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Adapting the Language of Postcolonial Subjectivity: Mimicry and the Subversive Art of Kent Monkman

A Thesis in English

by

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Introduction

My aim is to explore visual forms of artistic expression as they pertain to the colonial situation in North America, particularly the dual potential of art to perpetuate oppressive, hegemonic epistemologies of race and gender and to challenge these same epistemologies. The oppressive modem system of colonial subjectivity, both raced and gendered, that permeates our world was constituted in conjunction with colonial control of language and perpetuated by Western aesthetic tradition. The images and writings of Nineteenth-century Euroamerican painters and artists of the American frontier, such as George Catlin, Paul Kane, and James Earle Fraser, on permanent display in "Native American Art" exhibits in museums across North America, represent a dominant and one-sided narrative of the American West and the Native North American peoples whose stories and cultures have been largely silenced by colonial expansion.[1] The iconography of the Native North American, the stereotypical images that signify what we think of as "Native American," come largely from their work, which grafts Western ideas of race and gender onto obliterated Native Nmih American narratives. Catlin writes that the purpose of his work was to preserve "the vanishing races of [. . .] North America," yet his work and Kane's, and the iconography therein, actually silenced Native North American voices at the time and contributed to a colonial legacy that complicates the position of Native North American aiiistic voices today. Those voices include a variety of aesthetics and perspectives that allow for alternative histories and gender traditions and that challenge the perspective portrayed in colonial art like that of Catlin and Kane. Mimicking Catlin and Kane's style and idioms, multidisciplinary artist Kent Monkman, a Canadian of English/Irish and Swampy Cree descent, makes art that intervenes in the traditional landscapes of the American West, claiming a space for a queer Native North American voice in the same tradition that silenced alternative Native

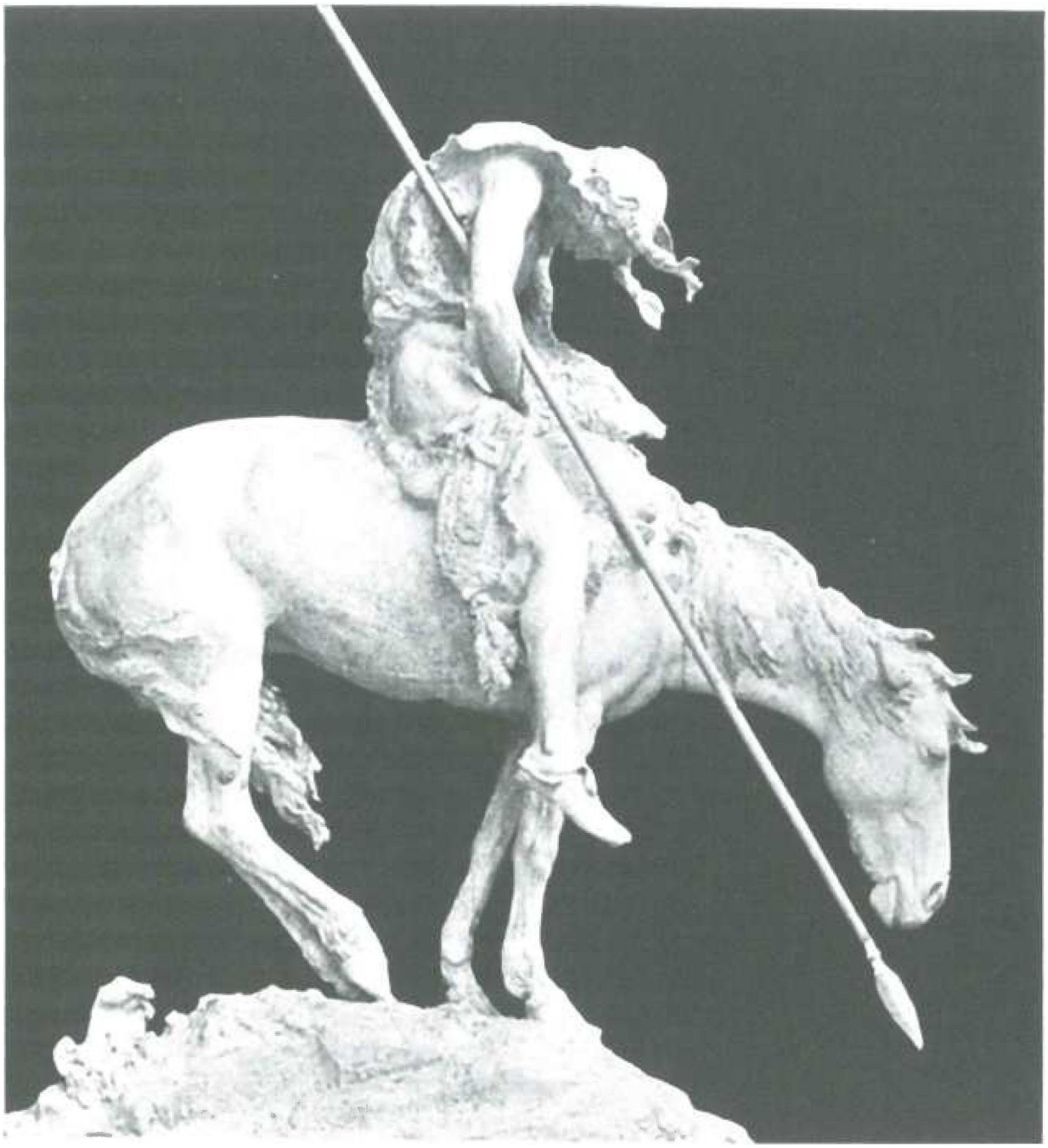
North American gender traditions. With its focus on historical narrative, Monkman's art demonstrates the potential for minority artists to adapt Western traditions of art and their inherent episternologies of race and gender to empower themselves in subversive artistic acts that can potentially alter the modem system of race and gender. Through a close examination of Monkman's paintings *Artist and Model* and *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi (Study for Icon for a New Empire),* I will explore how Monkman confronts the oppressive Colonial episteme of identity and its traditions of silence from within the hegemonic order.

Artist and Model and *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi (Study for Icon for a New Empire),* like much of Monkman's work, depict an alternative representation of the first encounters between white settlers and Native North Americans in the traditional styles of European Grand Manner painting and the landscape paintings of Euroamerican artists like Catlin and Kane. *Artist and Model* (see fig. 5) looks like a typical landscape painting from afar, with the characteristic vast sky, soft lines, and human figures dominated by natural elements, but up close it depicts a homoerotic encounter between Monkman's gender non-conforming alter-ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle (a play on "mischief egotistical") and a stereotypical cowboy, nude and tied to a tree. *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi* (see fig. 6) is a variant take on James Earle Fraser's sculpture *End of the Trail,* which depicts a Native American warrior slumped over on his horse (see fig. 1). In Monkman's painting, rather than being slumped over in defeat, the Native American sculpture is corning to life, leaning down in an embrace with the sculptor. Monkman, trained in a Western art tradition, embraces the European style of painting, using it as a means of confronting oppressive ideologies conveyed through the rnediurn.2 Part of his motivation is to "reverse the gaze where it's the aboriginal artist who's looking at the Europeans," challenging the one-sided subjective

point of view of Euroamerican art history (Sandals). Reversing the gaze by using the European style of painting is an important part of Monkman's mimicry.

Before describing how *Artist and Model* and *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi (Study for Icon for a New Empire)* posit a productive resistance to the colonial tradition of subjectivity within the language of the hegemony, I will detail the connections I see between queer and Native North American subjectivity in North America. I will attempt to identify how the colonization of North America has constituted the current hegemonic organization of categories of race and gender and the oppression inherent to this system. Highlighting some general theoretical background to the idea of language as culture is necessary in order to explain how European imperialism in North America employed language and aesthetic tradition as tools of colonial control in general, and in particular for the oppression of queer and racialized minorities. Then I will define mimicry, which is positioned at the junction of control and resistance, and connect it to the Native North American trickster and Monkman's work specifically. Synthesizing the work of theorists from and of diverse colonial situations with that of Native North American theorists will serve to demonstrate some of the universalities of colonial experience thus creating a global context for understanding Monkman's paintings while also situating his work in the particular context of Native North American colonial experience. While the theorists whom I cite write about the colonial imposition of the English language and I am writing about painting, both are languages in the sense that they can carry worldviews and are ways of representation. To trace how the discussion of language as a "master's tool" (Lorde, "Master's Tools") arose, I look to the colonial control tactic of forcefully silencing people through replacing indigenous languages with European ones.

Figure 1.



End of the Trail

The systematic erasure of language that colonizing nations have historically perpetrated has led to a common problem facing colonial artists and writers: those who have lost their language feel

they must resist, yet they do not have a language of their own with which to do so. Language is a means of control and also resistance because of its role in the creation of epistemologies, particularly those of cultural subjectivity.

Silence and Epistemology

How Silence Defines the Development of Colonial and Minority Subjectivity

Monkman is part of a tradition of postcolonial theorists and artists concerned with the silencing effect on minority cultures of one-sided historical narratives. The anxiety sun-ounding silenced nan-atives, language, and histories and the time and energy that theorists have devoted to discussing the issue of lost language is an indication of how crucial language is in the formation of identity. Ngugi wa Thiongo, in *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature,* goes so far as to renounce writing in English in favor of writing in his native Gikuyu.[3] For Ngugi, language is not only communication, but also culture:

> Language as culture is an image-forming agent in the mind of a child. Our whole conception of ourselves as a people, individually and collectively, is based on those pictures and images which may or may not con-ectly con-espond to the actual reality of the struggles with nature and nurture which produced them in the first place. Our capacity to confront the world creatively is dependent on how those images con-espond or not to that reality [. . .] Language as culture is thus mediating between me and my own self; between my own self and other selves; between me and nature. Language is mediating in my very being. (15)

In privileging English over native languages and in eliminating the teaching of native languages in colonial schools, Ngugi argues that the imperialist nation creates a sense of estrangement in the colonial child's mind from the real conditions of his/her life. Since the imperial language

formed as a result of the realities of life in another place, it does not accmately reflect the conditions of life in the colony. Further, he argues that language is a caiTier of culture that "embodies moral, ethical, and aesthetic values [which] are the basis of people's identities" (15). Thus, when one language is silenced or overtaken by another, those values are as well. The imposition of the colonial language served as a common element of colonialism from West Africa across North America. Systematic silencing, such as the elimination of teaching native languages in schools, does not necessarily mean that an indigenous language does not exist and is not used; language as culture does not have to be obliterated in order to be silenced.[4] However linguistic silencing is both symbolic of and a perpetuator of the installment of colonial power in a colonized community. The newly privileged language, because it relates to power, becomes the dominait means of interpreting moral, ethical, and aesthetic values in the newly formed colonial world, and it privileges the colonizer's worldview. Since language is crucial in the formation of identity and the social order, privileging the colonizer's language imposes a new organization of reality and social order.

The new organization of social reality resulting from the silencing power of one language over another is particularly relevant to subjectivity because language is intimately tied to how we identify ourselves and others. The term "subjectivity" implies that one's identity is defined within an epistemological system that dictates the boundaries of how we relate to the material world and to other people. One is made subject to and within a discourse even before one is bom.[5] Gayatri Spivak offers a pointed description of how silence relates to subjectivity and language. In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason,* she defines a subaltern class as both incapable of speaking and "irretrievably heterogeneous [. . .] defined as a difference from the elite" (2118- 2119). This heterogeneity is muting, she argues, because it is described by the elite, whose

ideology dictates the conditions of speaking; one can only speak from a subject position (identity category) created within the hegemonic ideology/language. Therefore, once an individual is identified in, or made a subject of a hegemonic language, "they have been inserted into the long road of hegemony" (2125). Importantly, speaking "entails a distanced decipherment by another, which is, at best," Spivak argues, "an interception. That is what speaking is" (2124). The ability to communicate is dependent on a listener to decipher what is being said and what is heard by the listener is only an interpretation. The interpretation is begun when the idea is put into a language that the listener can perceive. The idea communitcated by a speaker is then intercepted by the listener who continues to translate it through their own worldview. As an idea is communicated between two individuals, their worldviews begin to coincide, and generally the worldview of the more powerful individual takes over. Historically, colonial power dynamics, which privilege the colonizer's worldview, have resulted in the suppression of indigenous traditions that do not correspond to Western systems of knowledge by way of filtering unrecognizable ideas through a Western lens.

One particular aspect of the Native Nmih American worldview that was suppressed was a gender organization that did not match the Western male/female binary. When encountering third- and fourth-gender traditions in Native North American communities, Western writers could only interpret them through their own knowledge system, which accounted for only two genders. Thus, third- and fourth-gender individuals became subaltern, as they were made subjects within a two-gender tradition. While subjectivity, which is the tacit acceptance of a common worldview, enables speaking, it also erases the trace of the subject's "history of constitution as a subject within the dominant discourse, [and therefore] its heterogeneity" (2119). Though the subaltern may obtain a category by which to identify within the dominant order, this

has historically coincided with the erasure of the historical trace of the category's constitution, creating a false sense that the dominant social order, which is rooted in unequal power dynamics, is also natural-the idea that what is has always been and always will be. Colonial writers, failing to understand the complex identities of third- and fourth-gender individuals, conflated alternative gender traditions with homosexuality, fitting third- and fourth-gender individuals into the dominant gender binary paradigm. This reinterpretation of the Native North American third- and fourth-gender subject into Western gender subjectivity coincided with the silencing of third- and fourth-gender traditions. Until recently, their existence was unaknowledged by mainstream Western academic work. The problem this poses to postcolonial and queer subjectivity, to which the struggle for equality is inherent, is that the listener-for example the Western consumer of postcolonial art-is often the definer of the speaker's subjectivity and the giver of the language with which the subject can speak.

Minority subjectivity entails treading a thin line between desirable and undesirable heterogeneity (individuality and subalternity) and desirable and undesirable homogeneity (solidarity and stereotype). The state of being "irretrievably heterogenous," without a category of subjectivity, is synonymous with invisibility and disempowerment. Without a category by which to define oneself, there is no solidarity and no productive resistance to oppression. This is certainly an undesirable state. However, being inserted into hegemony means being defined by a homogenous category whose boundaries are dictated by the dominant social order. Though all may claim a social place, it is a place dictated by hegemony, a place that reinforces the dominant social order.[6] During the constitution of colonial subjectivity, the colonized culture becomes absorbed by the dominant culture and reorganized into the language of the hegemony, so that

even when the subaltern attempts to speak, that which is not recognized by dominant epistemology remains silenced.

Silencing of Alternative Gender Traditions and Its Impact on Native North American Identity

In the context of colonialism, silence takes multiple forms. Most generally, there is the silence of phenomena which may have existed at some point, but for which no record exists. This type of silence may or may not relate to power and epistemic violence; it is the silence of that which is completely unknown. Another form of silence is when something is known to have existed, but some kind of break in the continuity of its transmission occurred and what was can never be wholly recovered. This is often the case in colonial situations; the imposition and institution of a colonizer's system of knowledge and the control of the historical record causes a break in a colonized people's traditions that leads to an irreversible shift in their organization of reality, obliterating from the record any of their traditions that do not fit the new system of knowledge. Catlin lumped Native North American communities together as a "vanishing race," which he wanted to preserve in a traveling show, a "park" as Monkman calls it, "where aboriginal people would live forever frozen in time, in classic attire, where the refined of the world [. . .] could come and observe them" *(Walrus)*. Catlin's attitude served to silence the Native North American voice; though Native North Americans were assimilating with Euroamericans and still existed, equating acculturation with vanishing made Native North American communities subaltern. Kane, like Catlin, was motivated by a desire to preserve Native North Americans through his art and

> aim[ed] to paint the Ojibwa as accurately as possible in a European tradition. However, despite seeking out testimonials to assert his faithful rendering of landscapes and portraits in the field, Kane's studio paintings often reflected

> Eurocentric attitudes. While Kane has been critiqued as a "recorder" in the field and an "artist" in the studio, these European conventions met the demands of 19th centmy art patrons. (Harper)

Kane, consciously or unconsciously, catered to the tastes of European art buyers who at the time preferred more classical styles such as those characteristic of Dutch Golden Age painting (see fig. 2). Such styles, particularly the landscape, fell in line with a popular Christian narrative of the New World as an untouched, edenic, and pastoral place free of the corruption of Europe. The soft lines and atmospheric effect create a dream-like quality and the focus on vast skies and puffy clouds resonate with ideas of heaven and the mythic quality attributed to North America and its native inhabitants.[7] Though it may not have been his intent, Kane's use of the Native North Americans as subjects for his work contributed to the commodification of indigenous Americans, in line with George Catlin's touring gallery which presented artifacts of America's "vanishing race," an exploitative and profit-driven venture veiled, perhaps by delusion, as an earnest attempt to archive and understand the lives of cultures in the process of erasure by death or assimilation. Kane and others, like Catlin, viewed the indigenous North American people from a distanced and culturally-biased lens, much different from what is implied by the scientific and objective sounding titles of their written work, such as Catlin's *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians.* In Kane's *Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America,* the author takes an approach of viewing the native cultures as if they are already archived in a museum, mythologized, and on display as animals in the wild. In his preface, Kane communicates a longing for authenticity, lamenting that "the face of the red man is now no longer seen [. . .] and those who would see the aborigines of this country in their original state [. . .] must travel far through the pathless forest to find them" (vii).

Figure 2.

White Mud Portage, Winnipeg River

He also clearly views his subject as inferior, referring to "the filth, stench, and vermin" of their lodges as "almost intolerable to a white man; but Indians are invariable dirty" (8). Later, Kane expresses regret at leaving a group of Salteaux whom he calls his "friends [. . .] having experienced many acts of kindness at their hands" though such kindnesses, he adds, are "hardly to be expected from so wild and uncultivated a people" (92). Artists like Kane and Catlin view their Native subjects from behind an easel, as Catlin depicts himself doing in *Catlin Painting the Portrait of Mah-to-toh-pa-Mandan* (see fig. 4), and this intermediary object proves symbolic of a system of thought and conceptualization of an Other that prevents a mutual gaze and a naked human connection. They are craftsman of the dominant paradigm of thought. As artist or author of the Native subject, the power to narrate is intercepted by Catlin and Kane, and the audience who consumes their product.

In North American colonization, the will to disappear Native North Americans by turning them into relics of the past was combined with the willful obliteration of their traditions. Monk.man refers to himself as a "colonized sexuality," and is acutely aware of colonial Euroamerican attitudes toward alternative gender traditions in Native North American communities that held, prior to colonization, "an openness to diverse sexualities that somehow got stamped out by the Europeans who didn't understand it" ("Q & A: Kent Monk.man"). He refers to the third- and fourth-gender individuals who held socially important tribal roles pre-colonialism. Upon witnessing the "berdache," as third- and fourth-gender individuals came to be known amongst Europeans, Catlin remarked that "[it] is one of the most unaccountable and disgusting customs, that I have ever met in the Indian country, and [. . .] I should wish that it might be extinguished before it be more fully recorded" (Catlin, "Letter 56").[8] Catlin's audience apparently agreed as Monkman notes that

> Catlin writes about encountering these beautifully dressed and flamboyant men in every tribe. Drawing one beau, who didn't have the status of chief or high-ranking warrior, created such a backlash that the artist had to stop at the chalk drawing, so it just doesn't exist anymore. There's something really beautiful about that, something so completely impermanent and erasable. To me, this speaks about all the other histories and narratives that were never authorized ("Tonto Takes Charge").

In referencing that narratives are "authorized" Monk.man suggests how silence is systematically created. Artists, such as Catlin, who were the only connection much of the general public had to Native North American communities, acted as a filter for their narratives, interpreting their ways of life through a European cultural lens, and effectively silencing them simply by speaking for

them and by exercising the power of censorship. While they claimed to want to preserve Native North Americans, they could only preserve the image they had of Native North Americans, which was developed as part of a colonial tradition of seeing Native North Americans as not only different, but inferior. Therefore, Catlin, a non-Native, represented Native North Americans to other non-Natives, and since both representer and audience were non-Native, the Native became an object through which non-Natives shared their own worldviews with one another.

Colonial silencing of traditional Native North American ways of life goes deeper, however, swaying the attitudes of the colonized people toward their own traditions.[9] When a colonial framework of knowledge is propagated in the minds of the colonized through the manipulation of language, the colonized begin to perceive the imperial culture as their own. The distorted reality is potentially shared and propagated by both sides. Ngugi posits that beyond the physical violence imposed upon colonies by the colonizer, the domination of the mental universe of the colonized, which prevents collective defiance, is

> the biggest weapon [. . .] the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages [. . .] in their unity. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement [. . .] It makes them want to identify with other peoples' languages rather than their own. Amidst this wasteland, imperialism presents itself as the cure. (3)

Historically, "the cure" has been to adopt the colonizer's worldview. While imperial culture "gives" language to the colonized, it demands that the language be used to affirm and validate its use of force and its hierarchical paradigm of subjectivity; this is evident in Western writers' refusal to bend their own worldview of gender to fit Native North American paradigms.

Beyond refusing to accept the legitimacy of alternative gender traditions, Western writers have also fostered a culture of shame sun-ounding alternative gender traditions that has affected Native North American conceptions of gender. Since the 16th century, European policy toward third- and fourth-gender traditions has been to suppress them and "for many natives today, homosexuality is completely 'other,' a phenomenon imagined to belong to the urban white man and categorized with the other catastrophes attributed to him-disease, alcoholism, [and] emotional dysfunction" (Roscoe 102). Where traditions of third and fourth genders are known and accepted by tribal leaders, they are not often considered connected to Anglo-American concepts of homosexuality. According to Will Roscoe, many Native North American communities share the Euroamerican tradition of distaste for homosexuality, but while Euroamericans such as Catlin view third- and fourth-gender individuals similarly to homosexuals (Catlin occasionally referred to third- and fourth-gender individuals as "dandies"), Native North American communities do not always associate alternative gender traditions with homosexuality. The refusal of both Euroamericans and some Native North American communities to recognize that their traditions of gender and sexuality are interlaced and mutually altering has led queer-identified Native North Americans, such as Monkman, to feel caught between and marginalized by both cultures. Monkman's art demonstrates an overlapping of race and gender in Native North American subjectivity, which I will return to later, and he identifies as "two-spirit," a term that acknowledges the intersection of race and gender in colonial subjectivity. The emergence of "two-spirit," a term that encompasses queer identity and Native North American race identity, is the response of queer-identified Native North Americans to the difficult choice of having to either identify as a "homosexual" and risk being ostracized from tribal communities, many of whom associated the homosexual subject with the urban white man, or to identify as "Native

American" or "Native Canadian," race categories that do not represent their experience of being a colonized sexuality. Either way, they have been faced with the silencing of some aspect of their identity because the Euroamerican hegemonic epistemology of identity does not recognize the unique experience of minorities who are both queer and racialized.

Bondage, Domination, and the Possibility of Mutual Communication

The silencing of Native North American systems of gender through Euroamerican cultural domination exemplifies Ngugi's idea that in colonial relationships, the colonizer's worldview replaces the worldview of the colonized. When read in terms of colonial relationships, Hegel's "Master-Slave Dialectic" provides a description of bondage and domination that helps to analyze why colonialism engenders cultural domination. Hegel's dialectic focuses on communication and unequal power dynamics, and it resonates with *Artist and Model* and *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi,* which deal specifically, by way of complex sexual/gender imagery, with the unequal relationship and communication between colonizer and colonized.

Full self-realization, Hegel posits, depends upon a mutual recognition between a thesis and antithesis, that is, both must recognize that

> the other is equally independent and self-contained, and there is nothing in it of which it is not itself the origin [. . . . The thesis] does not have the [antithesis] before it merely as it exists primarily for desire, but as something that has an independent existence of its own, which, therefore, it cannot utilize for its own purposes, if that [antithesis] does not of its own accord do what the [thesis] does to it [. . . .] Action by one side only would be useless because what is to happen can only be brought about by both [. . . .] What is 'other' for [an individual] is an

> unessential, negatively characterized ['not I'] object. But the 'other' is also a self-consciousness; one individual is confronted by another individual. (542)

Though Hegel points to the paradox that a thesis and antithesis (or two individuals) are independent and yet dependent upon each other for self-realization, he emphasizes their independence and the need for both to mutually recognize this independence in the other. For Hegel, that any one thesis or antithesis has as its origin itself is a fact overriding any desire to have otherwise. In an ideal situation, the meeting of two independent selves results in a mutual recognition in which both recognize the self in the other and also recognize the other as independent. Thus, the meeting alters the perception of both. In colonial relationships however, a lack of mutual recognition creates a situation of bondage in which the colonizing culture sees itself as unaltered by the colonized culture.

In *The Location of Culture,* Homi Bhabha analyzes the colonizing culture's demand for non-mutual self-validation in terms of Jacques Derrida's *demand for narrative,* defined as "the narratorial voice [that] articulates the narcissistic, colonialist demand that it should be addressed directly, that the Other should authorize the self, recognize its priority, fulfil its outlines, replete, indeed repeat, its references and still its fractured gaze" (140). Euroamerican 19th century art conveys this narratorial voice. Catlin viewed alternative gender traditions in tribes he met through a purely Eurocentric lens. Since homosexuality was invisible in 19th century Euroamerican mainstream culture and he conflated alternative gender traditions with homosexuality, Catlin could only conceive of the eradication of Native North American alternative gender traditions. Similarly, it was common practice for 19th century artists to represent Native North Americans in the background of idyllic scenes, as in Kane's *Encampment, Winnipeg River* (see fig. 3), fetishizing them as part of the myth of North America

as an untouched biblical landscape. Kane's *Encampment, Winnipeg River* portrays the characteristic soft lines and atmospheric effect that evokes the mythic quality of North America. Making Native North Americans part of the scenery erased the destructive ramifications of colonialism from the historical narrative. The perspective that *Encampment, Winnipeg River* gives the consumer is the "authentic" Native North American in the innocence of the North American landscape, a far cry from the destructive reality of contact between the Native North Americans and the colonizers.

Figure 3.

Encampment, Winnipeg River

While Hegel writes in terms of individual self-consciousness, his work is applicable to colonial relationships if we imagine a nation or culture to be a collective ego or self-

consciousness. Historically, the economic and social organization of colonial relationships has operated in direct conflict with Hegel's idea of truth; the colony is presumed to exist primarily as an appendage of the imperial center. The imperial center perceives the colony's identity as completely defined by that of the center while the center's identity is stable and unaltered by the culture of the colony. The imperial center is operating under a false pretense of course, given that a thesis and antithesis have an independent existence of their own and are mutually dependent- and ironically the thesis may be more dependent on the antithesis than vice versa; there would be no such thing as a center if there were no periphery. Importantly, Hegel asserts that in a master-slave relationship, the master's refusal to recognize the slave's independence prevents the master from evolving beyond his boundaries and maintaining his own freedom and independence. While the master clings to power, he is dependent on his relationship to the slave to maintain it. In a higher sense, the slave is freer because he is not bound to power by his own volition; he is closer to liberation than the master, who is blinded by his own illusion. Nevertheless, due to the dominance of the imperial culture, a new organization of social reality becomes that of colonizer and colonized, which in material reality is oppressive to both sides of the relationship, but especially to the colonized. The new social reality created by colonial contact is at odds with Hegel's idea of a natural order consisting of constantly evolving, independent self-consciousnesses, and it defines the lived reality of our post-colonial social relationships. Yet Hegel hints at the possibility of a mutually-altering and mutually-beneficial meeting between two selves, and he remains relevant because of artists like Monkman who also suggest that the master-slave relationship is not the only possible state of post-colonial relationships.

The new organization of the social reality into colonizer and colonized and the demand for narrative coincide with the colonial phenomenon of mimicry, which is pivotal to Monkman's

work. While it would seem that the colonized become a reflection of the colonizer, Bhabha argues that the foundation of mimicry is "partial presence [. . .] an 'incomplete' and 'virtual'" colonial subject. One aspect of partial presence is what Bhabha refers to as *metonymy of presence,* which is defined by the phenomenon of the colonial subject becoming a fetishized part of the imperial center, rather than a dynamic person. Mimicry is ambivalent, however; the colonial subject is "almost the same, *but not quite"* (123), and this gray area is the place from which colonized subjects express their uniqueness. Mimicry emerges from the tense marrying of the desire for seeing the self reflected in the other with the desire for legitimizing oppression of the other based on ideas of essential difference. Mimicry creates a "double vision [however. . .] where the observer becomes the observed" (Bhabha 127).[10] While the colonized becomes a fetishized object, the colonizer is also decentered and fragmented. Though he does not refer to it as "mimicry," Monkman's expression of his intention as an artist reflects Bhabha's theory

> Part of my intent is to make people aware that you've been looking at us [but] we've also been looking at you. And there's a kind of scrutiny in that gaze that has to do with sometimes suspicion, sometimes admiration, sometimes respect, [and sometimes] fear, but we've always been looking at each other and by reversing that artistic eye it gives me the ability to address some of these larger issues: colonization, the obliteration of our cultures, the dispossession of aboriginal people from our land. ("Q & A: Kent Monkman")

Monkman's conveyance of stereotype through figures like Miss Chief and the nude cowboy evokes something similar to miming, which shares a root with "mimic" and is a form of art that focuses on performance through silent action and the facelessness of the performer. In the

overlapping of stereotypes that create the characters in his work, Monk.man hints at the facelessness underneath the masks we wear to in order to speak.

Monk.man's *Artist and Model* is almost the same as Catlin's painting of Mah-to-toh-pa, but not quite. In Catlin's *Catlin Painting the Portrait of Mah-to-toh-pa-Mandan,* the artist has painted himself painting Mah-to-toh-pa, who stands for his portrait. Surrounding the artist and model, a group of Mandan watch.

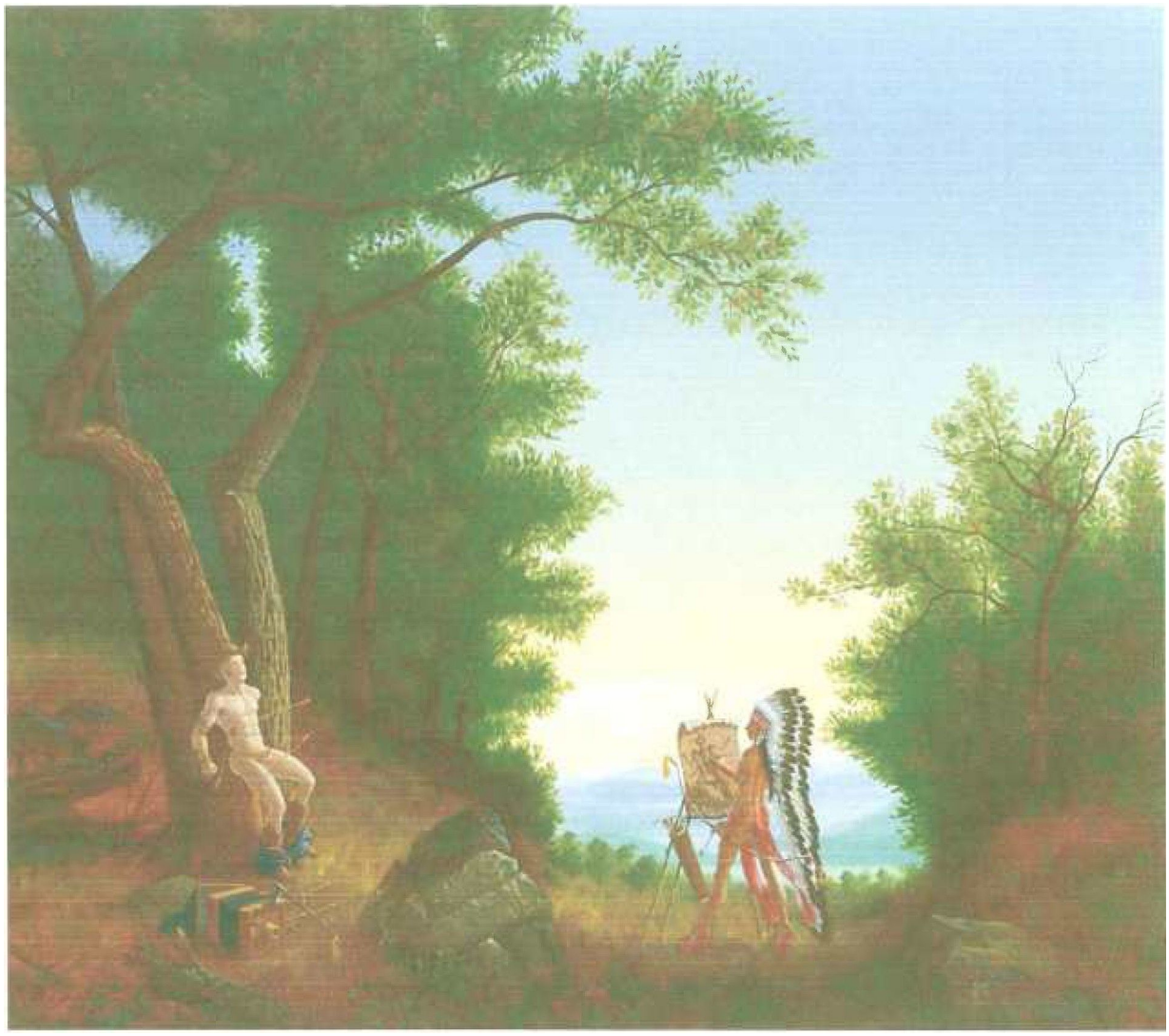
Figure 4.

Catlin Painting the Portrait of Mah-to-toh-pa-Mandan

As Catlin depicts his easel, the viewer knows what it is that Catlin sees; though the Mandan also watch Catlin, we have no representation of how they see him. Thus we have a one-sided gaze of the native that resonates with the imperial drive to see the self reflected in an oversimplified other. Like Catlin, Monkman inserts himself into *Artist and Model,* however he does so as his alter-ego, Miss Chief. Miss Chief is not only represented in several of Monkman's paintings and films, she, rather than Monk.man, is often also presented as the creator, as exemplified by *Artist and Model,* which is signed "S.-E.T." (Share-Eagle Testickle) in the bottom left comer. Miss Chief Eagle Testicle, whose name in this context pokes fun at Catlin's egotism in painting himself, also destabilizes Catlin's identity. Miss Chief is no more a "true" representation of Monkman or Native North American identity than Catlin's image of himself is a "true" representation of Catlin. The facelessness that Monkman hints at suggests that we are more than just how we appear and present to others. Catlin and Kane's false thinking that their work was objective representation was limiting to both their subjects and themselves, as it stripped both of the complexity of their underlying facelessness.

Monkman's *Artist and Model,* resonating with Hegel's "Master-Slave Dialectic," depicts a historical representation of the meeting between Native North American and Euroamerican in which the identity of both is mutable. The cowboy/Euroamerican figure is literally in a state of bondage. At first glance, it seems that the painting is reactionary toward the imperial domination of Native North Americans, maintaining the oppressive power relationship of colonizer/colonized simply by reversing the roles: the Native North American figure is in an apparent position of power, namely the artist depicting a subject, while the European is tied down.

Figure 5.



Artist and Model

His eyes are shut and his camera is knocked over, its focus veered off-canvas, suggesting that in this historical narrative, it is not his perspective in which the viewer should be interested. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes more likely that neither subject is forced into bondage. Since Miss Chief's model is aroused and presented with an iconography that is as reminiscent of gay bondage porn as of colonial imagery, it becomes more likely that the European figure is willingly tied up; perhaps he has even forged his own chains. His eyes are shut, suggesting a

double signification of Eurocentrism- an unwillingness to see and therefore to authorize a Native North American narrative of contact, or a willing closing of his own eyes as if to privilege the Native North American gaze, inviting and basking in it. The look on his face similarly may be of pain or of ecstasy. When filtered through the Hegelian idea of freedom/bondage, we may read that a look of pain would correspond to a situation of self-bondage due to an unwillingness to see the Native North American subject as an independent equal. Conversely, a look of pleasure would correspond to a willing closing of the eyes to allow for the Native gaze, which would liberate him from bondage. This reading is reinforced by *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi,* which depicts a mutual expression of pleasure between the European aiiist figure in the painting and the Native North American model.

When viewed side-by-side, the paintings depict the Native North American and the European subjects as occupying both the artist and model roles. In *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi,* the artist is giving the model life, transforming him from a statue into a dynamic being, yet the model is lifting the artist up in a mutual embrace. In both paintings, the figure representing the model is situated higher up spatially than the artist, suggesting that to be the subject of a gaze has the potential to be empowering as much as disempowering. To be above has obvious comlections to power, yet to be placed above, as on a pedestal, can be disempowering; one is on display and at the mercy of a gaze with the power to define. Traditionally, the definitions of artist and model place the artist in the position of power. "Artist" comes from the latin *ars* which has multiple meanings including craftsmanship, contrivance, artificiality, and trick, combined with the suffix *-ist* to form an agent noun ("artist"). The artist is therefore a craftsmail, but one who contrives artificialities, or one who tricks. As an artist one has power because one can alter reality by taking a model and representing it in a new way. A model in tum is passive; it exists

for the artist to interpret. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* a model is a "simplified or idealized description of a particular system, situation, or process" ("model"). In their writings and images, Catlin and Kane's representation of Native North Americans simplify the complexities of Native North American communities, reducing their subjects to stereotypes, and modeling them according to the dominant narrative of colonization. As a result, the Native North American subject becomes a reflection of the Euroamerican gaze, a simplified description of the Euroamerican system of subjectivity. Catlin and Kane exercise their power as artists, Catlin depicting himself at his easel, while colonial silencing blocks Native North American artists from altering the received narrative of history. Monkman, by representing colonizer and colonized as occupying both the artist and model positions, demonstrates the Hegelian concept that the gaze is always mutual.

While contact in Monkman's version of history is mutually transcendent because of equally privileged communication between colonizer/colonized, both being dynamic forces, hegemonic colonial discourse maintains the illusion that the colonizer's own cultural identity is stable. The new social reality of colonized and colonizer created through European cultural domination of Native North Americans affected both sides of the relationship negatively because it created a false reality in which both sides were fixed, the Native North American as a vanished race and the European as unchanged by contact. The new social organization of the world's people into colonial categories of race and gender that endure today came about through processes of "sublation," a tem1 often used by scholars to talk about the "Master-Slave Dialectic." The German word for sublation stems from the verb *aujheben. Aujheben* has multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings, including "to amass," and "to cancel." "To amass" evokes a smaller entity being absorbed by a larger one, as a colonized people are absorbed into a

hegemonic culture. This definition presumes that the hegemonic culture is in no way altered by the absorption of a minor one. "To cancel," however, and particularly when it is used in the mathematical sense, complicates the meaning evoked by "to amass." "To cancel each other out" implies that the thesis and antithesis are mutually altered by their encounter. To reconcile the two meanings, as Monkman's work does, is to accept that though a hegemonic culture may absorb a minority culture by subjecting minorities to hegemonic categories of identity, the dominant culture is also altered by the minority culture. Something completely new is born of the union, which is represented by the sexual nature of Monkman's work. Colonial frameworks of knowledge hinge on the privileging of the imperial culture, on the false assumption that Western culture is stable and eternal and that when it encounters other cultures, the communication is not mutual. [11] Monkman' s art questions not whether one culture is absorbed into the other, but rather in what ways both can be independent forces of change through mutual communication.

Acceptance of and Resistance to Cultural Influence

In the European colonial discourse, it is not possible for the dominant entity to be absorbed into the smaller one. Sublation, as understood by Euroamerican hegemony, means that a smaller entity is always absorbed by a larger one. A gesture of adoption of Euroamerican culture by Native North Americans is a gesture of submission. The tension many Native-identified people who live off the reservation or who willingly associate with Euroamerican culture feel is linked to both this hegemonic idea of sublation and to the idea of "authenticity" perpetuated by Catlin and Kane's idea of a "vanishing race." Though artists such as Catlin lament "a dying race," they also account for Native North Americans that cooperate with settlers, as Kane does on visiting Indians around Lake Huron who, "having a direct communication with whites, use guns and other weapons of civilized manufacture" (9). However, the lamentation of

the loss of the Native North Americans in an authentic, or "original state" implies that the Native North Americans who collaborate with white settlers, whose cultural boundaries are not fixed but rather open to change and mutual exchange, are somehow not "authentic" Native subjects. This itself perpetuates a tradition of silence-"authentic" Native North Americans have disappeared and no longer exist. From the Euroamerican standpoint, if you embrace Euroamerican culture, you are not an "authentic" Native North American.

Further, even according to some Native North Americans, if one collaborates with the Euroamericans and takes on their customs, one has betrayed one's Native identity, a phenomenon supporting Ngugi's theory of the "cultural bomb," or the total domination of the colonized subject's mental universe. In *The Business of Fancydancing,* a film that follows the relationship between two men raised on the Spokane Reservation, Sherman Alexie juxtaposes two opposing Native attitudes toward Euroamerican tradition in the characters of Seymour and Aristotle. The film is somewhat autobiographical because Seymour is in many ways a fictional version of Alexie, just as Miss Chief is a fictional version of Monkman. In the film, Seymour is a successful gay poet, praised by Euroamericans, who lives with his white boyfriend in Seattle, but struggles with both his own guilt about the life he chose and the condemnation of his Euroamerican lifestyle by his reservation friends. Aristotle, who is motivated largely by anger, attended the same Western college as Seymour, but dropped out and returned to the reservation. In one scene, Aristotle confronts Seymour in a cafe, telling him he has dropped out of school and is returning home to the reservation, and urges Seymour to do the same. When Seymour refuses, trying to convince Aristotle that they both "have more in common with white people than with the Indians back home," Aristotle explodes, accusing Seymour of "playing Indian, putting on the beads and feathers for all these white people." He calls him "the little public relations warrior [. .

. a] super-Indian [. . .] the expert in the authority" and tells him he has no heart (Alexie, *Fancydancing).* To collaborate with the Euroan lerican, according to Aristotle, is to integrate, and to integrate is to betray one's Indian identity.

In the same scene, Aristotle claims that there is nothing for him and Seymour in the white world and that they belong on the reservation. Aristotle's attitude borders on Catlin and Kane's idea that the Native who collaborates is not authentic, but rather a tool created by Western culture, suggesting that Aristotle's thinking is in line with the Euroarnerican hegemony, rather than opposed to it; it is tragically ironic because his anger toward hegemony motivates almost all of his speech and actions in the film, yet he is trapped in oppressive Euroamerican thought constructs. Seymour's position is equally tragic, however; he calls the reservation the worst "prison," but also acknowledges that the whole world is a prison, especially the feeling of tension between pursuing his individual ambition and the burden of responsibility of representing his people to the Euroamerican public. The two characters represent two ways of dealing with the prison of Euroamerican colonial epistemology of Native identity, yet neither way frees them of Euroamerican influence.

Seymour's success as a poet in the Euroamerican literary world resonates with Monkman's success in the Euroarnerican art world, and his choice to live off the reservation mirrors Monkrnan's. A question Alexie's film does not resolve is whether being "the public relations warrior," as Aristotle calls it, working within the rules of authority, can free one's people of the prison. It also questions, but does not resolve, whether the burden of liberating one's people is the ultimate responsibility of the minority artist. Monkman, like Seymour, accepts the influence of European colonization, but does not submit to it. While Aristotle's decision to reject the Western world does not ultimately free him from it, it does take him out of

the public eye, and removes his voice from the white world. Seymour views Aristotle's decision as an act of submission, of giving up the fight. Monkman, like Seymour, chooses to make use of his voice and his art is subversive rather than resistant; resistance is dangerous because denial of the colonizer's influence can itself be a gesture of submission, as Aristotle demonstrates. Monkman's work, like Seymour's poetry in the film, is not reactionary in the sense that it does not uphold the colonial paradigm of oppression. Rather, it is an exploration of how the encounter between Native North Americans and Euroamericans and the legacy of colonial silencing has altered both Euroamerican and Native North American identity and made them inseparable.

Resistance to the influence of cultural contact may lead not only to submission to that influence, but also to further oppression. Resistance to Euroamerican culture caused many Native North American tribes to consider certain behaviors and identities, such as homosexuality, as belonging to the colonizer. By associating homosexuality with Europeans, Native North American communities bought in to the European discourse and participated in the silencing of a queer Native North American identity.

In "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modem Gender System," Maria Lugones describes the phenomenon of minorities oppressing other minorities in terms of the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality, calling the intersection of the concepts and their relation to power *the coloniality of power.* It is neither exclusively the separation of people into categories nor the failure to recognize our complicity in the oppressive hegemonic system that perpetuates oppression, but rather both working together. Lugones defines Eurocentrism as "the cognitive perspective not of Europeans only, but of the Eurocentered world, of those educated under the hegemony of world capitalism" (191).[12] Rather than demonizing the colonizer, Lugones criticizes Eurocentrism, acknowledging the reality of how oppressed people can participate in

their own oppression and the oppression of others. Eurocentrism describes Aristotle's attitude toward white people in *The Business of Fancydancing,* as he is not only thinking in terms of race, but also acting on in line with those thoughts; it also describes the resistance of some tribes to the concept of homosexuality as distinctly white. Eurocentrism has totally dominated the minds of all subjects of Euroamerican hegemony and it is insidious because it is still common to understand race and gender as separate, and the race and gender system as natural rather than as historically created.

Lugones argues that our oppressive system of categorization did not arise from a grafting of European ideas about gender onto colonized people; rather a new system of gender was created during colonization which overlapped race and gender. Thus, new gender categories were created based on race-white male is distinct from black male, which is distinct from white female, which is distinct from black female-, and the newly constituted genders are also hierarchized as per the Eurocentric organization of social relations (192). While resistance to the influence of outside culture may lead to submission to it, Lugones argues that it is blind resistance, the failure to see how power is exercised on a global scale to pit minority subjects against each other, that leads to more oppression and prevents solidarity (188). Lugones is concerned with creating solidarity amongst people of color, and she examines the way that the modem colonial system of gender disrupts solidarity. She specifically writes against "the indifference that men, but, more important to our struggles, men who have been racialized as inferior, exhibit to the systematic violences inflicted upon women of color" (188). Separating the categories encourages understanding them "as homogenous and as picking out the dominant in the group as the norm; thus *women* picks out white bourgeois women, *men* picks out white bourgeois men, *black* picks out black heterosexual men, and so on. It is only when we perceive

gender and race as intelmeshed or fused that we actually see women of color" (192). Certain identities do not compute with such a system of categorization. Women of color are invisible within such a system because the category of *women* is reserved for white women and the category of *black* or *person of color* is reserved for men. The categories of black bourgeois man and black bourgeois woman do not register because *bourgeois* is a term that describes the norm, which is also understood as white. In the hierarchy of race/gender categories, though people of color are oppressed on a whole compared to white people, men of color, by virtue of being *men* within a patriarchal system, are still more privileged than women of color. Men of color have access to power that can make them complicit in the oppression of women of color, preventing people of color from achieving the solidarity required to deny the modem system of race/gender with a unified political voice. Therefore, a certain amount of acceptance is required in the fight; men of color must acknowledge their social category and the privilege it gives them, remaining aware of their place in the established social order whether they like the social order or not. Lugones' ideas also apply to the Native North American situation. Acceptance of homosexuality as defining Native North American identity, which Monkman's work demonstrates, would create solidarity among all Native-identified people.

Examining art such as Monkman' s and the aesthetic tradition from whence it arises allows us to trace the development of the modern system of race/gender through specific cultural objects, which gives theories like Lugones' weight. "Heterosexualism and the Modern/Colonial Gender System" is in turn helpful for understanding Monknmn' s work, which, through the figure of Miss Chief and the focus on homoeroticism, makes explicit through imagery the overlapping of race and gender in the development of Native North American subjectivity. *Artist and Model* and Si *je t'aime, prends garde a toi* are productive critiques of the dominant paradigm of

race/gender because they accept the influence of colonization on the cmTent state of Native identity while subverting Eurocentrism and the idea that categories must also be hierarchized and based on inequality. Arguing for acceptance over resistance, Henry Louis Gates Jr., in *The Signifj;ing Monkey,* asserts the imperative for the marginalized artist to recognize the influence of the tradition of the silencer:

> Our task is not to reinvent traditions as if they bore no relation to that tradition created and borne, in the main, by white men. Our writers [use] that impressive tradition to define themselves, both with and against their concept of received order. To name our tradition is to rename each of its antecedents, no matter how pale they might seem. To rename is to revise, and to revise is to Signify. (xxiii)

Though Gates is writing about Black American writers, Andrea Smith makes a similar argument for Native North American writers and artists:

> Rejecting [any discipline] as inherently "white" presumes that Native cultures have somehow managed to remain untainted by the dominant society, or that Native communities can completely untangle themselves from the larger colonial society. How can small communities tied in a thousand ways to the capitalist market system break out without a thorough social, economic and political revolution within the whole country? If a revolution is necessary, then it would seem wise for Native scholars and activists to use any tool that might be helpful in changing society. (89)

Indeed, Monkman uses the tool of European artistic tradition and also notes the importance of doing so with authority. To effect change on a systematic level, to change the signification of the language of oppression, even the minority artist must appeal to a mainstream audience; "the

execution has to be masterful in order to carry the same authority [as Catlin or Kane] about our perspective on these same critical [historical] events" ("Tonto Takes Charge"). Monkman's paintings can reach a large audience because, like Kane and Catlin's, they appeal to a Euroamerican audience. They also employ the tool of strategic silence, when using a tradition of silence to one's advantage becomes a means for subversive action and resistance to oppressive power structures.[13]

Silence, Participation, and The Problem with Speech

Subversive Silence, Willing Participation, and Subversive Speech

So far, I have laid out how language is fundamental to identity, as well as how the hierarchy of subjectivity and artistic expression can be used to reinforce colonial policies of silencing and a false image of colonized subjects created by colonial ideology. The following section delves deeper into the problems of speaking once one claims subjectivity within hegemonic discourse, especially the political problems faced by postcolonial artists who have to contend with the silences of their cultures' histories. In face of the demand for validation by hegemonic ideology, the minority is faced with two options: participation and silence. Ultimately, both have the potential to reinforce the hegemonic order, making subversive acts of expression precanous.

In "Tricks of the Weak," Josephina Ludmer, seeing that the "word is granted, retracted, and demanded from [the colonized]" (90), explores the option of subversive silence. Ludmer's article is based on the writings of Sor Juana, a nun in what is now Mexico during the time of Spanish colonial empire, and she explores a different definition of subversive silence than that which describes Monkman's work. Whereas Monkman uses a colonial tradition of silence as a jumping off point for subversive speech, Sor Juana refuses to speak. Though Sor Juana may have

had some mixed Amerindian blood, she was of a caste treated similarly to "pure" Spanish colonizers. Her feeling of oppression by literary tradition and aesthetics stems more from her position as a *woman* in Christian Patriarchy than from a position as a colonized subject, however her position and relationship to language bears resemblance to that of a colonized subject:

> Juana [like Ngugi in rejecting English] decides that to publish, the highest form of saying, does not interest her. That space the culture posits as its valued and dominant zone is precisely where Juana says, "I don't know," underscoring that saying, writing, and publishing are demands originating from others and associated with violence, with coercion. (90)

Juana's position is not the same as that of a colonized person; where Catlin, as a white Euroamerican male, has access to the most power, Juana, as a woman of "pure" race, has slightly less power than Catlin and slightly more than Monkman, who is both a person of color and a sexual minority. However, while Juana finds it problematic that her ability to speak is granted to her by Christian Patriarchy, she does not acknowledge that she occupies a higher position in the hierarchy than Indians.

Ludmer astutely points out that "in her poems, [Juana herself] grants the word to the Indians [. . .] both granting the word and identifying oneself with the other involve the same imperative: the weak must accept the superior's project" (90). Ludmer elucidates a tactic of imperialism-the "giving" of language that also demands a response: "We find the fictitious gesture of granting the word to those defined by their lack (lacking land, lacking writing, [lacking Christianity]) and of bringing their particular language to light" (90). Ludmer also demonstrates the dangers, suggested by Spivak, of becoming part of a new mainstream. Juana, though she did not want to publish, still possessed the ability to speak; as *woman,* she was not

subaltern, but a subject recognized by the patriarchal system of knowledge, even if granted an inferior position in that system. As such, she implemented the power of giving language to the Indians, who were even lower in the hierarchy than women. In her refusal to participate through subversive silence, Juana successfully subverted Christian Patriarchy, however she did not subvert the colonial system of power of which Christian Patriarchy is a part. Failing to recognize the relationship between *woman* and *Indian* in the colonial hierarchy of power led to her oppressing the Indians. Ultimately, Juana participated in the master's method of giving language, of speaking for another. By way of her subjectivity, she became an agent for the repetition of the very ideology she sought to resist. Once one is no longer subaltern, silence becomes impossible. Though Monkman inserts a queer Native North American voice into the received historical narrative of colonization, he does so in a way that does not usurp anyone's ability to speak for themselves.

By choosing to speak, Monkman chooses to participate in using the Master's language, but his speech subverts rather than upholds the paradigm of oppression. Participation can be subversive, as Monkman demonstrates, or it can reinforce the hegemonic order and perpetuate silence. Native American theorist Paula Gunn Allen explores minorities who validate oppressive social reality through willing participation, Allen provides an illustrative example of how cultural domination simultaneously silences a pre-colonial Native North American voice and alters a people's perception as their culture is replaced by hegemonic imperial culture. Allen posits that the aesthetic of Euroamerican narrative structure and convention embodies a value system that is incompatible with that of the oral and ritual-based Native tradition. She discusses what happens in the translation of the oral tradition to a system of writing. It causes a

> shift[ing] in the whole axis of culture [. . .] Language embodies the unspoken assumptions and orientations of the culture it belongs to. So while the problem is one of translation [. . .] the differences are perceptual and contextual as much as verbal. When shifts of language and context are coupled with almost infmite changes occasioned by [colonization, such as [. . .] Christianization and economic dislocation [. . ._ _ much that is changed goes unnoticed or unremarked by the people being changed [. . . .] Much of that change is at deep and subtle levels that are not easily noted or resisted. (2005)

Allen, like Spivak, points to the dangers of being interpolated into the dominant web of subjectivity. Even while Spivak argues that gaining subjectivity, and therefore voice, is desirable, unconscious changes in perception, like those described by Allen and Lugones' concept of Eurocentrism, can lead to complicity in systems, especially privilege-based hierarchical systems, that have historically silenced the subaltern. Allen criticizes George Sword, a Lakota leader who restructured Lakota stories to fit Western narrative structures. Though his stories are not recognized as Lakota traditional stories by Lakota's themselves, over time, "the Sword stories have become a model for later storytellers who, out of a desire to convey the tribal tales to western collectors, have changed the structures to ones more pleasing to American and European ears" (2015). Sword's artistic approach is similar to Kane's, who took the images he recorded in the field and altered them in his paintings so that they lined up more with the popular aesthetics of his time.

Allen references the speaker-listener relationship, specifically the speaker's dependency on the decipherment of the listener, so she provides a useful example of how Spivak's work on the subaltern applies specifically to Native North American subjectivity. Allen also gives a

concrete example of how silence is engendered. As discussed above, in discussing subjectivity, Spivak states that when one becomes subject within dominant discourse, the trace of the historical constitution of one's subjectivity is erased; to people who are not Lakota or not familiar with the oral tradition, the Sword stories come to signify Lakota, or even more generally, Native North American, culture and identity. The Sword stories become the only record of what is "Lakota." The meaning they conveyed and the process by which the pre-contact stories were lost is not part of that record. In the failure of mutual communication between Euroamericans and Lakota people, "Lakota" becomes a reflection of Euroamerican identity. Rather than inaugurating a negotiation between the two incompatible systems in which, for example, non-Native North American students might learn to think according to the Lakota oral tradition as well as the written tradition, the Lakota tradition is forced to become an appendage of the Euroamerican tradition, seen only through the Euroamerican style of storytelling. Through "education in western schools, exposure to mass media, and the need to function in a white-dominated world," Allen argues, "associative, synchronistic, event-centered narrative and thought [has been erased in favor of a] linear, foreground-centered one" (2015). Thus, traditional Lakota modes of perception have been lost as indigenous communities have been interpolated into hegemonic subjectivity. Though Sword and Juana's responses to the demand for validation differ-Juana employs resistant silence and Sword employs willing participation-, both examples demonstrate a reinforcing of the hegemonic order. The ability to speak comes from having a place in the hegemonic order and, importantly, if given a voice one cannot avoid speaking in the language of hegemony.

Monkman, as an artist, chooses to speak and he does so within the language of hegemony, but accepting that one has a voice recognizable within hegemonic discourse and

participating in the oppression and silencing inherent in the Euroarnerican episteme of race and gender identity can be distinct. Monkman neither attempts to remain silent, like Juana, nor does he give in to Eurocentrism, like Sword. Monkman identifies as "gay," a Euroamerican identity category, and he "likes to use the European idioms" of the Native North American subject ("Q & A: Kent Monkman"). In *Artist and Model,* Miss Chief wears a long headdress and carries a bow and quiver, common Euroamerican signifiers of the "Native American" subject. The knocked over camera in the foreground has a tomahawk sticking out of it and the cowboy is stripped nude and pinned to the tree by several arrows, signifying the violence and unrestrained sexuality of the recognizable "Indian savage." The image of the cowboy that Miss Chief is drawing on her easel is a stick figure, signifying that she is also the "primitive and unrefined Indian." However, Monkman claims that "Miss Chief Eagle Testickle [. . .] was created as a way of challenging the subjectivity of the artist, challenging these signifiers of aboriginal identity that had become so popular in Hollywood film and 19th century painting" ("Tonto Takes Charge"). It works because Miss Chiefrepresents a complete embracing of these absurd ideas about Native-identified people while also rendering them humorous and ridiculous. Monkman also employs "the European way of painting" ("Tonto Takes Charge"), mimicking the style of 19th century landscape paintings, and borrowing a line from the opera *Carmen* for the title of *Si Je t'aime prends garde a toi.* Unlike George Sword who participated in the silencing of the Lakota way of storytelling, though Monkman embraces European style and language, he does so in a way that challenges the received history of North American colonization and the present organization of people into an oppressive hierarchy of race and gender categories.

The Postcolonial Conflict of Individual versus Collective Identity

To choose to speak through art, especially from within minority subjectivity, creates a conflict between the artist's will to assert his/her individuality and the feeling of responsibility to a social group in need of fair representation within hegemony. In *The Business of Fancydancing,* the poet character Seymour demands of his friend Aristotle, "Do you know how hard it is to make right what was wrong?" (Alexie, *Fancydancing),* demonstrating the postcolonial artist's feeling of responsibility to his people. Monlanan's interviews convey a similar feeling of responsibility, especially through the importance he places on inserting the Native voice into narratives that wrote it out. For Native North American artists, how to deal with the silences of the past, especially as they relate to modem Native identity, is a point of anxiety. Monkman's paintings convey that he is acutely aware that what has been silenced is not to be resurrected and preserved. Rather, the past should be communicated with as a way of moving forward. According to Monkman

> In the Romantic period, we were painted out of the narrative, and in Modernism it was further ensured that aboriginal narratives wouldn't enter the canon, by deconstructing painting's ability to tell stories. Paul Kane's work is still the untouchable voice of authority. [His] paintings, the buckskinned Indians under thundering clouds, with rearing horses, [are] straight out of a Jacques-Louis David painting. [. . .] I respond to these artists because I think their work is important. It's worth examining that whole period of art, so purely one-sided. I try to approach it with humour, focusing on the side of art culture that is about survival and being able to adapt, and to look forward. Bringing together these different

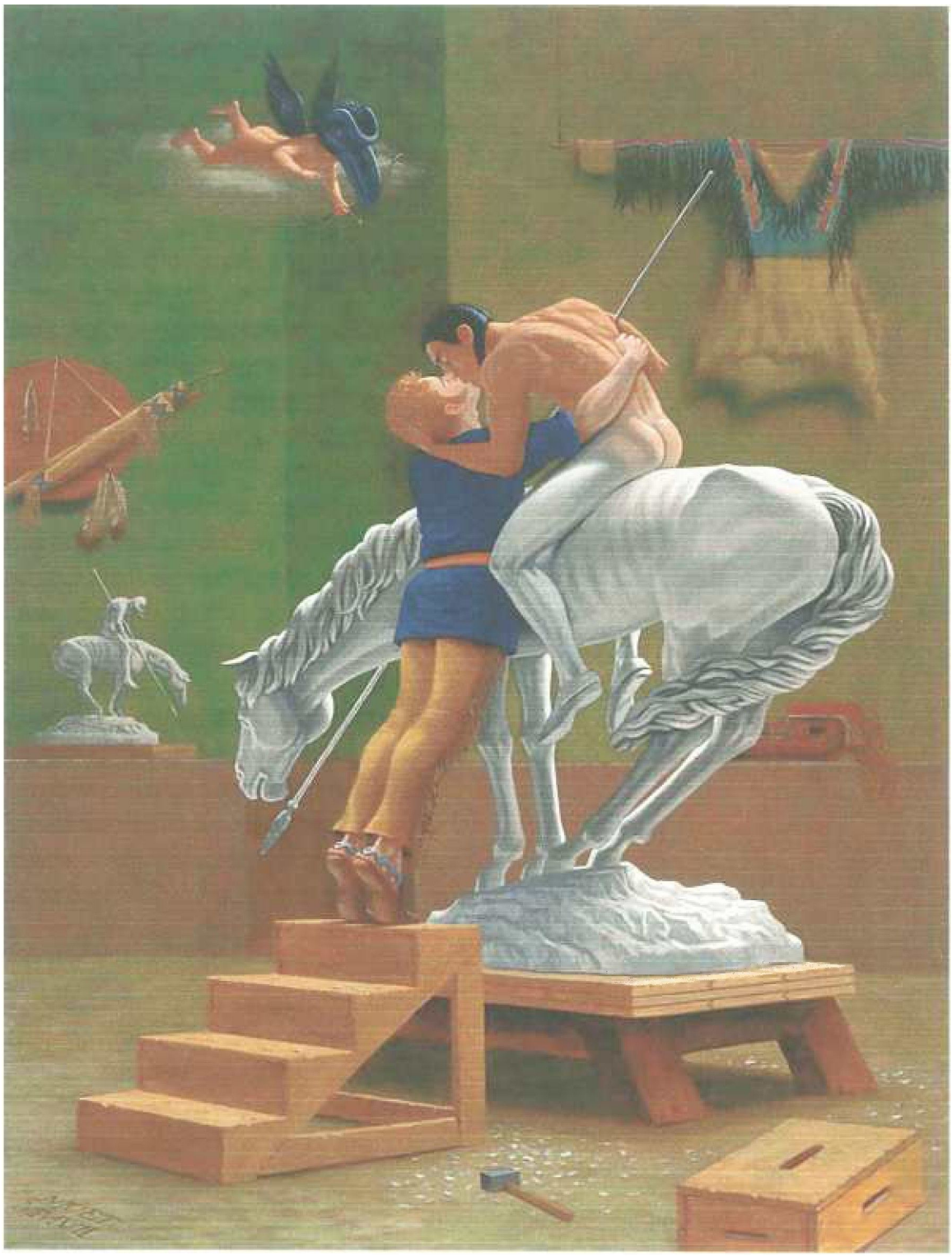
> ways of seeing and recording history in one painting makes you aware of how you can interpret it through the images that you create ("Tonto Takes Charge").

Monkman is responding to two common problems faced by Native North American artists and theorists, that of preserving tradition and that of retrieving that which has been silenced, as if one could reclaim a speaking position from the past, a space in time prior to and beyond the colonial order.

Retrieving what has been lost is particularly perilous, as I have argued through the work of Spivak, because once a hegemonic framework of thought has been inscribed into a colonial subject, the subject can only address the silenced with the voice of the silencer. Spivak posits that while representing what has already been silenced is impossible, even attempting to do so is damaging because "no contemporary metropolitan investigator is not influenced by [an imperialist ideological formation]" (2122). While Catlin and Kane were on board with the notion of preserving a "vanishing race," a thought construct that proved to be part of colonial narrative of history that, from its inception, functioned to make Native people invisible, Monkman focuses rather on adapting and moving forward.

For Monkman, Native North American iconography and "Miss Chief are playful way[s] of inserting ourselves into these painted histories where we didn't exist or were sidelined as bit players ("Tonto Takes Charge"). For example, the Eros figure *in Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi* has an infant's body and is riding a cloud, but has the head and wings of the raven, a new take on Western and Native North American literary signifiers. The Eros figure reflects the Classical tastes favored by Kane's audience and the Classical imagery that Kane inserted into his landscapes of North America, so *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi* acknowledges the altering of the North American landscape as part of the aesthetic tradition with which Monkman is working.

Figure 6.



Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi (Study for Icon for a New Empire)

However, unlike Kane's work, the painting does not give a one-sided view of history. Monkman participates in Kane's tradition by combining Eros with Raven, but he does so in a way that suggests that Native American tradition has been interlaced with Euroamerican tradition in such a way that the two almost always refer to each other and cannot be separated.

Sije t'aime, prends garde a toi makes explicit a mutual fascination between Native North Americans and Euroamerican colonists that was mutually altering. The setting for the painting is the artists' studio and it is filled with Native American iconography. The artist is also dressed in stereotypical Native North American attire and he is embracing his sculpture, demonstrating a profound affection for his subject. There are two types of imagery in the painting: the artists' objects-the stereotypical images including the clothing and quiver hanging on the wall, the miniature of Frazer's *End of the Trail,* and the tools strewn about on the floor-and the images that combine Classical European imagery with Native American iconography, such as the Eros/Raven figure and the artist and Native North American embracing in the foreground. The images that combine Classical European imagery with Native American iconography differ from the other images in that they are bolder and sharper in color and depicted as in motion, making them more "alive." Juxtaposing the dull objects belonging solely to the artist with the vibrant images in motion, the painting favors the images that intermesh Classical European imagery with Native American iconography while downplaying the images associated with the Euroamerican one-sided view of history. Further, by depicting images reflecting Euroamerican art tradition, as he does with Fraser's *End of the Trail* in *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi* and altering them to include homoerotic elements, Monkman makes space for his own queer identity in the received narrative of history while also paying respect to a collective identity associated with the silencing of alternative gender traditions. Unlike George Sword, who tried to preserve Native North

American oral tradition by translating it to the European style of storytelling, Monkman transmutes the Euroamerican tradition into something new.

Other Postcolonial and Native North American theorists' ideas support the way that Monkman deals with the question of retrieving what has been silenced in the past. The question of preservation is complex and has to do with how those in the present communicate with the past. Though Native North American subjects posed before Catlin and Kane's easels, these artists viewed indigenous people as if they existed only in the past. Catlin and Kane's idea of preserving Native North Americans is different from the desire to maintain cultural traditions that have survived colonialism and that are integral to Native North American communities that still exist. Bhabha points to an ambivalence faced by postcolonial writers, recognizing "the crucial importance, for subordinated peoples, of asserting their indigenous cultural traditions and retrieving their repressed histories," while cautioning against "the dangers of the fixity and fetishism of identities within the calcification of colonial cultures [associated with] the search for 'roots' in a celebratory romance of the past" (Introduction 13). Andrea Smith, citing Manu Meyer, agrees, and suggests how a writer can assert their cultural tradition and retrieve repressed history without romanticizing and fetishizing a mythic past: "We will not re-create [Native communities prior to colonization] because Native nations are and always have been nations that change and adapt to the surrounding circumstances" (97). Rather than looking to resurrect the past as it was, Smith argues that knowledge of the past can inform how we think about the mores of the present. "Native communities prior to colonization were not structured on the basis of hierarchy, oppression, or patriarchy," Smith argues, and "our understanding that it was possible to order society without structures of oppression in the past tells us that our current political and economic system is anything but natural and inevitable" (97). Similarly, knowledge that third-

and fourth-gender individuals not only existed in pre-colonial cultures, but were revered , suggests that the Euroamerican system of knowledge about gender, which has silenced queer people, is also not natural and inevitable. While fostering a sense of community and solidarity is a concern of much postcolonial art, doing so through idealizing the past overlooks that oppress10n is always possible in human communities and assumes that conflict cannot be productive.

As Smith and Bhabha argue, the postcolonial artist must be concerned with asserting his/her cultural identity. However , though Smith argues that Native communities prior to colonization were not structured on the basis of oppression, it is important to recognize, for the purpose of examining Monkman's art, a difference between the hierarchical oppression imposed by colonialism and oppression to individuality that is inherent in all communities. This subtlety is often overlooked by mainstream thought with regard to marginalized communities; however where there is community, there are mores and a mainstream, and therefore marginalized behaviors. Native North American trickster stories were often didactic and enforced certain social mores and gender roles within Native American communities (Ballinger 34); though these roles may be perceived as necessary for the survival of the group, they do limit the natural range of human expression. Similarly, for many artists, the function of art is to convey a unique form of self-expression. Native North American artists who embrace Euroamerican culture and whose traditional cultures were not, as Smith notes, based on the cult of individualism, are forced to reconcile the feeling of responsibility to their cultural and historical identity with their drive to assert their own individuality . The conflict between individualism and tribal identity can be a productive conflict, as demonstrated by the beauty of art like that of Monkman and Alexie.

Employing Trickster Tradition as a Way of Reconciling Individual and Collective Identity

Monkrnan uses trickster tradition to call attention to how power both limits and makes possible freedom of expression. Miss Chief as trickster and the presence of the Raven/Eros trickster figure in *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi* pay homage to both European and Native North American trickster traditions, but Monkrnan makes the trickster his own. Miss Chief and the Raven/Eros figure are tricksters because in their respective paintings they yield the power of signification, represented by the aiTows, which are phallic symbols. Besides being a combination of two trickster gods, the Raven/Eros figure is pointing an arrow at the central figures in *Si je*

t'aime, prends garde a toi, suggesting that it is the instigator of the mutual embrace. Similarly, Miss Chief is the artist in *Artist and Model* and she also holds the arrows and the dominant position, suggesting her power to signify. So the trickster is one with the power to signify, but trickster also signifies in unexpected ways, upsetting the received order of society. Both Miss Chief and the Raven/Eros figure are represented in environments that vastly alter the received narrative of Euroamerican and Native North American contact. One of the meanings of the Latin word for artist is one who tricks, and the trickster is often associated with the renegade, one who is not bound by the confines of social mores. Paradoxically, trickster figures are renegades, yet, as mentioned above, trickster tradition in traditional Native North American communities often served to reinforce established mores. While Monkrnan pays homage to the Native North American tradition described by Ballinger, he is not dealing with the mores of traditional Native North American societies, but as a "colonized sexuality," he is dealing with the mores of Euroamerican hegemony. By exploring the edges of society's boundaries, societal mores become better defined and easier to navigate, so while trickster is a renegade, he/she also serves his/her community by helping to define it. Similarly, artists often assert their individuality by expressing themselves in opposition to accepted standards of behavior in order to point out the oppression

inherent in such standards. Through trickster figures, Monkman can point out oppressions inherent in Euroamerican mores thus serving to better the community.

Miss Chief s marginal positions, as a gender non-conforming individual and as a Native North American, in conjunction with her use of overt sexuality and mimicry, when she is fetishizing the Euroamerican figure in *Artist and Model,* resonates with the trickster figure described by Lewis Hyde. According to Hyde, who analyzes trickster figures from Greece, West Africa, India, and Native North American traditions, trickster's domain is the boundary; tricksters are the "lords of the in-between [. . .] and of the crossroad at the edge of town" (6). Trickster engages in deviant behavior, however, unlike "a run-of-the-mill liar and thief [. . .] when he lies and steals, it isn't so much to get away with something or get rich as to disturb the established categories of truth and property and, by doing so, open the road to possible new worlds" (13). [14] While Hyde's trickster is a figure of the margins, he is also sacred, suggesting that he plays a role sanctioned by the status quo. Paradoxically, "the origins, liveliness, and durability of cultures require that there be space for figures whose function is to uncover and disrupt the very things that cultures are based on" (9). This is true of trickster figures in Native North American tradition, whence arises Miss Chief.

While Monkman pays homage to the Native North American cultural tradition of the trickster story, he also alters its use; instead of reaffirming or establishing a cultural more, his work disrupts cultural mores that are oppressive to marginalized groups of people within both Native Communities as well as the larger Euroamerican community. While trickster stories in general might be used to show why a social more is important for the safety of people, Monkman's tricksters help the viewer to identify mores that are oppressive to people, like the gendering of Native North American subjects through colonial discourse and the unequal power

dynamics between European colonizers and colonized Native North Americans. Further Monkman's tricksters set historical scenes that disrupt the mores established through colonialism. Monkman therefore reinterprets the trickster tradition-imp0liantly, a tradition with the authority to define society-and makes use of it to destabilize the hegemonic colonial order.

Hyde notes that though he turns to art to find where trickster persists in the contemporary world, he does not claim that any artist is a trickster; "Actual individuals," he posits, "are always more complicated than the archetype" (14). Trickster is rather an "'eternal state of mind' that is suspicious of all eternals, dragging them down from their heavenly preserves to see how they fare down here in this time-haunted world" (14). Miss Chief, not Monkman, embodies this spirit. However, since Monkman's identity lies at the boundaries of accepted race and gender categories, and trickster is a figure of the boundary, the trickster figure is an obvious tool for questioning the established categories of truth about race and gender. As tricksters play a sanctioned cultural role, Miss Chief allows Monkman to critique dominant and oppressive epistemologies of race and gender in North America with authority and in a way that is communicable to both the Euroamerican mainstream as well as to tribal communities. Through the trickster tradition, he is also able to assert his conception of his own individual gender/sexual identity and to suggest that his identity has a place within Native North American tradition.

Though *Artist and Model* and *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi* subvert the legacies of North American colonial oppression, Euroamerican artistic tradition, and the Euroamerican tradition of raced and gendered subjectivity in order to make space for a Native North American narrative of colonial history, they represent also Monkman's individuality. His work certainly demonstrates the postcolonial tension of feeling part of a community caught in the colonial mainstream with a communal consciousness of a silenced past, yet Monkman's art does not

claim to speak for all Native North American experience. Monkman's ability to exploit trickster tradition comes not only from the colonial identity represented in his work, but also from his queer identity, poising him to speak from a raced and gendered subjectivity. Monkman's multiple marginalization as a racial and sexual minority position him very far from the center, facilitating his work to convey a deep understanding of oppression and the mechanisms at work in dominant ideology. Monkman's art positions the trickster as artist, defined as one who, through performance, takes on certain identity categories recognizable within the dominant language (such as "Native American" and "gay")-categories with essentialist connotations-to make space for a unique and individualized form of self-expression that calls into question any essentialist definitions of self.[15] Monkman' s work is consistently self-reflexive. If one can only speak for oneself (even if that speaking self is necessarily a hegemonic construction), as Spivak claims, then socially responsible artistic expression and interpretation must be self-reflexive activities. [16] It is a mirror and in it the writer/artist can recognize the social, political, and economic place(s) from which he/she writes. Self-consciousness of our subjectivity in the hegemonic social order is key in transcending the limitations of the categories we must adopt in order to speak.

"Two-spirit" Identity, Intersectionality, and Eurocentered Capitalism "Two-Spirit" Identity and the Theory of lntersectionality

Speaking is always a political act. We have observed how both Catlin and Kane's art are part of a tradition of colonial silencing of Native North American tradition through aesthetics. Art is a form of speech and aesthetics convey ideology. Catlin and Kane crafted an image of North America and its inhabitants according to the aesthetics that would sell. The aesthetic techniques sought after by 19th century art buyers and patrons conveyed a fantastical idea of

North America and its peoples that subjected actual people, the Native North Americans, to a European discourse of Native subjectivity that oppressed them and organized colonial relations into a "master-slave" binary relationship. The following section will contextualize the specific colonial historical material I have been dealing with into the larger scope of the development and domination of globalization through world capitalism, which has rendered the world's people, including the so-called "colonizers," images to be consumed. Analysis of Monkman's work within this larger context requires a developed understanding of his political identification as "two-spirit," a term to which I alluded in an earlier discussion on the gender binary, and the history leading up to the development and widespread use of the term "two-spirit" among Native North Americans. Tracing the development of two-spirit identity, which has only gained popularity within the last thirty years, yields a wealth of information and questions about the development of Native North American subjectivity as it relates to colonialism, race and gender categories, and capitalism. Monkman identifies variously as "gay" and "two-spirit," and I have also referred to "queer" identity earlier, but the term "two-spirit" highlights the intersection of race and gender subjectivity in Euroamerican society in a way that none of the other terms can.

The key to a connection between the experience of queer and Native subjects in North America is the theory of intersectionality. Intersectionality, as described by Lugones in "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modem Gender System" is a move toward visibility for minority identities that hinges on the modem phenomenon of subjectivity, which fuses gender, sexuality, and race. I tum to using "intersectionality" rather than "multiple marginalization" now because it is the term that Lugones uses and in what follows, I will tie Monkman's work and my earlier discussions on the colonial development of a raced and gendered Native subject to her theories of intersectionality and Eurocentered Capitalism. "Intersectionality" highlights, in a way

that "multiple marginalization" does not, that the multiple identities queer minorities of color embody overlap each other in terms of a broader hegemonic system, Eurocentered Capitalism.

The term "two-spirit" is an example of the theory of intersectionality in practice. "Two-spirit" is the English translation of an Anishinabe/Ojibway term and encompasses racial and sexual identity into a single term. It is somewhat of an umbrella term, being used pantribally and panhistorically, and like "queer," it is used by many contemporary Natives who are lesbian, gay, transgendered and transsexual (Roscoe 110). Both "queer," as it is used as a term of solidarity, and "two-spirit," emerged in conjunction with the coloniality of gender and the established culture of heterosexualism. Like "queer," "two-spirit" is a self-chosen term that "encompasses more traditions than any other term" and symbolizes a rejection of "defining [the self] by the colonizer's culture which says [one must] be either lesbian, gay, or bisexual" (111). As such, the two-spirit identity is a "rejection of the entire taxonomy of Western discourse on sexuality" (111). However, though "two-spirit" is a self-created term based on a traditional indigenous concept, it is an English term, and its connotations are not completely free of the colonizer's influence; after all, it is part of a revival movement for which there would be no need if not for colonization and the suppression of alternative gender identities from cultural memory.

Though "queer" and "two-spirit" are similar terms, they cannot be used interchangeably. Yet, to speak of contemporary non-Native North American queer experience as opposed to two-spirit experience is to create an arbitrary dichotomy that risks homogenizing two-spirit identity. Due to the policies of silencing in place for the last four hundred and more years and an ongoing process of acculturation, [17] the boundary between contemporary two-spirit individuals' conception of gender and queer identity and that of non-Native queer Americans is in some ways blurred, particularly by the silencing of Native North American alternative gender traditions.

Since gender dichotomy and gender inequality constitute all identity categories m North American society, Native North American and non-Native North American queer experiences intersect, but they are not the same. Two-spirit people and queer white Americans share a tradition of silence and prohibition against homosexual behavior and a tradition that renders alternative sexual or gender identities invisible. "Queer" and "two-spirit" are similar terms in that both encompass multiple categories of gender identification and sexuality and function to create community amongst people who share experiences of oppression based on their gender/sexuality. Both terms assume and encourage difference and disagreement amongst those who use them to identify because they exist to challenge assumptions that categories of identification are homogenous.

Though "two-spirit" can be placed under the queer umbrella, the term emerged from within the Native North American queer community as a way of gaining visibility in a queer mainstream that did not yet represent their shared experience.[18] A perceived need for creating solidarity amongst queer people who were also raced as Native American led to the term "two-spirit." As "two-spirit," a queer person makes a claim that their experience with power relations is complicated by their racial category. Both "queer" and "two-spirit" are inclusive terms that exist ideally to unite people against unequal power dynamics, yet they encourage difference and the creation of multiple categories within them. Audre Lorde attempts to resolve this by differentiating between "divide and conquer" and "define and empower" (Lorde, "Master's Tools). Defining is creating categories for the purpose of solidarity and political voice, and though it necessarily leads to conflict on how terms and people are to be defined, it is a necessary step in claiming a united voice in a current reality based on division. Yet it is also important to engage in deconstructing the very categories that we as minorities must create so as to prevent

the conceptions that categories are homogenous and do not intersect. In our racist world, "queer" is at risk of signifying the dominant group under the umbrella to mainstream society; hence the importance of terms like "two-spirit" that define categories under the "queer" umbrella.

"Two-spirit" is a category indicative of a need for Native North American solidarity, but it also affirms that "Native American" or "Native North American" is not always a category inclusive of those who are queer-identified. Prior to the 1980's, when records of alternative gender identities in traditional tribal cultures gained widespread visibility, many Native-identified people staked out their queer identities off of the reservations, in urban centers, and in terms of Anglo-American discourse on sexuality (Roscoe 112). While queer Anglo-Americans were struggling for visibility in the mid to late 20th century, queer Native North Americans were fighting a battle for visibility on multiple fronts-as "queers" in a broad American context, as Native Americans in a broad American context, and as two-spirit within the pan-Native community and at home on reservations. Roscoe's research indicates the existence of alternative gender identities and social roles in the traditions of a vast majority of pre-contact tribes in North America, yet contemporary queer-identified Native North Americans across tribes shared experiences of invisibility or silence on the reservation. Within Native North American communities, until the 1990's, there was little recognition of any continuity between traditional alternative gender identities and sexual behaviors and contemporary queer-identified Native or non-Native people. The adoption of "two-spirit" as a widespread term of identification has coincided with a drive to establish continuity with the traditions of the past. Unique to Native North American experience, however, is the loss of a tradition of alternative genders because colonizers categorized such traditions as "barbaric" within a colonial discourse of race, and gender/sexuality.

The Creation of a Raced and Gendered Native North American Subject

The development of the colonial discourse that fuses race, gender, and sexuality, and led to the creation of "two-spirit" can be traced through multiple avenues that developed in conjunction and led to our modem system of oppression and race/gender categories. Lugones calls this system Eurocentered Capitalism, a global hegemonic system (191). To define Eurocentered Capitalism, Lugones speaks of the *coloniality of power,* which introduces "the basic and universal social classification of the population of the planet in terms of the idea of 'race'" (190). Lugones uses the *coloniality of gender* to describe the system of power and knowing where gender and race overlap and organize the social relations of people according to its particular model. Some key characteristics of Eurocentered Capitalism are 1) Patriarchy; 2) Binary; 3) Hierarchy; 4) The concept of modernity, which is defined by rationalism and progression; and 5) Naturalization/Fixity of race and gender experience. Eurocentered Capitalism is organized around the two axes of the *coloniality of power* and modernity (189); Lugones notes that we cannot think of either axis of Eurocentered Capitalism, Eurocentrism, or any of the characteristics Eurocentered Capitalism as prior to each other. They all developed in conjunction.

Capitalism relates to the *coloniality of gender* because capitalist nations are unified in their patriarchal organization of the control of resources and social relationships. Smith, in "Dismantling the Master's Tools with the Master's House" calls patriarchy

> the logic that naturalizes social hierarchy. Just as men are supposed to dominate women on the bases of "natural" biology, so too should the social elites [. . .] naturally rule everyone else through a nation-state form of governance that is

> constructed through domination, violence, and control. Patriarchy, in tum, is presumed a heteronormative gender binary system. (95-96)

Smith's definition of patriarchy highlights the relationship between sexuality, gender, and the nation, and while it lays the groundwork for connecting the social hierarchy of gender and the social hierarchy of race by referencing "natural" biology, it does not function as a complete explanation of the system. Lugones warns against centering an analysis of gender formation on patriarchy because it is an ahistorical framework that allows the critic to overlook "the mechanisms by which heterosexuality, capitalism, and racial classification are impossible to understand apart from each other" (187).[19] Patriarchy, along with biological dimorphism and heterosexualism, is rather a characteristic of Eurocentrism, a cognitive way of knowing that naturalizes the experience of people within the model of power of the global, capitalist system. This macro system of power "marks the flesh multiply by marking the bodies of the unfree in differential patterns devised to constitute them as the tortured materiality of power" (188). Centering inquiry on patriarchy is thus useful for understanding a system of power that regulates gender and sexual relations, as well as the functioning of the Western nation-state, but it does not account for the overlapping of race and gender resulting from the economics and history of specific colonial situations. Further, critics have spoken of patriarchy as if it is a transcultural phenomenon, while Native American theorists, such as Gunn Allen, have proven that patriarchy is a constituting factor in European systems of knowing, but not in many pre-colonial Native North American societies.

Artist and Model and *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi,* when placed in the context of 19th century art consumption, makes explicit how Native North American bodies were made objects of consumption through art. European buyers and those who viewed Catlin's traveling show

bought into an ideology that framed the Native American subject in terms of race and gender. Religious morality provided a justification for the Christianizing of indigenous Americans up to the 20th century and beginning as early as Spanish conquest in the 16th century, and it hinged partly on the existence of non-European forms of gender and sexuality. Christianity provided the discourse of "civilized" and "barbaric" used to justify the domination of Native North Americans and the existence of third- and fourth-gender individuals provided a prime justification of signifying Native North American traditions and Native North Americans as "barbaric." Monkman plays with the idea of the "Barbaric Indian" in the violent imagery of *Artist and Model.* Miss Chief is drawing a primitive-looking version of the Euroamerican model, reminiscent of a cave painting, resonating with the Christian view of Native North Americans as "uncivilized." Miss Chief is also very nonchalant-looking despite the suffering of the cowboy figure. Her apathy toward his suffering coupled with the gratuitous number of arrows sticking out of him resonates with the Christian view of the Native North Americans as "barbaric."

Whereas Native North American communities accommodated homosexual behavior within alternative gender traditions, linking gender to sexuality, Western discourse on homosexual behavior was largely limited to the immoral implications of "sodomy" propagated by Christian powers. Since alternative gender traditions were perceived as incomprehensible to the Western eye, they provided the grounds for seeing Native North Americans as racially different and inferior. Therefore, Christianity and missionization contributed to the formation of a race and gendered "Native American" subject. It also fused sexuality with race and gender. At the same time that Christianity suppressed alternative genders, European explorers viewed the existence of alternatively gendered individuals as an indication of Native North American hypersexuality, misunderstanding the complex and socially-sanctioned role they occupied. This

coincided with a narrative of the New World and its people as abundant, wild, and untamed, and therefore feminized; as well as titillating and primed for consumption, especially for the European male under the Christian influence of repressed sexuality. Written and painted images of North America consumed in Europe therefore provided a means for sexual escapism as well as a discourse of "civilized" and "barbaric." *Artist and Model* presents the cowboy as nude and Miss Chief as semi-nude, and hypersexualizes both figures. The sexual arousal of the cowboy is juxtaposed with brutal violence, suggesting a "barbaric" kind of sexuality associated with Miss Chief, the Native subject, who is in a dominant and controlling position. *Si je t'aime, prends garde a toi* also brings to light the colonial move to sexualize Native North Americans in the clear affection the artist/Euroamerican figure in the painting expresses toward the Native North American figure. Where Fraser's *End of the Trail* depicts a clothed Native American warrior, the artist in Monkman's painting has stripped the Native subject of his clothing, suggesting that the image of the "hypersexual savage" was actually a reflection of the Europeans' own latent desire.

Artist and Model connects this legacy to the present, highlighting a sexual desire between Native North Americans and Europeans. The latent desire of the colonizer is represented by the dual image of the cowboy's closed eyes and erection. The image of the cowboy, tied to the tree and at the mercy of Miss Chief s gaze, suggests that the legacy of consumption rendered European bodies as objects of consumption as well; specifically, the gendering of Native North Americans and Euroamericans created an image of masculinity to be consumed, exemplified by the muscular and proportioned physique of the cowboy in *Artist and Model.* Colonialism framed Native North Americans as both feminized, passive recipients of Euroamerican culture, and also as highly masculinized "noble savages," a contradiction embodied by Miss Chief in *Artist in Model,* who is dressed in stilettos, a symbol of femininity,

and yet aggressively dominating the cowboy figure. Yet, though they were highly masculinized as savage and aggressive, savagery is equally a feminine trait in European colonial history. The wild and irrational has historically been associated with the feminine, which was to be tamed by the traditionally masculine traits of reason and order, as well as the civilizing forces of Christianity and Christian Patriarchy.

Miss Chief s characterization represents the blending of Native North American tradition with Euroamerican gay and consumer culture. Miss Chief embodies contemporary "gay male" subject stereotypes, not often associated with Native North American subjectivity-the figure of the drag queen in high heels gazing upon a cowboy, an idealized figure of North American masculinity. Her trick is to elucidate the unspoken connections between consumer culture and oppression based on hierarchy, and race and gender categories, and to comment on Monkman's own participation in this system. In consuming Monkman' s images, the viewer must question their own participation and the ways that they make sense of the paintings. When the viewer relates to or even recognizes the stereotypical images in the paintings as communicating meaning, it means that colonial frameworks of thought are alive in the viewer's mind. Monkman's art, specifically the figure of Miss Chief, represents images of racial, sexual, and gender identity recognizable by the Euroamerican mainstream as the "Native American" subject, cultivated for consumption by the earliest European explorers and artists in the New World, who represented the Native subject according to the latent desires of consumers and their fantasies about the "New World."

Monkman's art also speaks from a more mainstream, Eurocentered Capitalist subjectivity. Miss Chief s official name is Miss Chief Share Eagle Testicle, "Share" being a nod to Cher, a high revenue-generating gay music icon. "Share" thus links gay culture to consumer

culture, but ironically, as sharing resonates more with communal economies, like those of many traditional Native North American societies, than with capitalist economies. Through "Share," Monkrnan simultaneously acknowledges his participation in consumer culture and his proximity to capitalism, as well as his distance from traditional Native North American economies. Miss Chief's quiver is Louis Vuitton, which also links Monkrnan's experience of being queer and Native North American to his subjectivity in consumer culture. Further, since the self-reflexive aspect of the work invites the viewer to contemplate their own participation in Eurocentered Capitalism in the way that they make sense of the images, *Artist and Model* pokes fun at those who would participate in their own commodification, such as the Native-identified person who would own designer appropriations of Native American cultural objects, like the Louis Vuitton quiver, or the gay male who is allured by or envious of the idealized male body represented in the image.

Eurocentered Capitalism and the Domination of the Image

Artist and Model and *Si je t'aime,prends garde a toi* highlight how constructed images of the Other, like the image of the raced and gendered Native Subject constructed through colonial projects and communicated through art like that of Kane and Catlin, come to silence the voices of the people they represent. Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* posits a theory of Eurocentered Capitalism that focuses on how the image mediates the social relationships between people and oppresses both master and slave. Debord posits a theory of our modem global society that recontextualizes postcolonialism within the broader system of capitalism that has come to dominate the world:

> [. . .] countries living under colonialism or semi-colonialism are [. . .] highly differentiated with respect to modes of production and power [. . .] but from the

> standpoint of their actually reality as mere *sectors* [sic], it is clear that the specificity of each is subsumed under a universal system as functions of a single tendency that has taken the planet for its field of operation [. . .] capitalism.

Through this broader lens, the focus on specific oppressions resulting from different colonial situations gives way to the focus on how the system of global capitalism has come to oppress us all, specifically through the domination of the image in the globalized world, which Debord calls "the spectacle." The spectacle, Debord argues is "a social relationship between people that is mediated by images" which has become possible as social life has "declin[ed] from being into having, and having into merely appearing" (17). Catlin's *Catlin Painting the Portrait of Mah-to-toh-pa-Mandan* depicts a literal mediation of the image in the relationship between Catlin and the Mandan. The spectacle is possible in a world in which basic needs have been met, where the line between need/want is blurred, and where there is an excess of production and leisure time, which is structured around consumption (28). The abundance of wealth created by the colonization of North America made leisure time available to people like Catlin, who could travel amongst the Native North Americans creating images; Catlin's concept of an Indian gallery is an indication of a consumer world dominated by images. Wealthy Europeans could buy a visual representation of their fantasies about North America and its Native people without ever having to experience them face-to-face.

The separation between the art consumers and the actual people on whom their products were based corresponds to the failure of transcendent relationship described by Hegel in the "Master-Slave Dialectic," as it applies to the North American colonial situation. Catlin could sell his paintings because his images reflected an image of North America, as an exotic place equally terrifying and idyllic, already formed in the minds of Europeans through the accounts of early

explorers. In other words, Catlin's paintings could be passively consumed because they fit into a pre-established thought framework. The colonial framework of thought, the image of the Native North American subject propagated by Catlin and Kane's art, mediated the social relationship between Native North Americans and Euroarnericans, preventing bare connection between them. Monkman's paintings, unlike Catlin and Kane's, cannot be passively consumed because while they deal with the received narrative of colonial contact between Euroarnericans and Native North American, they force the viewer to question it. We can recognize the iconography depicted in them, but the way Monkman composes the images resignifies the hegemonic iconography of the Native North American in radical ways. Monkman's paintings therefore intervene in the spectacle through its very means. Monkrnan's dealing with stereotypical images and his use of an alter-ego undermine the idea of authenticity. Though a hodge-podge of stereotypical images and cultural signifiers, Miss Chief and the aesthetic world she lives in, where idealized forms of masculinity and representations of celebrity culture reign, provide an alternative view of history that destabilizes the hegemonic historical narrative and points to it as a manifestation of Debord's society of the spectacle. At least in Miss Chief's version of history, mutual communication and affection between Native North Americans and Euroarnericans makes way for Hegel's idea of transcendent relationship.

Monkrnan's work manages to speak from within hegemonic discourse while also subverting it because it is not violent or reactionary and focuses instead on productive communication. The depiction of sexual imagery makes Monkman's work dynamic, challenging the notion that Native North Americans have vanished or become frozen in time, preserved in Euorarnerican paintings. The sexual humor of his images, like the cowboy in *Artist and Model,* who is somehow riddled with arrows and also aroused (his erection is painted in detail), suggests

a mutual, intense, and yet light-hearted communication between Europeans and Native North Americans. The apparent situation of bondage and inequality is undermined by the phallic symbols in the painting. While we can read Miss Chief's arrows as symbolic of the phallus, they are displaced when compared to the cowboy's actual phallus, suggesting that they are unable to signify without the contrasting image of the European phallus. Arrows are Euroamerican signifiers of the Native North American and that they are representative of Miss Chief's power simultaneously poke fun at the idea of her dominance and also decenters the authority of the cowboy's phallus. Monkman also includes a scrotum between Miss Chief's legs; if it reads as a symbol of her power as artist and creator, then so must the cowboy's phallus signify his ability to create. *Si Je t'aime prends garde a toi* reinforces this argument with the image of the Cupid/Raven hybrid floating on a cloud in the upper-left quadrant of the painting. Monkman meshes Native North American and Western mythology into a single figure who holds the arrow, or creative power. The transcendent embrace between the artist and model, lifting the artist up while giving the model life, is brought about by the Raven/Eros figure, who is aiming the arrow of love at the two figures. It is a blending of traditions that allows for the sexual communication in both paintings, for the production of something new and mutually transcendent between the two parties.

Will Roscoe provides a useful example of mutual communication between Euroamerican and Zuni culture that demonstrates how the acknowledgment that cultural boundaries are fluid leads to increased visibility for people whose identities are otherwise rendered subaltern, such as the queer-identified Native person. Though developments of queer identity among Native North Americans originated largely in urban centers due to the erasure of alternative gender traditions from the cultural memory of many tribes, some tribes have maintained cultural memory of

alternative gender roles. On reservations where cultural memory of alternative gender identities remained intact, there are

> fascinating processes of cultural accommodation and elaboration underway. "Gay," "lesbian" and "bisexual" individuals within reservation communities are becoming more visible, and tribal members are seeking to understand and reconcile memories of alternative gender traditions with modem sexual patterns and identities. At Zuni, the term "two-spirit" would probably not be recognized, nor would "berdache." However, "gay" and "homosexual," [Euroamerican terms,] are well known and used, [yet] with the assumption that these behavior patterns include a component of gender difference as well as same-sex orientation. In other words, understandings of Anglo-American sexual categories are "contaminated" with traditional Zuni categories. In a similar way, the act of "coming out," that is, making a public statement about one's identity, can be accomplished entirely within the terms of traditional culture. (Roscoe 112)

Where rejection of "gay" or "homosexual" as categories belonging to white culture leads to the alienation of queer-identified Native people, the Zuni allowance for the influence of Euroamerican identity categories creates stronger bonds among members of the tribe. Roscoe's example also touches on the imbrication of gender and sexuality, which is useful in understanding the use of homoeroticism in Monkman's work, especially as it relates to colonial relationships and the establishment of race and gender categories. Monkman's use of the homoerotic serves to both undermine the heterosexualist paradigm that oppresses queer people, to assert the experience of queer people into the historical narrative, and to highlight the "sameness" of Euroamericans and Native North Americans, undermining the binary of

colonizer/colonized. Roscoe's example of the Zuni's communicative attitude toward Euroarnerican culture strengthens the suggestion made by *Artist and Model* and *Si Je t'aime prends garde a toi* that mutually altering communication and therefore transcendent relationship is possible, even from within the all-encompassing oppression of Eurocentered Capitalism.

Conclusion

Examining how Catlin and Kane's art fits into the broader context of the colonization of North America and the oppression of its peoples allows us to link our current models of oppression and domination to specific historical events and cultural ideologies. While Monkrnan's artwork communicates beautifully the possibility of transcendence, the overcoming of the master-slave relationship, through mutual embrace and culture sharing, it also illustrates, through its consumer imagery, that Eurocentered Capitalism and the Debordian consumption of images has come to dominate the world. Eurocentrism has so dominated that the imposition of the hegemonic language no longer must be achieved by force alone. Developing nations and tribal territories and reservations embrace the teaching of English, as it has come to be the language of globalization, representing progress, education, elitism, and the ability to compete economically. As more people embrace the Eurocentered paradigm of mass consumption and competition, inequality and oppression persist insidiously in correlation to the increasing of both the depletion of the world's resources and the stability of the global environment.

This work has laid the foundation for comparing the Native North American colonial situation to other colonial situations through the examination of artistic texts and the politics of speech. It is important to think about how a world-wide system of Eurocentered Capitalism was created through varying colonial projects , however , such theories require more evidence. Research focusing on the establishment of systems of subjectivity within a Eurocentered

framework of thought in comparative colonial situations would give more weight to theories such as Debord's and Lugones' that link such widely-scoping global economic systems to subjectivity, oppression, and the mediation of images in the relationships between human beings.

Notes

[1] Developed in 1915, James Earle Fraser's *End of the Trail* is not technically nineteenth century, but I list him along with these painters as part of the same aesthetic tradition. I use the term "Native North American" as a collective term to describe people in the United States and Canada who identify culturally and racially with people who lived in North America prior to colonial contact with Europeans. I use this term especially to counter it against "Euroamerican" or "European" and not to imply that indigenous cultures are homogenous. I prefer "Native North American" to "Native American" because "Native American" is a term coined by the U.S. government and this term is not used to describe Canadian people with indigenous descent. "Native North American" is a broader term and serves to connect the colonial experience of indigenous people in the United States and Canada. I use the term "Native American" only where it applies to concepts about Native North Americans as created and used by Euroamericans, or to situations specific to U. S. history (i.e. "Native American" iconography, or to refer to images created by American artists). I sometimes use "Native," in place of "Native North American."

[2] Monkman studied illustration at Sheriden College of Applied Arts in Brampton, Ontario.

[3] Ngugi later reversed this position.

[4] Ngugi writes about systematic silencing in African colonial situations and Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder write about in in American schools. See Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, *American Indian Education: A History.* Native North American children were sent to boarding schools, first established by Christian missionaries and supported by U.S. government funds, where they were forced to take on a Euroamerican name and forbidden to use their native language.

[5] This definition of "subjectivity" is derived from Louis Althusser and Gayatri Spivak. See Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays;* and Gayatri Spivak, "A Critique of Postcolonial Reason."

[6] Inreferencing Spivak's work, I have been discussing the road from subalternity to subjectivity in terms of claiming a single category by which to identify. In reality, people wear multiple masks, making it tricky to stake a claim for oneself without being complicit in a system that oppresses minority identity categories by which one does not identify. This is a problem, addressed by Maria Lugones in "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modem Gender System."

[7] Before the age of rationalism, in the early days of colonialism, the Bible was used to justify exploitation of Native peoples and to create a binary of civilized/barbaric. This later gave way, in the age of reason, to the binary of progress/primitive. In Western Biblical tradition, God creates man in his image and woman is created in the image of man. The relationship of man/woman finds affinity with the colonizer/colonized relationship. Western nationalist discourse, asserts Bhabha, "[naturalizes] its own history of colonial expansion and exploitation by inscribing the history of the other in a fixed hierarchy of civil progress" (136). In her article on Native theologies, Andrea Smith locates the desire for a fixed narrative of history in the Christenizing aspect of imperialism. She cites the Exodus in her argument that "all Christian theology remains

complicit in the missionization and genocide of the Native peoples in the Americas." Exodus, which speaks of Canaan as the Promised Land despite its occupation by a people, operates as a *"narrative* of conquest" providing a foundation of Christian theology and a justification for the colonization and genocide of the indigenous people occupying the "Promised Land" of North America (87). The source of Christian Imperialist tradition is the tradition of the written word and the language of 'civility' and 'barbarism.' However, this tradition is a fixed, authoritative, and hierarchical narrative of progress. Missionization demonstrates an urge for the non-Christian to adopt the narrative of the center as his/her own.

[8] "Berdache" is a French term for a "male-bodied person [who] chooses to live as a woman does, and may, therefore, dress and behave like a woman." See Ballinger, "Coyote, He/She Was Going There: Sex and Gender in Native American Trickster Stories." Will Roscoe, in *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America,* suggests that the term "berdache" may have also applied to alternatively-gendered female-bodied people, but the historical data shows that those termed "berdache" were for the most part male-bodied. The term is widely considered derogatory, partly because it comes from a French word and is not originally an indigneous self-identifying term. Interestingly, Monkman refers to himself alternatively as "berdache," so the term is controversial.

[9] "Native North American History has been periodized in terms of four phases: symbiosis, conflict, the reservation period, and reemergence or revivalism. Today when anthropologists and native people use the word 'traditional' what they usually have in mind is the culture of the symbiotic phase, that period of mutual interdependence between Europeans and natives that prevailed in many areas before the rise of North American nation-states" (Roscoe 169).

[10] It also upends the concepts of authenticity and essentialism, "producing a partial vision of the colonizer's presence; a gaze of otherness, that shares the acuity of the genealogic gaze which, as Foucault describes it, liberates marginal elements and shatters the unity of man's being through which he extends his sovereignty" (126-127).

[11] Colonial frameworks of knowledge can be shared by both colonizer and colonized. Native North American denial of homosexuality within their tribes and the association of it with white culture mimics the imperial illusion that culture is stable. This form of mimicry is unproductive because it maintains the hegemonic order and the invisibility of Native North American queer minorities. Monkman's mimicry, on the other hand, is productive and reaches beyond the confines of a colonial framework of knowledge.

[12] World capitalism, according to Lugones, refers to "the structural articulation of all historically known forms of control of labor or exploitation, slavery, servitude, small independent mercantile production, wage labor, and reciprocity under the hegemony of the capital-wage labor relation" (191). According to Lugones, "not all labor relations fall under the capital/wage relation model, though it is the hegemonic model" (191).

[13] See Josefina Ludmer, "Tricks of the Weak;" and Homi Bhaba, *The Location of Culture.*

[14] Hyde uses the male gender pronoun to refer to trickster because cross-culturally trickster figures are almost always male.

[15] By denying essentialism, I mean to deny only that the social relationships attached to categories of identity are inherent in an individual's being.

[16] Spivak focuses on the importance of identifying the places from which one writes and "acknowledg[ing] our complicity in the muting [. . .] The postcolonial migrant investigator is touched by the colonial social formations" (2124).

[17] For a comprehensive overview oflaws and policies pertaining to Native American acculturation, see Prucha's *American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly* and Reyhner and Eder's *American Indian Education: A History.*

[18] The term "two-spirit" first emerged and gained popularity at a pantribal gathering in Winnipeg, Canada in 1990, an event characteristic of what Will Roscoe, in *Changing Ones,* calls "a cultural revival movement centered on recovery of berdache traditions and practices" (109).

[19] As a result of centering analyses on patriarchy without regard to race, Lugones argues that feminism became defined by the oppression of white, bourgeois women while failing to identify the oppression of women of color as a distinct experience. The failure to acknowledge the category of *women of color* results in making this particular relation to power invisible, or subaltern.

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