, but in the book she tells us very little of her romance or sexuality. Her third husband, Lieutenant Lewis H. Hopkins, to whom she was married when her book was published, is mentioned only once (see 246). She does tell us that Mr. Morton, whom she guided over a mountain pass in Eastern Oregon, proposed marriage to her (see 151), and that Indian women did fear rape by non-Indian men (see 228). Why would Sarah Winnemucca and her editor otherwise avoid discussion of romance and sexuality in the book?

Chapters 6, 7, and 8, comprising three-fifths of the text, each tell of episodes that occurred in Eastern Oregon and Washington, and Southern Idaho in the 1870s. Sarah plays a heroic role in each. In June 1878 she joined in a daring expedition to rescue her father and his band of Paiutes from the midst of the Bannock band of Shoshone, who were at war with U.S. troops in southern Idaho. Sarah rode more than 200 miles in three days, a feat that served as an important part of her public lectures. How does Sarah make herself an heroic figure in the book? How does she show that others respected and needed her skills?

Second paper topic:

1. In the middle part of the course we read autobiographies by Indians who told their life stories to non-Indian editors and translators. The narrative of John Tanner also fits into this category, whereas William Apess notably published his works on his own, without editorial assistance. Compare the roles of the editors, such as Edwin James, James Seaver, John Patterson, Mary Tyler Peabody Mann, and S. M. Barrett, and how we can find evidence that they have imposed their own words onto the autobiographer's discourse. Which editor do you feel did the best work, and why?
2. In the nineteenth century the genre of autobiography was lumped together with biography. It was not considered so important to analyze the representation of an individual's past out of his or her memory; the reason to read about a person's life was to learn that person's virtues or vices, heroism or failures. Autobiography, like biography, was read for edification. Consider how the lives of American Indians, whether written by themselves, by others, or in collaboration, met this need. For example, how can King Philip be considered an heroic leader like George Washington, as William Apess proposes?

Week Eleven: Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa)

Of Eastman's *Indian Boyhood*, please read the first four chapters, the first two of the five stories in chapter 10 ("Life in the Woods" and "A Winter Camp"), and the final chapter, "First Impressions of Civilization." Then read the entirety of *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*.

Eastman indirectly experienced the Sioux Uprising or Dakota War of 1862 when he was four years old. In August of that year, hungry Santee Sioux, angry about missing annuity payments for land taken from their tribe, killed many settlers and tried to drive others out of the area. The U.S. Army responded by imprisoning more than 1000 Sioux, and in December tried and executed 38 Sioux leaders at Mankato, Minnesota. Eastman's father Many Lightnings was imprisoned and sentenced to death, and Ohiyesa and others assumed he had been executed. Ohiyesa fled with his family to Canada, where was raised by his grandmother Uncheedah and his uncle Mysterious Medicine. His father survived and later converted to Christianity, taking the name Jacob Eastman, and at the very end of *Indian Boyhood* he finds his son Charles, and takes him to live in a more assimilated and Christian Sioux community at Flandreau, SD.

The opening line of *Indian Boyhood* is, "What boy would not be an Indian for a while when he thinks it the freest life in the world? This life was mine." As an adult Eastman worked for the YMCA, the Young Men's Christian Association, and that organization helped to launch the Boy Scouts of America around 1910. Eastman worked with Ernest Thompson Seton and Daniel Carter Beard to build the organization. The Scouting movement arose in response to urbanization and industrialization, and sought to teach boys (and later girls) the skills and values of pioneer farmers and hunters. As one scholar, H. David Brumble, put it, Eastman "described Indian life as the prototype for the Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls" (*American Indian Autobiography* 162). Still today, scouting appropriates American Indian names and motifs without fully acknowledging the history of dispossession and warfare against American Indians. In studying Eastman we can see the ambiguities and contradictions of a man who befriended and was embraced by many powerful men in U.S. business, education, and government, but also protested against the oppression of Indians by these same forces.

Scouting is just one of many institutions in the United States that has provided Anglo-American men with an opportunity for appropriating the dress, names, and iconography of Native Americans, a phenomenon described by Sioux scholar Philip J. Deloria in his book *Playing Indian*. Non-Indians have used these rituals to claim some of the authenticity and autochthony of American Indians, and thus help excuse the seizure of their lands and resources. Eastman seems to have regarded this as a mutual process, for in his chapter on "Games and Sports" he writes that he and his childhood friends "played 'white man'" (72).

As we saw in week four, some of the first colleges founded in Anglo America, such as Dartmouth and Harvard, were mission schools intended to educate Indian boys, and in the nineteenth century both Catholic and Protestant missionaries continued to run such schools all across the continent, often with government funding. In the 1880s the U.S. government founded new institutions such as Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (where Zitkala-Sa taught), and Haskell Indian Industrial Training School (where N. Scott Momaday's mother studied). These schools pursued an agenda of forced assimilation designed to eradicate Native American culture. Students were forced to cut their hair and wear modern clothing, prohibited from speaking their native languages, and often denied contact with their families. The curriculum emphasized farming, industrial labor and domestic service, for Indians were assumed to be incapable of middle-class professions. Many children were kidnapped from their families and sent to the schools against their will, and sexual abuse was a serious problem. Not until the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 were all schools for Indian children given over to tribal control.

Eastman, however, attended Santee Normal Training School, run by Protestant missionaries, where he and his classmates spoke and wrote the Sioux language. In *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, Eastman never directly protests the injustices of government boarding schools, but he writes of a girl at Santee who wanted to go home: "I saw them leading her back to the Dakota Home, in spite of her pleading and begging. The scene made my blood boil, and I suppressed with a difficulty a strong desire to go to her aid" (27).

One literary technique Eastman and other Indian Autobiographers often use to contrast their tribal culture with Anglo-America is circumlocution or distancing effects. An object or behavior that is familiar to readers is described according to the strange impression it supposedly created on the Indian protagonist of the autobiography. For example, when Eastman stops at a farmer's house for the night during his initial journey to the Santee boarding school: "All at once, without warning, the man struck the table with the butt of his knife with such force that I jumped and was within an ace of giving a war-whoop...it appeared that the blow on the table was merely a signal for quiet before saying grace" (21). And when he first encounters reading and writing in the local school: "To me they did not compare in interest with my bird's track and fish-fin studies on the sands. I was something like a wild-cub caught overnight" (14). Find several other passages in either book where he uses this technique. Does it create an irony that favors Indian ways?

The Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 is the climax of the second book. Eastman was a doctor at Pine Ridge reservation when it happened. He opens the chapter by comparing the Ghost Dance movement to that of the Shawnee Prophet: "it meant that the last hope of race entity had departed, and the people were groping blindly after spiritual relief" (55). What do you think he means by "last hope of race entity"? Only in the aftermath, as he treats innocent victims and searches for survivors, do we get the graphic details. "All this was a severe ordeal for one who had so lately put all his faith in the Christian love and lofty ideals of the white man" (66).

Eastman was forced out of his job as a doctor at Pine Ridge because he was a whistleblower on the practice of stealing part of the annuities paid to the tribal members, in cash. The start of the next chapter, "War with the Politicians," explains his illusions and disillusionment as he did not at that time believe that the government and its agents could be guilty of such cruelty and corruption, but that he since has learned it is true. How does this pattern of retrospective disillusionment soften his critique of U.S. policies, compared for example to Sarah Winnemucca's? Can you find other example of this pattern of disillusionment?

Eastman hints at a moment of crisis, where he lost his optimism about assimilation and saw clear through the vice and greed of the white man, but never says exactly when this moment came or how it changed his behavior. Indeed, every job he had, with YMCA or for anthropologists or collectors or revising the genealogy and tribal rolls of the Sioux (see 103) served the cause of assimilation.

Week Twelve: Gertrude Simmons Bonin aka Zitkala-Sa (1876-1938)

The collection of writings in the Penguin classics edition is divided into four parts:

1. *Old Indian Legends*, first published in 1901, is mostly trickster stories of Iktomi
2. *American Indian Stories*, includes the *Atlantic Monthly* articles from 1900
3. Selections from *American Indian* magazine, which she edited from 1918 to 1920
4. Poetry, Pamphlets, Essays and Speeches, some not published in her lifetime

Please read at least part 1, the first five essays in part 2, and the fourth through eighth essays or speeches in part 4.

Gertrude Simmons Bonin, as she was then known, entered literary discourse when she published two articles, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood" and "School Days of an Indian Girl" in the January and February 1900 issues of *Atlantic Monthly*, one of the most respected magazines of the U.S. intelligentsia.

An essential skill of a good autobiographer, which Zitkala-Sa employs well, is to represent the naiveté of herself as a child in writing aimed at adults. In her case, as a child she did not speak English and knew only her family and a few Sioux neighbors. This is accomplished in part through the technique of circumlocution applied to key objects such as the apples, the railroad, and the telegraph poles (see 84-88). But beyond Eastman's use of circumlocution, Zitkala-Sa employs literary allusions that transcend the consciousness of a young girl. In "Impressions of an Indian Childhood" her decision to go east to school is represented as a sinful thirst for knowledge and fall from grace, for the east is referred to as "Orchards of the East" where the trees grow red, red apples. And in the section entitled "The Devil" in "The School Days of an Indian Girl" the Christian devil appears to have animal features like many of the characters in Sioux mythology.

Zitkala-Sa wrote in a more literary mode than Charles Eastman, for she wanted her stories to be readable as fiction, not only as autobiography or memoir. The essays use a generalizing technique, not giving names except for Sioux names such as her older brother Dawée, and not mentioning names for places such as the schools she attended and taught at. Eastman wrote as a man who was already famous and well-connected, and boasted of his friendships with powerful men. Zitkala-Sa wrote as a journalist and fiction-writer who wanted her submissions to magazines to be accepted on their own merits, for she could not rely on her own fame. Consider the story "The Soft-Hearted Sioux" which tells of a Sioux missionary preacher returning to his tribe. How does this story, which is only vaguely autobiographical, convey the tragic conflict between Native and Christian values? How do you think it represents Zitkala-Sa's own struggles?

Zitkala-Sa breaks out of this distancing and fictional mode in the 4th section, "Retrospection," of the third essay "An Indian teacher among Indians" (104-113). Her narrative voice there becomes suddenly sophisticated and politically astute. She has a detailed and well-informed critique of the boarding school system and the government bureaucracy behind it, much more pointed than anything Eastman wrote. But this section and the following and previous also show a crisis of conscience and faith far more profound than Eastman's political conversion. She rejects the Bible just around the time that her mother converts to the faith (see 117). She writes that "for the white man's papers I had given up my faith in the Great Spirit. For these same papers I had forgotten the healing in trees and books" (112).

The essay "The Great Spirit" (pp. 114-17) was originally published as "Why I am a Pagan" in *Atlantic Monthly*. The title antagonized Richard Henry Pratt. Compare her reflections on "the solemn-faced 'native preacher'" (116) here with the way William Apess represented himself. Apess was proud to be a preacher and a Christian. Zitkala-Sa is the first of the autobiographers we have read who forthrightly declares that she believes indigenous religion is better for her than Christianity.

Zitkala-Sa attended a Quaker-run boarding school, White's Manual Labor Institute in Wabash, Indiana. She then went to Earlham College, also a Quaker institution in Indiana. Later she studied music in Boston and then taught at the Carlisle Indian Training School. Her views on the treatment of American Indians in the boarding schools were highly critical. Her relationship with the Richard Henry Pratt, the administrator of Carlisle and ideological leader of the boarding school movement, was vexed as well. Pratt was eager to have the publicity she brought, but tried to muffle her criticism. He reprinted some of her essays in his school's organ, the *Red Man*, slightly revised, to make the essays less critical of his enterprise. Later, Pratt himself wrote articles for another school magazine, the *Word Carrier*, that tried both to celebrate and take credit for her

success as a writer, and to refute the criticisms of the boarding school that she had written. Look back at her reflections on her school days and identify which events she chooses to convey the sense of anger and alienation that she felt. Why do you think Eastman did not write of such things at his school?

The Society of American Indians, founded in 1911, was a national, pan-tribal organization which sought to address the many problems of Indian tribes and to enhance their political power, notably by securing the rights of citizenship. American Indians were not United States citizens, and could not vote, until an act of Congress in 1924. Charles Eastman was among the founding members of the Society and lobbied for the citizenship bill (see 209). Zitkala-Sa edited the Society's magazine for about two years. The selections on pp181-211 include minutes of annual meetings as well as essays and position papers.

Week Thirteen: Maria Campbell, *Halfbreed*

By the time Maria Campbell published this book in 1973 at age 33, she was already a political activist for Native and Metis rights in western Canada. Because the Metis identity is specific to Canada and little known in the U.S., some background is necessary.

In the early nineteenth century the nation of Canada encompassed only the regions that today are southern Quebec and Ontario. The huge area known as Rupert's Land, roughly the watersheds of rivers flowing into the western side of Hudson Bay, nominally belonged to the Hudson Bay Company (HBC), a fur trade corporation based in London and chartered by the British Crown in 1670. The company established forts such as York Factory and Moose Factory, on the coast of Hudson Bay, and employed factors who traded blankets, knives, guns and other goods to local Indians for beaver and other pelts. By the late 1700s other fur trade companies such as the North West Company, based in Montreal, competed with the HBC. While the managers of the posts were mostly English and Scots men, the voyageurs who carried pelts by canoe between posts or down to Montreal for shipment to Europe were most often French speaking men from Quebec. We saw a window into this world in John Tanner's narrative, where he sold pelts to the HBC and the Northwest, and witnessed the rivalry between the two companies in the 1810s, which often turned violent. Many of the men of the fur trade had children by Native women, but few of these liaisons resulted in formal marriages, and rarely or never did the men take their mates back to Montreal or England. Gerhard Ens in *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* writes: "the emergence of identifiable Metis communities awaited specific political and economic conditions" (13) that developed at the Red River settlement, near modern Winnipeg and named for the river that flows northward from the Dakotas and Minnesota into Manitoba. The sons of mixed marriages who lived near fur trade posts (often after their fathers had abandoned their families and returned to Great Britain or lower Canada) sought employment in the fur trade, and some of them aspired to become bourgeois, but exclusionary policies of the HBC prevented this. Instead, many began to work as suppliers of provisions to posts on the Red River or Hudson's bay, by hunting buffalo on the prairies.

In 1869-70 the Hudson Bay Company sold Rupert's Land to the Canadian government, which began the process of annexing the land and imposing its national laws and land titles. Many Metis found their hunting grounds and farms taken from them and granted to railroad companies or to settlers from eastern Canada. In addition, schools and social services were now run by anglophone Protestants, and the Catholic faith of the Metis was marginalized. The Metis found an inspirational leader in the visionary priest Louis Riel (1844-1885) one of the most controversial and colorful figures in Canadian history. Riel wanted to create an independent nation called Manitoba, where Catholicism would be the official religion and the francophone Metis would have political and cultural sovereignty. Riel's vision brought him into conflict with the Canadian military, which acted to put down two Metis rebellions, in 1869 at Red River and in 1885 at Batoche,

Saskatchewan. After the second rebellion, Riel was tried and hanged. Some of the Metis refugees crossed into the United States and found refuge among Indian tribes. The Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota is populated by many Metis as well as by Ojibwa and metis refugees included the mother of prominent Native writer D'Arcy McNickle on the Flathead reservation in Montana.

All this helps explain what Campbell writes in the first two chapters about her family's background. Because the Metis did not have rights to live on aboriginal reserves or to collect benefits the Canadian government grants to First Nations or aborigines, they were doubly marginalized. To survive many were forced to squat on lands set aside for railroad lines, or to hunt illegally in park lands, as Maria's father does in Prince Albert National Park in central Saskatchewan. This explains the title of Campbell's collection of fiction *Stories of the Road Allowance People* (1995). Maria's activism helped to gain recognition for the Metis, but treaty status and benefits for Metis came only with the Pawley decision by the Canadian Supreme Court in 2003. This decision held that under the 1982 Canadian constitution, the Metis were entitled to many of the same rights as First Nations aboriginals.

The term "halfbreed" is among several synonyms for Metis that are quite derogatory, but Campbell appropriates and rehabilitates the term. What does she write about the relationships between Indians, whites and halfbreeds (such as in sexuality and courtship) that help affirm the dignity of the Metis?

Campbell writes very fondly of her grandmother Cheechum, her spiritual and cultural anchor, whom she returns to for wisdom many times and finally at the end of the book, when Cheechum dies at age 104. Compare the portrait of Cheechum to other Indian grandmothers in our earlier readings.

The importance of the grandmother, and relative insignificance of the mother, is also the case in some Native American myths, as with Nokomis (the Ojibwa word for grandmother) in some of the Nanabozho tales from week 1. After her mother dies, leaving her in charge of her seven younger siblings, Maria in effect is her own mother. What did you think of the measures she has to take to try to continue going to school while also caring for her siblings?

We have seen in other women autobiographers, such as Sarah Winnemucca, the difficulty of balancing the moral standards of the implied reader with the challenges of survival. Winnemucca wrote nothing of her husband, who left her after a short time. Campbell is more forthright. How does she explain or justify, in retrospect, her decision to marry Darrell, or her relationship with Ray, who in effect was her pimp when she lived in Vancouver? Does she use euphemisms or discretion in omitting certain facts?

Week Fourteen: John Fire Lane Deer, *Lane Deer Seeker of Visions*

If you read the entire book this will I think be the longest weekly assignment. Feel free to skip chapters 8, 11, and 15, and the epilogue, in which Richard Erdoes tells readers about his own life.

John Fire Lane Deer in the 1960s called himself "a hippie indian" (28) and embraced an image as a counterculture hero, a sharp critic of American capitalism and its values. He was also a Sioux or Lakota medicine man or shamanic healer and a comic trickster. The book appeared in 1972, and was researched and written a few years earlier during the brief psychedelic era and at the moment when the Vietnam War was becoming deeply unpopular. American Indians appealed to many hippies and others as victim/heroes because they had experienced the worst of the U.S. government's oppressive policies. Many hippies believed that they too were unjustly persecuted. As a Sioux in the 1960s Lane Deer was aware of Black Elk and the popularity of his book, and he

and his collaborator Richard Erdoes made the Sioux and the Wounded Knee massacre important to the book. The hairstyles and clothing of the 1960s hippies also resembled those of American Indians.

Lame Deer's moral indictment of the United States government and its policies rests on different foundations than what we read in earlier texts, where a sincere Christian conversion experience or success in education provided evidence of the autobiographical subject's virtue and trustworthiness. In chapters 3 and 4, "The Green Frog Skin" (Lame Deer's term for dollars) and "Getting Drunk, Going to Jail" how does Lame Deer assert a kind of moral authority to his readers while at the same time recounting his rebellious, dissolute behavior? What does this suggest about the changing audience for American Indian autobiographies in his time compared to earlier?

Many Sioux and other American Indians are understandably outraged by Mount Rushmore, carved out of a mountain in the Black Hills, land stolen from the Sioux after being granted to them by treaty. In chapter 5, "Sitting on top of Teddy Roosevelt's Head," the text deflects this moral indignation by attributing it to Richard Erdoes. Lame Deer assumes that his readers are already angry, rather than trying to make them angry. Many tourists visiting the Black Hills combine their visit to Mount Rushmore with a visit to Korszak Ziolkowski's Crazy Horse monument. In Lame Deer's account in this chapter, shared with statements by a few other Indian visitors, how does the Crazy Horse sculpture critique or refute the political statement made by Mount Rushmore? Does it do honor to Crazy Horse and the Sioux? Or is it another desecration?

Given Lame Deer's collaboration with Richard Erdoes this book fits into the tradition of "as-told-to" American Indian autobiographies, but there are several spots where it introduces interesting twists to the format. In the chapter "Don't Hurt the Trees" about the Peyote ceremony, Lame Deer's narrative voice addresses "you" referring to Richard Erdoes, who is participating in the all-night psychedelic experience. Lame Deer takes over Erdoes' job as investigative journalist or anthropologist, as the person who acts to fulfill the reader's curiosity and guarantee the reader's demand for veracity. When Lame Deer cannot provide the best eye-witness testimony, he seeks out other Sioux who can, such as Leonard Crow Dog on the peyote religion, and Fool Bull in chapter 14, which is about the Ghost Dance and the Wounded Knee Massacre. Having read about Wounded Knee in Charles Eastman's writings, what is your overall assessment of this event and its significance for American Indian history?

In many of the autobiographies we have read since George Copway, the subjects have devoted many chapters or long sections of the text to ethnographic descriptions of Native customs. Lame Deer does the same. Chapter 8 is about courtship, marriage and sexuality among the Sioux, Chapter 10 is about the sweat lodge, and chapter 16 about sacred pipes. This form is familiar from the works of academic anthropologists who began publishing such studies around 1900, but its real roots go back to explorers of the renaissance, including Columbus, Verrazano, Champlain and many others. Lame Deer and Erdoes employ a variation on the form, because whereas most ethnographers efface their own presence as witnesses to the behaviors they describe, Lame Deer, and occasionally Erdoes too, is nearly always there. In the American Indian autobiography, the ethnographic form also satisfies readers' desire for cultural information, but does it also detract from the focus on the subject's own life? Or does it instead reaffirm the principle that for tribal peoples, the self is less important than it is in the Judeo-Christian worldview?

In chapter 2 Lame Deer recounts a story told to him by his Grandmother about "Iktome, the evil spiderman, a smart-ass who played tricks on everyone" (21). Although in this course we examined most closely Nanabozho, the Ojibwa trickster, Iktomi the spider is the trickster hero in the mythology of the Sioux, and spiders are also the trickster heroes among some Southwestern tribes. Consider how Lame Deer himself fulfills the role of the trickster.

Week 15: N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain* and "The Man Made of Words"

The last two weeks of the course are devoted to the Kiowa poet, artist, memoirist, and storyteller N. Scott Momaday (b. 1934), who holds a special place among contemporary Native American authors. His 1969 Pulitzer-Prize winning novel *House Made of Dawn* is often identified as the start of a Native American literary renaissance in the United States. The term was coined by critic Kenneth Lincoln in his 1983 book *Native American Renaissance*. One consequence of this renaissance was that more Native authors began to publish works of fiction, poetry, history, and criticism. Until this time relatively few Native people were able to acquire the education in English as well as the financial means and social connections necessary to publish a book, and those who did generally began by telling their own stories and advocating on behalf of the needs of their tribe. For instance Black Hawk, Sarah Winnemucca, Geronimo and even John Lone Deer each published only one book, an autobiography. But with the Native American Renaissance the centrality of autobiography or life-writing diminished, and since the 1980s the most prominent Native literary figures alongside Momaday, such as Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko, and James Welch, became famous for works of fiction that are no more autobiographical than those of non-Indian writers.

Momaday's work is particularly interesting for this course because of the formal sophistication with which he has explored the history of his tribe, his family, and his own memory and presented it in two books. The twenty-four sections or chapters of *The Way to Rainy Mountain* are organized into three parts. In "Man Made of Words" Momaday refers to them as the mythical (the left hand pages, in Electra Roman), the historical (the upper part of the right hand pages, in Electra Italic), and the immediate (the lower part of the right hand pages, in Optima Italic). We have seen that many of our earlier authors mixed traditional stories into their autobiographical narratives, but Momaday stands out because his process of learning about his tribe's myths, language, and history is itself part of his own "immediate" life story, and because he shows how the old myths have contemporary relevance. Look at chapter IX, where the mythical part fits into the larger Kiowa origin story that began in chapter III, the historical part offers an alternate version linked in ritual objects still held by the Kiowa, and the immediate part tells of how the object was venerated by Momaday's own great-grandmother, whom we will meet in *The Names*.

In the last four chapters, XXI-XIV, how does the immediate or autobiographical thread find its way into the left-hand pages?

Momaday's work forces readers to reconsider common notions about the status of Native mythology. A conventional view has pigeonholed Native culture as non-literate or Oral. Consider this series of contrasts between oral and written cultures:

Oral cultures

guided by myth, superstition
religions that are animist, spiritual
ruled by custom
oral lit. is fluid, inconsistent
have no knowledge of history
cyclical concept of time

Writing (alphabetic) cultures

guided by reason and fact
religions of book: Judaism, Christianity, Islam
ruled by laws, constitution
textual lit. is fixed, definitive
have a documented, objective history
linear concept of time

This dichotomy is false, for several reasons. Here are three:

First, oral traditions are not transient or inconsistent. They can endure for centuries, while written histories and laws can be easily perverted by despotism or propaganda. Still, a tribal mythology and oral history is not necessarily ancient; Momaday acknowledges that "the golden age of the Kiowas had been short-lived, ninety or a hundred years, say, from about 1740" (85) and that when their ancestors lived in the Yellowstone country, without horses, they were a profoundly different culture, not yet truly Kiowa.

Second, because some tribes did have written histories, though generally in pictographic or non-alphabetic languages. The Mayan codices and stele and inscriptions from Mesoamerica are one example, and the Kiowa Calendars referred to in chapter XVII and published by anthropologist James Mooney, are another example, similar to the ledger art which we saw in week nine.

Third, because as Momaday writes, the "oral tradition can be shown, dramatically, to exist within the framework of a literary continuance." The oral tradition works alongside documentary evidence to provide a comprehensive history and memory of a Kiowa culture going back to its origins, in the hollow log and the Yellowstone country.

How do the horse and the buffalo play a central role not only in Kiowa culture but in the way *The Way to Rainy Mountain* records the struggles of Kiowa culture in the face of U.S. colonialism?

In his essay "The Man Made of Words" Momaday includes the story of the arrowmaker found in chapter XIII of the book, and says "it is a link between language and literature" as well as the clearest illustration of "that personification which in this instance emerges from it: the man made of words." Why is the arrowmaker made of words? What are we to make of his killing the enemy, who never actually threatens the arrowmaker, by his arrow? What if we as readers sympathize with the man outside the tent?

Week Sixteen:

N. Scott Momaday, *The Names*

Momaday divides the book into four chapters:

One: tells story of his ancestors, first on his mother's side then on his father's

Two: his earliest memories 1936-43, when the family lived in Gallup and elsewhere in New Mexico.

Three: during WWII his family lived in Hobbs, NM, when he was roughly 7-12 years old.

Four: in Jemez, NM starting at age 12, his parents taught school among the Pueblo Indians.

Epilogue: tells of his journey north to Tsoai, or Devil's Tower, which coincides with the Prologue to *The Way to Rainy Mountain*.

N. Scott Momaday is well-read in world literature, and quite familiar, for example, with the modernist narrative techniques of James Joyce and Vladimir Nabokov. In reading *The Names* we can see how Momaday understands his work as autobiographical literature and understands autobiography as a subjective practice of memory. By this principle, the world and his history in it was not or is not objectively available but must be built up out of his memory and consciousness. He writes in different modes such as stream of consciousness in order to show not only that the narrator is separate from the protagonist, but that the protagonist can best reach us through an artistic work of memory. The longest section of stream of consciousness narration, about his life in Hobbs, begins with the statement, "I invented history" (97).

That same passage in chapter Three includes the line, "an idea of one's ancestry and posterity is really an idea of the self" (97), which helps explain the content of the first chapter. Louise Erdrich is among the few prominent Native American authors who have acknowledged and written about her non-Indian ancestors, but Momaday does also in this book. His grandfather Theodore Scott was born in 1875 in the "knobs" area of western Kentucky. He worked at various trades including tobacco farmer and sheriff. Theodore's maternal grandmother Natachee was a Cherokee. N. Scott's mother in around 1929 decided to leave aside the life of a southern belle (while living in Fairview, KY, where the Confederate President Jefferson Davis had been born) and "began to see herself as Indian. That dim native heritage became a fascination and a cause for her, inasmuch, perhaps, as it enabled her to assume an attitude of defiance....This act of imagination was, I believe, among the most important events of my mother's early life, as later the same essential act was to be among the most important of my own" (25). She took the name Natachee from her grandmother and went to Haskell Institute, the Indian boarding school in Lawrence, Kansas. Her roommate there was a Kiowa girl, who introduced her to Alfred Morris Mammedaty. In this history N. Scott Momaday admits that Indian identity has to be cultivated, and that most Indians are of mixed ancestry. He prints for us the notarized document from the BIA which says he is 7/8 Indian blood, without commenting on how he perhaps ought to be only 5/8, since only one of his mother's grandparents was Indian.

Momaday uses the word "race" and "racial" (such as in the phrase "racial memory") in a way that most scholars and writers in the 1970s did not. Charles Eastman also used this term race or racial, but that was in a different era. So for example p155 Momaday writes that the Kiowa were a horse culture and "therefore there is in me, as there is in the Tartars, an old, sacred notion of the horse. I believe that at some point in my racial life, this notion must needs be expressed"

In chapter two p61 a passage explains how and why childhood memories are like myths: "They call for a certain attitude of belief on my part now; that is, they must mean something, but their best reality does not consist in meaning. They are not stories in that sense, but they are storylike, mythic, never evolved but evolving ever. There are such things in the world: it is in their nature to be believed; it is not necessarily in them to be understood." Consider how this statement helps explain how the myths in *The Way to Rainy Mountain* should be read.

Momaday's father's family is Kiowa but his grandfather Mammedaty died just before he was born, and he was raised mostly away from Oklahoma, in part among other Indian communities such as at Jemez. Look at the fourth chapter and explain how Momaday writes descriptions of local Indian customs, like other autobiographers we have read. How does it change the effect given that these people are not actually his own tribe?

One can find many connections between Momaday's work and the sketchbook of Etahdleuh Doanmoe, and indeed Momaday is also an artist who includes visual work (by his father Al) in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Consult pages 178-186 of *A Kiowa's Odyssey* where scholar Janet Catherine Berlo refers to Momaday several times, and explore some of these connections.

Final paper topics:

1. Most autobiographers write for an audience of readers whom they assume are much like themselves. They can appeal for sympathy or for esteem based upon certain shared moral and cultural values. But American Indian Autobiography has most often been written for a non-Indian audience, and therefore the Indian autobiographer has to provide much of the cultural background that other autobiographers take for granted. The audience wants to learn about American Indian culture as well as about the individual's life. Choose two or three autobiographers, such as Tanner, Black Hawk, Copway, Winnemucca or Momaday, and compare how they integrate ethnographic, mythological, or historical information into their life stories.
2. In reading about the experiences of autobiographers Eastman and Zitkala-Sa in boarding schools we confront a paradox: these students succeeded at a school curriculum that was intended to eradicate their Native culture and make them more like mainstream U.S. white people. Yet they are famous today as Native American activists defending their tribes and people. How do these two autobiographers reconcile their hard work and success in school with their critique of the boarding schools' ideology, including the Christian proselytizing?
3. As a third option, write about the relationship of visual to narrative material in the autobiographies of Momaday and Doanmoe. The drawings and paintings help blur the line between the individual and the tribal experience, and between myths and memory. Explore how this works.