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# THE SPECTACLE OF THE QUOTIDIAN ETHNICITY: THE ETHNOGRAPHIC IMAGINATIONS OF MOURNING DOVE, CARLOS BULOSAN, AND MAXINE HONG KINGSTON

BY

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

1998

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

9-14-98
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

9.15/98
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For his generous support *beyond the call of duty*, I would like to first and foremost thank the chair of my dissertation committee, Neal Tolchin: teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend.

I would also like to thank the following individuals whose expertise, wisdom, guidance, patience, and friendship made the completion of this study possible: Meena Alexander, Richard Barickman, King-Kok Cheung, Elaine Kim, Setha Low, Don Nakanishi, Gary Okihiro, Michele Wallace, and Richard Yarborough.

In addition, my deepest gratitude goes out to those whose friendship throughout the years provided me with an invaluable sense of community and belonging: Moustafa Bayoumi, Christie Carrillo, Lillian Cho, Gisele Fong, Tomio Geron, Beth Harris, Marli Higa, Minette Hinonangan, Alice Hom, Grace Hong, Susana Joenarti, Cynthia Lee, Ron Leiber, Lorraine Leong, Margot Liddell, Yong Soon Min, Kelly Nishimura, Rene Ontal, Janice Pono, Aijen Poo, Eun Kyung Rhee, Bill Spath, and Joe Ugoretz.

Finally, for everything good and true in my life, my love and thanks to my family: Chi Yun Ku, Chong Sun Ku, Kyong Mi Ku, and James & Sandra & Colin Ku.

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# THE SPECTACLE OF THE QUOTIDIAN ETHNICITY: THE ETHNOGRAPHIC IMAGINATIONS OF MOURNING DOVE, CARLOS BULOSAN, AND MAXINE HONG KINGSTON

## *Introduction: Is It This or Nothing?*

It was not too long ago—and perhaps this is more true today than ever before—that a person could make a modest living by simply *being*. Consider the case of Lucia Zarate, Robert Radlow, Baby Ruth Pontico, and Pete Robinson. At a certain point in their remarkable lives, each was "advertised" as the smallest, tallest, fattest, and thinnest person in the world respectively, and they all managed in one way or another to parlay a so-called anatomical oddity into an occupation. This was possible due largely to the age-old entrepreneurial adage: "Give the buyer what he wants." What the buyer wants, of course, aside from provisions necessary for organic sustenance, are extravagant gadgets, miscellaneous thingamajigs, novel experiences, or whatever else that promises to improve the quality of human life, promises to provide happiness by imparting pleasure. And what could be more pleasurable, to both children and adults alike, than the bundle of entertainment collectively known as the "circus"? Outside the vocational bounds of the circus, these individuals—these "freaks"—were customarily the objects of pity, fear, and contempt. That is, people like Zarate, Radlow,

Pontico, and Robinson were objects of public fascination, curiosity, and torment. They were, in a word, "spectacle" by simply *being*. In their attempts to not merely survive but *thrive* in the society they were born into, a cruel place they had no hand in fashioning, where any physical deviation from the perceived physical normalcy meant the impossibility of a "normal" existence, these Dwarfs, Giants, and Living Skeletons had to, like a desperate woman turning to prostitution, commodify the only aspect of their "selves" that seemed to matter to the world. The immense popularity of *Guinness Book of World Records*, P.T. Barnum's *Greatest Show on Earth*, and Ripley's *Believe It Or Not*, all testify to what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls the *spectacle and drama of the quotidian*: "one man's life is another man's spectacle" (407). She alludes to the words of John. J. MacAloon, who, in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle*, asserts: "In making a spectacle of oneself, or others, 'what is private or hidden becomes publicly exhibited, what is small or confined becomes exaggerated, grand or grandiose' " (409). The freak show, of course, is the epitome of the private quotidian transformed into publicly exaggerated spectacle. For the price of a ticket, the secret anguish, pain, and sadness of people born with so-called physical deformities become the object of marvel and entertainment, the source of displaced titillation for the populace. And the better Dwarf a dwarf can be, the better Giant a giant can be, and the better Skeleton a skeleton can

be, the more willing the customer is to pay. Authenticity is big bucks, and it must, as the rule of supply and demand dictates, continually be manufactured, displayed, and marketed.

Perhaps a modern parable as told by Sally Price might help to illustrate this point from a slightly different vantage point:

> In the 1960s, a Saramaka man set up a stall next to the road leading to the Suriname airport, where he carved a variety of objects and offered them for sale to passing tourists. In response to his customers' repeated requests for the symbolic meaning of the pieces they were buying, the artists explained each time that his carvings were intended only to be decorative. Perceiving their dissatisfaction in one case after another, and sometimes being drawn into arguments with them on the subject, he finally gave up and adopted a different strategy. He purchased Muntslag's dictionary of Maroon motifs, . . . even though he could not understand it because he had never learned to read. He then used its illustrations as models for the motifs in his carvings, and simply showed the book to his customers so they could look up the meaning of their purchases. Through this self-service technique, the man's life became more tranquil, his profits picked up considerably, the

> tourists boarded their planes in better spirits, and the myth of a pervasive iconography in the arts of the Maroons circumvented a potentially troubling setback. (118)

What is the "moral" of this parable? An obvious one is: *Give the customer what he wants.* But at what price? No, I do not mean "price" in terms of mere monetary exchange. By "price," I mean something more in the line of Faust: What is sacrificed, what is lost? What does the Saramaka artist give up in his pursuit of profit, in his efforts to satiate the meaning-seeking hunger of tourists in return for his economic survival? Does he, like Faust, essentially "sell his soul"? What becomes of his art, which is now inspired by someone called Muntslag, an urban Surinamer who "wrote a very popular book on Maroon art, which is essentially a dictionary of motifs and their (alleged) iconographic meaning" (Price 115). To this Saramaka man, an artist whose livelihood—like that of most artists living in a modern capitalist economy—depends on the commercialization of his hand-crafted figures, is it *this* or *nothing*? Can he survive as an artist without Muntslag, the alleged authority of Maroon art, a mythical being whom the artist has never even met? Must he, like the Dwarf and Giant, give the buyer what he wants? Must he "perform" the spectacle of his Maroonness through his artwork as defined by Munstlag in a manner not unlike the Dwarf performing his dwarfness and the Giant his giantness through their

physical anomalies as defined by the Munstlag of freakdom, P.T. Barnum?

This study, *The Spectacle of the Quotidian Ethnicity*, examines the ethnographic imaginations in the literary productions of three 20th-century American writers: Mourning Dove's *Cogewea* (1927), Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart* (1943), and Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1976). These authors, of course, are not "freaks" in the sense that Zarate, Radlow, Pontico, and Robinson were; they are not "spectacles" in their sense. Or are they? If, by either chance or design, some sort of important parallel exists between human circus attractions and the Saramaka artist, is it possible to throw Mourning Dove, Bulosan, and Kingston into the mix? Sure, these three writers happen to be Native American, Filipino American, and Chinese American respectively, but that does not make them "freaks," does it?

Let us consider several anecdotal examples from history. According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett:

> People have been displayed as living rarities from as early as 1501, when live Eskimos were exhibited in Bristol. A Brazilian village built by Native Americans in Rouen in the 1550s was burned down by French soldiers, an event that pleased the King so much that it was restaged the following day. . . . Over a period of five centuries, audiences flocked

> to see Tahitians, Laplanders, "Aztecs," Iroquois, Cherokees, Ojibways, Iowas, Mohawks, Botocudos, Guianese, Hottentots, Kaffirs, Nubians, Somalis, Singhalese, Patagonians, Terra del Fuegans, Ilongots, Kalmucks, Amapondans, Zulus, Bushmen, Australian aborigines, Japanese, and East Indians. They were exhibited in various cities in England and on the continent, in taverns and at fairs, on the stage in theatrical productions, at Whitehall, Piccadilly, and Vauxhall Gardens. . . in zoos and circuses, and, by the latter half of the nineteenth century, at world's fairs. (402)

What is unmistakable here is a relationship—however obscure or complex—between *ethnicity* and the *performative* dimension of the spectacle. It is no secret that throughout the United States for at least the past two centuries, it was quite customary for human representatives of "exotic" cultures to share the stage and cage of freak shows and side shows with humans with physical "deformities." Question: How exactly does one perform ethnicity? Is it akin to performing dwarfdom or giantdom? In other words, back in 1501, did the Eskimos know how to behave like Eskimos before an English audience, as Lucia Zarata, in the 1920s, knew how to behave like the world's smallest human before an American audience? Did they have to rehearse their role as Eskimos in

order to give their best performance? Were they able to remain in character—as Eskimos—for the entire duration of their exhibition? Did they remove their "costumes" at the end of the show? If so, did that make them somehow *less* Eskimo?

Perhaps making Zarate, Radlow, Pontico, and Robinson noteworthy was not their anatomical dimensions, *per se*, but rather the presentation and display of their so-called physical abnormalcy within the biological context of the "Human Species." Similarly, perhaps the aspect of *display* made the Eskimos interesting to the 16th-century English audience, more so than the fact that they were Eskimos, who, within the ethnological context of the "English Species" appeared quite abnormal. This study examines the works of Mourning Dove, Bulosan, and Kingston, not in order to better understand their ethnicities—that is, not for ethnographic purposes—but rather to critically survey the politics and poetics behind the presentation and display of their ethnicities, which have been, in the racialized context of the "White American Species," considered quite abnormal. These three individuals, however, as writers, do not display their "selves" upon a stage or behind a cage in a circus, but in the pages of their autobiographies and novels. An important objective of this study, therefore, is to establish a theoretical working relationship between "live" and "literary" ethnic performances, between those exhibited via actual "bodies" and those via the written

language. This study also addresses the question: to what extent does each author, in crafting a literary identity, ethnic or otherwise, "give the audience what he wants"? To what extent does each share the modern entrepreneurial spirit of not just the Saramaka man, but of Zarate, Radlow, Pontico, Robinson, and perhaps even of the live Eskimos who toured Bristol some five centuries ago?

Most importantly, while this study is a discussion of *Cogewea*, *America Is in the Heart*, and *The Woman Warrior*, it is also a discussion of *ethnography*, the literary convention most often associated with the academic field of anthropology. More specifically, this study is concerned with a certain historical moment and manifestation of ethnography, one that is intimately linked to the powerfully influential concept of Social Darwinism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The dominant presence of ethnography in these three works is neither disputable nor, for that matter, surprising. These works join a long procession of other works by so-called "ethnic" American writers who have relied on ethnography in crafting novels and autobiographies, so much so that a specifically American literary genre has been invented: to use Françoise Lionnet's term, *autoethnography*. This genre can be defined as autobiographical writings usually by—but not limited to—American writers of color that attempt to define the "otherness" of the authors' identities. Through this process, the autoethnographers also

define the otherness of the racial or ethnic groups to which they belong, where, as a rule, white, Anglo-Saxon is constituted as the "normative" American ethnicity, against which the "normalcy" of all other ethnicities are measured.

To cite examples of autoethnographies just from Asian American literature is to list the majority of the book-length prose works published by Asian American writers over the past century. This can be traced back to as early as 1887, when Lee Yan Phou published *When I Was a Boy in China*, and can be observed over a century later in Chang-rae Lee's 1996 novel, *Native Speaker*. Other examples cover the entire chronological gamut of Asian American literature, past and present: Etsu Sugimoto's *Daughter of the Samurai* (1925), New Il-Han's *When I Was a Boy in Korea* (1928), Younghill Kang's *The Grass Roof* (1931) and *East Goes West* (1937), Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart* (1943), C.Y. Lee's *Flower Drum Song* (1957), Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* (1945), Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* (1953), Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* (1975), Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989), Le Ly Hayslip's *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* (1989), Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) and *The Kitchen God's Wife* (1991), and David Mura's *Turning Japanese* (1991), to name just a few. And, as we see in the first chapter of this study, the notion of autoethnography is practically synonymous with the notion of

Native American literature, due largely to the historically ubiquitous presence of professional anthropologists in the authorial practices of Native American writers. This literary phenomenon has been the primary inspiration for Michael M.J. Fischer's often-cited essay, "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory," in which the author argues that "the florescence of ethnic autobiography" during the 1970s and 80s "can revitalize our way of thinking about how culture operates and refashion our practice of ethnography as a mode of cultural criticism" (194-95). Fischer posits—albeit problematically—that "ethnic autobiography and autobiographical fiction," such as Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, Michael Arlen's *Passage to Ararat* (1975), and Marita Golden's *Migrations of the Heart* (1983), "can perhaps serve as key forms for explorations of pluralist, post-industrial, late twentieth-century society" (195). Of course, this raises a rather obvious question: What accounts for such a close association between ethnography and the literary expression of individual and collective selves of "ethnic" writers?

Unfortunately, finding an answer to this question does not mean putting the issue to rest. On the contrary, it means opening a veritable floodgate of questions regarding the very nature of ethnography and its wide field of discursive operation. It means scrutinizing the origin, purpose, method, design, poetics, and politics of a mode of

representation whose dominance is not just limited to the pages of ethnic American novels and autobiographies but extends to almost every imaginable arena of cultural production and experience. To scrutinize ethnography is to critically engage one of the most compelling rhetorical conventions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries; it is to place the very meaning of *modernity* under a microscope. Ethnography, through its system of locution, semantics, grammar, syntax, signs, and iconography, reifies the very notion of modernity perhaps better than any other mode of representation, most notably by giving scientific credibility to a critical series of binary oppositions that provides the discursive backbone to ethnography and, by extension, to the cultural productions that employ it. These binaries include: primitive/modern, savage/civilized, heathen/Christian, superstitious/rational, Colored/White, Third World/First World, colonized/colonizer, natural/synthetic, feminine/masculine, simian/human, abnormal/normal, past/present, "other"/self." In sum, through these binaries, ethnography provides a semblance of language and logic to modernity.

In critically surveying the role of ethnography in the works of Mourning Dove, Bulosan, and Kingston, this study is guided by three alternative but overlapping points of reference: The first situates ethnography as a *literary convention* that invents the "other" as means for defining the "self." The second contextualizes ethnography as a

modernist expression of *mythic consciousness*, "the notion that cultural productions, in this case literary texts, have access to a mythic condition that represents a return to a more vital, primal, and elemental human state" (Manganaro 12). And the third positions ethnography as a vehicle for *display* and *commodification* of "otherness." While the objects of ethnography (artifacts, rituals, humans) and the venue of display (books, photographs, moving images, museums, zoos, fairs, theme parks, theatrical stages, tourist attractions, ethnic neighborhoods) may vary, all routes inevitably lead to a single Mecca: the marketplace. Ethnography, through its invention of cultures, poetic expressions of mythic consciousness, and infinitely imaginative manners of display, ultimately commodifies "otherness." Hence the postmodern adage: All the world's a *mall*.

* * *

Chapter One of this study is entitled "Mourning Dove's 'Faustian Deal': The Crisis of Ethnography and the Pangs of Imperialist Nostalgia." The objective of this chapter is to clarify the thesis and theoretical framework of this study by exploring the tensions that have historically kept two sets of literary urges at odds—between, on the one hand, the literary, novelistic, and artistic, and, on the other, ethnographic, anthropological, and scientific.

Published in 1927, *Cogewea* is a remarkable product of collaboration between Mourning Dove, an Okanogan Indian, and Lucullus V. McWhorter, a white professional anthropologist. In an unconventional process of literary division of labor, Mourning Dove provided the novel and McWhorter the ethnography. The problem with this description, of course, is obvious: Exactly how and where do we draw the line between the novel and ethnography, between the literary and the autobiographical, between art and science, especially in a work that aspires to be both? *Cogewea* provides us with a rare opportunity to consider this question, given that the authorial roles appear so clearly defined and prescribed in this partnership forged by an "ethnic" female artist and a white male scientist. As a result of this collaboration, as Mourning Dove places the ethnographic responsibilities on McWhorter, she appears to create a space—or a room, if you will—of her own, where she is ostensibly free to "do art," unencumbered by the unwritten obligation faced by most "ethnic" American writer to "explain" their ethnic difference, to perform autoethnography first and foremost, before or along side the "art." But is this in fact the case? Does Mourning Dove in fact realize her artistic dreams in this partnership? Or does she, fully aware of the vast gap separating her social status and that of McWhorter's, give up something, like Faust, during the transaction of this "deal"? The question before Mourning Dove, like the Saramaka

man, is: Is it *this* (collaborate with an ethnographer on a novel) or *nothing*?

Chapter Two is entitled "Carlos Bulosan's Modern Pangs of Nostalgia: Ethnography and the Myths of Primitivism." In essence, this chapter reads Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart* as a *counter*narrative to Paul Gauguin's mythical retreat to the South Seas. While the French painter sought to replace the anxiety of modernity with the promise of prelapsarian simplicity of Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands, the Filipino writer seeks to escape the anthropologically-defined "simple" environment of the Philippines by fleeing to the United States. Unfortunately, what he finds in the New World is not the height of civilization promised by American missionaries and schoolteachers stationed in the Philippines in the immediate decades following the Spanish-American War, but a sociologically defined "universe of force" and Darwinian determinism as depicted by American naturalists—Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris, Upton Sinclair, Jack London, and Richard Wright to name a few. *America Is in the Heart*, like Wright's *Black Boy-American Hunger*, is a narrative of the personal and social choices Bulosan sees and makes in a world governed by the rules of nature as defined by sociology's ethnographic imagination.

This chapter also examines the role of ethnography in what John Urry calls the "tourist gaze." Long before his journey to the United

States, Bulosan participates in the performance of ethnicity within the parameters of the tourist industry, modern technology, and economic survival. This participation would later become integral to his harsh experiences in the United States, as he desperately tries to make sense of the spectacle of his racial identity in a place that always already appears to have defined—ethnographically as well as legally—Filipinos as *simian* rather than human.

Finally, Chapter Three is entitled "Maxine Hong Kingston's Great Escape from the 'Watchful Villagers': Ethnography, the Freak Show, and the Aesthetic of Psychoanalysis." This chapter draws a parallel between Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and one of Sigmund Freud's most poetically imaginative essays, *Totem and Taboo*. Psychoanalysis structures, guides, and impels both works, where symptoms of neurosis, the present-day manifestation of primitive, atavistic characteristics, occur within the adult psychology of modern story-tellers. At the center of both works is profound ambivalence toward the pleasure principle. Should it be embraced or renounced? Does the good of the individual supersede the good of the "clan"? Is repression a necessary social device for maintaining civility or an excuse to silence and conspire against the weak and forgotten? For Kingston, the clan in question is China; for Freud, all of civilization. For Kingston, a Chinese American, her "primitive" identity is at stake, as she endeavors to become a modern

American novelist using the discourse provided by the Jewish German Freud—the discourse of modern secular science.

This chapter focuses also on the relationship among ethnography, psychoanalysis, childhood trauma, and the freak show. In attempting to make sense of her incoherent childhood traumas, Kingston employs the arsenal of her ethnographic imagination to do battle against the freakish ghosts of her past, which manifest not only in her nightmares and the impossible stories of her mother, but, to her dismay, also in her waking moments and her own stories. As a champion storyteller, gifted autoethnographer, virtuoso impresario, and master entrepreneur, she puts on display the bizarre freaks of her inner-self, hoping to jettison them into the external world, perhaps making it possible to flee from the spectacle of their existence, and thereby finally transforming herself from a "freakish Chinese" into a "normal American."

## *Chapter 1: Mourning Dove's "Faustian Deal": The Crisis of Ethnography and the Pangs of Imperialist Nostalgia*

In a rather curious scene in Mourning Dove's *Cogewea*, generally considered the first novel published by a Native American woman, the protagonist—named Cogewea—is quite angered by a book she is reading. The book is *The Brand*, a dime novel about a "half-blood brave" who denounces his family and Indian heritage over his affections for a white girl, the heroine of the story. The brave, however, dares not declare his love for her. His Indian blood makes that impossible. He is too ashamed of his Indian identity, feeling he is very much her inferior. Nonetheless, by the end of the novel, he "weds the white 'princess' and slaves for her the rest of his life" (91).

From the moment she picks up the novel, Cogewea knows exactly what to expect. Herself a half-breed, her anger toward the book becomes inevitable as soon as she discovers that the story concerns a half-breed. But despite this, she cannot stop herself from reading, and in despair she cries out: "I almost hate myself today. Every thing is against me, even to this maligning, absurdity of a book. The thing does nothing but slam the *breeds!* as if they were reptiles instead of humans" (89). She is so overcome with spite, she even throws the book on the floor. But *The Brand* has a mysterious power over her. She soon picks it up and

continues to read despite the fact that the "story, interesting to the whites, was worm-wood to her Indian spleen" (91).

More than anything else, she is angered by the book's quackery when it comes to Indian issues. "Bosh!" she says to herself:

> Show me the Red "buck" who would *slave* for the most exclusive white "princess" that lives. Such hash may go with the whites, but the Indian, both full bloods and the despised *breeds* know differently. And, that a "hero" should be depicted as hating his own mother for the flesh and heart that she gave his miserable frame. What a figure to be held up for laudation by either novelist or historian! No *man*, whether First American, Caucasian or of any other race, could be so beastly inhuman in real life. . . . and can people suppose that the Indian, who is of the heroic, has not the manhood accredited to even the most commercialized of nations? The truth is, he has more love of the undying type than his "superior" brother ever possessed. (91)

Cogewea is clearly more angry at herself for *being angry* than for the fallaciousness of *The Brand*. She knows better than to expect anything else from a book about Indians written by a white author for white readers. But why is she unable to stop herself from reading and why is she incapable of magnanimity? Prior to this scene, Cogewea had

already confessed a desire to write, of "contemplating the possibility of becoming an authoress, of writing a book" (33). But when the man in whom she confides makes a joke of it, she quickly drops the subject, but not before retorting, "I may surprise you yet, James LaGrinder! even if I am a 'squaw' as you call me" (34). The wrath she is later to exhibit toward *The Brand*—culminating in the burning of the book in her kitchen stove—clearly reveals something important about why she, a mere "squaw," wants to do something so out of character as to write a book.

*The Brand* irks Cogewea for a number of reasons: First, the half-breed Indian man is depicted as someone who feels inferior to a white woman due to his Indian blood. He is not only ashamed of his Indianness; his shame is *produced* by his Indian blood. He is also depicted as a self-hating Indian, one who curses even his own mother for birthing him. As far as Cogewea is concerned, this characterization is akin to asserting that fish have feathers: The notion that an Indian man hates his Indianness is beyond the realm of possibility. Second, both the author of the depiction and the intended audience of the novel are white. Cogewea is convinced that "the whites can not authentically chronicle [Indian] habits and customs. They can hardly get at the truth" (95). As far as she is concerned, whites do not possess the cognitive capacity to "authentically" comprehend, let alone document, Indian life. Third, and

perhaps most importantly, she knows whites lie about Indians with disingenuous purpose, namely for financial gain. Fully aware of their own ignorance, white writers who write on Indian subjects arrogantly and habitually make things up, knowing they can get away with it. So to depict an Indian man willfully enslaving himself to a white woman does nothing but perpetuate a lie of white dominance and superiority. It gives something white readers desire, something they will gladly pay for. Cogewea angrily reads *The Brand* despite knowing better because she feels she knows the truth about Indians and racist white fantasies, and can write about her people with far greater authenticity and authority. In sum, she wishes to write in order to correct the wrongs of white authors who distort Indian subjects for profit and greed.

But it is not necessarily the author of *The Brand* and other dime novelists whom Cogewea wishes to set straight. Their ignorance and opportunism are too predictable and ultimately beneath her concern. There is a much more formidable category of writers whom she wishes to combat—*the anthropologist*. Here is where *Cogewea* presents a compelling irony: Mourning Dove, the creator of Cogewea, the fictional character, in writing *Cogewea*, the novel, collaborates with a writer who essentially is the villain of the story. This raises the first among several critical questions inspired by *Cogewea*: What does it mean for Mourning Dove, a novelist, to collaborate with Lucullus V. McWhorter,

an anthropologist, on a novel that attempts to subvert the anthropological project? By the same token, what does it mean for an anthropologist to collaborate on a work which impugns his very collaboration? In this chapter, we examine this irony and these questions more closely by challenging the saliency of a series of binary oppositions that are at the heart of this issue: literature/anthropology, novel/ethnography, fiction/truth, art/science. Is there a clear boundary between the literary and anthropological, between the artistic and scientific? To what extent do novels really create so-called fiction while ethnographies record so-called truth? At stake here is not only the legitimacy of the outdated 19$^{th}$-century assumption of the empirical nature of scientific language. In reality, we might be overly optimistic in labeling this assumption "outdated," as a critical reading of *Cogewea* reminds us today, some seventy years after its publication, of the substantial degree to which the "literary/scientific" binary is still evoked in determining ideas of fiction and truth, despite a century of critical skepticism regarding the saliency of such categories.

Published in 1927, *Cogewea* is a remarkable product of an unconventional process of literary division of labor: By most conventional accounts, Christine Quintasket, an Okanogan Indian who wrote under the pen name Mourning Dove, provides the *novel* and Lucullus V. McWhorter, a professional anthropologist, provides the

*ethnography*. On the level of the plot, *Cogewea* is not so dissimilar to *The Brand*, prompting Janet Finn to compare the text to a "Harlequin romance" (143). Both novels are romantic adventures set in the Wild West and the plot concerns a love triangle: A good-hearted man, the hero, loves a beautiful woman, but she foolishly directs her affections elsewhere. She falls in love instead with the villain, a charmer, a wolf in sheep's clothing, until the end of the story when the hero and the woman ride off into the sunset to live happily ever after. The story of *Cogewea*, thus, is quite conventional as a Western romance novel, but with an important distinction: the hero and heroine of *Cogewea* are "half-breeds" and the villain a white man. This racial reshuffling of characters makes the novel quite unique; couple this with the fact that the author is an Indian woman, a rare phenomenon even today, let alone in the 1920s, the novel then becomes quite extraordinary.

But if Mourning Dove's authorship and the heroism of the Indian characters make the novel uniquely noteworthy, then McWhorter's collaboration makes it altogether common and well-nigh trivial. As Gretchen M. Bataille and Kathleen Mullen Sands note in *American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives*, a "matter of methodology" characterizes much of the writings by American Indian women, the dominant form of which is the autobiography. In addressing works such as Maria Chona's *Papago Woman*, Nancy Oestriech Lurie's *Mountain*

*Wolf Woman*, Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*, Beverly Hungry Wolf's *The Ways of My Grandmothers*, and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Storyteller*, among countless others, they argue that "bicultural composite authorship" distinguishes "Indian autobiographies from that of the Euro-American tradition most clearly" with "no relationship to gender differences." And we might add *genre* differences to the mix. *Cogewea*, of course, is a novel, not an autobiography. This is what distinguishes Mourning Dove from other Native American women writers of her era. Although Bataille and Sands's study addresses Native American women autobiographies, due to McWhorter's anthropological collaboration, it is still quite illuminating to consider *Cogewea* within the scope of their theoretical premises and categorical assumptions. As they assert:

> While some autobiographies by Indian people have been written solely by the author, even those have in some measure gone through bicultural processing in preparation of the manuscript for publication for a primarily non-Indian audiences. (9)

In expounding on this notion of "bicultural processing," Bataille and Sands identify two specific types that "lead to publication of Indian autobiography—oral and written" (10). They then further distinguish the oral process—between the "ethnographic" and "as-told-to." They explain:

> These are not mutually exclusive types, since both share in orality and presume a non-Indian partner to effect a completed work. In the ethnographic autobiography, however, the intention of the work is clearly not literary. Usually collected by an anthropologist whose goal has not been to record and publish a literary work but to collect information and customs, mores, practices, and ceremonies of a specific tribe, the ethnographic autobiography is documentary in nature, valuable not because of its mode of expression, but because of the ethnographic data it contains, a personal document to support anthropological interpretations of social data about tribal peoples. (10)

Bataille and Sands do admit, however, to the likelihood of the Indian narrator's personality breaking through even in this type of "scientific" process, "suggesting the potential for a genuine autobiography." But the brevity of the breakthrough often precludes this possibility. The authors therefore confidently contend that the "Ethnographic autobiography does not employ literary techniques" (11). It does, however, require a "collaborative effort by interviewer and subject, with the oral narration molded into publishable form for a non-Indian audience" (10). But no matter the type (oral or written) or the process (ethnographic or as-told-to), a few shared conditions define the Indian autobiography: a

collaboration between an Indian informant and white anthropologist, and an eventual publication intended for a non-Indian audience. We could argue that the same holds for the novel *Cogewea*, given the partnership between Mourning Dove (the Indian informant) and McWhorter (the white anthropologist).

Although their intentions to contribute to the scholarship of Indian women studies are noble in intent, unfortunately, what Bataille and Sands's theoretical assertions result in is a further complication of an already cloudy issue. In relying on a precarious series of unexamined claims and assumptions, they seriously reveal and perpetuate many critical flaws regarding language, discourse, and power. First, in asserting that the "intention" of ethnographic autobiographies is nonliterary, they leave unanswered an important question: *Whose* intention? The Indian's or anthropologist's? Can we speak of a "collective" or "hybrid" intention in this collaborative effort? Or do literary genres have innate intentions of their own? They also see a value in collecting ethnographic data, in the anthropological use of Indian autobiographies. But for whom is this valuable? Since they feel that publishability implies a "non-Indian audience," is it white readers who define the value of ethnography? Is it they who define the value of the Indian life that is autobiographized? Bataille and Sands also claim that the "goal" of the anthropologist is not literary but rather

informative, documental, interpretative, inquisitive—in a word, *scientific*. The scientific mode of expression, therefore, by nature, is nonliterary; accordingly, *ethnography*, anthropology's mode of expression, is nonliterary as well. Bataille and Sands do not see ethnography employing literary techniques. Thus, the less ethnographic an Indian autobiography, the more literary it is; the less an anthropologist makes her presence felt in the narrative of an Indian autobiography, the more "literary in intent" it becomes. Literary merit, therefore, "hinges on the narrative skills of the subject and the editorial skills of her collaborator and on the effectiveness of literary techniques employed in both narration and editorial phases" (13). In other words, Indian autobiographies could not—cannot—exist without the collaborator—the anthropologist, the ethnographer, the editor. Essentially, a partnership with anthropologists, therefore, is indispensable to and defines Indian autobiographies:

> What makes an autobiography literary rather than simply ethnographic is a search for and development of an inner stance, a sense of discovery of the wholeness of the subject's identity. As a life story the autobiography must have realism; the outer and inner elements must be sufficiently integrated to allow the reader to imagine the life and to comprehend it as a unique experience, not

> simply a typical representation of a tribal role. *Together*, the narrator and editor must be both "tender and severe" in articulating the subject's life "from particular moment in time." (13-14; emphasis added)

Sadly, Bataille and Sands's assumptions regarding the nature of literature and ethnography, art and science, are quite consistent with an attitude befitting anthropology's irrevocable past. Although published in 1984, their study better reflects the theoretical opinions of *1884*, a bygone era of anthropology that Renato Rosaldo in *Culture and Truth* associates with the "rise of classic norms" and "birth of ethnography":

> Produced by and for specialists, ethnographies aspired to be holistic representation of other cultures; they portrayed other forms of life as totalities. Ethnographies were storehouses of purportedly incontrovertible information to be mined by armchair theorists engaged in comparative studies. This genre seemingly resembled a mirror that reflected other cultures as they "really" were. (32)

Defining it as a "genre of social description" (31), Rosaldo maintains that ethnography "has been cultural anthropology's most significant contribution to knowledge" (38). He quotes T.O. Beidelman who, as recent as 1986, proclaimed with confidence: "Theories may change, but ethnography remains at the heart of anthropology; it is the test and

measure of all theory" (34). Why such reverence toward ethnography? As James Clifford points out in "Partial Truths," perhaps because "writing has emerged as central to what anthropologists do both in the field and thereafter" (2). George Marcus and James Fischer in *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* credit ethnography with elevating anthropology into a serious academic discipline by "bringing together into an integrated professional practice the previously separate processes of collecting data among non-Western peoples, done primarily by amateur scholars or others on the scene, and the armchair theorizing and analysis, done by the academic anthropologist" (18).

Anthropology, as a Western academic discipline, is relatively new, of course, sharing its beginnings with other social sciences—psychology, sociology, and archeology—in the mid-19$^{th}$ century. This was the era of the empiricists, such as Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, and George Henry Lewes; it was also the era of the birth of evolutionary theories characterized by the studies of Herbert Spencer and, most importantly, by the 1859 publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*. And following closely in Darwin's evolutionary footsteps were the first "professional" anthropologists—Lewis Henry Morgan, Edward Tylor, and James Frazer.

These 19$^{th}$-century Western empiricists, of course, did not originate the *idea* of anthropology, or, literally, "the study of man."

This idea emerged as early as the 15th and 16th centuries with the Age of Discovery, when non-Europeans and non-white societies steadily came into the collective consciousness of the West. With the so-called discovery of societies labeled "savage," "primitive," "uncivilized," "barbaric," and "heathen," came the need to dominate through expansionism and imperialism of the sort written about by Daniel Defoe in *Robinson Crusoe*, the archetypal novel of the Western Enlightenment. Throughout the duration of the 17th and 18th centuries, philosophers and writers of the Enlightenment, such as Jean Bodin, Michel de Montaigne, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Daniel Defoe, Montesquieu, Jean Jacque Rousseau, and Voltaire, all in one form or another contemplated the significance of "primitives" and "savages" in their midst.

It was not until the 19th century, however, that anthropology, armed with the idea of the Enlightenment, emerged as a serious positivist discipline, no longer to be mistaken for amateurish travel narratives of colonial traders and explorers or fanciful intellectual and literary musings of philosophers, poets, and novelists. The first half of the 20th century then took the field to its peak, led by such luminaries as Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, Edward Sapir, Margaret Mead, Marcel Mauss, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Branislaw Malinowki, Arnold R. Radcliff-Brown, among countless others. And it is this "golden era" of

anthropology that coincides with ethnography becoming theoretically and methodologically central to the field.

Despite almost a century of its reputable status as a proven scientific methodology, however, ethnography has been caught in a storm of critical scrutiny—or imputation, some might say—that has lasted the better part of the past thirty years. Much has been written and debated during that time about a so-called "crisis" in ethnography, most notably by the same contemporary anthropologists quoted before—Clifford, Marcus, Fischer, Rosaldo, and many others. And, without a doubt, the 1986 publication of *Writing Culture* sparked the biggest debate. Edited by James Clifford and George E. Marcus, this anthology marked a critical moment in the history of ethnography. With contributions by the leading contemporary scholars and critics of anthropology (Renato Rosaldo, Mary Louis Pratt, Stephen A. Tyler, Talal Asad, et al.), the volume placed ethnography under a "postmodern" lens and scrutinized its very epistemological foundations. Is there such a thing as an "objective" cultural description? Does ethnography "invent" rather than describe cultures? Are anthropologists detached Western scientists or one of colonialism's many agents? If anthropology is indeed part of the colonial process, does this taint its intellectual productions? Can the West still have authority over the representation of non-Western peoples in a postcolonial era? Since its beginning in the

mid-19th century, anthropology has trusted language, hence, the importance of ethnography. The crisis of representation has come with the crumbling of this ideology of textual faith, along with, as Rosaldo explains, the erosion of cultural norms, end of objectivism, rise of subjectivity, and increasing instability of once-pristine intellectual, scientific, and linguistic categories. As Ruth Behar puts it:

> The publication of that anthology in 1986 set off a debate about the predicaments of cultural representation that shook up North American anthropology and brought a new self-awareness to the discipline. Even those who criticized *Writing Culture* acknowledged its importance by giving it their serious attention. The book's purpose was to make an incredibly obvious point: that anthropologists write. And, further, that what they write, namely ethnographies—a strange cross between the realist novel, the travel account, the memoir, and the scientific report—had to be understood in terms of poetics and politics. (3)

Although prophetic in addressing these tough issues, *Writing Culture* quickly became lost in a fusillade of subsequent publications that reexamined ethnography, most notably, George Marcus and Michael Fischer's *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986), James Clifford's *Predicament of Culture* (1988), Renato Rosaldo's *Culture and Truth*

(1989), George E. Marcus's *Rereading Cultural Anthropology* (1992), and Vincent Crapanzano's *Hermes' Dilemma and Hamlet's Desire* (1992). In fact, so much has been written about this debate that virtually a new genre of anthropological writings has been invented, a genre I call *anthro-apology*.

*Anthro-apology* is theoretical writings by anthropologists—or *anthro-apologists*—who attempt to *reform* their discipline through self-criticism and ever-evolving experimental ethnography. The principle concern of *anthro-apology* has been two important controversies initially thought to be external to anthropology but eventually discovered to be at the core of it. The first emanates from the field of literary theory and involves the so-called "crisis of representation" that "emerged from an uncertainty about adequate means of describing social reality" (Marcus and Fischer 8). The second, integral to postcolonial theory, focuses on, to borrow a term from Edward Said, the status of "anthropology as colonialism's interlocutor." The pronouncedly complicated relationship between these two controversies and its effect on anthropology and ethnography is at the heart of *anthro-apology*.

But *anthro-apology* is not without its own problems and oversights. As many feminist critics have asserted, in their attempt to usher in a new self-awareness to the field of anthropology, the *anthro-apologists* have continued the age-old practice of "Women Need Not

Apply." Ruth Behar, in her introduction to *Women Writing Culture*, argues that Clifford and Marcus's *Writing Culture* replicates the errors of the discipline's past by omitting "women anthropologists and women's anthropological writings" from its agenda:

> In an act of sanctioned ignorance, the category of the new ethnography failed to take into account that throughout the twentieth century women had crossed the border between anthropology and literature. . . . *The Writing Culture* agenda, conceived in homoerotic terms by male academics, provided the official credentials, and the cachet, that women had lacked for crossing the border. (4)

In other words, Bataille and Sands's positivist claims—that literary language is unscientific and scientific language is unliterary—are wholly consistent with the male-privileging epistemology of anthropology and directly concordant with the "male gaze" that appears to navigate the direction and course of ethnography.

In "The Discourse of Others," Craig Owens maintains that the "West admit(s) only one vision—that of the constitutive male subject—or, rather, (it) posit(s) the subject of representation as absolutely centered, unitary, masculine" (188). He adds: "Among those prohibited from Western representation, whose representations are denied all legitimacy, are women" (188). Using Lacanian insights, Owen asserts

that the human subject is never a discrete self and cannot be known outside of the terms of society, outside the cultural formation of patriarchy, where *sight*, or the *gaze*, is erected as the dominant human sense. And it is this male gaze that defines the "difference" between men and women by confirming the *lack* or *absence* in women—the missing *phallus*, the "privileged signifier" of patriarchy. As Owen puts it, "sexual difference takes its decisive significance from a *sighting*" (199). The male gaze, however, more than just defines women by their lack of the phallus; it also defines men by not only the presence of their phallus, but by their authority to gaze. The ability to be gazed upon, therefore, defines women. The man desires that the woman is seen, displayed, and exposed. The woman is to show herself, to expose herself, to display herself. She, in her pose, becomes his fetish, his object of voyeurism, his pornographic image. She is reduced to his artifact of difference.

If we accept Owens's premise, if we define pornography as the male gaze upon the difference of gender found in the "otherness" of woman, can we, for the sake of the present discussion, temporarily define anthropology on similar terms? Can we define anthropology as the "white gaze" upon the difference of otherness of non-white peoples? Could this account, for example, to whatever degree, for the relative preponderance of Native American women autobiographies over other

literary forms? Is the autobiography by a woman of color, then, a "voluntary" displaying of her own "difference"? Is anthropology, then, pornography of culture, established via the *ethnographic gaze* upon the difference of *race*? Although not the first to do so, Owens points out that while there has been a considerable lack of female artists throughout Western history, there have been, in stark contrast, "certainly no shortages of images *of* women" in artwork by men" (188). Can we not make a similar observation in anthropology? While there has been a considerable lack of non-white ethnographers throughout history, there have been certainly no shortage of images of non-whites in ethnographies by whites.

Trinh T. Minh-ha, in *Woman, Native, Other*, augments this point when she speaks of anthropology as a white male vehicle for defining the otherness of so-called primitive peoples, and women in particular. The notions of "woman," "native," and "other," as her title insinuates, become one and the same. The woman is studied because she is studiable. The native is gazed upon because she is gaze-upon-able. The converse, however, does not hold in anthropology. The studier cannot be studied by the object of his study. The object "captured, solidified, and pinned to a butterfly board" (48) is in no position to study its captor. Trinh maintains:

> Anthropology is defined as a science of *man* or "a *study* of the *nature* of the *human* s-p-e-c-i-e-s." Next to the mind doctors—the psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and psychologist—is the anthropologist, who also pretends to the precision of a zoologist or a botanist. (55)

What I find most troubling about Bataille and Sands's discussion of the relationship between Indian women writers and white anthropologists is the complete and utter absence of not just the feminist response to *anthro-apology*, but the surprising lack of *anthro-apological* insights themselves. What they are ignorant of—or, worse, willfully ignore—is the fact that ethnography's scientific pretensions reflect a transcendental and magical faith in language, and symbolize the "persistence of an ideology claiming transparency of representation and immediacy of experience" (Clifford 2).

Moreover, Bataille and Sands, in quite a dramatic fashion, display Rosaldo's notion of *imperialist nostalgia*, a naïve attitude which "makes racial domination appear innocent and pure" (68). In defining the collaboration between Indian women and white anthropologist as an essential component in the formation of an Indian autobiography, and in characterizing the motives of anthropologists as qualitatively noble, Bataille and Sands categorically dissociate anthropologists from other "agents of colonialism—officials, constabulary officers, missionaries"

(68). They, in fact, deny anthropologists' complicity in the imperialistic domination of the people they study. As early as 1973, Talal Asad edited an important collection of essays, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, pondering the history and politics of this troubling relationship, and this is something that Warilea Iamo takes anthropologists to task for in "Stigma of New Guinea":

> If modern anthropology grew from the search for human contrast between Western people and their society, then the anthropologist is a restless person, an agent of those Western societies in search of a restive place. As an agent of a particular society, the anthropologist will find the non-Western social systems therapeutic and comforting for Western social systems. In Africa and New Guinea anthropologists have served colonial administrators. . . . Their job was to ensure that the white masters remained in control. Not only are the "natives" in this process sociopolitically, economically, and culturally transformed, but they also have become "things" in Western—for American—eyes. (77)

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said reiterates this point in his discussion of Colonel Creighton, the "main figure of worldly authority" in Rudyard Kipling's novel of Orientalized India, *Kim*. Creighton, for

all practical purposes, is a Renaissance Man; he is not only a soldier and a colonial official but also a scholar and an anthropologist. India, his post, is entirely interesting to him because he can approach it from each of the perspectives his many vocations allow. "The interchange between ethnography and colonial work in Creighton is fluent" and "he can study the talented boy [Kim] both as a future spy [for England] and as an anthropological curiosity" (153). Said's view of anthropology's relationship to colonialism is not unlike Iamo's:

> Of all the modern social sciences, anthropology is the one historically most closely tied to colonialism, since it was often the case that anthropologists and ethnologists advised colonial rulers on the manners and mores of the native people. . . . Kipling was one of the first novelists to portray this logical alliance between Western science and political power at work in the colonies. (153)

If we turn our attention from New Guinea and India to the United States some twenty-six years after the 1901 publication of *Kim*, we see perhaps one of the first American novelists in Mourning Dove portraying a similar "alliance between Western science and political power." In this case, however, we have a "real life" manifestation of the fictional relationship forged between Kim, the "native-other," and Creighton, the white anthropologist; we see this affiliation in the relationship between

Mourning Dove and her anthropologist collaborator, Lucullus V. McWhorter.

In returning to our initial discussion of *Cogewea*, it is quite clear that while many others have been and are still unaware of anthropology's imperialist nostalgia, the same cannot be said of Mourning Dove. Yes, she collaborates with an anthropologist; but, by all accounts, she does so reluctantly. Quite aware of her position as an Indian woman with barely three years of formal education, she virtually gives McWhorter, the respected scientist, unlimited reign over her novel. In fact, it is she who solicits his help in editing her manuscript when they first meet in 1914 (Fisher v). As Dexter Fisher notes in the introduction to the 1981 edition of *Cogewea*, McWhorter's hand in amending Mourning Dove's manuscript was quite heavy, exceeding perhaps even Ezra Pound's celebrated editing of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. The anthropologist contributed many elements to the novel, including poetic epigraphs taken from various Western writers (including Longfellow's *Hiawatha*), and radical rephrasing, reconstructing, and detailed copy-editing of Mourning Dove's language. He also tacked on to the text long passages of cultural and historical anecdotes from his own research (xv-xvi).

His most intriguing editorial maneuver, however, is the sequence of parenthetical numbers that continually interrupts the narrative during the course of the story. Provided by McWhorter, these numbers refer to

notes that appear at the conclusion of the novel; they are essentially endnotes, a conventional research device used for academic or scientific documentation. Such devices are not uncommon in a scholarly edition of previously published novels shown over time to exhibit literary merit, where the editors use footnotes or endnotes for annotation purposes. It is, however, quite rare to see scholarly notations in the *first* edition of a novel. This is precisely the case in *Cogewea*, where the endnotes, sixteen pages worth, serve an ethnographic function, explaining cultural details and "corroborating various stories and incidents in the novel" (Fisher xv). Wherever he felt the plot of the story needed clarification pertaining to "Indian" matters, McWhorter provided ethnographic information on a wide range of topics: laws, mating rituals, taboos and prohibitions, food, clothing, language, war, dance, and many other anthropological facets of Okanogan society.

When the novel is finally published after many setbacks involving difficulties with finance, publisher, and delay of over a dozen years, Mourning Dove is predictably "overwhelmed by the final product in which she suddenly realized the full extent of McWhorter's influence" (Fisher xv). In a letter dated June 4, 1928, she writes her collaborator:

> I have just got through going over the book *Cogeawea* (sic), and am surprised at the changes that you made. I think they are fine, and you make a tasty dressing like a cook would

> do with a fine meal. I sure was interested in the book, and hubby read it over and also all the rest of the family neglected their housework till they read it cover to cover. I felt like it was some one elses (sic) book and not mine at all. In fact the finishing touches are put there by you, and I have never seen it. (qtd. in Fisher xv)

Her reaction to the finished product is surprisingly cautious and diplomatic. She is, of course, quite elated and excited about having just been published. This is a rare and admirable feat for anyone, let alone for a self-educated Indian woman in the 1920s. Mourning Dove had been interviewed some eleven years earlier by the *Spokesman Review* of Spokane and "hailed as the first American Indian novelist" and "(g)iven such fanfare, it was embarrassing to continually have to explain why the book was not yet published" (Fisher xiv). After a dozen years of anticipation, perhaps she is more relieved than ecstatic. And she is also grateful. Fully aware that without his involvement, she would never have succeeding in publishing *Cogewea*, she is sincerely thankful to McWhorter for his devotion. Although she owes him thanks, a demonstration of her appreciation is not the only thing she owes him. There is a greater price to be paid. *In accepting the necessary collaboration with McWhorter, she has in fact made a Faustian deal.*

For the price of getting her novel published, she has paid not only with her novel but with her soul.

Her letter to McWhorter reveals not so much elation and gratitude but sadness. "I am surprised at the changes you made," she says. So much so, she does not even recognize that it is her own book. Whose book is it then? The heavy-handed "finishing touches" she has never even seen. As Fisher notes:

> Mourning Dove's intention from the beginning had been to write a romance about the half-blood Cogewea that was based on her own experience and would preserve in novel form some of the unrecorded stories of her tribe. Despite the inclusion of the Okanogan elements, Mourning Dove regarded *Cogewea* as fiction, refusing at one point, for example, to allow McWhorter to use a picture of her on the title page because that was appropriate only for historical works. (xiii)

Mourning Dove's primary intent is novelistic, literary, and artistic. But, against what Bataille and Sands might claim, this intent does not exclude the ethnographic and scientific. The two urges—the literary and ethnographic—are not mutually exclusive categories to her. As Faye Harrison proclaims, "if ethnography is kind of fiction, then the converse, that fiction is kind of ethnography, is also true" (qtd. in Behar 19).

Mourning Dove's desire to include "unrecorded stories of her tribe" is every bit as important as the "romance" in the creation of the *novel*. The ethnographic element, therefore, is in fact as literary as the plot, the characterization, setting, tone, voice, atmosphere, or any other features of the novel. McWhorter, however, like Bataille and Sands, sees the distinctions in black and white terms. Wanting to exaggerate the scientific advantage of the novel, he eventually convinces Mourning Dove to allow her picture to grace the cover of the book (Fisher xiii). Moreover, he felt that the book needed a strong "Indian point of view." So, in the most ironic fashion, he suppressed Mourning Dove's literary intentions and highlighted his own political ones by "constantly inserting into the narrative innumerable didactic passages about the injustices suffered by Indians at the hands of government agencies, as well as historical facts about other tribes that are hardly relevant to the story" (Fisher xiv). And so, even to Dexter Fisher, someone who very much admires and is exceedingly sympathetic to McWhorter, the "result is that the narrative, which is very much within the tradition of the western romance, with its stock characters and melodrama, sags at times under the weight of vituperation" (xiv).

In a bizarre bit of irony, it is McWhorter, a white man, who vituperates more passionately against the wrongs committed on the Indians by whites than Mourning Dove, an Indian woman upon whom the

wrongs have been committed. Mourning Dove's ambitions as a writer are prosaic and unpretentious. She simply wants to write fiction, a romance, the kind she herself in all likelihood enjoys reading, a dime novel not unlike *The Brand*. If she is to crusade for a cause, she will do so as a novelist, *within* the confines of the novel's structure, through plot and characterization. This is not to say, however, that she did not have a politically progressive spirit. As Janet Finn notes, Mourning Dove, as the first woman to sit on the Colville Tribal Council, "took her personal experiences and political concerns to public forums," and often "stood before civic groups advocating tribal fishing rights and sat with Camp Fire Girls telling stories of Okanogan life" (137). Moreover, within the bounds of her identity as a *writer*, she "wrote against the dominant grain of Indian image making" of white America, and her novel "challenged the capacity of impersonal ethnographic accounts to 'capture' Native American experience." She wrote to counter "popular stereotypes of Indian people" and pose an "alternative form for elucidating cultural knowledge" (141).

An important question needs to be addressed: Did Mourning Dove have prior knowledge of the nature and extent of McWhorter's involvement in the revision and publication of her novel? Did she willfully acquiesce to his authority? Does she merely feign surprise over not recognizing her novel after publication? If she cannot recognize her

work after it has passed through McWhorter's blue-pencil, is she in fact the author of *Cogewea*?

Not surprisingly, immediately following the novel's publication were disbelieving words of skeptics and doubters. An Indian agent's accusation that McWhorter was the sole author of *Cogewea* so deeply offended the anthropologist that he wrote a letter to the agent angrily denying the charge, leading to the recanting of the statements (Fisher xvi). This kind of public challenge to the legitimacy of her authorship greatly distressed Mourning Dove. The fact that she herself might have believed in the partial truth of the accusations no doubt added to her distress.

McWhorter's heavy-handed contribution to the novel, however, was not the skeptics' main point of doubt. That was all too obvious. What most critics questioned was Mourning Dove's ability to write a novel. She was, after all, merely a "squaw." Recall that this is the sentiment that infuriates the character Cogewea when she is made fun of after declaring she wishes to write a book. This is also the sentiment that Bataille and Sands reveal when they describe the collaboration of anthropologists as essential to Native American woman autobiographers. And this is the same sentiment that confronted the African American poet, Phillis Wheatley, who in the 18$^{th}$ century underwent "tests" verifying her authorship of poems. For Wheatley to claim ownership of

her own poems, no less than the Governor of Massachusetts and John Hancock, among eighteen other "prominent" citizens, needed to testify that "under the Disadvantage of serving as a Slave in a Family in this Town," she "had been examined and thought qualified to write them" (qtd. in *Norton Anthology* 814). Mourning Dove was not as fortunate as Wheatley. She could not assemble a team of qualified arbitrators to authenticate her authorship of *Cogewea*. She had only McWhorter, a man caught in the middle of the scandal, to plead her case. And so, it was left up to her "to prove to the world that she could write a novel by herself" (Fisher xvi).

To McWhorter, "a homesteader, historian, and self-styled Indian rights activist in Washington State" (Finn 137), Mourning Dove's dime novel romance provided him with an ideal opportunity to fulfill his own agenda. His opportunism, however, was not necessarily malevolent in intent, and his motives were not entirely self-serving or villainous. On the contrary, he appeared to have had the best interest of Mourning Dove and the Indian people in mind when he agreed to collaborate on *Cogewea*. In her characterization of McWhorter, Fisher practically canonizes him with praise:

> He was a man of the utmost integrity whose genuine interest in Indian history and culture became the center of his work and publications. He had, for example, defended

> the Yakimas in their struggle to protect their irrigation rights and had in 1913 published a pamphlet entitled *The Crime against the Yakimas*, which exposed the pattern of abuses against Indians by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Adopted into the Yakima tribe, he was given the honorary name of He-mene Ka-wan, or "Old Wolf," which he used repeatedly in his correspondence with Indian friends. (vi)

Evidence of McWhorter's outrage at the mistreatment of Indians by whites are found throughout the narrative and endnotes of *Cogewea*. Due to an absence of Mourning Dove's original manuscript which McWhorter worked with, and given that there are no objective markers to designate his scholarly additions and editorial revisions, it is virtually impossible to attribute, with certainty, a passage in the novel to either writer. But, in all likelihood, the didactic passages concerning Indian customs and vitriolic condemnation of Bureau of Indian Affairs are wholly McWhorter's. And so, given McWhorter's credentials as a respected anthropologist, his advocacy on her behalf to get the book financed and published, his tireless devotion in molding the manuscript into a publishable condition, and his righteous championing of Indian causes, how could Mourning Dove, a half-breed migrant worker whose home was determined by the ripening of fruits, vegetables, and grain, ever hope to criticize or protest McWhorter's full discretionary power

over the final condition of her novel? Echoed in the "relationship of Mourning Dove and her patron Lucullus McWhorter," writes Finn, are "themes of obligation, illness, and financial struggle" (139).

Earlier in this chapter, with the help of Renato Rosaldo, we defined *imperialist nostalgia* as a naïve attitude which "makes racial domination appear innocent and pure" (68):

> Curiously enough, agents of colonialism—officials, constabulary officers, missionaries, and other figures from whom anthropologists ritually dissociate themselves—often display nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was "traditionally" (that is, when they first encountered it). The peculiarity of their yearning, of course, is that the agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed. Therefore. . . people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed. (69)

Rosaldo sees a paradox: "A person kills somebody, and then mourns the victim" (69). He also sees imperialist nostalgia using "a pose of 'innocent yearning' both to capture people's imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination" (69). At the heart of imperialist nostalgia is guilt and denial of complicity with imperialism, and its purpose is to hide both the guilt and denial. This is achieved

through a variety of means, and most of these means—wittingly or not—are employed by McWhorter.

As a historian and scholar, he knows the brutal truth about the campaign of genocide the whites have mercilessly conducted against North America's indigenous population. As an anthropologist of Indian cultures, he is a preservationist, devoting his life and career to the protection of an endangered "species" of people. As a scientist, he is motivated by curiosity and obligated to advance his academic field of study. As a friend of Mourning Dove, he wants to use his influence and talents to uplift her, play Dr. Higgins to her Eliza Doolittle, transform her from an insignificant "squaw" into a respected novelist, an artist, his fair lady. This is the least he can do to right the wrongs of his own kind—the whites. Put all these motivations together and he exemplifies the prototypical Lone Anthropologist (a play on the term, "Lone Ethnographer," used by Rosaldo): He is Indiana Jones, who, in the film, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, single-handedly rescues a helpless Indian village—populated mostly by women—from famine and destruction by finding and returning to the villagers an ethnographic artifact integral to their cultural preservation. McWhorter, therefore, epitomizes a compelling assertion made by Ruth Behar: "Anthropology makes heroes of men." It is "the male quest plot turned institution" and "is by nature a paradoxical pursuit for woman" (16). As Susan Sontag

asserts, anthropology is "one of the rare intellectual vocations which do not demand a sacrifice of one's manhood" (qtd. in Behar 16). The woman is always already the object of the gaze of anthropology: "Woman, the original Other, is always being looked at and looked over. A woman sees herself being seen" (Behar 2). In anthropology, the woman is the object of both the male gaze and the ethnographic gaze. McWhorter simultaneously epitomizes the spirit of imperialist nostalgia, the quest of the male hero, and the mission of the *white man's burden*, "where civilized nations stand duty-bound to uplift so-called savage ones" (Rosaldo 70). He has voluntarily, and with the best of intentions, burdened himself in uplifting Mourning Dove from humble Okanogan squaw to published American novelist. How can Mourning Dove possibly criticize or protest McWhorter?

There is a more basic question: *Can* she, even if she wishes to? Although she may not, in "realistic" terms, be in a position to directly challenge McWhorter privately or publicly, she does have an alternative, one which has commonly served so-called "minority" or "subaltern" writers and artist whenever and wherever unequal distribution of power and authority exists. *She can and does protest McWhorter by playing trickster*, who "mocks and plays with the boundaries of truth and fiction" (Finn 133).

The trickster, of course, is a literary character who overcomes a more powerful opponent through a variety of creative means. As Paul V.A. Williams explains in "Loki and Saxo's Hamlet," the trickster employs an almost endless arsenal of unconventional weapons: deviousness, mischief, tricks, deception, underhandedness, performance, playing the fool, riddles, puns and other verbal ingenuity, elaborate skills, confidence, covert strategies, intelligence, humor, unmatched wisdom, and supernatural powers. The trickster's motivations are rarely *proactive*; rather, they are *reactive* to dire situations not of their making. They are reluctant or accidental combatants. The trickster uses his skills against an opponent who is blessed with every apparent upper hand, an enemy with glaringly pronounced physical, material, social, political, institutional, and divine advantages. Unwillingly forced into a critical situation of life or death, the trickster—the ultimate underdog—inevitably triumphs nevertheless, and "better men than he meet their deaths through his strange skills and elaborate strategies" (Williams 3). Warwick Wadlington, in *The Confidence Game in American Literature*, defines the trickster as an *archetype*, appearing "in variants ranging from the demonic to the messianic," representing "the ready transformation of a basic motivation into a set of social deportments, like cunning and stupidity, that to common view seem mutually exclusive" (6). Wadlington sees the trickster embodying a paradox: He is both "a force

of treacherous disorder that outrages and disrupts" and "an unanticipated, usually unintentional benevolence in which trickery is at the expense of inimical forces and for the benefit of mankind" (15). Moreover:

> Whether he is seen, according to social and historical circumstances, as demiurge, culture hero, savior-god, devil, shaman, or comic rogue, the Trickster has a profound fascination, abrogating as he does in his tricks and self-deceptions all restrictions, rules, and taboos, manipulating the untouchable, and freely tapping the unchecked powers of the unconscious or the afterworld by means of illusion and metamorphosis. (16)

Often cited examples of the trickster archetype are usually folkloric in nature, including Loki from the Eddic lore, Maui from Polynesian, Eshu-Elegba from West African, Ture from Central African, Krishna from Hindu, Wakdjunkaga from North American Indian, and Daiiru from South American (Wadlington 15). There are, however, deployments that are not associated with traditional beliefs, customs, and myths. Bernard Bell, for instance, sees William Wells Brown employing "several black trickster tales in *Clotel* to illustrate the ingenious strategies and disguises used to escape from slavery" (25). Joanne M. Braxton, on the other hand, sees the tradition of black women's autobiographies as

embodying "the spirit of the archetypal trickster figure who relies on wit, speed, and intelligence to deceive, beguile, overwhelm, and defeat a more powerful foe" (45).

Mourning Dove's strategy to "beguile, overwhelm, and defeat" the "more powerful foe" of McWhorter is to turn her novel into an allegory. Through a combined means of illusion, literary ingenuity, and supernaturalism, she metamorphoses herself and McWhorter into fictional characters—she into Cogewea, the heroine, and he into Alfred Densmore, the villain. Because she has no social, political, institutional, or economic power over McWhorter in the "real" world, she resorts to the means of the trickster in order to assert her *self* in the "imaginative" world she has authored. She realizes McWhorter's power to appropriate *Cogewea* in serving his own imperialistic means and nostalgic ends. Despite his intentions to do otherwise, he abuses his unlimited force and authority as a white male scientist to "kill" Mourning Dove's presence in *Cogewea*, so much so that she does not even recognize her own novel after he puts his "finishing touches" on it. She, therefore, having foreseen the power and intent of McWhorter from the start of their collaboration, and given no other alternative, goes the way of the trickster: She uses the literary devices of plot and characterization to subvert and impugn McWhorter's collaboration. The result is McWhorter's participation in his own demise—at least that is the

trickster's intent. Mourning Dove's desire to author a novel thus manifests in Cogewea's desire to write a book. As discussed earlier, Cogewea's eventual outrage upon reading *The Brand* culminates in her burning the book in her kitchen stove. This act of momentary incendiarism ignites her identity as a writer; by destroying the "fake" book, she creates a space for own future book, one that will be a "real" representation of Indians and half-breeds. Cogewea's desire to write is Mourning Dove's desire magically transformed into a fictional yearning. *Cogewea*, the novel, is the phoenix that rises from the ashes of *The Brand*, destroyed by Cogewea and resurrected by Mourning Dove. And serving as the foil, the villain who meets his just desserts, parodied and mocked, hissed and derided, is none other than Lucullus V. McWhorter, a.k.a. Alfred Densmore.

Alfred Densmore is an Easterner whose snobbery and contemptuousness are obvious to everyone as soon as he makes his entrance. His reason for coming West is hinted at when he, disappointed at the ranch where he lands a job, thinks to himself: "Where were those picturesque Indians that he was promised to meet?" (48). He is upset at finding himself in "a nest of half bloods, whom he had always understood to be the inferior degenerates of two races" (48). Densmore has come West with the mind of a tourist, bringing with him his own idealized image of the Indian. When he does not find what he expects,

he is very disappointed, and, like a shortchanged tourist, feels cheated. The "degenerate" half-bloods on the ranch, sensing his haughtiness, write him off as a "tenderfoot" who knows nothing of "manly" matters such as breaking broncos. They show him no respect, convinced that "that fellow will commit suicide rangling those wild horses" (48). The only one to see him sympathetically is Cogewea. She is entirely fascinated by Densmore, seeing in him a stark contrast against the motley crew of uneducated and artless half-breed roughnecks she lives amongst. He is, in a word, a gentleman. Cogewea admires what she thinks is his refined, civilized demeanor. In fact, the main object of her attraction to him is the very thing that the other half-breeds despise—his snobbery. When Densmore is teased by the ranch-hands whose practical joke involving a wild bronco leads to him fracturing his arm, Cogewea comes to his aid. She not only befriends and nurses him, she is utterly flattered when he flirts with her. This, of course, is the same woman who is to later burn a book for depicting a half-breed as falling in love with a white woman. By depicting Cogewea as a flawed character in this ironic manner, naïvely bewitched and bewildered by a villainous snob, Mourning Dove hints at her own failings in her relationship with McWhorter. In essentially *scolding* Cogewea for her foolishness, Mourning Dove in fact scolds herself. The object of Mourning Dove's fascination, of course, is another well-bred and educated white

gentleman in McWhorter. Her criticism of Cogewea, thus, mirrors Cogewea's of the half-breed brave in *The Brand*.

The object of Cogewea's desire is not so much Densmore as it is what he represents—class, education, sophistication, civilization. These are the same qualities that attract Mourning Dove to McWhorter, the gentleman and scholar, when she asks him for his help with her manuscript. To both author and her fictional character, these two white men represent a potential avenue of escape from their Indian "depravity." The similarities between the two women do not end here. The most important parallel pertains not so much to the motives for their attraction to the two white men, but rather for the men's attraction to the two half-breed Indian women who long to be writers.

Densmore's attraction for Cogewea when he first sees her is sexual. This increases as he spends more time with her:

> There was a disturbing element to his mediations. . . . That "breed" girl came ever before him. It was in vain that he tried to blot her from memory, to banish her from vision. She peeped from every flower; those flashing black eyes reflected from the pebbles glinting in the sunshine. Her tresses streamed on the eddying current, and her voice was in the notes of bird-song and the chipmunk's chatter. (80)

Although unable to cease thinking of her in such gushingly romantic manner, he chides himself: "Alfred Densmore, the cold, calculating business man out from the East for adventure and money, was half in love wih (sic) this wild, tawny girl of the range" (81). The mere idea of such a thing happening distresses him to no end. He admonishes himself: "What a fool! I am not really falling in love with that squaw! Ridiculous!" (81). To be physically attracted to Cogewea is one thing, but to have "feelings" for her because she is so "sweet" to him is quite another. He tells himself that women like her are "alright as objects of amusement and pleasure, but there it must halt" (81). Seeing himself as a civilized man, he is embarrassed by his sexual attraction to, let alone feelings of love for, someone of a race beneath his own. This is unacceptable behavior for a white gentleman. He imagines what his family would think of such a thing: "My sisters would never tolerate it, and it would break my mother's heart" (81). But more than anything else, the idea of disinheritance—a certainty if he were to marry her—rattles his bones: "*Never! Never!* I don't dare! Pshaw!" (81).

Densmore's incessant denial indicates an undeniable truth: He desires Cogewea. Unfortunately, to desire her solely on the basis of sex or love is unacceptable in the civilized code of ethics by which he proudly lives. However, while sex with a "squaw" as an *end* is unthinkable, if her sexuality can be a *means* for ulterior gains, a

financial one in particular, then it is very much within the bounds of civilized behavior. "Had she strings to a gold mine there would be an inducement," he thinks, "but a squaw without compensation—a sacrifice without adequate requital—blah!" (81). Then, like magic or a dramatic turn in a perverse fairy tale, it happens. Densmore discovers that perhaps she is indeed tied to a string that literally leads to a gold mine. And the string that links Cogewea to a gold mine is made of the most surprising material: *ethnography.*

In a silly moment of flirtation, Densmore tells her how lonely he has been waiting for his arm to heal: "No one to speak to; every body busy but me" (83). So eager is Cogewea for his approval and affection, she offers him the only thing she feels she can—an ethnographic spectacle of her "Indianness." After all, what can she possibly give him that he already has not? Sensing his disappointment at not finding "real" Indians but only "half-breeds" during his trip out West, Cogewea volunteers the services of Stemteemä, her ancient grandmother who embodies the Okanogan oral tradition:

> I will have her tell some stories that may hold interest for you—stories of the past—of the time that was. She will speak in Okanogan and I will interpret for you. (83)

The services she offers Densmore are the same ones Mourning Dove offers McWhorter—that of the *native informant.* She will not only lead

him to an "authentic" source of Indianness but will also serve as a translator. Mourning Dove tells Densmore that Stemteemä, over a hundred years old, is her only living relative: "When mother died, she was the only relative we had—after daddy left us for the glitter of gold in the Yukon; and which—" (83).

Stopping in mid-sentence, Mourning Dove knows immediately that she has said too much, "as though she had betrayed a secret" (83). And she has. To her, the memory of her father is "an ever haunting uncertainty—a dreaming of that which is more fearful than death—gnawing at her soul" (83-4). The death of her parents is too painful a subject, and she regrets having spoken so freely to Densmore. This sadness of Cogewea, however, is completely lost to the Easterner. "But the mention of 'gold in the Yukon' has aroused to new life his latent passion for wealth" (84). To go back East a wealthy man was Densmore's chief aim in life. He felt there "must be wealth somewhere in this new country—mines of it among the Indians—requiring only brains and strategy to possess" (85). The strategy his brain comes up with is to court Cogewea, pretend to love her, and use her to get closer to Stemteemä, believing that the location of the secret gold mine is hidden in her stories. Densmore sees in ethnography a treasure map to wealth, "the one god of his ambition" (84). The value of ethnography, therefore, rests not in the thing itself but rather in the potential profit to

which it may lead. In this respect, Mourning Dove is not unlike Densmore. To them both, what use are Indian tales, customs, and artifacts in the modern world if they cannot make a profit with them? In a letter she writes to McWhorter in 1918, Mourning Dove complains to him of her difficulty in obtaining legends and stories from other Indians:

> They are such hard people to get anything out from. . . . There are some that are getting suspicious of my wanting folklores and if the Indians find out that their stories will reach print I am sure it will be hard for me to get any more legends without paying the hard cash for them. A whiteman has spoiled my field of work. . . . This Mr. James Teit has collected folklore among the Indians and has been paying five dollars a piece for good Indian legends and naturally that has spoiled the natives and of course they wish the same price from me whether they story is worth a nickel to me. (qtd. in Fisher viii)

While a white person displaying business sense is considered admirable and natural, an Indian entrepreneur is seen as greedy and unnatural. The tenuous relationship between anthropologists and native informants is aptly illustrated in a joke, the source of which I am not certain: The typical Cheyenne family has five members in it—the mother, father, brother, sister, and an anthropologist. The success of this joke, of

course, depends upon the veracity of the situation being lampooned. *Cogewea*, for one, is a work that appears to support the humor of the joke. It demonstrates the subtle hostility Indians have for the commonplace intrusion of anthropologists in their lives. A particularly telling moment is when James LaGrinder, a half-breed, mockingly recounts a story of one particular anthropologist:

> I was there when the boys was a stuffin' one poor woman. It was at the first buffalo roundup when lots of people come to see the sight. A bunch of us riders was together when this here lady come up and begins askin' questions 'bout the buffaloes; and Injun names of flyin', walkin' and swimmin' things and a lot of bunk. Well, you know how the boys are. The sure lacoed that there gal to a finish; and while she was a dashin' the information down in her little tablet, we was a thinkin' up more lies to tell her. We didn't savey she was writin' a real book, or maybe we would a been more careful. Yes, maybe! Why, them there writin' folks is dead easy pickin' for the cowpunchers. But I see she took to the more full-blood talk than what I tell her. (93-4)

This humorous anecdote reveals much about the problematic relationship between anthropologists and their native informants. The playfulness of

the cowpunchers, in lying to and taking advantage of eager ethnographers, is quite consistent with the strategies of the trickster. But while most Indians in *Cogewea* are quite aware of the subversive power of the trickster (deception, lies, underhandedness, playing the fool, verbal ingenuity), Cogewea is not. She falls prey to Densmore's schemes because she, like the half-breed brave in *The Brand*, has learned to despise her Indianness. But, like the others, she is beginning to learn that it is her Indianness, *if commodified and marketed effectively*, that will help her obtain the goods she needs, be they material or otherwise. What she desires is love and respect from a white gentleman. And, like Mourning Dove, she is willing to make a Faustian deal to fulfill that desire.

This is the moral of Mourning Dove's allegorical *Cogewea*, if there is to be a moral. In exposing and putting on display this weakness of Cogewea, Mourning Dove confesses her own duplicity in the commodification of Indianness for ulterior motives. Just as Cogewea needs Densmore, Mourning Dove needs McWhorter to get her novel published. Conversely, just as Densmore needs Cogewea, McWhorter needs Mourning Dove to express his imperialist nostalgia. Here are two marriages made in market heaven. As Finn sees it:

> Mourning Dove saw in McWhorter a sponsor for her lifelong desire to write novels informed by and

> incorporating Native Americans' experiences. McWhorter recognized her literary ability and saw in her the ideal informant capable of documenting the "primitive folk ways" of the Okanogan peoples. Mourning Dove agreed to assist McWhorter in his salvage ethnography project in exchange for his support in the editing and publishing of her fictional work. For McWhorter, editorial control over Mourning Dove's writing offered him a means of voicing his political views through her text. (140)

In the end, however, it appears that only Densmore is severely punished. His evil scheme is exposed and he is utterly humiliated. Meanwhile, James LaGrinder, a half-breed whose love for Cogewea is at first rejected, saves her from the sinister grips of Densmore and is elevated to a new place of respect and integrity. The white man gets his just desserts and the half-breed "gets the girl." Cogewea learns a valuable lesson in the process: whites are not to be trusted, especially if they come seducing her for ethnographic motives. They are never truly interested in her for her humanity, but for the commercial profit her Indianness may engender. In tricking him into collaborating on a work that undermines his very collaboration, does Mourning Dove punish McWhorter more maliciously than she does Densmore? After all, the

latter is merely a fictional character. Since McWhorter is "real," is his villainy, then, much more dangerous?

Can ethnography exist for a non-exploitative end? Can the native informant overcome the duplicitous nature of the profession? The moral of this allegory perhaps is not so clear as it seems. Has Mourning Dove successfully rewritten *The Brand*? This is impossible to say. Such is the sad fate of those who survive in the modern world as tricksters and native informants. Such is the fate of the ethnographic novel.

* * *

But there is another important question to consider: What happens when a single individual—say an American writer of color—adopts the roles of both the ethnographer and novelist in the creation of an *autobiography*, a literary form that has been an object of as much debate over its "factual" and "fictional" nature as ethnography has? This is the question confronting Carlos Bulosan, the author of *America Is in the Heart*, and Maxine Hong Kingston, the author of *The Woman Warrior*, the two other authors at the focal point of this study. Within the confines of the autobiographical novel, these two writers utilize the rhetorical device of anthropology—the literary expression of ethnography—to craft and posit a "fictional self." Unlike Mourning Dove, however, neither Bulosan and Kingston has a literary accomplice. They willfully supply the ethnographic component to the fictionalized

account of their lives on their own. The tensions between the ethnographic and novelistic urges, therefore, are much more profound, complicated, and ambiguous in *America Is in the Heart* and *The Woman Warrior* than in *Cogwea*. Recall that Mourning Dove solicited the help of and placed the ethnographic responsibility on McWhorter (or, rather, he appropriated it), leaving her ostensibly free to satiate her artistic hunger and novelistic desires. She, in return, accepted her role as the vehicle for his own personal literary desires by agreeing to become his native informant. This is the price she had to pay—the fate she had to accept—in a world where her racial identity—her otherness—was a commodity to be bartered by anthropologists and publishers. What is then the fate of Bulosan and Kingston? What price do they pay in attempting to play the role of both "artist" and "scientist" in their autobiographical endeavors? Do they become the native informants to themselves?

In *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, George Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer's 1986 apology for the field of anthropology, the authors offer a curious observation:

> Those people who in particular have become classic anthropological subjects, such as the Samoans, Trobriand Islanders, Hopi, and Toda of India, know their status well, and have, with some ambivalence, assimilated

> anthropological knowledge about them as part of their sense of themselves. (24)

Surprisingly, the authors do not say anything further regarding this "assimilation" process; they do not venture into possible reasons for it, nor do they attempt to explain what they mean by "ambivalence" or "anthropological knowledge." Instead, they treat the matter as a mere tangential footnote to the more pressing issues before them. The explicit aim of their book is to extol the promise of experimental ethnography as the field of anthropology and its various subjects of scientific inquiry—"tribal" societies in particular—move into the last decades of the 20th century. The authors are not concerned with the "classic anthropological subjects," *per se*; they are concerned, first and foremost, with the current institutional state and methodological status of their field, and second, with the professional fate of the field's practitioners—the ethnographers.

It is worth noting, however, that more than a dozen years prior to Marcus and Fischer's *anthro-apology*, Margaret Mead, the renowned American anthropologist, expressed some ambivalence of her own toward a similar matter regarding a few of her most celebrated subjects. In her preface to the 1973 edition of *Coming of Age in Samoa* (published initially in 1928), perhaps the first ethnographic monograph to attract a significant popular readership in the United States, Mead wrote:

> Inevitably, young Samoans who read this book will feel somehow not included, because this account of young people two generations ago was written about them, but not for them. . . . But to the students who have the strange experience of having a book about how their ancestors lived on the reading list of their courses at Cornell or the University of Hawaii, I can only say that neither their grandmothers nor I guessed where we would be today. (xiii)

Where in fact are we today? Where are the grandchildren of Mead's original Samoan native informants today? If they are to be found in American universities reading anthropological accounts of the Samoan society, are they living examples of those "classic anthropological subjects" whom Marcus and Fischer write about, those who have "assimilated anthropological knowledge about them as part of their sense of themselves"?

As in the case of Marcus and Fischer, Mead fails to elaborate further on the matter. This lack of discussion perhaps indicates, even in the case of Mead, the difficulty of many anthropologists of conceptualizing anthropological subjects as anything more than just *that*. To Mead, Marcus, and Fischer, their first priority is their science. Second is the relevance of anthropological subjects to "our" welfare.

The humanity of Samoans or Todi of India, if there is to be humanity, comes a distant third, if it ever comes at all.

Had she been more culturally astute during her heyday, Mead would not have waited nearly forty-five years after the publication of *Coming of Age in Samoa* to witness this process of assimilation occur in places like the University of Hawaii. Had she, in 1943, purchased a copy of Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*, she might have realized the power of anthropological knowledge and language upon the psyche of a non-white American author in his attempt to define his sense of self. Marcus and Fischer would have realized the same thing, had they purchased Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* in 1976. In these two autobiographical novels, the authors devote as much energy explaining the nature of being Filipino and Chinese as they do telling imaginative stories of their lives. As such, their autobiographical objectives compete not only with their novelistic desires, but with their self-anointed duties as anthropological references. Ultimately, like Mourning Dove, these two Asian American writers also make a Faustian Deal, commodifying their Asian identities in hopes of earning enough capital to have the opportunity to create art. This commercial exchange and the ensuing struggle against self-commodification are perhaps the ultimate symbol of their modernity, a status each author assumes with as much ambivalence and anxiety as they do with optimism and enthusiasm.

The objective of the next two chapters of this study, therefore, is to consider the important insights gained in our reading of *Cogewea* to unearth further insights into the multitudinous interchanges that place among ethnography, the novel, autobiography, and modernity in *America Is in the Heart* and *The Woman Warrior*.

## *Chapter 2: Carlos Bulosan's Modern Pangs of Nostalgia: Ethnography and the Myths of Primitivism*

Carlos Bulosan, a son of a farmer in the small village of Binalonan on the island of Luzon, the Philippines, was born on November 24, 1913. On July 22, 1930, he arrived in Seattle, Washington, speaking hardly any English and with only three years of formal education. Having been born only fifteen years after the Spanish-American War, for the first seventeen years of his life, Bulosan was a first-hand witness to the tremendous social and political upheavals that took place in the Philippines. After nearly three hundred years of Spanish rule, the fate of the archipelago now rested in the hands of the United States. In a country forced to rapidly endure new conditions and ideals, "change" was the operative word of the age. In his autobiographical novel, *America Is in the Heart*, published in 1943 in the United States, Bulosan remembers how the younger generation of Filipinos stirred and adapted "new attitudes," becoming, in the process, "total strangers to the older generation" (5). One important area of change was education, where the American government provided new opportunities to the Filipino people, waking a nation "hitherto illiterate and backward" (14). But this seemingly positive change did not come without a heavy price, for Bulosan also remembers many naïve Filipinos

who too eagerly assimilated the "fake American ideals and modes of living" (5).

To illustrate the magnitude and quality of the radically changing times, Bulosan offers us a detailed account of the tragic events surrounding the marriage of his brother Leon, who just returned from fighting a war in Europe. After the approval of the bride by the groom's family, Bulosan recalls sitting by as peasant boys and girls danced in their bare feet. About three days later, while the women put away "the plates and the large wooden bowls used as rice receptacles on the long dining table," the men piled chairs onto oxcarts and sleds, returning them to those who had lent the items. Earlier that day, "the merrymakers," while "waiting for the momentous hour of the wedding," had eaten rice with their bare hands and rinsed their mouths with a large bowl that passed around the tables (6). Bulosan writes:

> It was the time for the groom to carry his bride to the new house which had been built especially for them in the yard. . . . He would then find out if his wife were virginal. . . . The ritual was simple. But it was also the most dramatic of the series of colorful wedding events. My brother Leon carried his wife across the harvest fields to their new home. We followed, shouting with joy and throwing rice upon them. We stopped in the yard when they entered the house.

> Then we waited silently, anxious to see the black smoke come out of the house, for it would mean that the bride was a virgin. If no smoke showed, we would know that the groom had been deceived, and we would justify his actions if he returned the girl to her people. (6-7)

Tragically for the newlywed couple, there is no smoke. As if reacting instinctively to a secret atavistic cue, the entire village, frantic and rabid, rushes into the house. The bride is stripped, tied to a tree, spat on, and cursed at by men wielding whips. When the groom, face covered in blood, staggers out of the house, his frenzied and furious neighbors, armed with angry stones, tie him to the tree as well. Bulosan's distraught father attempts to intercede by flinging himself upon the couple. "Stop, you devils!" he shouts helplessly. "She is a good, industrious woman, and my son wants to live with her!" (7). His desperate supplications are ignored and he too is beaten by the bloodthirsty mob. The crowd eventually leaves, "still angry but spent," and Bulosan sees his "father's face searching for an answer in the earth to the unanswerable question in (his) brother's eyes" (8). What the unanswerable question is, Bulosan does not say.

In his description of the wedding procession and the tragic events that follow, Bulosan demonstrates the verbal precision of a seasoned ethnographer. His manner of writing is reminiscent of no less than

Bronislaw Malinowski describing a marriage ritual of the Trobriand Islanders in *The Sexual Life of Savages* published in 1929. In his narration, Bulosan is quite blunt about the peccant nature of the custom, calling it "primitive" and "cruel." In his discussion of a Trobriand wedding, Malinowski also mixes an "objective" description of the ritual with an apologetic appeal to the readers' superior moral sensibility:

> We left the young couple starting their common life in the hut of the bridegroom's parents; here they remain until the protracted series of marriage gifts and countergifts, and the redistribution of every one of these among more distant relatives, has been completed. Only about the time of the next harvest do they build their own home; until then they have to spend a protracted "honeymoon" under the parental roof. *This must seem a most unsatisfactory state of affairs to the European reader. But he must avoid drawing too close a parallel to our own condition.* (93; emphasis added)

In presenting to European readers an "unsatisfactory" marital custom of a "savage" people, Malinowski contrasts the moral sensibilities of Europeans with those of the Trobriand Islanders. His message to the readers is, "do not judge them too harshly; they have not progressed as much as we; give them time." Likewise, Bulosan's point

in describing the "primitive custom" is not to demonstrate the barbarism of a "savage" people, *per se*, but rather to illustrate the relative social difference between the people being described and those reading the account. Bulosan wishes to attest to the important social changes that took place in the Philippines during the early decades of the 20th century. He, therefore, assures the readers that, although cruel, "it was a fast-dying custom, in line with other backward customs in the Philippines, yielding to the new ways of the younger generation that were shaping out sharply from the growing industrialism" (7). The old ways, characterized by the cruelty suffered by his brother and sister-in-law, although barbaric and savage, were fast-dying. Sparked by the growing industrialism, the new ways were beginning to take root.

In using ethnography to first describe then explain the significance of a custom that is foreign to the readers, both Malinowski and Bulosan exhibit Vincent Crapanzano's notion of "Hermes' dilemma." In *Hermes' Dilemma and Hamlet's Desire*, the author argues that the role of the ethnographer goes beyond "translating" the foreignness of another culture into terms more familiar to the targeted readers. A translator generally works with someone else's text, which, in its original form, exists in a language foreign to the audience whom the translator serves. The ethnographer, in contrast, must work both as the author of the original foreign text *and* the translator of it. He, in

effect, must translate his own work. In other words, the ethnographer must first *invent* a cultural phenomenon before translating it. Crapanzano, therefore, likens the ethnographer to Hermes,

> a messenger who, given methodologies for uncovering the masked, the latent, the unconscious, may even obtain his message through stealth. He presents languages, cultures, and societies in all their opacity, their foreigness, their meaninglessness; then, like the magician, the hermeneut, Hermes himself, he clarifies the opaque, renders the foreign familiar, and gives meaning to the meaningless. He decodes the message. He interprets. (43)

The inventive aspect of Bulosan's account of his brother's wedding is evident throughout the language of the depiction. Even before he starts his narration, Bulosan writes: "I do not remember the exact details of my brother's marriage" (6). He, however, manages to provide almost three detailed pages of the marriage. The ambiguity and inexactness of his account are indicated in many other ways: Instead of saying simply, "I sat on a bamboo chair," he says, "I *remember* how I sat"; instead of, "It was the third day of the wedding," he says "It *must have been* the third day," leaving open the possibility that it was not; instead of, "The smoke did not come out of the house," he says, "I *do not think* the smoke came out," making us wonder if it really did; instead of, "The men also

knocked down my brother," he says, "The men *must also have* knocked down my brother," to imply perhaps that they did not. The result of such liberal use of noncommittal language is that Bulosan, contrary to our initial impressions of him, voluntarily makes himself into an unreliable, insecure, and unauthoritative narrator.

The task before Crapanzano's Hermes does not end with interpreting, rendering the foreign familiar, giving meaning to the meaningless, and decoding the message. "He must [also] render the foreign familiar and preserve its very foreignness at one and the same time." Crapanzano asserts that while the "translator accomplishes this through style," the ethnographer does so "through the coupling of a presentation that asserts the foreign and an interpretation that makes it all familiar." He then reminds us that "Hermes was a trickster: a god of cunning and tricks" (44). The ethnographer, however, is not a trickster, "having no cunning and no tricks":

> But he shares this with Hermes: *he must make his message convincing*. It treats of the foreign, the strange, the unfamiliar, the exotic, the unknown—that, in short, which challenges belief. The ethnographer must make use of all the persuasive devices at his disposal to convince his readers of *the* truth of his message, but, treating these

> rhetorical strategies as though they were cunning tricks, he gives them scant recognition. (44-5)

The difference between Malinowski and Bulosan is touched upon here by Crapanzano's comparison of Hermes and the ethnographer. Hermes is like the ethnographer in that they both translate, interpret, and attempt to make the message convincing. They differ, however, in that while the former never promised to tell the "whole truth," the latter has. The ethnographer, therefore, "does not share Hermes' confidence," but his texts nonetheless "assume a truth that speaks for itself—a whole truth that needs no rhetorical support" (45). The ethnographer, of course, is wrong in his assumption. As James Clifford reminds us, ethnography—or, for that matter, any other form of textual representation—can never communicate whole truths, only "partial" ones. In this manner, it is Bulosan, not Malinowski, who resembles Hermes. Employing the tools of the trickster, Bulosan practices verbal games with his readers, playing mischief with language. "I do not remember the exact details," he says, then proceeds to provide us with a mountain of details. He even ends his recollection of the tragic wedding by saying: "*I will never forget* how my brother lifted the girl in his arms, as ceremoniously and gently as he had done that afternoon, and carried her tenderly into their house to begin a new life" (8; emphasis added).

In adopting the role of the ethnographer, Bulosan places himself in a rather arduous position, one that is fraught with unexpected obstacles, a checkered legacy, and urgent controversy. As an autobiographer writing ethnography, he complicates the matter even further by playing the role of the trickster. In the previous chapter, we witnessed the tangled web created by the collaboration between an Indian woman novelist and a white male anthropologist. In their partnership in completing *Cogewea*, Mourning Dove and McWhorter divided up the labor: She provided the novel, he the ethnography; she played the role of the artist, he the scientist. As we have seen, the result was not as tidy and controversy-free as either of them intended or expected. Mourning Dove, desiring to be an artist but not having the power and authority of McWhorter, had to live with the ambivalence of becoming McWhorter's native informant. This was her Faustian deal, the price she had to pay in a world where her racial identity was a commodity to be bartered by anthropologists and publishers. In this chapter, we draw on the relationship between *Cogewea* and *America Is in the Heart*, and ask a critical question: What does it mean for Carlos Bulosan, a Filipino American writer, to play both roles? There is no Bronislaw Malinowski, for instance, who collaborates with him. He, however, desires the advantages Malinowski, the scientist, can offer his novel. What does it mean, then, for Bulosan to be both the

autobiographer and ethnographer, novelist and anthropologist, artist and scientist? The tensions between these two sets of literary urges are much more ambiguous and complicated than they already are because the battle takes place within the body and mind of a single author. If Bulosan plays both roles, does he then become his own native informant? Can the native informant, then, write? Can he, in return, sell? More importantly, must he commodify his own ethnic identity in order to survive as an artist? Must he, too, make a Faustian deal, not with a professional anthropologist like Mourning Dove, but with his own literary demons? Must he, then, ultimately transform himself into a trickster in order to do battle with himself?

In addressing some of these questions, let us consider another compelling scene in *America Is in the Heart*: Still a young child, barely thirteen years old, Bulosan recalls leaving Binalonan, his hometown, forever. While some of the social changes in the Philippines were positive in nature, the majority were not. Most of the changes exasperated the increasingly brutal living conditions the peasants had to endure. With the rise of industrialism followed a marked gap between the haves and have-nots. No matter how much they toiled, the peasants suffered under the harsh lion's paw of "large corporations and absentee landlords," and "when the church took part in the corruption, the

consequence almost tore the Philippines from its economic roots" (23). Bulosan writes:

> The peasants did not know to whom they should present their grievances or whom to fight when the cancer of exploitation became intolerable. They became cynical about the national government and the few powerful Filipinos of foreign extraction who were squeezing a fat livelihood out of it. (23)

What this meant for Bulosan's family was simple: They would lose the small plot of land that they relied on for their meager survival. With the birth of more children, there were more mouths to feed. Bulosan's father, utterly dejected and helpless in bringing a halt to his family's economic demise, soon becomes a mere shell of a man, his spirit completely broken. Not knowing what to do, Bulosan, barely thirteen years of age, decides to leave home so that there would be one less mouth to feed. He knows this sacrifice was the end of his "life in Mangusmana, the end of the bitter days of childhood" (30).

And so, he soon finds himself in the town of Baguio, one of the most modernized towns in the Philippines, with paved roads, beautiful houses and theaters "built in the Western fashion" (66). Baguio, where the affluent lived, was also a favorite destination for American and European tourists. Not finding any work and tired of sleeping in the

gutter and begging for discarded food, Bulosan accidentally stumbles across a job:

> One day an American lady tourist asked me to undress before her camera, and gave me ten centavos for doing it. I had found a simple way to make a living. Whenever I saw a white person in the market with a camera, I made myself conspicuously ugly, hoping to earn ten centavos. But what interested the tourists most were the naked Igorot women and their children. Sometimes they took pictures of the old men with G-strings. They were not interested in Christian Filipinos like me. They seemed to take a particular delight in photographing young Igorot girls with large breasts and robust mountain men whose genitals were nearly exposed, their G-strings bulging large and alive. (67)

In this remarkable passage, we see the full measure of Bulosan's ambivalence with a critical binary opposition that is to follow him for the rest of his life—the discursive dichotomy of *primitive* and *modern*. Consider the tableau staged by Bulosan: The backdrop is Baguio, one of the most developed and commercialized cities in the Philippines. Upstage are scattered groups of Igorots, described by an American dictionary as "a people of the Malay stock in northern Luzon in the Philippines, comprising various tribes, some noted as headhunters"

(*Random House* 660). Intermixed with them are crowds of American and European tourists, pointing, leering, gawking, and taking photographs. Downstage left is an "American lady tourist," peering through the eye of a camera (an apt symbol of the modern) pointed toward stage left at the thirteen year old Bulosan (a symbol of the primitive). In him, she sees what she is not, or, more precisely, what she is no longer. She has traveled a great distance, across the vast Pacific Ocean no less, for a moment such as this, to be face to face with an object of her anticipation. What do we make of her? How do we make sense of her displacement? Is she where she ought to be? Who exactly is she?

She is, in a word, a *tourist*, and, as such, embodies the spirit of the social practice called "tourism," and she surveys her surroundings with the "tourist gaze." John Urry, in *The Tourist Gaze*, reminds us what "some minimal characteristics" of tourism and the tourist gaze are: First and foremost, tourism is a "leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organized work" and arises "from a movement of people to, and their stay in, various destinations" at "sites which are outside the normal places of residency and work" (2-3). No doubt, for our American lady tourist, the Philippines is such a place. She may work outside her home, in an office or factory, or she may work at home, doing unpaid domestic labor. Either way, she has come to

Baguio for "purposes which are not directly connected with paid [or unpaid] work" (3).

Secondly, certain places are "chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures," and such "anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos" (3). How did our American tourist know to come to the Philippines? Certainly, she must have read about it, seen images of it, or heard rumors of it in deciding how to best spend her valuable "free" time. Having consulted some "non-tourist" sources, she must have come to Baguio knowing and anticipating what to look for.

Third, the tourist gaze is "directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience," and are selected "because they are taken to be in some sense *out of the ordinary*" (3; emphasis added). In pointing her camera at Bulosan, the American tourist must see in him something she is not, something *different* from what she is *used to* encountering during her "ordinary" life. Bulosan must be for her something "out of the ordinary."

Fourth, the gaze is "constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs," as when "two people kissing in Paris" becomes a sign of "timeless romantic Paris" and "a small village is England" is seen as a sign of "real olde England" (3). When the

American tourist asks Bulosan to "undress before her camera," what does she see the naked Filipino boy as a sign of? Certainly not the thing in itself. When Bulosan laments that most tourists took "particular delight in photographing young Igorot girls with large breasts and robust mountain men whose genitals were nearly exposed, their G-strings bulging large and alive," does he offer a hint as to the true source of the touristic desire? In other words, does he know what value the symbol of the Igorot has to the tourist?

Finally, the last characteristic of the tourist gaze that Urry identifies is the development of an "array of tourist professionals. . . who attempt to reproduce ever-new objects of the tourist gaze" and who depend "upon the interplay between, on the one hand, competition between interests involved in the provision of such objects and, on the other hand, changing class, gender, generational distinctions of taste within the potential population of visitors" (3-4).

It is this last point that helps us to understand better the complicated interchange between the American lady tourist and the thirteen year old Bulosan, who, as a self-described "Christian Filipino," seems uniquely aware of his *own* difference from the Igorots, the truer object of the tourist gaze. Earlier in the narrative of *America Is in the Heart*, Bulosan compared himself to the many Igorots who came down from the hills to trade with the lowlanders:

> They walked among the people in their G-strings with their poisoned arrows and dogs. They had long black hair like mine, but while they knotted theirs and stuck brightly polished sticks through the knots, I tangled my hair like a bird's nest and put a straw hat on it to keep it from falling over my face. (40)

Although this was his first encounter with the Igorots, they leave an indelible impression. Compared to him, they are conspicuously more "ugly," more "naked," and far more "primitive." And clearly, to the American tourists, they are far more interesting than Bulosan, a "Christian Filipino." Knowing that his next meal might depend on his response to this difference, Bulosan reluctantly becomes one of the "array of tourist professionals." Through performance, pageantry, theatrics, impersonation, and misrepresentation, he becomes a manipulator of touristic signs. He finds himself "competing" against the Igorots for American dollars. Sensing their advantage, he *pretends* to be more like them, making himself more marketable. He undresses and makes himself "conspicuously ugly," and, by knowing and anticipating what the tourist is willing to pay for, Bulosan is temporarily able to make a modest living. Learning the trade of the true impresario, he gives the buyer what she wants. But what exactly does the tourist want? What is this thing that she could not find in her everyday, ordinary

existence back home in the United States? What does she imagine she can find in capturing a photograph of an Igorot?

What the tourist wants, what she is willing to travel half-way across the world for, what she wants to capture in her camera, is the experience of *mythic consciousness*, the notion that certain cultural productions have "access to a mythic condition that represents a return to a more vital, primal, and elemental human state" (Manganaro 12). The experience of mythic consciousness, in other words, is the "modern" search for relief from the spiritual anxiety caused by the rise of industrialization, technology, and machinization. In sum, it is the modern escape from modernity itself.

The notion of escaping the hustle and bustle of modern life, of course, was a vital concern for the writers of the Romantic age. As early as 1807, William Wordsworth lamented:

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
> Little we see in Nature that is ours;
> We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon! (1-4).

Across the Atlantic some fifty years later, Henry David Thoreau, whose famous retreat into Walden Pond inspired generations of the discontented and overworked to seek spiritual comfort in nature, commanded: "Simplify, simplify, simplify!" But perhaps no other

individual embodied the spirit of mythic consciousness more idealistically than Paul Gauguin, the French post-impressionist painter who made a getaway to Tahiti and the Marquesas in 1891 after enduring almost half a century of European life. In a letter to his wife Mette, dated February 1890, he confessed to dreaming about a more harmonious life. "May the day come," he wrote, "perhaps very soon, when I'll bury myself in the woods of an ocean island to live on ecstasy, calmness and art." What he wanted more than anything was not to struggle financially: "Free at last," he dreamed, "without money trouble, I'll be able to love, to sing and to die" (qtd. in Chipp 79). In a letter to J.F. Willumsen later that year, Gauguin wrote about his distress over and dread for Europe:

> A terrible epoch is brewing in Europe for the coming generation: the kingdom of gold. Everything is putrefied, even men, even the arts. There [in Tahiti], at least under an eternally summer sky, on a marvellously (sic) fertile soil, the Tahitian has only to lift his hands to gather his food; and in addition he never works. When in Europe men and women survive only after unceasing labor during which they struggle in convulsions of cold and hunger, a prey to misery, the Tahitians, on the contrary, happy inhabitants of the unknown paradise of Oceania, know only sweetness of

> life. To live life, for them, is to sing and to love—. (qtd. in Chipp 79)

What Wordsworth, Thoreau, and Gauguin all saw in the primeval forest was a direct contrast to what Europe and America were fast becoming—a modern wasteland corrupted by industry, commerce, machinery, routine, anxiety, repression, and utter exhaustion. Gauguin in particular saw in the primitive-other what has today become the stereotype of the happy-go-lucky native, an enviable soul who exists only to satiate primal urges that lead to pleasures of the flesh—food, sun, sleep, song, and sex.

But the mythic consciousness yearned for by Gauguin is not in full measure the one experienced by the American tourist for whom Bulosan poses. While sharing with him a vision of an enviable unrepressed life in the primitive-other, she also sees in it an alternative image created by the *negative impression* of the picture of a tropical paradise—the dangerous, bestial, feral, and barbaric heathen. For every innocent and natural bathing Tahitian beauty is a savage and hideous cannibal or headhunter. Matching dream for nighmare with Gauguin is Joseph Conrad, whose vision of the primitive is as diametrically opposed to Gauguin's as a satyr is to Hyperion. In stark contrast to the French painter's fantasy of "happy inhabitants of the unknown paradise of Oceania," Conrad, in *Heart of Darkness*, offers us the altogether grisly countenance of Africa's inhabitants. As Marlow, the intrepid narrator,

"penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness" like some fictional specter of Henry Morgan Stanley, he sees himself and his companions as "wanders on a prehistoric earth" (37):

> We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil. But suddenly as we struggled round a bend there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. . . . We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. (37)

This is the godforsaken place where Kurtz, the ghastly specter of David Livingstone, utters his famous lines: "The horror! The horror!" Needless to say, neither Kurtz nor Marlow—nor even Conrad or Gauguin for that matter—ever finds the dream of nature's paradise. So which is it? Which is the more salient version of the primitive? Is it the South Seas paradise, with its lush palm trees, gentle trade winds, and flocks of ripe Polynesian boys and girls frolicking in the shallow surfs? Or is it Dark Africa, with its ferocious jungles, animalistic totems, and

bloodthirsty headhunters and cannibals, with their mutilated bodies and pagan sacrifices? The simplest answer, of course, is that it is both. And neither. The two images nonetheless work simultaneously against and in conjunction with each other to form the *discourse* of primitivism. As Marianna Torgovnick observes in *Gone Primitive*:

> To study the primitive is thus to enter an exotic world which is also a familiar world. That world is structured by sets of images and ideas that have slipped from their original metaphoric status to control perceptions of primitives—images and ideas I call tropes. Primitives are like children, the tropes say. Primitives are our untamed selves, our id forces—libidinous, irrational, violent, dangerous. Primitives are free. Primitives exist at the "lowest cultural levels"; we occupy the "highest," in the metaphors of stratification and hierarchy commonly used by Malinowski and others like him. The ensemble of these tropes—however miscellaneous and contradictory—forms the basic grammar and vocabulary of what I call primitivist discourse, a discourse fundamental to the Western sense of self and the Other. (8)

Clearly displayed in Bulosan's tableau of the *American-tourist-cum-Filipino-boy* are all the tropes of primitivism identified by Torgovnick.

The tourist sees in Bulosan a simultaneous manifestations of a child; the untamed self; and the libidinous, irrational, violent, and dangerous id forces. She sees him existing in the "lowest cultural level" while she occupies the highest. There is, of course, an irony to this scene, for it is not the so-called "modern" American woman with the camera who manipulates these tropes but rather the so-called "primitive" Filipino boy desperate to make a living. It is he who knows that these are in fact tropes, signs, and metaphors. She, on the other hand, is manipulated by them, or, rather, Bulosan manipulates her *through* them. But she is not the sole victim of his trickery. Bulosan also manipulates *us* in opening his story with a bizarre wedding ritual which he imaginatively depicts using the full linguistic arsenal of primitivism upon which ethnography relies. Just as he "performs" and "impersonates" the Igorot for the American tourist, he directs the Filipino villagers to appear "conspicuously ugly" to us, the readers. In the post-war Philippines that Bulosan creates, we are to be delighted and shocked at the savagery of the villagers, just as the tourist is with the Igorots. As much as he does for the tourist, Bulosan predicts and fulfills *our* desire for mythic consciousness.

In many ways, the American tourist—and, by extension, we—resembles Othello, the tragic Moor, while Bulosan does Iago, the wily villain. Both Bulosan and Iago possess the power of the semiotician in

that they know the free-play nature of signs. Othello and the tourist, on the other hand, see signs as something fixed and permanently grounded. To Iago, the handkerchief that Othello gives Desdemona is merely a *sign* of love. To Othello, it *is* love itself. To Bulosan, the primitivist trope can be played with and manipulated. To the tourist, it is something authentic fixed in the body of the Igorot. It is the thing in itself. These differences in semiotic identities allow Iago and Bulosan to gain relative power over their adversaries; they are able to manipulate the other by manipulating the signs in which the other grounds meaning. This is not to say, however, that Bulosan, as a semiotician, is completely free or liberated from the myth of primitivism. On the contrary, he is as much chained to "the basic grammar and vocabulary" of the primitivist discourse as anyone else who depends on the tropes—whether it be to manipulate with or be manipulated by it. Despite his self-conscious play with signs and metaphors, Bulosan eventually rationalizes his emigration to the United States by linguistically constructing the Philippines as a primitive place. How else is he to explain his decision to flee from his childhood home?

But his primitivist portrayal of the Philippines serves a far greater purpose than to just explain an important choice he makes in his life. In depicting the Philippines as a primitive place, Bulosan appropriates the myth of primitivism as a way of liberating the peasantry from a debased

life of hardship, misery, and ignorance. That is the "moral," if you will, behind the story of his brother's wedding. The fact that he intentionally exposes himself as a highly unreliable narrator is not important. What is of vital importance is the fact that the "backward" customs practiced by the peasantry must stop. The needless torture and pain suffered by his brother and his bride are a function of "primitive" urges, and if the Philippines is to advance to modernity, the people must overcome or outgrow their instinctually violent and inhumane existence.

Bulosan tries to drive home this point by recalling another compelling incident that occurred to him. Not long before he makes his fateful trip across the Pacific for Seattle, he finds himself in the company of his cousin, "a high school student in Vigan, a large city in the province of Ilocos Sur" (76). His cousin, wearing "a good pair of shoes" and dressed in a newly pressed alpaca suit, invites Bulosan, whose "feet were still as bare as when (he) was born," to a dance in a village nearby. When he arrives at the party, Bulosan is immediately shocked at what he sees. He writes:

> I noticed a girl who had fallen for my cousin. I saw him kiss her on the mouth, a thing which was very daring in those days. . . . The girls snickered in their corners, sticking out their little yellow tongues behind outspread fans. The little girls and boys around the dance floor drummed on

> their bloated bellies. Sometimes they danced among themselves and attracted much attention from the crowd with their naked bodies and ugly, spreading toes: spitting as they jumped to the wild music, their spittle falling on their naked loins. (77)

Although admittedly shy, Bulosan senses himself being drawn to the decadent rhythm of the dance. Following the lead of his cousin who "strode across like a peacock" in front of an attractive girl, Bulosan approaches a girl who immediately flings herself into his arms. As they danced in the "way it should not have been done in the village," he "could see the sensual stare of the men and the anger of the women" (77). Much to his chagrin, Bulosan finds himself unexpectedly aroused as he dances for the first time in his life. Feeling that the world is "a cradle upon the biggest ocean in the universe," he writes:

> There is no other sounds except the beating of your hearts, and when the wild blaring of the trumpet and the savage boom-boom of the drum bring you back to reality, you get scared and begin to misstep and falter. Your hands weaken their hold on the rapturous being near you. . . . Suddenly you become conscious of the staring people around you, appraising you with obscene eyes and lascivious tongues. . . . Then the orchestra becomes a cymbal of crashing noises,

> meaningless and riotous, and you return to your corner, trembling with cold and sudden fear. You are pushed back to reality, to the world of puny men and women who are circumscribed by fear. Then you, too, are one among them and one of them, prisoned by their fears and the ugliness of their lives. (77-8)

Bulosan finds himself in a moment of crisis. Sexually awakened by the "savage boom-boom of the drums" and lustful for the wanton girl, he is overcome with shame and self-disgust. He realizes that in this savage environment, he is no different from the others. He, too, is "one among them and one of them," essentially indistinguishable from the bloodthirsty villagers who raided his brother's smokeless house. He is a savage also. He sees now that the villagers, in punishing the perceived sins of his brother's wife, were driven by *fear*, something he is now keenly experiencing. Who is he, then, to judge? He is one of *them*, likewise unable to control his libidinous desires and abject terror. *That*, he now discovers, is the true meaning of the primitive. To be prisoned by fear and ugliness, to live among puny men and women circumscribed by fear, *this* was the world of the primitive. In sum, to be primitive is to be a *peasant*, helpless and ignorant, living in darkness and superstition, controlled by the basest instincts. As he sees himself falling deeper and

deeper into a life of degradation in the Philippines, he makes a crucial vow to himself:

> I was determined to leave that environment and all its crushing forces, and if I were successful in escaping unscathed, I would go back someday to understand what it meant to be born of the peasantry. I would go back because I was a part of it, because I could not really escape from it no matter where I went or what became of me. I would go back to give significance to all that was starved and thwarted in my life. (62)

Bulosan takes the iconography of the primitive, the same one that Conrad used to construct his dark Africa, and redirects it toward a different referent—not toward the anthropologically defined notion of the tribal "savage," but the sociologically defined notion of the "peasant." The village raiders, therefore, are primitive not because they are savage heathens, but because they are impoverished peasants. The primitive is not the Filipino, Igorot, Tahitian, or African, but whomever is poor, exploited, and oppressed. Born into the peasantry, he is one himself. But there is an important message that Bulosan wants to communicate to anyone who reads his autobiographical novel: To be born a peasant does not mean remaining one forever. The peasantry can be "awakened" from the slumber of ignorance and superstition, no longer

to be slaves to cruel fate, but the masters of their own destiny and will. Bulosan, therefore, wants *America Is in the Heart*, as a work of art, to be an example of *verism* (or what the turn-of-the-century American writer Hamlin Garland called *veritism*), "the theory that strict representation of truth and reality is essential to art and literature" (*Random House* 1461), that a "truthful" novel like his can open the eyes of the peasants, enabling them to take control of their own lives. Here, Bulosan shares his view of literature's societal function with Mao Tsetung, who declared in his talk at Yenan on May 2, 1942:

> The problem facing the workers, peasants and soldiers is this: they are now engaged in a bitter and bloody struggle with the enemy but are illiterate and uneducated as a result of long years of rule by the feudal and bourgeois classes, and therefore they are eagerly demanding a widespread campaign of *enlightenment*, education and works of literature and art which meet their urgent needs. . . (266-67; emphasis added)

Both Bulosan and Mao recognize the debilitating symptom common to the peasantry—illiteracy and ignorance due to lack of education.

After the end of the Spanish-American War, the United States established schools throughout the Philippines and made education accessible to thousands of Filipinos, including, for the first time, the

peasants. Bulosan, however, is wary of this trend, convinced that the Americans do not really have the best interest of the Filipino people in mind in providing them with education. Why else would the Americans teach in English and not in one of many Filipino languages like Tagalog? And why else would they teach Filipino children the history of the United States and not the Philippines? And why else would they require the students to "pledge allegiance," not to the Filipino flag, but the American? Bulosan sees in the American education a campaign by the *new* rulers to further darken the mind of the peasants by influencing them with "false American ideals and modes of living" (5). Instead of relying on the Americans, Bulosan realizes early in his life that if he is to enlighten himself and his people, he must rely on himself and other like-minded Filipinos. But what exactly is it to be "enlightened" and how does this state of mind come about? This is the question that Bulosan endeavors to answer during the course of *America Is in the Heart*, and nowhere is this mission more aptly illustrated than in his brief but vital discussion of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

*America Is in the Heart* at times reads like an extended reading list. During the course of his narrative, Bulosan makes nearly a hundred literary references, marking his spiritual growth and intellectual progress with the books and authors he comes across or is told about. *America Is in the Heart*, therefore, is very much a literary autobiography, and is not

unlike works of similar mind and purpose in modern American literature—Younghill Kang's *East Goes West*, Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth*, and Malcolm X's *Autobiography*. The very first book that Bulosan remembers coming across, thus, is no doubt of some importance.

One day, while he is still a very young child, his brother Macario comes home from school with a book. Bulosan recalls:

> He went to the kitchen and came back with the oil lamp. He sat on the floor beside me. He started reading the story of a man named Robinson Crusoe who had been shipwrecked in some unknown sea and drifted to a little island far away. My brother patiently explained the struggle of this ingenious man who had lived alone for years in inclement weathers and had survived loneliness and returned safely to his native land. (32)

This is the moment that Bulosan identifies as the "beginning" of his intellectual life. Although barely pubescent, he has by this time already lived what is a lifetime for many. He has already had a long *physical* life, toiling in the fields and patties since he could walk. He has also already had a long *emotional* life, undergoing a multitude of family tragedies and misfortunes. In identifying this moment as the start of his *intellectual* life, he draws a parallel between his life and the state of his

country during the decades of American rule in the 1920s and 30s. The child Bulosan is thus symbolic of the Philippines: As the child Bulosan comes into self-consciousness, so does the Philippines. However, in using *Robinson Crusoe* to mark the awakening of the Filipinos, Bulosan refers directly to an important moment in the history, not of the Philippines, but *Europe*: The Enlightenment and the Age of Reason.

Published in 1719 in England, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is the foremost novel of the European Enlightenment, which was characterized by the notion that truth about the nature of man and the world could be discovered using reason. To be enlightened meant to combat errors of antiquity and move against superstition, ignorance, and traditional knowledge and accepted wisdom. Science became the means of studying a universe that was governed by observable and discoverable laws. If reason and science were to be embraced, then superstition and magic could no longer become pretext for persecution by priest, kings, and the aristocracy. The Age of Reason was thus the era of encyclopedias, where knowledge translated to power through the processes of discovery, scrutiny, and classification. Since *Robinson Crusoe* captures the ideal spirit of the European Enlightenment, it is not surprising to see Bulosan borrow it to symbolize both his own personal and the collective Filipino Enlightenment.

There is, however, a less heartening way to consider Defoe's novel, one which ostensibly goes against Bulosan's intentions. For Edward Said, it is no accident that *Robinson Crusoe* occupies such a lofty position in the English canon. True to the spirit of global British imperialism, the novel is "about a European who creates a fiefdom for himself on a distant, non-European island" (*Culture* xii). Said sees it as "a work whose protagonist is the founder of a new world, which he rules and reclaims for Christianity and England" (*Culture* 70). To Said, "Crusoe is explicitly enabled by an ideology of overseas expansion—directly connected in style and form to the narratives of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century exploration voyages that laid the foundations of the great colonial empires" (*Culture* 70). This creates an intriguing paradox: In choosing a symbol for the Filipino Enlightenment, Bulosan selects a work that symbolizes the ideology of European colonialism, the same ideology that has been at the heart of Spain's and the United States' control and domination of the Philippines for three centuries.

Bulosan nonetheless is "fascinated by the bearded man, and a strong desire grew in (him) to see his island" (32). And his brother gives him this advice:

> You must remember the good example of Robinson Crusoe. . . . Someday you may be left alone somewhere in the world and you will have to depend on your own ingenuity. . . .

> Maybe you will be thrown upon some unknown island someday with nothing to protect you except your hands and your mind. Now read this line after me, Allos. . . . (32)

On the surface, Bulosan's identification with Crusoe makes predictable sense. Both he and the character learn that they must depend on their own hands and mind, not God's or fate's, in order to survive alone in a perilous environment. What is conspicuously absent, however, in Bulosan's discussion of *Robinson Crusoe* are the "other" characters in the novel, namely the savage Friday and the hordes of wretched cannibals.

We must remember that it is only a couple of years after reading *Robinson Crusoe* with his brother that Bulosan takes off his clothes in making himself "conspicuously ugly" for the "American lady tourist." Pretending to be an Igorot before this camera-wielding woman, he surely realizes his prescribed place in the scheme of the *modern-primitive* encounter. In a similar encounter between Crusoe and Friday, the nature of the relationship between the two are explicitly prescribed by Defoe. When he meets Friday, Crusoe has already been alone for twenty-five years. His original destination was Brazil, where he was to operate a colonial plantation. Finding himself unexpectedly marooned, he decides to establish a plantation anyway, and in the process "colonizes" the island for his own use. He builds a house and a barn, tailors his own

clothing, sows and harvests different crops according to the seasons, cooks stew and bakes bread, domesticates and breeds livestock, churns butter and ferments cheese, builds canoes, sets traps and snares, and even manages to teach a parrot to speak. And soon after saving the life of "his" savage from a group of demonic cannibals, the European realizes why he did so:

> It came now very warmly upon my thoughts, and indeed irresistibly, that now was my time to get me a servant, and perhaps a companion or assistant; and that I was called plainly by Providence to save this poor creature's life. (152)

As instructed by no less than Providence herself, Crusoe immediately instructs his savage to bury the cannibals slain by Crusoe's bullets. But he does not help. After allowing his new servant a brief half-hour rest, Crusoe comes to fully grasp his awesome responsibility:

> In a while I began to speak to him, and teach him to speak to me. And first, I made him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life. I likewise taught him to say Master, and then let him know that was to by my name. I likewise taught him to say Yes and No, and to know the meaning of them. (156)

As Master, Crusoe is obliged to also feed and clothe his man Friday, "at which he seemed very glad, for he was stark naked" (156). True to the role of the Master, Crusoe's first and only instinct is to set Friday to work. And work he does, taking no time at all in realizing the "meaning" of work, and eventually doing "all the work" for Crusoe. Seeing that Friday "worked very willingly and very hard" and also "very cheerfully," Crusoe comes to another important self-realization:

> His simple unfeigned honesty appeared to me more and more ever day, and I began to love the creature; and, on his side, I believe he love me more than it was possible for him ever to love anything before. (161)

The cycle of "the white man's burden" is complete: The White Master, in loving the Dark Slave, gets loved in return. By the same token, the Colonizer, in loving the Colonized, gets loved in return. Two years later, on his twenty-seventh year on the island, as another savage comes to live with them, Crusoe surveys his astonishing accomplishments:

> My island was now peopled, and I thought myself very rich in subjects. And it was a merry reflection which I frequently made, how like a king I looked. First of all the whole country was my own mere property; so that I had an undoubted right of dominion. Secondly, my people were perfectly subjected; I was absolute lord and lawgiver; they

> all owed their lives to me, and were ready to lay down their lives, if there had been occasion of it, for me. (176)

It would be some two hundred years after Defoe writes these fateful words that Bulosan is to pose naked in front of a tourist who has come to the Philippines to perhaps merrily reflect upon a place that was now *her* own property, one which *she* had an "undoubted right of dominion." She, after all, is a citizen of the United States, the new "absolute lord and lawgiver" of the Philippines. Did not, then, all the Filipinos owe their lives to her as Friday did to Crusoe?

Earlier in our discussion, we identified several major characteristics of the tourist gaze as observed by John Urry. One of them was that certain touristic places were "chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures," and such "anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos" (3). We speculated that the American tourist knew to come to the Philippines because she may have read about it, seen images of it, or heard rumors of it in deciding how to best spend her valuable "free" time. Thus, having consulted some "non-tourist" sources, she must have come to Baguio knowing and anticipating what to look for. In all likelihood, a major source of her fascination with the Philippines sprang forth from the state of Missouri

some twenty years prior to her encounter with the boy Bulosan. In 1904, the city of Saint Louis was the cite of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, an event whose founding principles virtually mirrored the sentiments of Robinson Crusoe as he merrily reflected upon his new beloved kingdom.

In *All the World's a Fair*, Robert Rydell notes that between "1876 and 1916, nearly one hundred million people visited the international expositions held at Philadelphia, New Orleans, Chicago, Atlanta, Nashville, Omaha, Buffalo, Saint Louis, Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, and San Diego" (2). All these expositions shared many common goals: to boost the local economy of the cities that held the expositions; to market new merchandises of large companies; to flaunt American successes in commerce, the arts, and entertainment; to give the American public "opportunities for vicarious travel in other lands"; and to demonstrate the incredible racial and cultural diversity of the globe (2).

The wonder of human diversity, however, was intimately connected to the dominant American ideology of "progress" and the prevailing notions of scientific determinism and eugenics embraced by the general American populace. At the start of the 20$^{th}$ century, it was no accident that these American ideas of racial and cultural hierarchy, supported by the so-called scientific authorities, coincided with the

victory of the American military over the Spanish Empire in Cuba and the Philippines in 1898. The international expositions provided both the United States government and Darwinian scientists with opportunities to popularize evolutionary ideas about race and progress. More than any other, the Saint Louis World's Fair in 1904, backed by tremendous government funding, gave scientists unlimited reign. And among all the classes of scientists, the ones given most power and authority were anthropologists and ethnobiologists. Writing about their general role in the expositions between 1876 and 1916, Rydell writes:

> The scientific approach, with its emphasis on classification, stressed the diversity of racial "types" and an evolutionary hierarchy that tended to blur class distinction among whites while it invited them to appraise the relative capabilities of different groups of nonwhites for emulating the American model of progress. . . . By 1916, eugenicists had joined anthropologists in applying hierarchical ideas about race and culture to selected white populations, thereby laying the intellectual foundation for mass support of immigration restriction. (5)

Among the American immigrant groups directly affected by restrictions of this sort were Filipinos, whose racial categorization was a matter of confusion for decades. Bulosan gives a rather compelling example of

how biological theories and random judicial decisions influenced the lives of Filipino immigrants:

> Prior to the *Roldan vs. The United States* case, Filipinos were considered Mongolians. Since there is a law which forbids the marriage between members of the Mongolian and Caucasian races, those who hated Filipinos wanted them to be included in this discriminatory legislation. Anthropologists and other experts maintained that the Filipinos are not Mongolians, but members of the Malayan race. It was a simple thing for the state legislature to pass a law forbidding marriage between members of the Malayan and Caucasian races. (143)

*Roldan vs. The United States*, however, is not until 1931, just three years prior to the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, which gave the Philippines a commonwealth status after thirty-five years of bloody nationalist struggle for independence from the United States. The major governmental support for the 1904 Saint Louis World's Fair had a great deal to do with the U.S. military's attempts to squelch the Filipino independence movement. According to Rydell, this particular exposition "featured the most extensive Anthropology Department of any world's fair" (Rydell 160), and its crowning achievement was the Philippines Reservation, which "according to William P. Wilson, chairman of the

United States government's Philippine Exposition Board, constituted 'an exposition within an exposition; the greatest exhibition of the most marvelous Exposition in the history of the world' " (Rydell 167). In this reservation, on a forty-seven-acre plot of land in the American Middle West, lived nearly twelve hundred Filipinos in makeshift villages for the entire duration of the Saint Louis World's Fair that lasted the better part of 1904. William Howard Taft, president of the United States from 1909 to 1913, was at the time the civil governor of the Philippines. With President Theodore Roosevelt's support, he endorsed the Philippines Reservation enthusiastically, believing that "the proposed exhibition would have a 'moral effect' on the people of the islands and that 'Filipino participation would be a very great influence in completing *pacification* and in bringing Filipinos to improve their conditions' " (168; emphasis added). The purpose of the exhibit, while scientific in displaying the diversity of races and cultures of the world, was also jingoistic in highlighting the moral depravity of the Philippines as a place that is in dire need of American guidance, as Friday needed Crusoe's. Thus, as Defoe's marooned hero righteously took up the burden of "enlightening" the savage races, so did the United States, especially in places like the Philippines. The exposition, therefore, brought proof of the saliency of the white man's burden right into America's backyard. It was now up to the fairgoers to accept the reason

and logic behind America's presence in the Philippines. In the process, they not only got to travel vicariously to a primitive world, but was assured of white America's biological superiority over the darker races both at home and abroad.

The Saint Louis fair's Anthropology Department put on display human representatives from a variety of societies and nations: "Groups of pygmies from Africa, 'Patagonian giants' from Argentina, Ainu aborigines from Japan, and Kwakiutl Indians from Vancouver Islands, as well as groups of Native Americans gathered around prominent Indian chiefs including Geronimo, Chief Joseph, and Quanah Parker, were formed into living ethnological exhibits" (Rydell 163). Unlike Gaugauin and the American tourist, who had to "travel" to far-off exotic places for their fix of mythic consciousness, the fairgoers could stay "home," since the exposition brought the far-off exotic places to the United States. In no time at all, the "wild tribes" of the Philippines quickly became the most popular attraction at the fair. Among the Filipinos on display were 38 Bogobos, 41 Negritos, and 100 Moros. It was, however, the 114 Igorots whom the fairgoers unmistakably loved the most (Rydell 172). Rydell writes:

> The perceived simplicity of Igorot life doubtless accounted for their appeal and made some fairgoers long for a less complicated way of living than that represented by the

> monuments to industrialization contained in the White City palaces. But the immediate impetus to see the Igorot exhibit stemmed less from preindustrial longings than from a powerful mixture of white supremacist sexual stereotypes and voyeurism. (172)

Some twenty years later, it is this same "mixture of white supremacist sexual stereotypes and voyeurism" that Bulosan panders to in hopes of earning ten centavos from an American lady tourist in the town of Baguio in the Philippines.

What is inexplicably on display, whether it be Saint Louis or Baguio, is the ideology of primitivism, with all its paradoxes, inconsistencies, contradictions, and ironies. And attempting to provide this ideology with logic and weight is the indisputable authority of science, and, in particular, Darwinian anthropology. The authoritative status of anthropology is not lost on Bulosan. In his attempt to "enlighten" or "wake-up" the peasants from their ignorance and superstition, he does so with ethnography, the primary "tool" of anthropology. Like Hermes, he wants to make his message convincing. But he is not without ambivalence, demonstrating suspicion for ethnography's capacity to do so. As we discussed early on, his account of his brother's wedding, the first real memory Bulosan admits to in his autobiography, fictional or otherwise, is a classic example of

ethnography. In using the primary rhetorical device of anthropology, Bulosan not only acknowledges the discipline's intellectual respectability, but also its partial origins in the European Enlightenment.

But, unlike Mourning Dove, Bulosan does not have a professional anthropologist as a collaborator in writing his novel. What he has instead is his own internalized sense of anthropology's utilitarianism. As an "enlightened" peasant, he wants to stop understanding the world using fear, superstition, and magic as his guide. He wants instead to join the movement toward progress and modernity by jettisoning the ways of the old and embracing the ways of the new. And the single most important symbol of the new is none other than science, and, in the science of anthropology, the method of choice is ethnography. This is precisely the message both the U.S. government and the ethnological scientists wished to convey through the ethnographic attractions at the world fairs. In a sense, by using ethnography to write about his Filipino identity, Bulosan reenacts the tensions that we observed in the collaborative efforts of Mourning Dove and Lucullus V. McWhorter in *Cogewea*. On the surface, Bulosan's logic in using ethnography is simple enough: Since he is the ethnographer, he, by the terms of ethnography, is "modern." However, since he ethnographizes himself, he is simultaneously "primitive." Can the two terms coexist in the mind and body of one writer? Like Mourning Dove, Bulosan wishes to be

"literary," but he is burdened by his need to write about his Filipinoness. He shares with her a desire to discover the humanity intrinsic to the artistic process. He also shares McWhorter's desire of being "scientific," of demonstrating that he, too, can possess the authority and credibility that are accorded to scientists in the modern, enlightened world.

Thus far in this chapter, we have focused primarily on Bulosan's recollection of his first seventeen years in the Philippines. This part of his life, however, constitutes only a third of *America Is in the Heart*. The majority of his narrative details his life in the United States, and it is there that we must follow our author if we are to fully make sense of his intentions in using ethnography as a fictional device. Although ethnography has most commonly been associated with the field of anthropology, it has also been an important rhetorical device in the development of the field of American sociology during the 1920s and 30s. As Bulosan crosses the "border" of the Philippines and enters the United States, he shifts his narrative strategy accordingly, metamorphosing from an anthropological novelist to a sociological one, and, in the process, altering once again the referents to the tropes of primitivism. The nature and ramification of this shift are of the utmost importance in continuing our examination of Bulosan's divided role as both ethnographer and subject.

In *Writing Chicago*, Carla Cappetti argues that many Chicago writers of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s appropriated the rhetorical device of Chicago urban sociologists in crafting their novels. She sees James T. Farrell, Nelson Algren, and Richard Wright as "the most emblematic products and best known representatives" of writers who brought "into sharp focus the sociological imagination of Chicago literature, of the American urban novel, and, more broadly, of American literature (1). Cappetti sees "the theories and methodologies developed by the Chicago Urban sociologists" playing a "central role in the overall shape and specific content" in works such as Farrell's *Studs Lonigan*, Algren's *Never Come Morning*, and Wright's *Black Boy-American Hunger* (13). She writes:

> At the crossroad where Chicago literature and Chicago sociology meet are two groups of texts written between 1915 and 1945—texts that exemplify the connections between these two schools of urban writing. James T. Farrell's Irish street youths, Nelson Algren's Polish thieves and prostitutes, Richard Wright's Black boys, and the neighborhoods in which these characters live find their sociological counterparts in W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's Polish peasants and unadjusted girls, in Robert Park's marginal men, in Robert Redfield's urban "folks," in

> Frederic Thrasher's youth gangs, and in Louis Wirth's metropolitan types. (2)

Had Carlos Bulosan written an account of himself, not as an itinerant worker in the West Coast during the Great Depression, but as a worker in one of Chicago's infamous slaughter houses, Cappetti might have easily included *America Is in the Hearts* among the novels and autobiographical narratives that exhibit a "sociological imagination," something she sees as an "overarching source and inspiration of American realism" (13). But along with realism, she includes in this sociological tradition "worn out labels such as *naturalism*, *proletarian literature*, *ethnic literature*," as well as the "limiting definitions such as *Chicago literature* and *midwestern literature*" (2). However, it is *naturalism* that "has become a catch-all term" whose "critical fortunes typify those of the others" (2).

In style and substance, *America Is in the Heart* is certainly a work of American naturalism, a mode of writing that depends on the scientific principles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Central to naturalism is Social Darwinism, the idea that "a human being belongs entirely in the order of nature and does not have a soul or any other mode of participation in a religious or spiritual world beyond nature" (Abrams 153). The French novelist Emile Zola, who, in the 1870s developed what he called *le roman expérimental*, is most often cited as the

prototypical naturalist. In the United States, an impressive cadre of writers developed and sustained naturalist fiction well into the 20th century—Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris, Jack London, and Richard Wright, to name just a few. By most conventional accounts, the world of the naturalists is bleak, harsh, and Godless, and human beings are not governed by divine or spiritual forces, but by nature's indifference and animalistic instincts, especially hunger and libido. It is therefore up to science, not theology or magic, to make sense of the universe. If realism differs from romanticism in attempting to depict life *as it is* and *not as we would have it*, then naturalism differs from realism in claming to depict life *in its utmost accuracy*. Thus, there is "an objective scientific attitude. . .with elaborate documentation" in naturalism, "sometimes including an almost medical frankness about activities and bodily functions" (Abrams 154). Donald Pizer observes American naturalism this way:

> The influence of Darwinism and French fiction, the notion that man is a brute and life a struggle, the belief that we are but ciphers in either a cosmic storm or a chemical process—this kind of awareness about what the naturalists absorbed and believed can help clarify our understanding of the themes which preoccupied individual naturalists in the

> muddy pool which is the coming together of a particular temperament and a historical moment. (548)

The two worlds described by Bulosan—the Philippines after the Spanish-American War and the United States during the Great Depression—and the theme and structure of *America Is in the Heart* are very much a product of his naturalistic beliefs mixed with his socialist vision and activism, a product of *evolution* united with *revolution*, Darwin married to Marx.

Because the naturalist novel calls for a "scientific" mode of representation, ethnography has been central in both the development and understanding of its poetics. But, as defined thus far in this study, is not ethnography the textual production of anthropology? Was it not early-20$^{th}$-century anthropologists who established ethnography as central to what they do in their discipline? And, as discussed in the previous chapter, did not the "crisis" in representation occur in the field of anthropology due to the epistemological challenge that confronted ethnography?

While anthropology busied itself conducting ethnographic research on "exotic" and "primitive" peoples in "far-away places," sociology was hard at work theorizing about and documenting the nature of some other people "at home." In *The Ethnographic Imagination*, Paul Atkinson reminds us: "Whereas in the early decades of this century

anthropological fieldworkers were turning outwards to the study of 'exotic' peoples, including Native Americans for anthropologists in the United States, the Chicago ethnographers found equally remarkable forms of social organization and culture in their own backyard—or at least in the ethnically and economically variegated setting of a rapidly growing and changing environment" (28-29). The so-called "underlife," "underdog," and "deviant" in the city, argues Atkinson, have "remained a characteristic preoccupation of ethnographic enquiry." This, however, did not originate with the Chicago School, from "the head of a Park or a Thomas"; the "sociologists were influenced by the work of social anthropologists, such as Malinowski, Boas, and Redfield":

> The early ethnographies of the American school were based explicitly on the combination of "anthropological" inspirations and the preoccupation with the first-hand exploration of urban types and settings. Park encouraged his students and colleagues to adopt the same methods and approaches to their research in the "natural areas" of Chicago as were being used by anthropologists in their studies of Native American cultures" (29)

Remarkably, it appears that Carlos Bulosan, of all writers, heeded Park's advice in shifting his mode of narrative from an "anthropological

ethnography" to a "sociological ethnography" in depicting his migration from the Philippines to the United States.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is a specific image of the "primitive" that is ethnographically imagined in anthropology: the paradoxical world of the South Seas paradise, lush palm trees, gentle trade winds, and flocks of innocent brown boys and girls juxtaposed with Dark Africa, ferocious jungles, animalistic totems, bloodthirsty headhunters and cannibals, mutilated bodies, and pagan sacrifices. This is the world envisioned in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, D.H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*, Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes*, Ruydard Kipling's *Kim*, and Part One of Carlos Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*.

In the naturalist worlds of Emile Zola's *Germinal*, Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, Meridel Le Sueur's *The Girl*, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth*, and Parts Two, Three, and Four of Bulosan's *America Is in the Heart*, an alternative image of the primitive is provided by the ethnographic imagination of sociology. The primitive, we are told by sociology, is "among us," deep in the heart of Western civilization. It is alive and well in the modern city, in industrial urban centers of London, Paris, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. The primitive also resides in the rapidly vanishing rural

wilderness, in the farmlands, badlands, and coal mines of Europe and the United States. In the sociological imagination, the primitive is the ruthless gangster, diseased prostitute, desperate criminal, itinerant laborer, unskilled and unemployable worker, sullied vagabond, and wretched immigrant of the destitute jungles of major cities and rural outbacks.

Recall that Bulosan left the Philippines after the realization of his primitive existence due to his life as a peasant. Wanting to enlighten and liberate himself and other Filipinos from the tyranny of ignorance and superstition, Bulosan sailed for the United States. Perhaps it is in America, he thought, the home of missionaries and Abraham Lincoln, that a passage out of peasantry—out of barbarism, poverty, senseless violence, and monstrosity—can be found. After all, that was what the American schoolteachers and missionaries in the Philippines preached to the Filipinos. What Bulosan finds in America, however, is shocking and frightening beyond belief. Instead of the paradise of civilization that Bulosan anticipated, he finds something altogether unimaginable and unexpected in America—a brutality and cruelty of the kind he has never encountered, not even in his worst nightmares. According to E. San Juan, Jr., perhaps the foremost scholar of Bulosan and the Philippines in the United States, by 1931, "more than 100,000 Filipino workers had been recruited from the hinterlands of the United States' only Asian

colony, the Philippines, to work in the plantations of Hawaii, the Alaskan canneries, and the farmlands of the West Coast." Moreover:

> The Depression inflicted on Filipinos severe unemployment, intense labor exploitation, and racist vigilante violence. In 1928 and 1930, Filipinos were attacked by racist vigilantes in Yakima Valley, Washington; Watsonville, California, and other towns. . . . Since the 1898 annexation of the islands up to 1946, Filipinos in the United States (called "Pinoys") inhabited a limbo of indeterminacy: neither citizens, aliens, nor wards, they were "nationals" without a sovereign country. (San Juan, Jr.)

The reality Bulosan confronts is that Filipinos in America are treated with as much—if not more—savagery than his brother and bride experienced immediately after their wedding, when they were raided and beaten by the frightened villagers. Contrary to what he has been taught by the Americans in the Philippines, Bulosan now realizes that the disease of peasantry is not endemic to the Philippines, but epidemic on a global scale. This malignant disease corrodes the lives of people wherever anti-democratic forces rule supreme. Even in America—most of all in America—the primitive, the tragic suffering of the peasantry, is alive and well.

When the teenage Bulosan, excited and apprehensive, arrives in Seattle in the summer of 1930, he is immediately sold for five dollars by sleazy labor contractors to "work in the fish canneries in Alaska" along with other Filipinos (101). When he comes back to Seattle for the second time a few months later, he is practically broke, having given up most of his earnings from the cannery to pay for the "neatly itemized expenditures" that he "supposedly. . . incurred during the season" (104). Having nowhere to go and nothing to do, he wanders the ghetto-streets of the destitute, seeking the comforting company of fellow Filipinos:

> It was already twilight and the cannery workers were in the crowded Chinese *gambling* houses, losing their season's earnings and *drinking* bootleg whisky. They become *quarrelsome* and *abusive* to their own people when they lost, and *subservient* to the Chinese gambling lords and *marijuana* peddlers. They pawed at the semi-nude *whores* with their *dirty* hands and made suggestive gestures, running out into the night when they were *rebuffed* for lack of money. (104; emphasis added)

Gambling, drinking, petty quarreling, drug abuse, subservience, whoremongering—something terrible was happening to the Filipinos in America, something utterly dreadful and monstrous. As a witness to and subsequently a participant in such debased behavior of his countrymen,

Bulosan writes of almost dying within himself "in these surroundings, where man was indistinguishable from beast" (135). Much to his chagrin, he eventually acquires "a certain degree of immunity to sickening scenes such as took place" all around him in America. In his desperate attempt to escape the primitive beast in the Philippines, Bulosan has unwittingly walked into the mouth of a greater beast in America. He writes:

> It took a me long time, then, to erase the outward scars of these years, but the deep, invisible scars inside me are not wholly healed and forgotten. They jarred my equilibrium now and then, and always, when I came face to face with brutality, I was afraid of what I would do to myself and others. I was terribly afraid of myself, for it was the beast, the monster, the murderer of love and kindness that raise its dark head to defy all that was good and beautiful in life. It was then that I would cry out for the resurrection of my childhood. (135-36)

Hence the power of nostalgia. If he were to successfully resurrect his childhood, what would Bulosan find? We already know the answer, of course: More of the same. Better to cling to an idealized past than to face the bitter truth of reality. But if he were to document the harsh reality of his life in America, how would he do it? This is the question

that he confronts one night after enduring several years of beatings by the police and other white men, being chased out of town after town by angry mobs, and witnessing the horrible transformation of humane Filipinos into ruthless beasts. One night, after arriving in San Luis Obispo, he rents a room and writes a letter to his brother Macario. "Then it came to me," recalls Bulosan, "like a revelation, that I could actually write understandable English" (180). He, "seized with happiness," writes "slowly and boldly." When he completes the long letter to Macario, Bulosan "jumped to (his) feet and shouted through (his) tears": "They can't silence me any more! I'll tell the world what they have done to me!" (180).

And tell he does. To San Juan, Jr., Bulosan's "ethnobiography" is "a testimony to those years of struggle and resistance to imperial racism and violence" that "gestures toward a popular front against global fascism." But *America Is in the Heart* more than just documents the savage treatment that Bulosan endured. It also makes a point—posits a hypothesis, if you will—about the affect an environment defined in terms of naturalism has on an individual's personality. The literary intent of his autobiography, therefore, appears identical to Richard Wright's in *Black Boy-American Hunger*. As Cappetti argues:

> Wright's two-volume autobiography is an emblematic product of a sociological grafting onto literature that is the

> acknowledged mark of the literature of the 1930s. More specifically, it is a remarkable expression of the tendencies that made the confluence of sociology and literature possible at that particular time of modern American history: on the one hand the tendency toward a more subjective sociology, a sociology that rediscovered the subjectivity of the individual as a social and cultural being; on the other the tendency toward a more objective literature, a literature that rediscovered the individual's unbreachable ties with the larger cultural and social spheres. (198-99)

Just as he "grafted" *anthropology* to literature in his narrative of his childhood in the Philippines, Bulosan, like Wright, grafts *sociology* to literature in narrating his experiences in the United States. In the process, he posits a theorem: Existence in America is just as harsh and cruel as it is in the Philippines. In documenting his flight from the South to the North Wright establishes an almost identical theorem: "The racial and intellectual tolerance of the South. . . are oppressive presences in the North as well, even though they come dressed in different clothes" (Cappetti 199). Cappetti sees passages in Wright's autobiography that "exemplify the methodology of participant observation in the Chicago school of sociology." She sees the depiction of Frederic Thrasher and Louis Wirth's notions of the street gang "cultural milieu" and its "moral

and social codes." And it is Richard Wright, "through his special gift for words," who "captures the fluid quality" of these sociological notions." Simultaneously, "it is Wright the sociologist who interprets" and "represents" them (200). It is Wright the ethnographer who, like Hermes, translates, interprets, and attempts to give meaning to the objects of his inquiry. Positing that Wright "became the sociologist of his own life" through the use of the categories of "personality" and "environment," Cappetti calls *Black Boy-American Hunger* an "exemplary product of the sociological imagination of the 1930s" (209):

> Whether consciously or unconsciously, Richard Wright wrote himself into a case study and thus became the informant of himself as a Black youth who grows up in the South and migrates to Chicago. In so doing he was able to make that story representative both of the specific experiences of Black migrants and of the more general facts of "social life" and "human nature" in modern sociology. (210)

Likewise, *America Is in the Heart* is Bulosan's *le roman expérimental*, the sociological ethnography of both his own life and the fate of Filipinos in the harsh environment of the United States, "a country of survival of the fittest" (170) during the Depression. His desire as a writer, as Hermes, as a conductor of participant observation, is

unequivocal: "to interpret the soul of the Filipinos in this country, to find a place in it not only for myself but my people" (qtd. in San Juan, Jr.). As the "self" to Wright was the soul of the collective Black consciousness, the "self" to Bulosan is not only his fellow Filipinos, but "the collective agency of all colonized subjects" (San Juan, Jr.). In his reliance on the rhetorical conventions of both anthropology and sociology to document his findings and arguments, Bulosan reveals his faith in the utilitarian value of ethnography, in not only its empirical and objective capacities, but also its literary and poetic potentials.

So far in this study, we have looked at the ethnographic imagination of anthropology, its adaptation by sociology, and its application in Mourning Dove's and Carlos Bulosan's literary productions. We have thus seen that in the ethnographic imagination, the primitive first existed "out there," in the primeval forest, in the souls of feral savages, noble or otherwise. We soon discovered that the primitive lives also "among us," in the belly of criminals and immigrants of the concrete jungles and rural wastelands of rapidly industrializing societies. A more frightening discovery, however, as 20$^{th}$-century scientists and avant-garde artist alike ascertained, is that the primitive is not necessarily the alien or the undesirable "other." It is, in fact, "us," and it resides deep in the heart of modern humans, in the very pith of our souls. The savage yelps and transgressive desires are not the monopolies

of Okanogan Indians, Igorots, Filipinos, migrant workers, and vagabonds. Rather, it is the stuff of our very fiber of being, the bones and sinews of our humanity, the origin of our civilized personae. In Torgovnick's words, it is "our untamed selves, our id forces." Just as the Chicago sociologists urged that sociology turn to the methodological foundation of anthropology, another group of "scientists" eventually urged the same for their discipline: Psychologists—or, more specifically, psychoanalysts—also urged the borrowing of the ethnographic imagination in making sense of another mystery; this time the challenge was to translate into something more familiar the foreignness of the dark abyss of our *minds*. And so we must now turn to *The Woman Warrior*, the autobiographical novel of Maxine Hong Kingston, the third and final author who defines the scope of our study, in order to continue our inquiry into the multiformity of the ethnographic imagination.

*Chapter 3: Maxine Hong Kingston's Great Escape from the "Watchful Villagers": Ethnography, the Freak Show, and the Aesthetic of Psychoanalysis*

In the "Shaman" chapter of *The Woman Warrior*, Maxine Hong Kingston makes a rather surprising, if not shocking, confession:

> My mother has cooked for us: raccoons, skunks, hawks, city pigeons, wild ducks, wild geese, black-skinned bantams, snakes, garden snails, turtles that crawled about the pantry floor and sometimes escaped under refrigerator or stove, catfish that swam in the bathtub. . . . She boiled the weeds we pulled up in the yard. . . . We children used to hide under the beds with our fingers in our ears to shut out the bird screams and the thud, thud of the turtles swimming in the boiling water, their shells hitting the sides of the pot. Once the third aunt who worked at the laundry ran out and bought us bags of candy to hold over our noses; my mother was dismembering skunk on the chopping block. I could smell the rubbery odor through the candy. (90-91)

But perhaps this revelation is not so newsworthy. After all, are not the bizarre eating habits of the Chinese common knowledge to all? Is it not possible to walk into any "authentic" Chinese restaurant in Chinatown

and see "raccoons, skunks, hawks, city pigeons, wild ducks, wild geese, black-skinned bantams, snakes, garden snails," and a whole host of other similarly curious and grotesque items on display, if not on the menu? This passage, therefore, can easily be taken as a validation of "our" preexisting suspicions of the Chinese as a wondrously queer group of people, not just in the matter of diet, but in every other cultural arena, can it not? Would Kingston otherwise have subtitled her book "Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts" unless she intended to divulge something noteworthy about the mysterious Chinese, to let us in on some secret, ancient or otherwise? After all, she is no mere anthropologist offering up academic tidbits and hypothesis about random Chinese cultural phenomena. Kingston is the genuine article; she is an *insider*, an *authentic* Chinese, is she not? Why else would the word "nonfiction" grace the back cover of the recent Vintage International edition of *The Woman Warrior*? It appears that the surprise in this passage is not that the Chinese are shockingly odd—we knew this already; the surprise is that an actual Chinese person is admitting to it.

The Chinese, of course, have been an object of American curiosity for centuries, and, as early as the mid-18$^{th}$ century, "Chineseness" appeared in America as novelty items on display. In *Marginal Sights*, James S. Moy tells us that the "notion of Chineseness under the sign of the exotic became familiar to the American spectator *long before*

sightings of the actual Chinese" (9; emphasis added). He adds: "From the onset, then, the Chinese in America resided solely in the province of the imaginary" (10). One of the earliest "actual" sightings was Afong Moy, a "Chinese Lady" placed on display in New York City in 1834. For three years, she "performed her Chineseness at several locations, including the American Museum, Peals Museum (which would later be purchased by P.T. Barnum), and unnamed venue located at 8 Park Place, the Brooklyn Institute, and the Saloon" (Moy 12). By the late-19th century, the human display of Chinese—along with representatives from other "alien" nations—in museums was quite commonplace. For James Moy, this sort of "institutionalization of Chinese racial representation as appropriate for museums" (13) did not come about by accident or chance. Rather, sustaining this curatorial practice was a marriage of two seemingly disparate enterprises—the science of anthropology and the spectacle of the freak show. Moy writes:

> As museums assumed a more pseudoscientific anthropological stance, audiences came not merely to look as one might survey a circus sideshow, but to study, to learn, to participate in a exchange which promised an authentic, scientifically grounded explication of the freakish assembled objects, despite the awkward truncation of time and geography. (14)

It is this curiosity for the mixture of the freakish and ethnographic that Kingston appears to be eliciting in her description of the foods forced on her by her Chinese mother. "Believe it or not," she seems to say with her grotesque menu, "my family ate skunks." That is, her *Chinese* family ate skunks. And she will not only prove this to us scientifically, she will also entertain us in the process with spectacular theatrics.

In *The Year of the Dragon*, Frank Chin's 1974 play set in San Francisco's Chinatown, a similar curiosity for the freakish and ethnographic takes center stage. The central character is Fred Eng, an aspiring novelist who works as a tour guide in Chinatown. Except for three short scenes that take place on the street, the play is set entirely in the Eng's apartment. But it is in the rare moments outside that we are given brief but significant glimpses of Fred at work, as he performs a "shtick" before his audience of tourists who have wandered to Chinatown to enjoy the spectacle of the Chinese New Year festivities. Fred's shtick is composed of layers of impersonations, beginning with a rendition of the stereotypical Chinaman, a "yellow" Amos and Andy, if you will:

> We'come a Chinatong, Folks! Ha. Ha. Ha . . . Hoppy New Year! Fred Eng, "Freddie" of Eng's Chinatown tour' n' travoo.

> "We tell Chinatown where to go." Ha ha ha. I'm top guide here. Allaw week Chinee New Year. Sssshhh Boom! Muchee muchie firey crackee! Ha. Ha. Ha . . . (71)

Then a transition takes place: Fred drops his fake pidgin and lets his audience in on the joke. He lets them know that they are "special," that he will not take advantage of them with a gimmick:

> But you're my last tour of the day, folks. And on my last tour of the day, no hooey. I like to let my hair down. Drop the phony accent. And be me. Just me.
>
> I figure once a day, I have got to be me. (71)

So he promises this lucky group of tourists the things all tourists desire—direct interaction with the "natives" and assurance of authenticity. As Dean MacCannell observes in *The Tourist*: "The touristic way of getting in with the natives is to enter into a quest for authentic experiences, perceptions and insights" (105). Tourists are thus trapped in what amounts to be a manifold of "stage sets," where they, wittingly or unwittingly, essentially agree not to question the authenticity of the sights before their gaze. John Urry, in *The Tourist Gaze*, adds:

> The tourist is a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in other 'times' and other 'places' away from that person's everyday life. particular fascination is shown

> by tourists in the 'real lives' of others which somehow possess a reality which is hard to discover in people's own experiences. (8)

Knowing that more than anything else the tourists "wanna know where to eat in Chinatown" (77), Fred makes a special offer. He will take them to the places where he, an *authentic* Chinese, eats:

> Other guides leave you to wander around counting for yourselves. But you're my last tour of the day. So no hooey. No more boo sheet. I'm telling you right now. Only ninety-nine restaurants and suey chops in Chinatown. I eating in every one and can telling you, it's TRUE!

Fred assures his audience that as an insider, as a real Chinaman, as someone *in the know*, he can take them to the source of *authentic* Chinese cuisine. Do not fall for those other tour guides who take advantage of your naïveté by taking you to fake, "touristy" places, he says. Trust *me*. Fred has already proven his qualifications as a reliable guide by dropping his fake accent. He, for one, will not insult the intelligence of his customers. More significantly, he will let them in on a great secret about the mysterious Chinese, especially as it concerns food. In doing so, however, Fred also lets his audience know that he risks danger to himself. This was the reason for the initial masquerade,

and he could get into real trouble if the other Chinese knew that he was giving away secrets. The Chinese are ever watchful. Nonetheless, being Chinese and having eaten in every Chinese restaurant in Chinatown, Fred assures his audience that he can vouch for the *truth* about Chinese food. So what is the truth? Surprisingly enough, Fred reveals that they, the tourists, already know it. Yes, your preexisting notions about the Chinese, especially our food, are true, Fred says. Yes, Chinese food, like everything else Chinese, is wondrously odd, fantastic, and grotesque:

> . . . Cantonese sweet' n' sour goes straight to your scrotum.
> Pekingese goo makes you dream in 3-D.
> Shanghai hash cures blind drunkenness and raises your I.Q.
> six points!
> And the universal peanut grease
> of the Chinatown deepfry lights up
> every nerve of your body. . . (77)

With these words of validation, Fred leads the excited and awed tourists to dinner. But this is where another transition in performance takes place, where Fred strips away another layer of impersonation. This time, however, he does not let his audience in on the joke. He keeps this particular part of the shtick to himself. During his exit, as the curtain falls on the scene, he mutters privately under his breath: "Goddamn

motherfucking cocksucking sonofabitch. . ." (77). Hidden beneath the layers of performance and impersonation are Fred's abject bitterness and resentment for both his profession and his shameful participation in it. More than anything else, Fred aspires to write the great American novel; instead, he is stuck writing and performing clever Chinaman shticks and gags for a bunch of idiotic tourists day after day. Although his true desire is to write novels, to become an artist, he is in fact no more than a buffoon, a clown, a pathetic native informant—a cultural prostitute, if you will.

But Fred knows his status well, or so he believes. He knows that his goofy Chinaman performance is just that—a performance. He knows that the China he offers the tourist is not real. In this, he is not unlike Carlos Bulosan, who, as a child, posed naked for an American tourist hoping to earn ten centavos. The object of the tourist gaze in that case was the Igorot, something Bulosan knew he was not. But, sensing that the tourist did not know the difference between an Igorot and a "Christian Filipino," he manipulated the "signs" of Igorotness and made a simple living through performance and masquerade. The same appears to be true for Fred, who also makes a living by manipulating the signs of the "native-other," the Chinese in his case, and giving his customers what they want through his own brand of theatrics. There is, however, an important difference between Bulosan and Fred: While the former

describes his predicament as something rather benign, the latter is clearly full of hostility and rancor because of it. And Fred must hide his contempt, knowing that it is financial suicide if his customers knew his true feelings. In essence, Fred has to hide the real in order to sell the semblance of the real. But why not just stop, simply quit his job? If he is so miserable, so contemptuous with making a living by staging his own authenticity, why continue?

He is, in a word, an artist. He cannot stop because he needs to create art and believes it is either *this* or *nothing*. In this, he epitomizes the dilemma of hundreds of Asian American actors and performers who, given no alternatives, resort to auditioning time and time again for the same one or two Broadway shows—*Miss Saigon* and *The King and I.* To these talented artists, many with degrees from prestigious acting schools and programs, as Asian Americans, it is either the "T&A" show of Miss Saigon or nothing. Resentments, predictably, galore. Thus, Fred devotes as much energy suppressing his resentment as he does coming up with cagey and imaginative routines. But all bets are off when his sister Matty and her white husband Ross come to visit, imploring Fred to collaborate on a Chinese cookbook. When Fred is ambivalent about it, Ross touches a nerve by insisting: "It's easy Fred . . . Just a matter of writing Mama Fu Fu's syndicated column . . . . A new

even more 'far out' cookbook. The way you write about Chinatown . . ." (82-83). Fred, irate at the whole situation, remarks sarcastically:

> I'm going to write the great Chinese American Cookbook, is what. MAMA FU FU'S RICE DEEM SUM right up their ass, cuz no one's gonna read the great Chinese American novel. . . . I'll write a Mama Fu Fu Chinese cookbook that'll drive people crazy! They'll drink soy sauce straight from the bottle. It's gonna be the first Chinese cookbook to win the Pulitzer Prize and make Mama Fu Fu's bigger than Kentucky Fried Chicken. (83)

Fred then calls Ross, a white scholar and aficionado of Chinese language and culture, a "park ranger" and Chinatown his "private reserve," which makes the Chinese his "endangered species" (85).

As a professional tour guide, Fred sees his own complicity in this unfortunate scenario. If Chinatown is indeed a private reserve, some sort of human zoo; and the Chinese are endangered species, some sort of biological rarity, the Missing Link, if you will; and if Ross is the park ranger, the overseer and game warden, then Fred is the pitchman, the confidence man, who, with the art of elaborate and cunning pitch, lures unsuspecting customers into buying Chineseness, its oddity, its *freakishness*. Of course, in the world of the freak show, the pitchmen who sell the freaks—the tallest, the shortest, the Bearded Lady, the

Siamese Twins—are not themselves freaks. When P.T. Barnum sells General Tom Thumb, the customer pays to see the world's smallest man, the tiniest celebrity, not Barnum the impresario. Fred, however, knows that in selling Chineseness, he sells himself, because he, too, is a Chinaman. He knows he is both the commodity and the salesman, the prostitute and the pimp. Moreover, he is also the manufacturer. The Chinese he offers the tourists is an act, a shtick, a product of his imagination mixed with his knowledge of occidental fantasies of the exotic Orient. Thus, what he essentially manufactures and sells is snake-oil. To those who come to him for the authentic, he supplies the "fake," fearful that the "real" is not good enough, therefore not in demand at the marketplace. In order to offer the real, he feels he must write a novel, an artform he can take pride in. But as a Chinese American, to write a novel is to risk failure—and rejection. To offer the fake, however, under the guise of the real, is to make a sure profit. It is, in all likelihood, to be accepted, to make a decent living. So Fred goes on selling the fake, pitching snake-oils, pretending to be the exotic and freakish Chinese that the tourists fantasize about and is willing to pay for.

Embarrassed at having offended his brother-in-law, Ross attempts a pathetic defense, to which Fred responds:

> You're right, Ross, I don't think of myself as a tourist guide all my life. But my own parents won't read a story I write. Then it hit me, "Food's our only common language. . ." Cookbooks! . . . Chinese Cookbooks! Your recipes and my smut knocked me out, Sis. You invented a new literary form. Food pornography. (86)

In referring to "recipes" and "smut" in the creation of "food pornography," Frank Chin alludes to the two elements—the science of anthropology and the spectacle of the freak show—that sustained the "institutionalization of Chinese racial representation as appropriate for museums" that we identified earlier in our discussion of Afong Moy, the "Chinese Lady" on display at New York City's American Museum in 1834. The fascination that Americans—tourists or otherwise—typically show for Chinese food is located somewhere in this intersection of recipes and smut, of science and entertainment, of the ethnographic and the freakish.

Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, in *Reading Asian American Literature*, defines Frank Chin's notion of "food pornography" as:

> making a living by exploiting the "exotic" aspects of one's ethnic foodways. In cultural terms it translates to reifying cultural differences and exaggerating one's otherness in order to gain foothold in a white-dominated social system.

> Like exchanging sexual services for food, food pornography is also a kind of prostitution, but with an important difference: superficially, food pornography appears to be a promotion, rather than a vitiation or devaluation, of one's ethnic identity. . . .food pornographers seem to take pride in their apartness from the mainstream. They seem to be acknowledging and proclaiming, not just playing down, their differences. Nevertheless, what they in fact do is to wrench cultural practices out of their context and display them for gain to the curious gaze of "outsiders." (55-56)

While I find Wong's definition quite astute and insightful on the whole, I want to add to her remark that food pornographers "seem to take *pride* in their apartness from the mainsteam." As we have witnessed in the case of Fred Eng, the "originator" of the term, pride is the last thing in his heart. Fred is ashamed of and embarrassed by his profession as a food pornographer. If he shows pride in the apartness of the Chinese from the mainstream, it is an act, a performance. It is pretend. The danger of this kind of all-encompassing performative existence, of course, is obvious. As the saying goes: We eventually become what we pretend to be. This is the message, it seems, of Chin's *The Year of the Dragon*, if there is to be a message: Let us—Chinese American writers—not "prostitute" our ethnic or racial difference in order to make

a living. Let us create art, not smut. Write about yourself with dignity, not with pornographic shame and embarrassment. This is the predicament faced by millions of people around the world whose economic survival is intimately tied to the tourist industry, to the commodification of their "native-otherness" and performance of "manufactored authentic" identity. To Frank Chin, the solution may be hard-line but is also self-evident: Find an alternative; resist by any means necessary. Do the work of the mythological Monkey in *Journey to the West*, an exemplar of classic Chinese heroic tradition:

> Life is war. Every human is born a soldier. All behavior is tactics and strategy. Deception is the basis of all warfare, the strategist Sun Tzu, "the Grandson," says. For the soldier, the essential skill in winning the war to maintain personal integrity is in the telling of the difference between the real and the fake. We (the editors of *The Big Aiiieeeee!*, which includes Chin) tell it. (Chan, et al. xv)

As Wong puts it: "While Chin's impassioned, almost savage view on this subject leaves little room for a nuanced view of cultural presentation and transformation, it thought-provokingly identifies a persistent strain in Asian American cultural politics" (56).

And this strain seems to persist also in *The Woman Warrior*. If there is little or no nuance to Chin's response to food pornography, what

can we say about Maxine Hong Kingston's? In her confession of the foods she endured as a child, does she *do* food pornography or does she *pretend*? Or perhaps she condemns or subverts it? Is Kingston more similar to Chin or to Fred Eng in this regard? If we are to take Chin's word for it, Kingston is Fred Eng with a crucial difference: While Fred resents and is ambivalent about his food pornography, not only is Kingston utterly devoid of resentment or ambivalence, she marvels and bathes in its glory. Chin and the other three editors of *The Big Aiiieeeee!* have vociferously and aggressively—some would say mean-spiritedly or even savagely—taken Kingston to task for what they perceive as her "cultural prostitution," claiming that the "China and Chinese America portrayed in (her) works are the products of white racist imagination, not fact, not Chinese culture, and not Chinese or Chinese American literature" (xiii). In his "Come All Ye Asian American Writers of the Real and the Fake," Chin does not limit his criticism just to Kingston:

> Kingston, (David Henry) Hwang, and (Amy) Tan are the first writers of any race, and certainly the first writers of Asian ancestry, to so boldly fake the best-known works from the most universally known body of Asian literature and lore in history. And, to legitimize their faking, they have to fake all of Asian American history and literature,

> and argue that the immigrants who settled and established Chinese American lost touch with Chinese culture, and that a faulty memory combined with new experiences produced new versions of these traditional stories. This version of history is their contribution to the stereotype. (3)

The stereotype that Chin refers to is particular in character: "The social Darwinists of the turn of the century," Chin writes, "regowned this stereotype in social scientific jargon, and white writers—from Jack London to Robert Heinlein—made art of the stereotype" (8). Chin sees three specific reasons for the "consistency" of the social Darwinist depiction of the Chinese among "mainstreamed" Chinese American works—in particular, those of Kingston, Hwang, and Tan—and among "other Chinese American publishing sensations of the past," including Yung Wing's 1909 *My Life in China and America* and Jade Snow Wong's 1945 *Fifth Chinese Daughter*:

> (1) all the authors are Christian, (2) the only form of literature written by Chinese Americans that major publishers will publish (other than cookbook) is autobiography, an exclusively Christian form; and (3) they all write to the specifications of the Christian stereotype of Asian being as opposite morally from the West as it is geographically. ("Come" 8)

As Wong indicates, there is no nuance to Chin's vilification of Kingston's role as a cultural pornographer. But despite his callous and mean-spirited posturing, Chin's observations appear to have some merit. It would be hard to deny that on the surface, Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, for one, reflects the three characteristics outlined by Chin. The question, of course, is whether or not these qualities translate to what Chin claims:

> With Kingston's autobiographical *Woman Warrior*, we have given up even the pretense of reporting from the real world. Chinese culture is so cruel and she is so helpless against its overwhelming cruelty that she lives entirely in her imagination. It is an imagination informed only by the stereotype communicated to her through the Christian Chinese autobiography. . . . Helping her along, giving her a strong scientific, and entertaining foundation are Chinese and Japanese sociology and Hollywood. ("Come" 26)

It is this kind of extreme hyperbolic and intemperate rhetoric that has allowed bitter controversy to become permanently affixed to Chin's life and work. And predictably, most critics of Chin have appropriately focused on his seemingly unabashed sexist and homophobic outbursts, especially in his condemnation of Kingston and Hwang.

To King Kok Cheung, Chin's rhetoric leads to an inevitable false choice for someone like herself, a Chinese American woman and a scholar of Asian American literature: either embrace Kingston and choose feminism or embrace him and choose heroism. Cheung writes in "The Woman Warrior versus The Chinaman Pacific" that in their attempt to "correct the distorted images of Asian males projected by the dominant culture," Chin and many other Chinese American male writers are "blind to the biases resulting from their own acceptance of the patriarchal constructs of masculinity" (236). She detects in Chin's writing and criticism, "not only homophobia but perhaps also a sexist preference for stereotypes that imply predatory violence against women to 'effeminate' " stereotypes, such as the popular Charlie Chan variety that has dominated the American fantasy of Chinese men (237). In surveying the fusillade of criticism levied upon *The Woman Warrior* by Asian American male critics, Cheung identifies the most persistent and vociferous accusation: Kingston falsifies Chinese culture and reinforces Chinese stereotypes "in the name of feminism" (239). "Women of color," Cheung implores, "should not have to undergo a self-division resulting from having to choose between female and ethnic identities" (246).

Although very perceptive and persuasive in critiquing the obvious misogynistic and homophobic core of Chin's rhetoric, Cheung does not

address the question of whether or not Kingston "self-Orientalizes" her Chinese identity for touristic or pornographic ends as Chin charges. But what if we take Kingston at her word? What if we turn directly to her memoir for answers to some of the questions that confronted not just Fred Eng, but also Carlos Bulosan? Does *The Woman Warrior* make it possible to glean anything conclusive about whether or not Kingston allows herself to become a modern-day Afong Moy, displaying her Chineseness as if for a freak show for the benefit of the tourist gaze? In other words, what results does Kingston's ethnographic imagination lead to?

According to a popular "multiculturalist" mythology, the source of which, like all worthwhile mythologies, are uncertain, *The Woman Warrior* is the most often assigned literary text in the American academy, more than Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, more than Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, and more than William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The reason for this is surprisingly simple: While the works of most writers who write "literature"—Melville, Hemingway, Shakespeare—are customarily confined to courses offered through a university's English department, Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* is regularly found in the syllabi of courses offered through a myriad of disparate departments—English and composition, Women's Studies, Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies, history, sociology, psychology,

and anthropology. Since its publication in 1976, *The Woman Warrior* has undoubtedly been among the most widely discussed and disputed American—let alone Asian American—literary productions, and its multidisciplinary use has been unparalleled in American literary history, at least during the 1980s and 90s, when, as numerous conservative critics have lamented, the army of multiculturalism ruled the academy. Works like Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, regularly assigned not only in English but in Women's Studies and African American Studies courses, come close, but still lack the wide disciplinary appeal of *The Woman Warrior*, which often pops up in a variety of social science courses.

This sort of intense pedagogical application and academic examination of her work has placed Kingston on a hotseat of controversy, a position that is either to be envied or pitied, depending on who does the considering. Curtiss J. Rooks, Jr. and Jon Panish, in "The Dilemma of the Ethnic Writer: A Case Study of Maxine Hong Kingston," offer this summary of the Kingston debate:

> Maxine Hong Kingston's work has earned both popular and critical acclaim. This acceptance has led to numerous debates within the Asian American scholarly community about its "representativeness" of the Asian American experience. These debates have mostly centered around the

> question of whether Maxine Hong Kingston's works insightfully depict the coming-into-being of a Chinese American or if they reinforce the dominant American views of the exotic Eastern Other and the duality of a Chinese in the United States. (130)

Rooks and Panish find it troubling that "despite the author's explicit statement that this was a book of suppositions," Kingston's publishers categorized *The Woman Warrior*—and the sequel, *China Men*—as "nonfiction," when her "manner of combining legend, myth, and childhood remembrance defied categorization" (130).

But it appears that Rooks, Panish, and Kingston's publishers are not alone in contemplating the categorical nature of *The Woman Warrior*. All indications are that the author herself is either very much confused or intentionally—if not playfully—ambiguous. Early in the first chapter, Kingston ponders:

> Chinese-Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, to insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with stories, from what is Chinese? What is Chinese tradition and what is the movies? (6)

By using these questions to open her "memoir," Kingston admits to an insecure ethnic identity. What about who I am is just me, she asks, and what is Chinese? What events of my childhood are particular to my own peculiar family and what are typical to the peculiarity of Chinese families in general? Kingston asks these weighty questions at a critical moment. She had just begun to tell us a tragic story of her aunt, the "No Name Woman." But her story is not a first-hand account. It is her mother's story which Kingston remembers, translates, edits, interprets, ponders, and extrapolates. In this and many other regards, her "No Name Woman" story is much like Bulosan's suspicious account of his brother's wedding: Both stories involve women who have committed a sexual act that transgressed their respective "village" code of behavior and both women suffer the communal "wrath" of the entire village. Bulosan and Kingston thus appear to validate an observation Sigmund Freud makes in *Totem and Taboo* about the behavior of "primitive" societies when it comes to a transgression of a tribal law regarding inappropriate sexual behavior:

> The violation of the prohibition is not left to what is, so to speak, an automatic punishment, as is the case with other violations. . . *but is most energetically avenged by the whole tribe as if it were a question of warding off a danger*

> *that threatens the community as a whole* or a guilt that weighs upon all. (7-8; emphasis added)

More significantly, both stories employ the rhetorical conventions of modern ethnography and are told in a manner that makes the narrators appear very insecure, if not outright unreliable. As Vincent Crapanzano might say, both exhibit the narrative dilemma of Hermes, who makes "use of all the persuasive devices at his disposal to convince his readers of *the* truth of his message, but, treating these rhetorical strategies as though they were cunning tricks, he gives them scant recognition" (45). Just as Bulosan used phrases like "I do not remember exactly," "I do not think," and "something must have happened" to raise doubts about the accuracy of *the event as it factually occurred* (if it occurred ever at all), Kingston uses phrases like "perhaps," "it could well have been," and "she may have" to raise doubts about the event she tells us about.

There is, however, little doubt as to the serious nature of a "warning" given by Kingston's mother in the very first lines of *The Woman Warrior*:

> "You must not tell anyone. . .what I am about to tell you. In China your father had a sister who killed herself. She jumped into the family well. We say that your father has all brothers because it is as if she had never been born." (3)

Of course, Kingston's first act is to disobey her mother's wishes; she goes on to tell us "exactly" what her mother tells her. If we were to pay attention to and respect Kingston's use of punctuation, it is clear that we are to believe that she repeats her mother's story *verbatim*. The first two and a half pages—the first nine paragraphs—are encased in quotation marks. With the use of punctuation, Kingston establishes her mother, Brave Orchid, as a first-hand witness to the events that befell her husband's sister. Brave Orchid tells Kingston of her aunt's pregnancy "long after the time when it could have been possible." Her husband, you see, had sailed for the United States in 1924, just days after the "village celebrated seventeen hurry-up weddings—to make sure that every young man who went 'out on the road' would responsibly come home" (4). Brave Orchid, present at the village at the time, noticed the ill-timed pregnancy, but did not say anything. She then tells her daughter, our narrator:

> "The village had also been counting. On the night the baby was to be born the villagers raided our house. Some were crying. . . . As the villagers closed in, we could see that some of them, probably men and women we knew well, wore white masks. . . . At first they threw mud and rocks at the house. Then they threw eggs and began slaughtering our stock. . . . Their knives dripped with the blood of our

> animals. They smeared blood on the doors and walls." (3-4)

Then a woman swung a headless chicken, "splattering blood in red arcs about her." As if intending to give Freud's observation a measure of merit, the villagers, *en masse*, rushed into the family house and ripped up the aunt's "clothes and shoes and broke her combs." They broke bowls and pots, overturned jugs, stole sugar and oranges, and "cut pieces from the dead animals" (4-5). The aunt, after giving birth that evening, drowned herself with her baby in the family well. Brave Orchid then gives Kingston a final warning:

> "Don't let your father know that I told you. He denies her. Now that you have started to menstruate, what happened to her could happen to you. Don't humiliate us. You wouldn't like to be forgotten as if you had never been born. The villagers are watchful." (5)

With these final words of caution, Brave Orchid reveals her hand. This story has not been told for its own sake; there is a "moral" to this story. However, in telling her daughter this story, Brave Orchid risked danger to herself by violating the village rule—or taboo, rather—of "not telling." (Recall this is something Fred Eng *pretended* to fear.) It does not matter that the events occurred decades ago in a far away place; Brave Orchid knows that the "villagers are watchful" still (5). But the

risk is not without rewards, for Brave Orchid needs to keep her daughter safe from harm. The reason for her telling, therefore, was not to merely gossip about their family history, but to impart an important object lesson. In sum, in learning about the "other," you learn valuable lessons about your "self." As Kingston articulates it:

> Whenever she had to warn us about life, my mother told stories that ran like this one, a story to grow up on. She tested our strength to establish realities. Those in the emigrant generations who could not reassert brute survival died young and far from home.

While it is difficult enough to discern Brave Orchid's motivations for recalling the No Name aunt, it is even more so identifying Kingston's motivations for telling *us* what her mother told her not to. It is Brave Orchid, of course, who sets the precedence of transgressing the taboo: She told her daughter and risked the retribution of an ever-watchful and mercilessly vengeful village. As Kingston comes of age into womanhood, Brave Orchid needs to prepare her, teach her methods of survival, so that she might avoid the tragic fate of her No Name aunt. At least this is what Kingston would have us believe.

But why does Kingston tell us this family secret? Why not, like her mother, wait until her own daughter comes of age and tell only her in strict confidence? Why take us, an audience of unknown readers, into

her confidence? What can she gain by so willfully violating her mother's admonition in this manner? I am not, of course, the first to ask these questions. Since its publication, *The Woman Warrior* has inspired more critical attention than any other Asian American work, and the most widely shared perspective has been a feminist one. This is understandable since, as Elaine Kim notes in *Asian American Literature*, even Kingston herself "has said that sexism has been the 'primary question in her own consciousness' " (199). Kim adds:

> The aunt's tragedy forces the Chinese American woman to examine the culture that produced and attempted to destroy her. Is China really a place where daughters are sold into slavery, promised to cretinous husbands for money, driven to suicide, stoned to death? Even Brave Orchid implies her complicity with such practices, telling her daughter that in China girls are given away free instead of costing money as they do in America. (202)

Ostensibly, Kingston's reason for telling us the forbidden story is woman-centered and anti-patriarchal. "When we Chinese girls listened to the adults talk-story," she writes, "we learned that we failed if we grew up to be but wives or slaves" (19). "There is a Chinese word for the female *I*—which is 'slave,' " she writes, "Break the women with their own tongues!" (47). The title of her memoir, therefore, has great

significance. By telling, Kingston avenges her aunt and punishes China's barbaric misogyny, not with a sword, but with a pen, the weapon of choice for a woman warrior. Predictably, this apparent battle-of-the-sexes theme of *The Woman Warrior* has inspired Frank Chin to mount a counterattack, resulting in his parody, "Unmanly Warrior," where he accuses Kingston of willfully falsifying Chinese history and culture in order to "cash in" on a "feminist fad" (Kim 198). Chin lambastes Kingston for writing a book based on lies, distortions, and perversions, "with the hope that it will be adopted as an aid in teaching American fourth and fifth graders" about China's supposed barbarism and sexism (Afterword i).

As we have seen, the reason Chin provides in *The Year of the Dragon* for Fred Eng taking his audience into his confidence was essentially to "scam" them, to manipulate their fantasies of and hunger for the exotic by giving them what they want under the guise of the authentic. Having to "prostitute" himself in this matter tore Fred's psyche apart, but he continued nonetheless, sensing that he had no other alternative as a writer wishing to survive as an artist. Are we then Kingston's tourists, her target of manipulation? Is she, either due to or despite her feminist overtures, performing a "shtick" of her own for our naïve amusement? Are we, the readers, just another group of gullible tourists on a fruitless quest for the authentic? Are we being "had"? Are

we the American tourist who paid Bulosan ten centavos thinking he was an Igorot? Does Kingston also mutter profanities under her breath like Fred Eng at having to package her Chineseness in exotic clothing for the sake of her identity as an artist. Is it *this* or *nothing* for Kingston as well?

As we have already seen, Kingston does not limit the public revelation of family matters to just exposing the secret of her aunt. She appears to have a greater mission in mind: All indications are that Kingston, more than anything else, wishes to *punish her mother*. And she does so through a rather cruel method: She exposes and embarrasses Brave Orchid by making her out to be a *freak*. Kingston asks us in utter exasperation, as if she herself is shocked at her memory: "Can you believe what my mother fed us? Have you ever heard of anyone forcing their children to eat skunks, snakes, and turtles? What a *freak*!" But her mother's cruelty does not end there. At the start of the chapter, "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe," Kingston reveals something even more outrageous: Her mother cut her tongue. "She pushed my tongue up and sliced the frenum," she writes. Then, if uncertain, adds: "Or maybe she snipped it with a pair of nail scissors" (163-64).

What is undeniably clear from her "memoir" is that Kingston's childhood was fraught with pain, humiliation, torture, loneliness, and abject misery. Every memory she unearths points to some kind of

psychic trauma of the sort often associated with child abuse. Thus, the question she poses early in her memoir is critical: "Chinese-Americans, when you try to understand what things in you are Chinese, how do you separate what is peculiar to childhood, to poverty, to insanities, one family, your mother who marked your growing with stories, from what is Chinese?" (6). How do you indeed?

As we observed in our discussion of *America Is in the Heart*, Bulosan makes a critical discovery when he follows his cousin to a party. As he becomes sexually aroused while dancing with a girl, he realizes his rightful place in a savage environment. The lust in his body, awakened by the "savage boom-boom of the drums," clearly signaled to him that he was a savage also. He finally saw that when the villagers raided his brother's smokeless house, they were responding to an inexpressible fear caused by ignorance and superstitious beliefs. His enlightenment occurred only when he realized that he was "one among them and one of them," no different from the villagers. The savagery of the villagers was the result of their *primitivism*, which Bulosan defined as a life of darkness, superstition, and degradation. To be primitive, thus, was to be a *peasant*. To Kingston, however, the primitive is something quite different. To her, to be primitive is to be a *freak*, a freak in the sense of "freak of nature," an aberration of normalcy as defined by the clinical discoveries of the psychological—or

psychoanalytical, rather—sciences during the latter half of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries.

The "No Name Woman" chapter, while it begins with the nine paragraphs of her mother's quoted words, is comprised mostly of Kingston's own speculations as to the details and meanings behind the death of her aunt. This is because her mother refused to give details. As Kingston says:

> If I want to learn what clothes my aunt wore, whether flashy or ordinary, I would have to begin, "Remember Father's drowned-in-the-well sister?" I cannot do that. My mother has told me once and for all the useful parts. She will add nothing unless powered by Necessity, a riverbank that guides her life. (6)

Kingston has no choice, therefore, but to fill in the gaps and fissures of the story using the only materials she has on hand—the "stuff" of her miserable childhood, her memories, traumas, pains, humiliations, loneliness, and imagination. But the stuff she uses as fillers and patchwork is composed of other materials as well, most significantly the same discursive materials that the late-19th-century American museums used for the "institutionalization of Chinese racial representation" that we discussed earlier—the science of anthropology and the spectacle of the freak show. In writing her memoir, Kingston plays a dual role using

the rhetorical strategies each discipline provides. On the one hand, she is a scientist, combining psychological and anthropological terms and theories to present and interpret the mysteries of her Chinese life. This gives her account a semblance of respectability, authority, and authenticity that is customarily given to scientific discourse. On the other hand, she is an entertainer, shocking and unnerving her readers with outrageous details about her Chinese childhood. This gives her marketability in a commodity-driven, capitalist American society. She thus becomes a latter-day impresario in the tradition of no less than the greatest one of them all, P.T. Barnum, who, better than anyone, popularized the "science" of ethnicity by marrying the zoological to the theatrical and the museum to the stage. The Aborigine, the Pygmy, the Apache, the Siamese, the Bornean, and the Chinese, to showmen like Barnum, shared the stage and cage with the Dog-faced Boy, the Bearded Lady, the Elephant Man, the Tallest, the Thinnest, the Smallest, and the Fattest. As materials for "The Greatest Show on Earth," they made up the family of human oddities and freaks. Likewise, in *The Woman Warrior*, Kingston presents the Chinese as no less than freaks, remarking at one point:

> To make my waking life American-normal, I turn on the lights before anything untoward makes an appearance. I

> push the deformed into my dreams, which are Chinese, the language of impossible stories. (87)

To Kingston, all things Chinese, exemplified by her mother, are senseless. They are impossible and deformed. They are bad dreams, or, rather, awful nightmares. They are untoward. But how can she think otherwise given her personal experience growing up in a Chinese environment? But if she is an *insider* with first-hand knowledge, why is China such a mystery to her? Why is it so foreign, so impossible, not just in the past when she was a girl, but now still, when she is an adult recording her memories of her childhood? (This is implied by Kingston's use of the present verb-tense: I "*turn* on the light," she writes, not "*turned* on" or "*used to* turn on"; I "*push* the deformities," she writes, not "*pushed.*") There are at least two possible answers: One, Kingston is an unreliable informant, foreign to China, and not really an "authentic" Chinese, presuming that there is such a thing to begin with. Two, *that* is the nature of the Chinese; the Chinese, by nature, are freakish and impossible to understand, unless they become an object of study for an anthropologist or psychologist—unless their mysteries are tackled by the ethnographer armed with the powerful methods of science and reason.

At the end of "No Name Woman," Kingston tells us why she has raised her aunt from the dead despite her mother's warning:

> In the twenty years since I heard this story I have not asked for details nor said my aunt's name; I do not know it. People who can comfort the dead can also chase after them to hurt them further—a reverse ancestor worship. The real punishment was not the raid swiftly inflicted by the villagers, but the family's deliberately forgetting her. (16)

In keeping silent for twenty years, Kingston feels she is no different from her mother, father, or any of the villagers that savagely raided her aunt's home. In keeping silent for so long, some twenty years, she realizes that she has also "participated" in her aunt's punishment. Like them, and like the villagers in Bulosan's childhood, she has led a primitive existence. As we have seen, once Bulosan makes this discovery, his life's mission becomes one of a social revolutionary. He commits himself to the cause of helping to raise the peasantry from the depths of savagery through the process of reason, enlightenment, and modernity. "They can't silence me any more!" he cried, "I'll tell the world what they have done to me." His autobiographical intent, therefore, however earnest or naïve, was consistent with Mao Tsetung's definition of literature: Write the "truth" for the sake of the masses; write to uplift and awaken the peasantry.

To atone for her own sin, her own internalized misogyny, in participating in her aunt's punishment, Kingston also decides to tell the

world what "they" have done to her. For Bulosan, "they" were the anti-democratic forces that kept the peasantry in a state of subhuman depravity—large corporations, absentee landlords, corrupt church officials, racist cops, and their ilk. For Kingston, "they" are either the unspeakable forces of China or the vague and potent traumas of her childhood. And like Bulosan, she will tell the world even if it means *making up* details—even if it means, like Fred Eng, staging authenticity. And what glorious details she stages and makes up. Kingston, after all, is a champion storyteller who freely boasts of her ability to "twist into designs" any bare story she comes across:

> Long ago in China, knot-makers tied string into buttons and frogs, and rope into bell pulls. There was one knot so complicated that it blinded the knot-makers. Finally, an emperor outlawed this cruel knot, and the nobles could not order it anymore. If I had lived in China, I would have been an outlaw knot-maker. (163)

But then there is the rub: She has *not* lived in China. She was born in Stockton, California, not the village in China where her aunt died. But, being the outlaw knot-maker that she is, Kingston nevertheless weaves a fabulously complicated knot using the bare materials given to her by Brave Orchid. But not all is lost: She may not have lived in China, but

she has lived her childhood. (Only if she could tell the two apart with some measure of confidence or surety.)

Kingston states explicitly that she breaks her mother's secret to avenge her aunt's memory and end her punishment. But, despite her expressed reasons, the notion of saving her aunt is a ruse. Kingston is a trickster, after all; and, as a masterful storyteller, as Hermes, if you will, she is not to be trusted. *The Woman Warrior* is a public document and now the entire world knows that her mother violated the taboo against speaking about the No Name Woman. If the world knows, then the villagers know. Brave Orchid's daughter thus exposes the sin of her mother, who is now a potential target of the village's wrath. Had her mother not broken the prohibition, Kingston could never have known about the dead aunt and would not—could not—have written about her. This is the punishment Kingston bestows upon her mother, a believer in ghosts and demonic spirits. This is the punishment for making her childhood a living hell, for cutting her tongue and forcing skunks and snakes down her belly. *The Woman Warrior*, thus, not so much avenges the No Name aunt but Kingston's own damaged psyche, her battered "self." This injury is interpreted as her mother's doing but she is not big enough to absorb the enormity of Kingston's anger and vengeance. And neither is the village big enough. The object that is perhaps big enough is giant China itself. In order to punish her mother, Kingston displaces

her vengeance upon China and all things she deems Chinese. There is, of course, a problem: Kingston is not sure what exactly is Chinese and what is not. Having never been to China, she is like the 19th-century American spectator, for whom the "notion of Chineseness under the sign of the exotic became familiar. . . long before sightings of the actual Chinese" (Moy 9). As a native informant of China, Kingston is a poor candidate, unqualified and untrustworthy. But as one of the most read and discussed American writers at the end of the 20th century, her authority of Chineseness rivals P.T. Barnum's assumed authority over his assembly of human oddities and freaks.

In *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self*, Leslie Fiedler argues that people's odd fascination with freaks and the circus atmosphere of freak-shows is not so much anthropological or teratological but *psychological*:

> What monsters men have needed to believe in they have created for themselves in words and pictures when they could not discover them in nature. And it is with that psychic need, then, that we should begin; seeking prototypes neither in history or anthropology, nor in embryology or teratology, but in depth psychology, which deals with our basic uncertainty about the limits of our bodies and our egos. More precisely, it is with the

> psychology of childhood that we must start, for in childhood such uncertainty is strongest and the distinction between the dreams it begets and the reality to which we wake hardest to maintain. (27)

In looking for "essential clues" as to why the freakish excites and fascinates so many, Fiedler suggests that we look not at psychology textbooks but children's literature. He writes: "Reading any of L. Frank Baum's Oz books, for instance, or James Barrie's *Peter Pan*, or *Alice in Wonderland*, or *Gulliver's Travels*, we cross in our imaginations a borderline which in childhood we could never be sure was there, entering a realm where precisely what qualifies us as normal on the one side identifies as Freaks on the other" (27-28). Fielder, if given the chance, might add *The Woman Warrior* to the list, for the world offered to us by Kingston, the *Chinese* world that is, is a realm of the uncertain where the line between dreams and realities is as dubious as it is in *Peter Pan* and *Gulliver's Travels*. Did Kingston's No-Name aunt really exist or did Brave Orchid make her up? Is it possible that Brave Orchid never talked of her and Kingston fabricated the whole thing? Did Brave Orchid really feed skunks and snakes to her children or did Kingston just imagine it? Or did Kingston make this up also? Did her mother really cut her tongue or is this, like every other weird detail of her memoir, merely a metaphor, a literary device? Although these questions are

impossible to answer with certainty, at least one thing is clear: To Kingston, the world she identifies as "American" is normal, real, civilized, and mature. The Chinese world, on the other hand, is the opposite: abnormal, unreal, uncivilized, and infantile. She constructs China by negation: Whatever it is not, America is; whatever America is not, China is. America belongs to her adulthood, China to her childhood.

To Fiedler, children's book tells us that "maturity involves the ability to believe the self normal, only the other a monster or Freak" (31). *The Woman Warrior* tells us the same. The only figure of reason and logic in a world populated by the Chinese is Kingston herself, the autobiographer; she is the only normal. All others—her mother, aunt, neighbors—are monstrous and freakish. She, therefore, puts them on display; on display is the China of her imagination and fright. "Step right up folks," she says to us, "step right up and see the wondrous Chinese, the grotesque Chinese, the frighteningly bizarre freaks of nature, your worst nightmare." She asks us to see for ourselves the dark terror of her childhood, her battered psyche.

This is among the apparent messages of "At the Western Palace," Kingston's heartbreaking recollection of Moon Orchid, her mother's unfortunate sister who comes to America seeking her lost husband. When she is rejected by her husband, who has remarried a "modern,

heartless girl," Moon Orchid undergoes what can only be described as a severe case of neurosis—a mental breakdown. In a letter to Brave Orchid, she writes that "she had overheard Mexican ghosts plotting on her life" (155). When her daughter comes to visit, she tells her: "Don't come to see me because the Mexican ghost will follow you to my new hiding place" (155). In order to "cure" her younger sister of this "illness," Brave Orchid brings her home. Fearful of her aunt's madness. Kingston recalls the children—including herself—locking "themselves up in their bedrooms" and hanging "blankets over the cracks in the doorjambs" (158). They tell one another that "Chinese people are very weird" (158). Seeing no other alternative, Brave Orchid finally commits her sister to a state mental asylum. And it is there that Moon Orchid, although "shrunken to the bone," finds happiness and prances "like a child," telling Brave Orchid:

> "Oh, Sister, I am so happy here. No one ever leaves. Isn't that wonderful? We are all women here. Come. I want you to meet my daughters." (160)

Her "daughters" are the other inmates, many of whom are pregnant women, the ghosts of the No Name Woman, perhaps. She tells Brave Orchid, "we understand one another here. We speak the same language, the very same. They understand me, and I understand them" (160). Like every other unpleasant memory of her childhood, Kingston describes her

aunt's mental breakdown as something typical of China, like the metal tube that held her mother's medical diploma:

> When I open it, the smell of China flies out, a thousand-year-old bat flying heavy-headed out of the Chinese caverns where bats are as white as dust, a smell that comes from long ago, far back in the brain. Crates from Canton, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan have that smell too, only stronger because they are more recently come from the Chinese. (58)

What exactly is the source of the "smell that comes from long ago, far back in the brain"? In consigning China and recent immigrants to this peculiar time and place in her attempt to understand the Chinese part of her own psyche, Kingston demonstrates what Johannes Fabian in *Time and the Other* calls *denial of coevalness*, "a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse" (31). Fabian argues that anthropology's roots in the evolutionary sciences of the mid-19$^{th}$ century underscores the "*raison d'être* for the comparative method" that "establish taxonomies and developmental sequences" for the field (27). "To put it more concretely: What makes the savage significant to the evolutionist's Time is that he lives in another Time" (27). The primitive, say an Igorot, may occupy the same spatiality and temporality

as the modern, an anthropologist, for example, but in terms of evolutionary Time, the two belong to a different time and space—a different epoch. The two are separated by thousands—or even millions—of years of history, evolutionary history. Even as the anthropologist interviews an Igorot or jots down field notes of an Igorot ritual, the evolutionist's Time commands that the reality of their contemporaneity be suspended. Fabian uses the metaphor of the "time-machine" to demonstrate the "time distancing discourse of evolutionism" (39). When anthropologists travel to far-off distant places to conduct research and prepare notes for ethnography, they may *literally* travel by ships, planes, or automobiles; in matter of perceptions, however, they travel by time-machine, where the "denial of coevalness becomes intensified as time-distancing turns from an explicit concern to an implicit theoretical assumption" (39):

> In sum, the sort of cultural relativism which guided American anthropologists involved in the study of culture at a distance seems to put to a test our global thesis that anthropology has been constructing its object—the Other—by employing various devices of temporal distancing, negating the coeval existence of the object and subject of its discourse. (50)

Kingston, of course, is not an anthropologist, *per se*. She is, however, very much *anthropological* in her approach to writing, and, as Frank Chin asserts, she depends on scientific principles and social Darwinist assumptions of late-19th and early-20th centuries in her attempt to make sense of China. In writing *The Woman Warrior*, Kingston appears to have employed her own devices of "temporal distancing," in the process negating the "coeval existence of the object and subject of her discourse"—the Chinese. Her relationship to anthropology, therefore, is analogous to that of Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis: They both rely on Darwinian anthropology to make their cases, and *The Woman Warrior* unmistakably refers to the language and theoretical suppositions of psychoanalysis that Freud developed in *Totem and Taboo*, his remarkable 1913 essay that links the psychology of so-called primitive people to that of children, neurotics, and artists.

The "remnants" of primitive man's "ways of thinking," Freud tells us in *Totem and Taboo*, survives in our manners and customs. He sees a value in considering the condition of the primitive man, who is, in a sense, still our contemporary:

> (T)here are people whom we still consider more closely related to primitive man than to ourselves, in whom we therefore recognize the direct descendants and representatives of earlier man. We can thus judge the so-

> called savage and semi-savage races; their psychic life assumes a peculiar interest for us, for we can recognize in their psychic life a well-preserved, early stage of our own development. (4)

Who exactly are "these people"? Who are these "savage" and "semi-savage" races? Who does Freud mean by "we" and "us"? Are they the same as those alluded to in *The Origins and Development of the English Language* by Thomas Pyles and John Algeo? "If speaking makes *us* human," they write, "writing makes *us* civilized" (9; emphasis added). They explain how the Indo-European language family, dating back as far as 1000BC, is believed to be the "ancestor of most of the languages Europe and many of those of south Asia" (61). They also explain how the Indo-European culture used wheeled vehicles, utilized plows to work the fields, expressed religious feelings, and consumed mead. Thus, according to the authors, "the Indo-Europeans' culture was considerably more advanced than that of some groups of people living today" (83). Who do Pyles and Algeo mean? Who are these "groups of people living today" that are less "advanced" than a culture that *ceased* existing a millennium ago? Who are these *primitive* people who appear to justify the denial of coevalness?

But say we, by either travelling through time or space, "discover" some of these people. Say we locate these people and conduct a

rigorous, scientifically-sound study of their habits, customs, rituals, traditions, and rites. Would Freud be correct in assuming that we will "recognize in their psychic life a well-preserved, early stage of our own development"? Would Kingston also be correct? Would we be able to understand our own development by studying the "thousand-year-old bat" that "comes from long ago, far back in the brain"? In other words, can we better understand ourselves by studying the primitive-other? If we were to address this question to Margaret Mead, the author of the landmark *Coming of Age in Samoa* published in 1928, she would most likely answer with an emphatic "yes—but with a caveat." To Mead, it is imperative that anthropologists choose to study not just any "other" people but "quite simple peoples, primitive peoples, whose society has never attained the complexity of our own" (4). She sees a parallel between the study of adult humans in primitive civilizations and study of human babies who as yet have no civilization. She thus draws a relationship between anthropology and infant psychology. She believes that the anthropologist must make a "choice of primitive peoples like the Eskimo, the Australian, the South Sea islander, or the Pueblo Indian," since he is "guided by the knowledge that the analysis of a simpler civilisation is more possible of attainment" (4). But the choice does not end there:

> Furthermore, we (anthropologists) do not choose a simple peasant community in Europe or an isolated group of mountain whites in the American South. . . . Instead, we choose primitive groups who have had thousands of years of historical development along completely different lines from our own, whose language does not possess our Indo-European categories, whose religious ideas are of a different nature, whose social organisation is not only simpler but very different from our own. (5)

But, as Freud reminds us in *Totem and Taboo*, no matter how "different" the lines of development, the "remnants" of primitive man's "ways of thinking" survives in our manners and customs. That, of course, is Mead's point as well. And, as Kingston reminds us, thousand year old smells linger "far back in the brain." The eminent anthropologist Franz Boas, who, in 1896, served as curator of ethnology at New York City's American Museum of Natural History and frequently solicited and accepted human and other ethnological display items from P.T. Barnum, acknowledges as much in the preface to Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, postulating that the "whole psycho-analytic approach is largely based" on this atavistic supposition (iv).

To Freud, the originator and great proselytizer of the notion of the Oedipus complex, no specific remnant of primitive people survives more

vigorously far back in the brain of modern people than the universal law that "the members of the same totem are not allowed to enter into sexual relations with each other; that is, that they cannot marry each other" (7). This *taboo against incest*, Freud believes, is what "attracts the interest of the psychoanalyst" to studying the primitive races. In making his case, he reminds us of the "great care expended by the Australians as well as other savage people to prevent incest," concluding that "these savages are even more sensitive to incest than we, perhaps because they are more subject to temptations than we are, and hence require more extensive protection against it" (14). To illustrate the magnitude of the "great care expended" in the prevention of incest by savage people, Freud provides us with a "fragmentary excerpt from the abundant material" available to him. For example:

> In New Mecklenburg some cousins are subject to such restrictions, which also apply to brothers and sisters. They may neither approach each other, shake hands, nor give each other presents, though they may talk to each other at a distance of several paces. The penalty for incest with a sister is death through hanging. (16)

He also cites examples that occur on the Lepers Islands in the New Hebrides, in the Gazelle Peninsula, in New Mecklenburg, on the Fiji Islands, among the Battas of Sumatra, among the Barongos in Delagoa

Bay in Africa, and among the Akamba in British East Africa. In describing each of these cases, Freud does so with obvious glee, as if expecting his readers to be surprised, shocked, and outraged by the queer goings on among the different variety of primitive peoples around the globe. He is thus as much an entertainer, an impresario, as he is a scientist. By passing before the curious gaze of his audience a steady procession of wondrous and grotesque savages, he titillates as much as he educates. (Recall that this was also the curatorial structure and intent of the 1904 World's Fair in Saint Louis, as discussed in the previous chapter.) That, of course, is the "beauty" of psychoanalysis; as Marianna Torgovnick puts it, "*Totem and Taboo* remains an important work, important most of all for its ideas about the primitive—ideas vividly imagined, but *utterly without proof*" (201-02; emphasis added). But what could Torgovnick mean? Is she suggesting that Freud "made up" his examples, that his theory of psychoanalysis is more poetics than science? Kingston, of course, has had similar charges levied against her; many have questioned the effect of her vivid imagination upon the "truthfulness" of her accounts of the Chinese. And, as if wishing to validate Freud's supposition, thereby indirectly validating her own, Kingston offers her own example of the absurd extent to which a primitive people will go in circumventing incest; and her example is as

surprising, shocking, outrageous, and titillating as any provided by Freud.

In speculating possible details to the tragic fate of her No Name aunt, Kingston wonders whether or not her aunt's beautiful hair "lured her imminent lover" (10). Soon after the marriage, her aunt's husband, along with most other men, had sailed for the Gold Mountain. Had this not been the case, would her aunt have lured other men with her hair? Applying her knowledge of the Chinese, Kingston comes up with a probable answer: Yes.

> Uncles, cousins, nephews, brothers would have looked, too, had they been home between journeys. Perhaps they had already been restraining their curiosity, and they left, fearful that their glances, like a field of nesting birds, might be startled if caught. Poverty hurt, and that was their first reason for leaving. But another, final reason for leaving the crowded house was the never-said. (10)

The "never-said," of course, is incest. Kingston wonders whether or not her aunt's lover was "somebody in her own household," but then posits that "intercourse with a man outside the family would have been no less abhorrent" (11). In no uncertain way, Kingston defines incest in Freudian terms: Incest is not something that occurs just within the "family," but within the "clan." In other words, or in psychoanalytic

terms, incest occurs when there is sex between members sharing the same "totem." Kingston writes:

> All the village were kinsmen, and the titles shouted in loud country voices never let kinship be forgotten. Any man within visiting distance would have been neutralized as a lover—"brother," "younger brother," "older brother"—one hundred and fifteen relationship titles. Parents researched birth charts probably not so much to assure good fortune as to circumvent incest in a population that has but one hundred surnames. Everybody has eight million relatives. (11-12)

Remember that Kingston has already confessed to participating in the punishment of her aunt by not uttering her name for twenty years. This behavior is something Freud has also identified as a primitive practice:

> One of the most surprising, but at the same time one of the most instructive taboo customs of mourning among primitive races is the prohibition against pronouncing the *name* of the deceased. This is very widespread, and has not been subjected to many modifications with important consequences. (73)

Now, Kingston confesses to taking part in another elaborate primitive scheme in attempting to protect herself against incest. She admits to

adding "brother" silently to Chinese boy's names: "It hexed the boys, who would or would not asked me to dance, and made them less scary and as familiar and deserving of benevolence as girls" (12). But how, one may ask, is this relevant to Kingston's "memoir"? How is this sort of anthropological and psychoanalytical theorizing relevant to the recollection of her childhood? Is she writing a memoir or is she conducting psychoanalysis upon herself, playing the roles of both the patient and doctor? Is *The Woman Warrior* an autobiography, a psychoanalytic session, or a defense for *Totem and Taboo*? Can it be all three?

Psychoanalysis is of crucial importance to Kingston because, based on all the evidence found in *The Woman Warrior*, she herself suffers from severe neurosis. She knows what it is to live at the cusp of insanity and has seen for herself the horror that lives deep in her soul. She has endured repeated bouts of mental anguish, glimpsed her own savagery, and is horrified of the "atavism deeper than fear" (12). Throughout her memoir, Kingston demonstrates how she is haunted and hunted by "ghosts"—the ghosts of the "village." As long as she remains in the village, and is controlled by the "villagers" and the "village structure," she will never be "American-normal." China will always follow her as the "mentally retarded boy" at the Chinese school she attended as a child followed her around, "believing that (they) were two

of a kind" (194). But why would he? He, after all, was a retard, a freak of nature. He was no different from one of those newly arrived Chinese, the "funny-looking FOB's, Fresh-off-the-Boat's, as the Chinese-American kids at school called the young immigrants," with their eyes that "do not focus correctly" and mouths that slack (194). To insure no one mistakes him for her, Kingston invites the readers to "step right up and behold this *freak*":

> He had an enormous face, and he growled. He laughed from so far within his thick body that his face got confused about what the sounds coming up into his mouth might be, laughs or cries. He barked unhappily. . . . But sometimes he chased us—his fat arms out to the side; his fat fingers opening and closing; his legs stiff like *Frankenstein's monster*, like the mummy dragging its foot; growling; laughing-crying. (195; emphasis added)

Kingston wants to verify that she is *not* him and abhors the idea that this retard, "this birth defect" (195), thinks he has something in common with her. She, therefore, compares her anguish to Victor's in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Recall that he was also horrified at the idea that the monster shared something in common with *him*, a normal human, who, like Kingston, no doubt "studied hard" and "got straight A's" (Kingston 195). When Victor "saw the dull yellow eye of the creature

open" for the first time, nothing but "breathless horror and disgust" filled his heart (35). After fleeing from what in essence was his own child, a member of his family, his "clan" or "village," he attempts to sleep but is disturbed only by wild dreams. And when he opens his eyes, every limb of his body becomes "convulsed" and he is not sure whether he is still in a dream or is awake. To the abject dismay of Victor, the "miserable monster" had chased after and found him:

> He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped, and rushed downstairs. (36)

Like Victor, Kingston has only one thing in mind when the Chinese retard, with his pathetic grin, chases after her: Escape. She does the only thing that has a chance of working—"follow the old rule" and *run away from her own house* (195). Kingston is afraid that the Chinese village, personified in this freak of nature, will follow her forever, as her aunt, Moon Orchid, believed the Mexicans ghosts followed her, "plotting on her life" (155). And, like her aunt, Kingston wants to hide, never to be found by them. She wants never again to suffer the pain and humiliation of her childhood—never again to be associated with those

who allegedly eat skunks and snakes and drive women to suicide. She wants no more mysteries and no more exotics. She wants to be normal, not a freak:

> I enjoy the simplicity. Concrete pours out of my mouth to cover the forests with freeways and sidewalks. Give me plastics, periodical tables, t.v. dinners with vegetables no more complex than peas mixed with diced carrots. Shine floodlights into dark corner: no ghosts. (204)

And, as Fiedler observed in the child's fascination for and fear of the freak, the only way Kingston knows to establish the normalcy of her "self" is by distorting and "freakifying" the part of herself that is most easily "otherable." By both spatially (by running away from her village) and temporally (by denial of coevalness) distancing herself from her Chinese village, she can de-freakify and de-other herself. By jettisoning the exotic, she can embrace simplicity. As Victor had to run from the monster in order to escape insanity, Kingston is convinced she has to "leave home in order to see the world logically, logic the new way of seeing" (204). She has found her final solution: Leave the village behind.

The woman who writes *The Woman Warrior* is now an adult, free to make her own choices: "I live now," she writes, "where there are Chinese and Japanese, but no emigrants from my own village looking at

me as if I had failed them" (52). But if she were to ask Victor Frankenstein, he would remind her that things are never that easy. Run away all you want, he would say, but it is no use. The monster, you see, is indelibly a part of you. It lives not just in your nightmares but in your reality, because it, in effect, *is* you. It is the monstrosity that lives in us all. As Freud would say, the monster, the beast, the horror, is the id forces. Deep inside, far back in our brains, we are no different from savages:

> He who approaches the problem of taboo from the field of psychoanalysis, which is concerned with the study of the unconscious part of the individual's psychic life, needs but a moment's reflection to realize that these phenomena are by no means foreign to him. He knows people who have individually created such taboo prohibitions for themselves, which they follow as strictly as savages observe the taboos common to their tribe or society. (*Totem* 36)

As Leslie Fiedler would say, the monster, the freak, is the imaginary manifestations of our "projected infantile or adolescent traumas," the psychologically concocted response "to our basic insecurities" (34). As Margaret Mead would say, the primitive is the simplified image of ourselves. In the words of Debra Gordon:

> Mead's ethnography uses the heuristic contrast of the "primitive" and the "modern" to create Samoa as a mirror for American self-criticism. The very subtitle of the book, "A psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization," suggests the Western reference point from which the "primitive" is derived. The ideology of the primitive implies a relationship between the West and what it defines as outside of itself; it functions as a place from which to simultaneously affirm and critique its practices. (151)

While playing a vital role in maintaining a distinct line between the binary notions of "primitive" and "modern," anthropology has helped to blur the line between "fiction" and "truth" in the application of the binary. Given the ubiquitous presence of anthropological knowledge and assumptions throughout the world, it is not surprising that the spores of primitivist discourse have also germinated in the pages of *The Woman Warrior*, a book that is, as Adam Kuper might say, "paraded" before the "wondering eyes of undergraduates" (13-14) more often than almost any other in the American academy. In other words, it is not surprising—and it must be of some consequence—that Kingston, like Bulosan, has assimilated the language of anthropology and the myth of primitivism in her fictional and autobiographical invention of her Chinese self. Even

now, as an adult, she writes, "I continue to sort out what's just my childhood, just my imagination, just my family, just the village, just movies, just living" (205).

The novelistic structure of *The Woman Warrior* consists of layers after layers of narrative voices, like an onion or a "Russian nest." In her recollection of one particular incident, she admits:

> In fact, it wasn't me my brother told about going to Los Angeles; one of my sisters told me what he'd told her. His version of the story may be better than mine because of its bareness, not twisted into design. (164)

As with the story of the No Name aunt which did not come with any details, Kingston interprets and extrapolates on the barest of stories with a mountain of details. Toward the end of *The Woman Warrior*, she even wonders about the existence of the "retarded" Chinese boy who followed her around: "Perhaps I made him up," she acknowledges, "and what I once had was not Chinese-sight at all but child-sight that would have disappeared eventually without such struggle" (205). We of course know that it did not disappear. Even as she ends her memoir, she does not end her struggle to figure out what is peculiar about the typical Chinese and what is particular about her peculiar childhood and family. Her use of her mother's stories is thus analogous to Freud's use of Frazer's. As Frazer's account of the aborigines is at best "partial

truths," so is Brave Orchid's stories of the Chinese. Kingston thus ends her "Memoir Among Ghosts" like she began it—with her mother's base story extravagantly dressed up:

> Here is a story my mother told me, not when I was young, but recently, when I told her I also talk story. The beginning is hers, the ending, mine. (206)

What we are left is Kingston's partial-truth. She leaves it up to us, her readers, to ponder what is real and what is imagined, as her mother did to her. She leaves us to wonder whether or not there is a difference between the real and the imagined. Like the masterful impresario that she is, Kingston leaves us begging for more without leaving us any answers.

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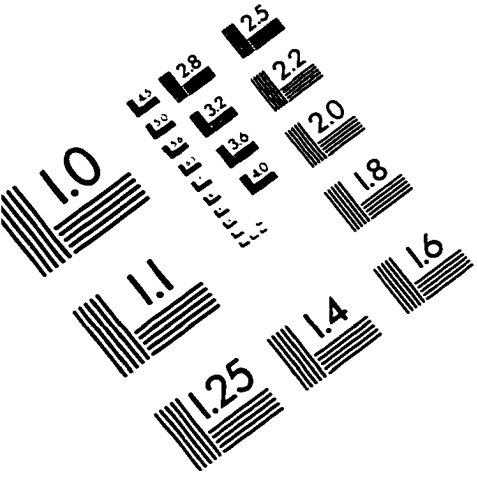
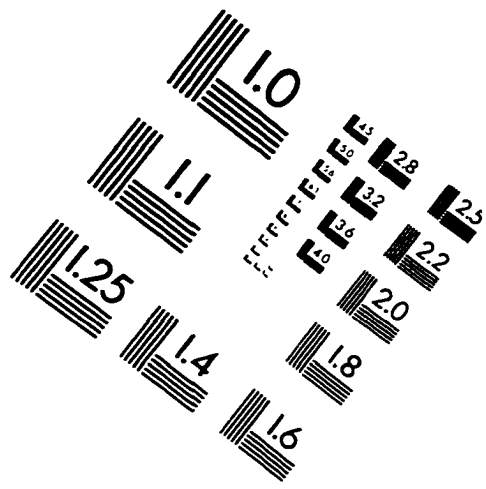
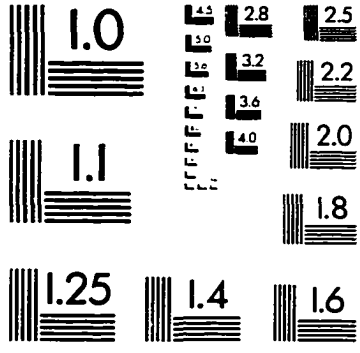
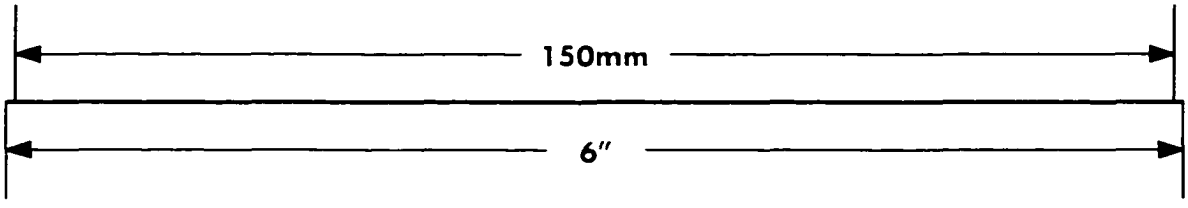
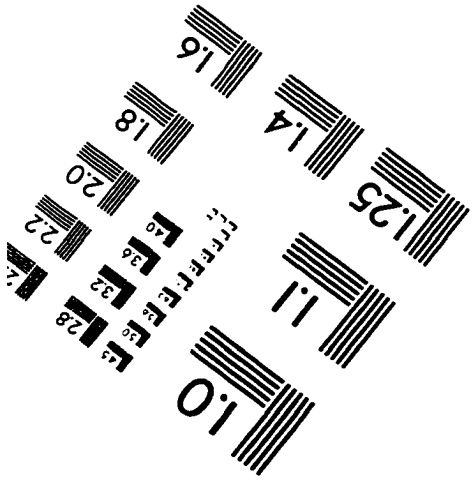
# IMAGE EVALUATION
# TEST TARGET (QA-3)

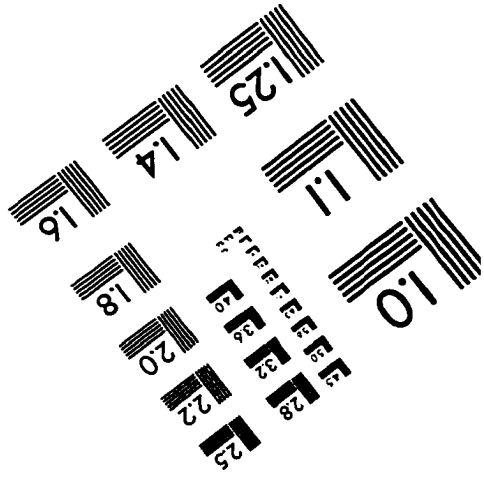
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