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Representations of American Indian women
the case of Nancy Ward

Ethnohistorical and ethnographic materials concerning the Cherokee Indians span more than two centuries. Within the pages of the numerous volumes that chronicle this indigenous Nation, the narratives and contributions of Cherokee women are marginalized, at best. The displacement of women within these histories, biographies and ethnographies is illustrative of the male bias that feminist anthropology has critiqued from its beginnings (Behar 1993; Lamphere and Rosaldo 1974; Rapp 1975). Despite this widespread marginalization, one woman's name, Nancy Ward, *Nanye'hi* in Cherokee, is remembered in the pages of social science texts as a, perhaps *the*, "great woman" in Cherokee pre-constitutional (1650-1827) history. The stories about Ward's life survive from the turn of the nineteenth century as some of the few specific representations of an individual Cherokee woman. These narratives also represent a rare glimpse of the daily lived experience of Cherokee women in pre-removal Cherokee society. While these narratives have not been utilized to any extent to attempt a greater understanding of women in eighteenth century Cherokee society, the writings and their uses in social science texts do tell us much about how Cherokee women have figured in the imaginations of the authors of those narratives.

While several biographies about Ward were written during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, she, and all Cherokee women, are generally omitted from works which purportedly concentrate on the Cherokee Nation as a whole. To illustrate this point, I have chosen to focus on the use of Ward narratives in works of general Cherokee ethnohistory in which she makes a brief appearance, rather than biographical works

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about her (Alderman 1978; McClary 1962; Perdue 1995). There is some evidence that the focus on Nanye'hi resulted from the rediscovery of records of her actions kept by the American military officers during the bloody conflicts of the Revolutionary War between the Cherokee Nation—which sided with the British—and the United States. Other military records of treaties between the Cherokees and the United States also include passages about Ward.

This essay illustrates, by examining narratives about the life of Nanye'hi, the power of representation to stereotypically define both an individual, and thereby, the social group to which they belong. Further, this discussion is illustrative of how those representations can become entextualized and imbued with specific meaning through their repeated use and that, in order to break the entextual power of a an oft-invoked representation, it is necessary to apply the text to a completely different model of praxis (Silverstein and Urban 1996). Toward this end, I have chosen for analysis works of a general ethnohistorical nature, one ethnological, one historical, and one autobiographical. The first is from the nineteenth century while the others are from the twentieth century. The twentieth century publications draw heavily on *Myths of the Cherokee* (Mooney 1982), first published in the nineteenth century. In this context, I propose to investigate the ways in which representations of a 'famous other' can not only lead to the development of the "great person" complex in social science texts, but can also serve as evidence for the worldview of a given author at a particular point in time (Lebsock 1989). After reviewing the nineteenth century representation of Ward and the circumstances surrounding the collecting and writing of that narrative, I consider some of the ramifications of the twentieth century authors' choices in using only particular parts of the Ward narratives within their own more general works about Cherokees and/or American Indians. I draw on Rayna Green's notion of the "Pocahontas Perplex" in order to discuss these authors' use of narratives about Nanye'hi—Nancy Ward—who was called by Thomas Jefferson, the "Pocahontas of the West." Prior to turning to the narratives and their ramifications, I will briefly show how discussions about gender and the place of women in American Indian society has evolved in social science literature.

approaches to gender in Native American scholarship

According to Cheryl Metoyer-Duran's citation analysis in *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* (AICRJ), only 1.3% of articles presented in the AICRJ between 1971 and 1990 have included gender studies as a major category of research (Metoyer-Duran 1993: 25-54). From the 1970s, with the advance of feminist scholarship in universities na-

tionwide, ethnographic work on women and gender was produced with increasing frequency (Abu-Lughod 1986; Behar 1993; Collier 1988; Leacock 1977, 1980; Povinelli 1991; Shostak 1981; Strathern 1984; Wolf 1972, 1975, 1985; Zavella 1991). To a certain extent, this has been true for studies of American Indian women as well and by the mid-1980s, significant ethnographic research had been published (Brown 1975; Leacock 1977, 1980; Albers and Medicine 1983). However, in the past decade, the ethnographic and ethnohistorical work on American Indian women has declined. Several factors contributed to this decline. Perhaps one of the most striking features is a new perception among American Indians regarding the ethnographic process (Mankiller 1993; Medicine 1994). No longer will they allow themselves to be merely the object of the ethnographic lens, whether mainstream or feminist. Many tribal governments will not allow anthropologists to invade the privacy of homes, lodges, and rituals. Tribal peoples of North America are educated in the same institutions as the EuroAmerican anthropologist and, if they allow access at all, they demand more of the profession than a "snapshot" of supposedly static lifeways. American Indian women of the late twentieth century recognize that social scientists are in a position of power and demand, wherever possible, that that power be shared.

When writing about American Indian women, it is vital to remember that there has never been a pan-Indian experience for the indigenous cultures of North America (Leacock 1980; Medicine 1994). Pan-Indian movements have attempted a unified stand against the bureaucracy of the United States, but to even intimate that there is a mono-cultural experience is to ignore the richness of American Indian peoples (McNickle 1973; Albers and Medicine 1983; Klein and Ackerman 1995; Shoemaker 1995; Mankiller 1993). It is wrong to speak of "The Indian Women's" experience even though some attempt to do so (Garbarino 1985; Prucha 1986). In order to begin addressing the variety of lifeways among indigenous tribal women of North America in both the past and the present, it is necessary to focus on particular nations. To that end, this paper identifies and analyzes some of the rhetoric used in the creation of narrative surrounding one instance of women's history in the Cherokee Nation, the stories about Nancy Ward.

I am most interested in the ways that anthropologists, historians, and feminist American Indian women scholars over the last century portrayed the power, or influence, that Nancy Ward exercised in the Cherokee Nation. Here, I will show how anthropologists and historians tend[ed] to create a picture of American Indian women as a "group" in their "natural" or traditional state as chattels and/or servants to their

men while an individual woman, in this case Nancy Ward, is singled out as extraordinary, courageous, and "different" from her peers because of her "love and respect" for the "whiteman [which of course includes whitewomen]" (Foreman 1954; Green 1976). Because one work draws from the previous one, the result is ahistorical and fails to account for changes imposed upon late eighteenth century Cherokee society. This is particularly noticeable since the original narratives were often taken from a skewed set of colonial viewpoints (Silverblatt 1991). The story that emerges from the ethnographic pen is directly affected by the position of the social scientist in his or her own society. The social scientist's situatedness in the particular theoretical stance(s) of his or her day directly affects the choices made in the choosing and writing of narratives about American Indian culture and history (Foucault 1970; Wallace 1993). This paper attempts to identify this bias and to discern how, by employing a model that is conceptualized in a non-hierarchical web, we can avoid some ethnocentricity in our future writings.

Nancy Ward: representations of a Cherokee woman

The authors I have chosen are as follows: James Mooney, an ethnologist in the employ of the Bureau of American Ethnology [BAE]; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, who offered a representation of Nancy Ward—among other "great American Indian women"—as an answer to the exclusion of women in history—which was very much in the style of her contemporary, Mary Ritter Beard; and Wilma Mankiller, who, along with other contemporary Cherokee Indian women who use the narratives of this Chigau in fiction, autobiography, and spiritual writings, presents Ward as a role model to be drawn upon as inspiration for a new generation of Cherokee women. In order to critique the later representations effectively, I turn first, of necessity, to the nineteenth century anthropological work by James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokees*, and to the social and political climate in which Mooney researched and wrote his monograph.

James Mooney, the U.S. Indian Policy, and the BAE

According to a 1984 biography, Mooney became intrigued with the idea of studying American Indians from a very early age (Moses 1984: 1-15). He came of age in the Dawes Allotment Act era of United States/Indian relations [1880-1887] and became an employee of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) in 1885. At that time, the BAE had been in existence for only six years. This is approximately the same period of time that the legislation and debate surrounding the Dawes Act had been on the floor of the House and Senate in Washington. The climate of the still-infant discipline of anthropology, as well as that of the

Smithsonian under which the BAE was subsumed, mirrored United States society in the belief that the indigenous cultures of North America "teetered on the brink of extinction" (Moses 1984: 13). The general policy of the Smithsonian, and all of its departments, at this time is best summed up by this statement of Joseph Henry, the first secretary of the Smithsonian:

Theories and laws are best left to future generations of scholars; collection of data is paramount for the present. To begin with, the science of ethnology will have to be inductive rather than deductive. Once the evidence has been gathered, only then could laws of society be elucidated (Moses 1984: 13).

This single-minded collection of data, referred to as "culture history," is precisely what the employees of the BAE were expected to do when sent out into the field and charged with "the prodigious task of collecting with absolute accuracy not only American antiquities but the material and mental cultures of the antiquated, or at least the anachronistic, Native Americans" (Hinsley 1981; Moses 1984: 13).

Mooney gladly threw himself into this arduous task. He believed, as did his superiors, that he had to "capture" the culture of the American Indians before it disappeared forever into oblivion. Toward this end, he injected himself into the Eastern Band of Cherokee which resided, as it still does, in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina. Mooney felt that their experience was still the "purest aboriginal experience available for study in the contiguous United States" because of the remoteness of the *qualla* (Moses 1984: 22). Ironically, because of their remote location, the Eastern Cherokee were less affected by the continuing pressure of American encroachment in the late nineteenth century than the Indian Territory tribes (which included the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma).

In the spring of 1887, Mooney arrived in the mountains of North Carolina and began a pharmacological survey of the indigenous plant life in the region. No explanation was given, either in biographical sources or his own writing, of his initial contact with the Cherokee. However, informants were found for the purpose of cataloging the plants with Cherokee names and this in turn led him to begin to collect plants that were used by Cherokee shamans. Mooney wrote:

It soon became evident that the application of the medicine was not the whole, and in fact was rather subordinate, part of the treatment which was always accompanied by certain ceremonies and "words" (Moses 1984: 23).

Toward the end of procuring those ceremonies and "words," he set

about asking his informants about prayers and incantations. According to Moses, he found a young Cherokee woman who seemed willing to discuss the information but she was "quickly dissuaded by a few shamans from whom she had received her information." Undaunted, and sensing the "possibility for a valuable ethnographic study," Mooney pressed on (Moses 1984: 23).

While it is easy to critique Mooney's field methods from the comfort of the late twentieth century, there was no ethical dilemma concerned with obtaining both information, and artifacts in Mooney's day. His fieldwork of 1887-88 afforded him the opportunity to procure extensive information from the Cherokee. Hinsley says of him:

Mooney's field success was attributable in part to the fact that he astutely but sympathetically took advantage of the social disintegration and economic poverty of the Cherokees... Mooney found the Cherokee men of knowledge secretive, proud, and competitive... [and while he] did not formally possess [shamanistic] expertise, he had amassed a large store of Irish lore, stories, and medical remedies. With these he was able to claim a place of respect within the dwindling circle of Cherokee medicine men (Hinsley 1981: 211).

Hinsley goes on to say that if "cooperation and exchange failed... Mooney played on the jealousy and vanity... among the Cherokee men of knowledge" to obtain materials (Hinsley 1981: 211).

Eventually, Mooney's persistence paid off with several of his informants. Four separate personal books of myths (read: history), formulas, prayers, songs and prescriptions found its way into the possession of the BAE and the Smithsonian through Mooney's cajolery (Moses 1984: 1984: 23). Mooney recounted his experiences with them and told about his "newly won reputation among the Indians." He stated, "By letting the Indians know that I had myself some knowledge of charms [purportedly Irish Gaelic], I gradually impressed them with the idea that I am a great conjurer, too" (Moses 1984: 24). This mode of ethnographic collection, i.e. false flattery and sometimes trickery, would be used by Mooney throughout his stay with the Cherokee from 1887-1890 (Hinsley 1981; Mooney 1982; Moses 1984). The resulting monograph contains four separate manuscripts from Cherokee medicine men of formulas for making curing medicine, successful hunting, accomplish love desire (whether to "fix" or put asunder), and a miscellaneous category that includes a way to find lost articles and to frighten away a storm (Mooney 1982: 303-4). In Mooney's words:

The myths given in this paper are part of a large body of material collected among the Cherokee... inclusive, and comprising more

or less extensive notes, together with original Cherokee manuscripts, relating to the history, archaeology, geographic nomenclature, personal names, botany, medicine, arts, home life, religion, songs, ceremonies, and language of the tribe (Mooney 1982: 11).

There are several narratives about Nancy Ward/Nanye'hi that found places in Mooney's work that also appear in the twentieth-century. I have chosen to concentrate on two of the most enduring: 1) in which Ward warns the Holston and Watauga communities and saves a Mrs. Bean from execution and 2) the Hopewell Treaty/War Woman of Echota speech. The first narrative concerns an incident in which Nancy Ward, upon finding out about an impending attack on the white settlements Holston and Watauga by a group of Cherokee warriors, warns the inhabitants to allow their escape.

[Ward] distinguished herself by her constant friendship for the Americans, always using her best effort to bring about peace between them and her own people, and frequently giving timely warning of projected Indian raids, notably on the occasion of the great invasion of the Watauga and Holston settlements in 1776... A Mrs. Bean and a boy named Moore were captured on this occasion and carried to one of the Cherokee towns in the neighborhood of Tellico, where the boy was burned, but the woman, after she had been condemned to death and everything was in readiness for the tragedy, was rescued by the interposition of Nancy Ward (Mooney 1982: 204, 48).

Notice how the very language which Mooney chose—*tragedy* and *interposition*—point to Ward's action as out of the ordinary.

The second narrative by Mooney appears to have been published in text form for the first time in *Myths of the Cherokees*. It concerns a talk that Nancy Ward purportedly gave at the signing of the Hopewell Treaty in 1785. Even though there is no record of her name within the proceedings which were drawn by Mooney directly from the American State Papers, modern cultural historians generally agree that Nancy Ward was the War Woman of Echota (Indian Affairs, Vol. 1, p. 41, 1832; quoted in Mooney 1982: 490). Mooney's account reads as follows:

At the Hopewell treaty conference in 1785 the principal chief of Echota, after an opening speech, said: "I have no more to say, but one of our beloved women has, who has borne and raised up warriors." After delivering a string of wampum to emphasize the importance of the occasion, "the war woman of Chota then addressed the commissioners." Having expressed her pleasure at

the peace, she continued: "I have a pipe and a little tobacco to give to the commissioners to smoke in friendship. I look on you and the red people as my children. Your having determined on peace is most pleasing to me, for I have seen much trouble during the late war. I am old, but I hope yet to bear children, who will grow up and people our nation, as we are now to be under the protection of Congress and shall have no more disturbance. The talk I have given is from the young warriors I have raised in my town, as well as myself. They rejoice that we have peace, and we hope the chain of friendship will never more be broken." Two strings of wampum, a pipe, and some tobacco accompanied her words (Mooney 1982: 490).

Mooney states that the "historical matters are, of course, collated [sic] chiefly from printed sources, but the myths proper, with but few exceptions, are from original investigation" (Mooney 1982: 12). Mooney's historical sketch narratives about Nancy Ward come primarily from two major sources. These are John Haywood's 1823 *Natural and Aboriginal Tennessee* and J.G.M. Ramsey's 1853 *Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century*. Ramsey's narrative of Ward is taken verbatim from Haywood's who in turn took his narrative directly from the records of military envoy Lt. Henry Timberlake in the late eighteenth century.

While Cherokee historical memory is replete with stories that refer to the position of "war women" or "pretty women"—as evidenced by Mooney references to them in *Myths of the Cherokee* (See Myth Numbers 93, 94, and 110)—Mooney relies on the records of Timberlake to fashion his historical accounts of the Cherokee Beloved Woman. Timberlake—an envoy of the US government at the time of the Hopewell Treaty—had dealings with Nancy Ward and described her position as negotiator and peacekeeper between the relentlessly advancing Colonial American settlers and the continually resisting Cherokees. Because of this, Mooney and the twentieth century social scientists to follow have stereotyped both Nancy Ward and the position of War Woman into a particular niche in "American history" for "American audiences."

twentieth-century representations: Carolyn T. Foreman

By 1954, a number of histories about the Cherokee Nation had been published (Starr 1921; Williams 1928, 1944). A great many of them excluded any mention of the role and importance of women in Cherokee society. The ones that did generally described women as chattels and "the abject slave and drudge to the men of her tribe" (Foreman 1954: 5). Had these historians been able to avoid the pitfalls of androcentrism

and looked further into historic documents, they might have found some very contradictory information concerning Cherokee women.

The Cherokee social system of the mid- to late eighteenth century was described by Europeans who were involved with them either in trade, military or missionary work as a "petticoat government" (originally: Adair 1930: 153; Fogelson 1992; Mankiller 1993; Pleithman 1964). Some of these sources also state that the Cherokee were "slowly emerging" from a matriarchal stage (Pleithman 1964: 7). This representation is disturbing not only from a feminist standpoint, but also because this society, as many other indigenous societies of North America, is traditionally matrilineal (Gilbert 1937; Fogelson 1992; Mankiller 1993). Matrilineality, as a kinship system of many American Indian nations, has been debated by a number of feminist authors with little agreement on its meaning in the lives of individual women and men (Bataille and Sands 1984; Klein and Ackerman 1995; Leacock 1977; Mankiller 1993). In the next century, the notion of "emerging from matriarchy" (referring, in fact, to a matrilineal/matrilocal clan system) will be reflected in the evolutionary theory of Lewis Henry Morgan and his teleological notion that theorized a move from the "promiscuous horde to patriarchal monogamy" (Morgan 1877: 505-515). The label "petticoat government" on the Cherokee was meant derisively and stemmed from the fact that there was a women's council active in tribal affairs (Adair 153; Mankiller 1993; Oconaluftee Village Tour 1996). There is contradiction among the several accounts of the form this council took. Some refer to the council as being made up of the matriarch of each of the seven clans of the Cherokee system (Foreman 1954: 72). Others refer to these seven representative women as well as women who proved themselves as "War Women" or "Pretty Women" (Alderman 1978: 3-5; Satz 1979: 19-21). According to Wilma Mankiller, former Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the designation *Ghigau* (commonly translated Beloved Woman) is probably closer to "Blood Woman" or "War Woman" and may have been attached to a number of women at any given time (Mankiller 1993: 19). Thus, while we can be relatively sure that the women's council did exist at the turn of the nineteenth century, it may be impossible to tell the exact make-up of it.

Carolyn Thomas Foreman was displeased with the exclusion of women. She states,

In doing research on other subjects, the writer sometimes came across mention of power exerted by Indian women in other respects than persuading their men from killing a captured white man by fire. Becoming interested to learn to what extent the authority of Indian women extended, the material herein was collected, and while it is probably not exhaustive, it covers

accounts of Indian women chiefs and rulers from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the time of the earliest explorers to recent years (Foreman 1954: 6).

As a wealthy and educated EuroAmerican woman who had lived in the Oklahoma Territory, formerly the Indian Territory, for half a century at the time of the above writing, Foreman saw a need to address the exclusion and/or misrepresentation of Indian women in the available texts. To help alleviate this "inaccurate observation" Foreman wrote a slim volume entitled, *Indian Women Chiefs* (Foreman 1954: 5-6). Foreman's treatment of the subject, however, played into the historiography of the day because "when inclusion of an individual woman seemed inescapable it was often done in such a way as to either downplay her achievement or to emphasize her exceptional qualities" in a way that managed to exclude the other women of her society (Lebsock 1989: 326). Narratives concerning Nancy Ward appear in this work as the final chapter. Foreman is mostly concerned with Ward's role as a helper and informant for EuroAmericans at the time of the Revolutionary War and the period leading up to her death circa 1824. While Foreman's initial claim is to bring Indian women's accomplishments into the foreground of the American historical scene, she digresses into a formulaic and contrived litany of both Nancy Ward's documented and purported exploits, marriage with a white trader and her subsequent u-gv-ha-tli children. Foreman quotes the Bean Narrative and the Hopewell Narrative from Mooney's *Myths of the Cherokee* in this chapter about Nancy Ward verbatim with little to no analysis nor any attempt at commenting on women's roles in Cherokee society as a whole. Further, in another section of the chapter, Foreman relates a story about how Nancy Ward came to be bestowed with the title *Ghigau*.

Her [Nancy Ward] first husband, Kingfisher, of the Deer clan, was the father of her first two children, Catherine and Fivekiller. Kingfisher was killed while fighting the Creeks at the battle of Taliwa in 1755. His wife [Ward] was with him during that fight; she lay behind a log chewing bullets for him to make them cause serious lacerations. After Kingfisher's death, Nancy snatched up his rifle and fought as a warrior during the remainder of the battle. On the defeat of the Creeks, the prisoners were divided among the victors and Nancy received a Negro slave, thus becoming the first slave owner among the Cherokees (Foreman 1954: 73).

While Foreman fails to give any information regarding the origin of this particular narrative, her intent—to show Ward's worthiness of the title bestowed on her *and* to establish her in a middle to upper-class milieu

by virtue of being the first Cherokee slave owner—is clear. This narrative, as used by Foreman in her book, can be shown to accomplish the task that Mary Ritter Beard set out to do in her work, *Woman as Force in History*. As Lebsock says, "Beard's work makes it clear that all historians of the western tradition—be they students of the ancients or students of the fascists—might vastly enrich their histories, if only they would pay attention to women" (Lebsock 1989).

Foreman also uses the Hopewell Narrative by "one of the beloved women" to prove to the reader Nancy Ward's eloquence and worthiness. She quotes from Mooney verbatim and the speech appears in its entirety just as it does in *Myths of the Cherokee* (Foreman 1954: 78-79). Foreman actually quotes the Hopewell Narrative twice in a single chapter. The second time that the Hopewell Narrative is quoted, Foreman goes farther with the story:

Only citizens of the Upper Cherokees were present at the meeting and Old Tassel of the town of Chota, was the principal speaker for the Indians. Before the treaty was signed, Old Tassel asked leave for the War Woman of Chota to talk to the commissioners (Foreman 1954: 81).

Even though Carolyn Foreman was a sloppy scholar, her representation of Nancy Ward—and another half-dozen or so women—in *Indian Women Chiefs* served a specific purpose. At a time when American Indian populations were just beginning to regain their footing and give voice to their opposition to long-standing oppression and conditions of living, Foreman (and her husband, Grant Foreman—a former Indian Agent in Indian Territory) represented indigenous North Americans as strong and as having both choice and agency in their own "demise" (McNickle 1973).

Wilma Mankiller, Chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma

While there are several current works that concentrate on or include Nancy Ward (Alderman 1978; Awiatka), I have chosen to focus on the autobiography of the Former Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, Wilma Mankiller. This decision was made because, as Principal Chief, her choice of narratives in the historical sections of her book and the overall knowledge about her tribe provides her with insight and influence that some other writers cannot claim. Illustrative of this is her description of the role of women in pre-constitution Cherokee society:

In the times before the Cherokees learned the ways of others, they paid extraordinary respect to women.

So when a man married, he took up residence with the clan of his wife. The women of each of the seven clans elected their own leaders. These leaders convened as the Women's Council, and sometimes raised their voices in judgment to override the authority of the chiefs when the women believed the welfare of the tribe demanded such an action. It was common custom among the ancient Cherokees that any important questions relating to war and peace were left to a vote of the women. There were brave Cherokee women who followed their husbands and brothers into battle. These female warriors were called War Women or Pretty Women, and they were considered dignitaries of the tribe, many of them being as powerful in council as in battle. The Cherokees also had a custom of assigning to a certain woman the task of declaring whether pardon or punishment should be inflicted on great offenders. This woman also was called the Pretty Woman, but she was sometimes known as Most Honored Woman or Beloved Woman (Mankiller 1993: 19-20).

The tone of her description is matter-of-fact, leaving no question in the mind of the reader about the validity or intent. Historical documents corroborate her description. In fact, that women were a strong force in pre-constitution Cherokee society is evidenced in many ways.

In his 1775 work, *A History of the American Indians*, James Adair, a British trader, made reference to the fact that Europeans were reluctant to marry Cherokee women within their (Cherokee) system because of the "wanton female government" that existed at the time. The right of divorce was equal for women and men and as a result, unions were commonly of "short duration." Adair also stated that, to the European mind, Cherokee women had far too much power within their society with one outcome being the retention of all the marriage "fortunes" by women in the event of divorce (Adair 1930: 133). For this reason, many Europeans and, later, Americans who married Cherokee women did so in Charleston, South Carolina under the auspices of the Catholic church there in an attempt to impose European inheritance patterns on the Cherokee (Adair 1930: 133,134). While the tribe resisted this conversion to a patriarchal system, by the early nineteenth century, a large, wealthy population of u-gv-ha-tli were steadily gaining the political power and economic prestige to push toward complete assimilation (Pleithman 1964: 8; Perdue 1995: 10; Wallace 1993: 17).

The so-called "petticoat government" and the power of the Cherokee women within their society prior to the drastic shifts of the early nineteenth century, had roots in the kinship, marriage, spiritual and economic systems of Cherokee society (Satz 1979: 20; Mankiller 1993: 23-25; Fogelson 1992; Perdue 1995; Wallace 1993: 17). Under the matri-

lineal kinship system of the Cherokee, clan affiliation and lineage were traced exclusively through the mother. Inheritance of clan traditions, sacred objects, and allocation of work were all determined by one's mother's clan (Gilbert 1937: 332). The Cherokee practiced a matrilineal, exogamous marriage system. This meant that a newly married couple would, ideally, live with, and the husband would owe some specific measure of support and allegiance to, the wife's family for at least some period of time (Mankiller 1993: 19-25; Satz 1979: 20-21). Life for Cherokee women and men was extremely balanced. Throughout Adair's *History of the American Indians* and Mooney's *Myths of the Cherokees*, as well as in Moravian missionary diaries and letters, fragments that refer to women, their contributions to society and inclusion in society can be found (Adair 1930; Alderman 1978; Mooney 1982; Foreman 1954; McLoughlin 1984). One piece of evidence of the relative equality of women and men is that of the "wedding" or union. The Cherokee ceremony of union began when a woman and man decided to live together. The man went hunting and brought game back to his new partner while the woman presented her new partner with corn, a sacred food to the Cherokees. This symbolized both parties' willingness to share the abundance of their labors with the other (Satz 1979: 20).

The unified spheres produced an entirely different type of lifeways that European/American traders, missionaries and settlers could not comprehend (Perdue 1979: 41; Wallace 1993: 30-32). The lack of understanding that existed between the Cherokees and whites has been well documented. The missionaries, military men and traders who had initial contact with the Cherokee wrote frequently about the "laziness of the men and the drudgery of the women" (Foreman 1954: 72; McLoughlin 1984: 22). It was unfathomable to eighteenth century European men or women for women to have a vital role in the economic viability of society (McLoughlin 1984: 22-24). Clara Sue Kidwell, an American Indian historian, has said that:

...the positions of women in European societies, largely derived from Judaic and Christian ideal of womanhood, led European men to overlook the power that Indian women could wield in their own societies (Bataille and Sands 1984: viii).

Because of this, one of the primary objectives of most of the white people who maintained contact, including the fledgling United States government, with the Cherokee was to make the women and men "productive" in the way European/Americans understood productivity (Mankiller 1993: 20-21; McLoughlin 1984: 25-26; Satz 1979: 20-21). The Cherokee resisted this change until the nineteenth century when, as mentioned above, the u-gv-ha-tli population had grown to such an ex-

tent that white people's ways became, for many, preferable. This was due to their predominately Christian/English language-based upbringing (Mankiller 1993: 24-26; Satz 1979: 72-96; Wallace 1993: 15-18).

Chief Mankiller cites narratives about Ward in two distinct sections of her book. The first is in a chapter entitled "Origins" which describes the role of Ghigau in pre-contact Cherokee society. She introduces Nancy Ward by recognizing that she had been conferred with the title, Ghigau. Mankiller states:

There was also a very powerful woman who is alternately described as the Ghigau or "Beloved Woman." The name may be a corruption of *giga*, or blood, and *aghuya*, or woman. If so, the title might be phrased more accurately as "Red Woman" or "War Woman."

Whatever the case, prior to European contact and the influence of the whites on our culture, women played a prominent role in the social, political, and cultural life of the Cherokees. Nancy Ward, Ghigau of the Cherokees, participated in a May 1817 tribal council meeting at which she presented a statement signed by twelve other women pleading with the Cherokee people [read men] not to give up any more land (Mankiller 1993: 19).

Mankiller bases her account on a letter sent by Nancy Ward and the twelve other women as noted above. These women were willing to bend to the demands of the acculturative process in an attempt to avoid removal. It is interesting to note that while Carolyn Thomas Foreman quotes this letter in its entirety as a kind of 'inventory of Nancy Ward quotes,' Mankiller does not. She merely makes a reference to it to punctuate her argument, in this chapter devoted to history, that women once held high status among the Cherokee.

Mankiller's second reference to Nancy Ward appears in her chapter "Homeward Bound." This reference is evocative of oral narration and is used to depict Ward as courageous and valorous. This particular narrative of the heroic action of the woman fighting with her husband in the Creek Wars is based on a number of stories that have come to the late twentieth century through textual representation. Mankiller's version, which is a bit different than the same narrative in Foreman's work, is as follows:

It was the belief of the Cherokees that the Great Spirit sent messages through their Beloved Woman. So great was her power that she could commute the sentence of a person condemned to death by the council. The Ghigau, known by her later name of Nancy Ward, is often called the last Beloved Woman. She earned

her title, the highest honor that a Cherokee woman could achieve, by rallying the Cherokees in a pitched battle against the Creeks in 1755. As a War Woman of the Wolf Clan, she accompanied her first husband, Kingfisher, into battle. In the field, she prepared food for him and chewed his bullets to cause fatal damage when they struck their marks. When Kingfisher was killed in the heat of the fray, she raised his weapon and fought so valiantly that the Cherokees rose behind her leadership and defeated the Creeks.

In recognition of her courage in war, Nancy was given her prestigious title. She spent the remainder of her life as a devoted advocate of peace between the Cherokees and all others (Mankiller 1993: 207-8).

Mankiller's use of Ward narratives is quite distinct from that of other authors, both quoted and unquoted, that have chosen to make use of these narratives. Her exclusive focus on Nanye'hi's rise to the status of Ghigau and the final letter to the Council is also unique and may stem from her position as first woman Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. These two narratives, unlike all of the other available documentation, highlight *Nanye'hi* as Ghigau and her pride in her own "Cherokeeness." Most notably, Mankiller does not incorporate *any* of the narratives that involve Nanye'hi's role of "befriending the 'whiteman' [which of course includes 'whitewomen']." This conspicuous absence from Mankiller's work is illustrative of the role that the social scientist, or biographer, or novelist, plays in the reader's perception of a particular individual or, for that matter, individual society. For Chief Mankiller, a feminist in her own right, the image of a strong Cherokee woman was most likely a source of great inspiration during her term of office.

implications of representations of American Indian women

The narratives of Nancy Ward described in this paper have made the transition from an off-handed inclusion to point out eccentricities in Cherokee societal construction collected as "salvage ethnology" in the nineteenth century; to "proving" American Indian women's worth, prestige and status in the first half of the twentieth century; to a role model for modern Cherokee women moving toward a new millennium.

The significance of the two narrative statements about Nancy Ward is not that throughout the twentieth century both of these stories have come to reflect salient features about her life. Instead, the significance is in the use of these narratives as a means to an end in the works in which

they figure. Rather than just a notion about the life of Nancy Ward, it appears that in this case, and many others, twentieth century authors have appropriated stories in search of the "good Indian." This appropriation of indigenous narrative by social scientists for the pacification of the conscience and the aggrandizement of the United States as a whole finds its roots in what Rayna Green (Cherokee) has called the "Pocahontas Perplex" (Green 1976). It is significant that the "good Indians" are very often indigenous women who are "in league" with the United States (or British, or Spanish, etc.) government and who go against the wishes of at least a great many of their own people (Alderman 1978: 44-45). Green states that this is the "Indian woman's dilemma. In order to be 'good,' she must defy her own people, exile herself from them, become white, and perhaps suffer death" (Green 1976: 704). In her critique of the Pocahontas myth, Green suggests that the "good Indian" model serves a larger purpose as well.

Moreover, as a model for the national understanding of Indian women, her significance is undeniable. With her darker, negatively viewed sister, the Squaw—or, the anti-Pocahontas, as Fiedler calls her—the *Princess* [emphasis mine] intrudes on the national consciousness, and a potential cult waits to be resurrected when our anxieties about who we are make us recall her from her woodland retreat (Green 1976: 701).

In the case of the Ward narratives, the *Princess* becomes the *Chieftainness* with the power to subdue the "bad Indians" who wish to remove or retaliate against white encroachment and invasion. Both the Bean Narrative and the Hopewell Narrative are used to establish Ward's courage and bravery, the action which led to her attaining the position of Ghigau and her unswerving dedication to peace with and "love," or at least great respect, for the "whiteman" [which of course includes the "whitewoman"]. Thus, the American conscience may be appeased thanks to the image of yet another Indian woman willing to go against her own people for the sake of whites. Vine Deloria, an American Indian scholar, points out in *Custer Died For Your Sins* that "many whites claim kinship with some distant Indian Princess grandmother, and thus try to resolve their 'Indian Problem' with such sincere affirmations of relationship" (Green 1976: 713). Again, Rayna Green offers:

The only good Indian—male or female, Squanto, Pocahontas, Sacagawea, Cochise, the Little Mohee or the Indian Doctor—rescues and helps white men (Green 1976: 703).

Nancy Ward can be counted, by this description, as a "good Indian."

conclusion

Both James Mooney and Carolyn T. Foreman serve the purpose of creating a "good Indian" as described by Green with their uses of the Bean Narrative and the Hopewell Narrative. Each historian creates a false dichotomy between Nancy Ward and the "bad Indian" faction within the tribe who would rise up against Colonial American encroachment. By continuing to build on the narratives Foreman creates in Ward the manifestation of many qualities that Americans could both identify with and look up to. Combined with many other narratives that can be directly linked to Nancy Ward, through military records and diaries of traders and military officers, the Bean Narrative and the Hopewell Narrative construct a representation of Nancy Ward, like that of Pocahontas, that gives the reader a sense of atonement over the "Indian Problem."

On the other hand, the use of other narratives about Nanye'hi by Wilma Mankiller casts a different light on its probable meaning(s). While Foreman used the Ward narratives as discussed above to point out her dealings with Colonial Americans, Mankiller uses the narratives in a strikingly different way. Ward is depicted as Ghigau, a position of authority and influence among the pre-removal Cherokee nation, and these narratives help solidify this position for modern Cherokee women. Mankiller does not utilize the Hopewell Narrative in her autobiographical history, but she does make reference to another letter that bears Nancy Ward's name. The choice of this letter, which pleads with the Cherokee Council of 1817 not to give up any more Cherokee land to the Americans, may be indicative of Mankiller's focus away from Ward's appeasement and apparent respect for white culture and settlers. For Mankiller, there is no ambiguity within the tribal history where Ward is concerned. Ward is depicted as *Ghigau*, Beloved Woman, and an inspiration for the modern Cherokee Nation.

There are some present-day manifestations which may have arisen as a result of the use of the Ward Narratives. One of these is the 1994 formation of the Society for the Descendants of Nancy Ward in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Tahlequah is the location of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and near Chief Mankiller's place of residence. The founding of this society undoubtedly had its beginnings in Mankiller's dramatic rise to prominence and her use of the narratives in her autobiography, published in 1993.

Another recent manifestation is the recently released book of Cherokee spirituality, *Selu: Seeking the Corn-Mother's Wisdom*, by Marilou Awiakta (1993). Awiakta, in this work which seeks to speak to Cherokees as well as other American Indian tribes and EuroAmericans, incor-

porates both the narrative of Nanye'hi's act for which she became a Ghigau and the Hopewell Narrative into the her story. She, like Mankiller, introduces Nanye'hi in her role as Ghigau as a source of strength and leadership for Cherokee women in the twentieth century. The message is clear, Nanye'hi was a "good Indian" for both the Cherokee and EuroAmericans.

In the telling and retelling of the Ward narratives over the past one hundred years, a process of appropriation may have denied all federally-recognized groups of Cherokee the full opportunity to exercise their prerogative on Nancy Ward's place in their history. That she is once again being invoked by the Cherokee people themselves, in stories, in history, and as an icon for a society to bring Cherokee people together, could be recognized as an alternative indigenous model to the "Pocahontas Perplex." Nancy Ward, "the Pocahontas of the West," may well come to have entirely new representations for coming generations.

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