

〈논 문〉

## Languages of Power: Pauline in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*

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Pauline Puyat, with her sado-masochistic religious zeal and schizophrenic sexual delusions that suddenly and inexorably flare up into terrifying outcomes for everyone in her vicinity including herself, is one of the most disturbing characters in Louise Erdrich's often bizarre and surreal fictional landscape. She is born a half-breed Chippewa but intensely hates her Indian heritage, and she takes advantage of every opportunity to deny her link to the Indian community while at the same time constantly going back to the reservation for gossip, sympathy, and pleasure. She also quietly condones the three white men, Lily, Tor, and Dutch, beating and raping Fleur, a Chippewa medicine woman and the heroine of the novel whom she loves and hates, and then ends up killing them by locking them up in a freezer. Later, she interrupts a healing ritual Moses and Nanapush were conducting for Fleur, strangles her lover Napoleon Morrissey, and runs naked to the Mission, to later become a nun named Leopolda. In short, aside from the United States government and the Turcot Lumber Company, she is the most destructive force in the novel, ceaselessly undermining and dissipating the safety and coherence of the Chippewa community others desperately try to hold together.

The critical response to this troubled and troubling character has been, however, rather inadequate: of the few articles on this novel, only one is devoted exclusively to Pauline (Cornell): the rest quietly put her aside or describe her mainly in contrast with Nanapush, often to her disadvantage. James Flavin, for example, discusses Nanapush in great detail, establishing his connection to the traditional trickster/medicine man figure of the Indian culture and attributing his strength and power to his self-effacing and empowering sense of the "communal nature of tribal society" (9), but he does not consider Pauline's place in the novel in any way. This is a curious omission, when we remember the fact that much of his energy and power is spent on counterbalancing the harm Pauline and her narrative do to his tribe and narrative.

Daniel Cornell notes the contrast between Pauline's mental disturbance and Nanapush's vigorous stability and assumes that his reliability as a narrator works toward diminishing her trustworthiness, i.e. highlights her mendacity and aberrations. He then aligns her with Fleur from a feminist point of view, regarding them both as occupying the non-phallogocentric subject positions and becoming reduced to the "other." According to Cornell, Pauline's idiosyncracies and deviance are defined as "insanity" by the characters in the novel and the readers largely because she refuses to be constituted as a "woman"—the object of male gaze and desire—and takes up the position of constitutive subject (52, 54), only to be persecuted for that presumption.

Gloria Bird recognizes the difference between Pauline and other Indian characters in the novel and regards her as a vehicle for "a more overtly colonialist view...who regards the Indians of the novel as Other" (45) during her discussion of the political problems of the novel involving the relationships between the colonizer and the colonized. Interestingly, however, even Bird's essay does not deal with the most troubling aspect of the novel, that is, the destructive and tragic quality of Pauline's career.

While reading through this novel, one cannot but notice how unhappy and isolated she really is, while despising and hating what she does to wreck other people's lives: she is an orphan, a sole survivor of her family that consumption claimed along with many others in the tribe, and unlike Fleur, another orphan in the novel who is cared for and surrounded by men, friends, husband, and a child, she does not have anybody who takes a responsibility for her well-being.

While Fleur is beautiful, charismatic, and proudly independent in her initial isolation and fearfully respected later due to her family tradition as practitioners of a powerful medicine, Pauline is avoided and despised because of her ignominious family, and the most important trait she attributes to herself is the intensity of her curiosity into other people's affairs and sexuality and her own utter lack of physical charm and concomitant "invisibility." Whereas Fleur inspires various kinds of strong reactions in everyone she encounters, be it jealousy, fear, lust, pity, or admiration, Pauline is incapable of getting herself noticed by men and oftentimes women. The novel in a way traces the painful and tortuous journey that she makes to get people's attention and replace Fleur at the center of life's stage: "There would have to come a turning, a gathering, another door. And it would be Pauline who opened it, as she closed the Argus lockers. Not Fleur Pillager" (*Tracks* 139).

This envious ambition on Pauline's part to reduce Fleur's power and charisma, however, is accompanied by a thinly disguised longing and desire for her as a mother-figure: when she is on a leaking boat on her self-imposed mission to subdue Misshepeshu, the monster of the lake, Pauline ignores every effort to make her land ashore, but when she sees Fleur, she screams at her. When the latter turns toward her, she feels as if she entered a door, and when Fleur turns again, this time away from her, she feels a "crushing sadness" (200). Also, the only time she totally "abandon[s] my Lord" and feels "no jealousy or zeal" is when Fleur bathes her in warm water, rubs her body with herbs, and dresses her in new, smooth underwear. On the way home, she feels "mindless and at peace," and that is the only time we see her at peace with herself and the world in the whole book, even though it does not stop her from pursuing her deadly plan to conquer the water monster and fetch more Indian souls to Christ.

In other words, the story revolves around the one-sided "jealousy and zeal" Pauline feels toward Fleur and toward the Catholicism that she feels can empower her to escape from her insignificance and become more like her. The ending shows her being installed at the St. Catherine's School in downtown Argus as a teacher of arithmetic, while her beloved rival is driven away from the ancestral land and family, carrying all her worldly possessions in a rough cart.

Is Pauline (Sister Leopolda), then, an effective, triumphant vehicle of colonial power that barges into the Chippewa reservation in the guises of Catholicism, the Agent, the US government and the lumber company to "divide and conquer," to wipe the Chippewa people off the map? Is Fleur simply replaced by Pauline, who has learned to adopt and adapt herself to the new ways of constituting personal power and a social status? Is Pauline a winner in the classic colonial power-game where only the sellout ensures temporary safety and self-preservation?

Despite the seeming defeat of Fleur and the Chippewa tribe at the hands of Pauline, the colonial government, and its various religious and secular agencies, the answer is not so simple. Granted that Pauline becomes a nun (a white privilege) and a teacher of arithmetic at a Catholic school, and that her enemies lose the basis of their survival not to mention their political and spiritual power, her success is a Pyrrhic victory at best because, whereas her outward career improves significantly over the course of the novel, she becomes increasingly more isolated, suspected, avoided, and finally deranged, more prone to bouts of schizophrenic delusions and staggering violence without realizing their

significance or consequence beforehand. She also loses the small chance she had to relate to her unattainable *alter ego*, Fleur, who could have made her “visible” and accepted in the tribe, and to experience the maternal warmth Pauline desperately needs and briefly enjoys on several occasions with her. In other words, as the novel progresses, she moves further and further from her most desired goals: closeness with and recognition by people around her, love with men, and easy intimacy with Fleur.

Seen this way, Pauline is a *locus classicus* where the colonial power inscribes itself in its frightening comprehensiveness and thoroughness, wreaking a havoc on her identity and sanity, while itself maintaining an invisible, distant, and even benign visages of religion (Father Damien, Mother Superior), bureaucracy (the Agent, Nanapush), and monetary economy (the Pinkham’s dealer). More directly related to the colonial power and therefore more effective in breaking up the families and tribal unity and identity, these external agents assume a much more sympathetic appearances than Pauline and are perceived as such: Father Damien, for instance, is a thoroughly congenial figure to all characters in the novel including Nanapush, always ready to help with information on land allotment and tax (172), sorely needed food (172), medical attention (167), and charming and disarming wit (124). Mother Superior of the Mission is no less likable: she demonstrates a great deal of tact, warmth, and humor toward the increasingly disturbed novice Pauline, ordering her to burn more sticks in the stove so that Christ can stay longer during his visits (138), giving up her own blanket for Pauline (139), and scraping what little she and her fellow nuns can to feed the Indan children during a difficult winter (125). The Pinkham’s dealer, who buys tree bark from the Indians, in fact, offers the only way to raise cash to pay for the Kashpaw land although the money he brings in radically changes their attitude toward nature, eradicates memory of the past (174), and irritates their lives with the susurrous of dollar bills (176). Nor does the Agent seem at fault. Nanapush recognizes this diffusion (immanence) of the colonial power:

I was told that it was not his [the Agent’s] fault the trees were sold and cut down. Nor was the tribe to blame. *There was no adversary, no betrayer, no one to fight.* Bernadette was friendly. The Agent smiled and spoke in a voice of pleasant softness. (207; my italics)

In a way, then, Pauline is a tragic figure who suffers the brunt of the colonial invasion: due to her peripheral position in the Chippewa community (half-breed, pariah lineage, Catholic, physically unattractive, mentally unstable), she comes to deny her own heritage,

hate and despise her culture, destroy the Kashpaw and Morrissey family and the tribal cohesion, and ends up irrevocably deranged and isolated. Her career, more than anyone else's in the novel, seems to be a graphic illustration of Michel Foucault's concept of power with its dyadic orientation:

The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle. (Foucault 98)

In this configuration, power is not a monolithic, linear force that emanates from a single palpable source; it is "employed and exercised through a net-like organisation.... [Individuals] are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power" (ibid.). At the same time, one cannot deny the empirical fact that some individuals assume or suffer from a certain power more than others, and it evinces its dual nature in a frighteningly concentrated way in Pauline.

In the context of the novel, then, Pauline is the one character that carries out and suffers most vividly the multifarious implications of the colonial encroachment, and the events that she initiates or intrudes into to promote her power or authority often in the name of God show the difference between the traditional Chippewa perspective toward power and that of the colonizer, and in the process demonstrates how the latter leads to the annihilation of personal integrity and communal unity. Despite the tragic turn of events and unsettling characters such as Pauline, *Tracks*, then is a positive political statement that celebrates the traditional Chippewa values and dissects the insidious and deadly consequences of the individualism upon which the colonial power is based.

To properly assess the significance of Pauline's tragic and destructive career, we need to establish the political and economic context that confronted her tribe. Long before the date of the events in the novel (1912-1924), it had been the government policy to "divide and conquer" the Indians. The most effective way to do so was to by force take away or buy the communally owned Indian land and redistribute it to individual families, not tribes, since the concept and practice of tribal ownership of the land were the very basis of traditional economy in which the tribe's survival was much more central than individual wealth or glory, and the ceremonial, voluntary nature of daily life was maintained. By buying out or dividing the tribal land, the colonizers would be able to break up the communal life, dissociate its members from the traditional religion, and therefore assimilate them into

the mainstream, i.e. capitalist and Christian corporate America more easily; those who were unwilling or unable to follow this program had to leave, uprooted and driven away from their land.

The Board of Indian Commissioners made it brutally clear that the Indians would not be allowed to stop them from Americanizing every inch of North America whatever the cost might be:

This Anglo-Saxon race will not allow the car of civilization to stop long at any line of latitude or longitude on our beloved domain. If the Indian in his wilderness plants himself on the track, he must inevitably be crushed by it. (qtd. in Bowden 193)

This resolution was carried out in various ways, but the most powerful and comprehensive was the General Allotment Act (the so-called Henry Dawes Act) of 1887. It stipulated that each head of a family would be given a quarter-section (160 acres), and a bachelor over 18 an eighth-section, and the rest of the Indian reservation lands would be distributed for white settlement. So by 1934, over 60% of the 138 million acres held by Indians before severalty was acquired by whites (ibid. 193-4). Those Indians like Fleur, who would not buy into this plan or refused to pay for the allotted land were evicted from the reservation.

In the novel, this policy is firmly installed in the reservation, and it is clear that it would be fully and successfully accomplished. Both narrators of the novel, Pauline and Nanapush, are aware of its inevitability: "The land will go, the land will be sold and measured," Nanapush warns Fleur in 1912 (8); Pauline confidently predicts in 1919 that "the land will be sold and divided" and that "the young, like Lulu and Nector, will return from the government schools blinded and defeated" (204-5).

Another important rationale and tactic to divide the tribes was to convert its members to Christianity, be it Catholicism or Protestantism. In the novel, the Mission (the local base of Catholicism) has been in operation for quite a while and has infiltrated the daily lives of Indians to such an extent that the missionaries such as Father Damien are fully embraced by the tribal people, including non-Catholics, and Pauline, of course, is a prime example of its Americanizing—individualizing and dividing—operation. Set apart from the tribe because of her deficiencies from the very beginning, the increasingly alienated and divisive Pauline seems to live out the colonizers' fondest dreams such as that of Merrill Gates, a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners:

If civilization, education and Christianity are to do their work, we must get at the individual. They must lay hold of men and women and children, one by one. The deadening sway of tribal custom must be interfered with. The sad uniformity of savage tribal life must be broken up. (qtd. in Prucha 621)

Against such an overarching and inexorable plan was pitted the traditional life that would be entirely incompatible with land severalty, rapacious capitalism, and the intense self-absorption of Christianity. The power and identity of an individual were defined in terms of his relationship with nature and the well-being of the tribe. Fleur's power, for instance, comes from her ancestors, not from herself, and it is based on dreams, medicinal herbs, and innate charisma, not her own volition or endeavor, and it departs her when the tribe itself is broken up.

The ancestral and communal basis of that power is recurrently testified to in both Nanapush's and Pauline's narrative: Nanapush feels the measurement and lumbering of Lake Matchimanito and the sacred Pillager land is blasphemous because Misshepesu, the water monster that people believe to be Fleur's supernatural lover and source of her mysterious power, came there when her father came to the Chippewa land from the east (175). The hereditary nature of her power is further attested by the fact that her cousin Moses Pillager is also a medicine man who concocts love medicine (80) and abortion pills (132), and oddly enough by Pauline's remark that "power travels in bloodlines, handed out before birth" (931). Pauline also refers to the awe and fearful reverence Fleur inspires even in the elders of the village (89). While Boy Lazarre is dying of blood poisoning after being bitten by Margaret, people automatically assume that Fleur is killing him with sorcery ("bad medicine"). When Pauline has murdered and discarded Napoleon Morrissey's body, everyone immediately suspects that Fleur is responsible and points to the acorns and twigs young Lulu heaped around him as evidence for her witchcraft (204, 215). According to A. Irving Hallowell, who observed the Ojibwa Indians (a branch of Chippewa) in the Manitoba area in the 1930s, the Chippewa medicine men maintained their power and authority despite the newly institutionalized power agencies such as the chiefs and tribal police. They were believed to have the power of life and death, and such power was given to them by various Manitous through dreams and rituals such as "shaking tent" (Hallowell 36).

Such power is like a talent one has to develop and refine, and if one does not know how to use it properly, or if others do not have the necessary sensitivity to and trust in it, it will

suddenly disappear, as we see in Fleur's case. According to Nanapush, who attains and uses similar power through dreams, singing, and storytelling, one has to be careful to remember that the power is not personal, and therefore can be taken away from the individual who temporarily assumes it. However, Fleur does not heed that advice and fails to modify her medicine to meet the new challenges that confront her people:

Power dies, power goes under and gutters out, ungraspable. It is momentary, quick of fight and liable to deceive. As soon as you rely on the possession it is gone. Forget that it ever existed, and it returns. I never made the mistake of thinking that I owned my own strength, that was my secret. (177)

Unfortunately, though, that is precisely what Fleur fails to comprehend or admit, and she blames herself for the dissolution of her family and tribe caused by the colonial power, which is of course far beyond her control. Unlike Nanapush, who after all understands and tries to deal with the colonialism in its own terms as well as his own, or Old Bertonie, the mysterious and powerful medicine man who helps Tayo recover his identity and the tribal cohesion in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, she is incapable and unwilling to adapt to the new conditions or create new ceremonies for a changing world.

That inflexibility is probably one of the major reasons why the novel ends on a tragic note with the family and tribal members alienated and separated from each other and from their source of power and identity. As a consequence of that *hamartia*, "her dreams lied, her vision obscured, her helper slept deep in the lake" (177), and she herself is driven away from the lake where her Manitou is. Though based on the ancestral and tribal tradition and generally acknowledged both by her tribesmen and herself, Fleur's power does not escape the invasion of the atomistic and egocentric worldview of the colonizers in the sense that, by assuming the power to be her own absolute and inalienable possession rather than that of the tribe bestowed upon her temporarily and conditionally, Fleur loses it irrevocably. After all, then, Fleur has more in common with Pauline than either of them seems to suspect, and interestingly both of them are crushed under the juggernaut of colonialism precisely because they play into the divisive and individualistic logic of the United States government and Catholicism rather than abiding by the traditional communal value system.

While Fleur represents and adheres to the traditional values such as harmony with nature, reverence for the elders and children, and openness to the supernatural and

mystical and fails to protect them only at the last instance because of her blindness to the true nature or dimension of the invading power, Pauline has always been consumed with the desire to be like the colonizers and to separate herself from the tribe because "even as a child [she] saw that to hang back was to perish." she refuses to speak her native tongue, and as soon as she is old enough to leave home, she asks her father to send her to the white South so that she can pick up a white trade, lace-making, and lead a white life (14). Her anxious desire to become white reaches its pathetic culmination when she hears from Christ himself that despite her Indian features, she is in fact "wholly white" during one of her nightly visions/delusions (137).

Once convinced that she is different from the rest of the tribe and that she is actually not one of "them" but has more in common with the members of the triumphant colonial power and is virtually more white, Catholic, ascetic, and sanctimonious than any nun in the Mission, Pauline employs various means to defamiliarize them. Not surprisingly, her enterprise is a classic colonialist tactic:

Although the stereotyping initiative, so to speak, is taken by the community that exercises power, it has to create a stereotype that exercises power, it has to create a stereotype of itself as much as it does of others. Indeed, this is one of the ways by which *otherness* is defined. The definition of otherness, the degree to which others can be persuasively shown to be discordant with the putative norm, provides a rationale for conquest. (Deane 12)

In Pauline's case, this operation is doubly tragic because she completely surrenders to the colonialist logic that she is and has to be different to survive or be accepted by the whites she wants to emulate, and she also projects their denigrating stereotypes of her fellow Indians onto the complex and discrete Indian people around her and regards them as an amorphous and despicable whole.

Of course such actions of Pauline are not entirely based on her private paranoia: there were real threats to the survival of "different" or resistant individuals, as we see in a CIA Report from 1889. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs declared, "the logic of events demands the absorption of the Indians into our national life, *not as Indians, but as American citizens*" (qtd. in Prucha 610; my italics). Even so, her reaction to this threat is extreme and disastrous as well as self-annihilating; its ramifications go far beyond her own assimilation or transformation. First, it means shutting out any desire or need to integrate herself into the tribal life represented by Fleur and her family. It also means alienating and stereotyping the tribe in the worst colonialist clichés: the tribe as a whole is

a "kingdom of the damned" (199) and "the lost tribe of Israel" (196), which fatally echoes a Puritan woman's wholesale condemnation of Pauline's own race—"hell hounds" and "those roaring lions and savage bears" (Rowlandson 35, 70). The lake monster Misshepesu that supposedly courts and empowers Fleur is a "devil," complete with horns, fangs, fins, brass scales, claws, and golden eyes (11, 137), and this misguided perception leads her to strangle her lover Napoleon Morrissey and unsuccessfully abort and later abandon her daughter Marie, thus depriving herself of any chance to experience a genuine warmth or bond with a fellow human being. It would be superfluous to say that one cannot achieve a meaningful or redeeming relationship with a group of people whom one regards as pagan, bestial, and beyond any hope of salvation, and that is Pauline's lot in the novel.

Her stereotyping reaches its peak when it comes to her rival Fleur. To her Christianized mind, Fleur embodies and represents whatever she lacks or does not dare to be: she is beautiful, sexually electrifying, potentially a maternal figure for her. She becomes unbearably afraid and jealous of her when they both work in Argus, but after Fleur carries her and puts her to sleep in a closet one night, she devotes herself to her and "becomes her moving shadow" (22) that men never notice. When she dozes off during Fleur's premature delivery of the second child, she dreams that her own mother, who abandoned her when she died, takes the baby from Fleur as if Pauline herself is vicariously handed over to her mother through Fleur (161). Curious as she is about everyone in the tribe, Fleur occupies the very center of her obsessive attention and various machinations that she conducts in the novel.

Such fascination and longing that she feels toward Fleur, however, are inextricably bound up with the fear of the medicine woman's mysterious power and probably almost unconscious endeavors to demonize her. From the beginning of her narrative, she tries to convince her readers that Fleur's power and charisma come from Misshepesu, and hence a devilish one, and that she is more of a witch than a medicine woman. She recounts the stories of Fleur's deadly encounters with men, the suspicious paraphernalia she keeps for her evil trade such as the finger of a child, powder of unborn rabbits, and the heart of an owl to make her see better at night, and finally the fact that she changes herself into animals at night.

According to the anthropological research by Hallowell, "there is an old and widespread belief among the Ojibwa that sorcerers can transform themselves into bears in order to pursue their nefarious work" (67), and it is interesting that the bear is one animal Pauline

associates with Fleur most frequently (12, 157), along with the wolf (19, 88). When Fleur is in labor, Pauline recognizes "Turtle's quavering scratch, Eagle's high shriek, Loon's crazy bitterness, Otter, the howl of Wolf, Bear's low rasp" (59). And of course, by the end of the novel, Pauline has strangled the water monster (Napoleon) who is Fleur's Manitou, shot and killed the last bear, another Manitou that is closely related with Fleur (60). Fleur herself is driven away from the lake and the wood, the source of her power and medicinal herbs. However, when compared with Nanapush's account of Fleur, Pauline is strikingly animalistic in the sense that she tends to attribute supernatural and bestial traits to Fleur and genuinely believe in them herself even while ostensibly denying the potency of her witchcraft (89).

Sexuality is one area Pauline delves into to define and undermine Fleur's power, vindicating and privileging her own lack or powerlessness in that area, and ultimately establishing her own righteousness and spiritual authenticity based on that lack. In her narrative, she displays a preternatural and obsessive sensitivity to any sign of sexual passion between Fleur and her husband Eli and endows it with crude bestiality: "In the morning, before they washed in Matchmanito, they smiled like animals, wild and heady, and sometimes in the dusk their fingers left tracks like snails, glistening and wet" (72). She reinforces the Christian association of sex with pagan or hedonistic savagery, while at the same time practicing and glorifying her own versions of fanatical asceticism and masochistic penance, but all these religious rants seem hollow and profoundly misguided because of her psychotic (re)actions concerning sexuality. While in Argus, she is racked with her own lack of sexual charm and Fleur's Calypso-like irresistibility: "She knew the effect she had on men, even the very youngest of them. She swayed them, sotted them, made them curious about her habits, drew them close with careless ease and cast them off with the same indifference" (16-17). Desperately desiring and despising intense sexual experience, she makes mostly futile efforts to seduce Napoleon Morrissey and Eli Kashpaw and avenges her failure and humiliation on Eli and Sophie, using Moses Pillager's love potion. She fantasizes about Eli's sexual prowess while visiting his family, and when he makes love to Sophie, she "enters" the young girl to vicariously savor an afternoon-long intercourse with him in the water and later describes it in surprisingly graphic and sensuous terms.

Such clinical obsession with and abhorrence for sexuality are disturbing especially because, in Pauline's imagination, they go hand in hand with Catholicism, the colonizer's

religion. Being plain, secretive, and painfully insignificant in her community, she constructs a sense of identity that would not only compensate for her inadequacy but also condemn her fellow Indians. In other words, she closely follows the colonialist logic of establishing a difference and thereby justifying the oppression of the natives, but it is done at the expense of her identity and sanity. There is an abysmal gap between the “invisibility” people associate with Pauline and her physically excruciating but self-aggrandizing penances and zealous religious delusions.

Blinded by an urge to create and consolidate a spiritual and social distinction between her fellow Indians and herself, she indulges in heretical and masochistic self-mortifications and interprets them in a language that verges on phantasmagoria. Unaware of the theological or dogmatic significance of her actions, she commits the solipsistic and megalomaniacal error of identifying the self-imposed and extreme forms of physical suffering or mental disturbance with sanctity. Like the misguided nuns St. Teresa of Avila describes to warn us (*Interior Castle* 191), and Anne Hutchinson, who was prosecuted and exiled by the Puritans for heresy when she divulged that God showed the validity of what she was preaching “by an immediate revelation” (Hall 337), Pauline relentlessly chastises her own body and soul and imagines that she speaks with Christ (137) and converses with the devil himself (193). She then interprets such actions and events as a means and evidence for her being different from and superior to the Chippewas. So, she wears her shoes in the wrong way, starves herself, refuses to toss in bed, goes without washing, and stoically endures Nanapush’s lewd remarks and teasing (151-3), feeling that she is better than the Indians, nuns, and even the most famous of the Christian saints: “I knew there never was a martyr like me” (192).

Her most recurrent and empowering fantasy is that of being one of the “chosen” few like the Virgin. In the novel, Pauline gets rejected and made “invisible” by her fellow tribesmen, feels burdened with the guilt of having killed the three men by locking them up in a storage locker (66) and having born and abandoned an illegitimate child (137), but she internalizes the language of Catholicism and tries to turn her disadvantages and anguish into assets and privileges. She imagines herself being selected by God to go out and save the lost souls of the Chippewas “with the net of my knowledge” (cf. Luke 5:1-10), to suffer like Christ for forty days and forty nights (cf. Mathew 4:2) on a leaking boat, and to be the first Indian lily of the valley (203) reserved for God’s use just as Virgin Mary was (95, 135). However, her strategy to disentangle herself from her unsatisfactory identity and fellow

Indians through Catholicism does not work; it backfires on her and leaves her more alienated from both. It blinds her to any genuine sense of moral responsibility or human bond, and even after she realizes she has mistakenly killed Napoleon, she says, "There was no guilt in this matter, no fault. How could I have known what body the devil would assume?" (203) When she puts her arm in boiling water to prove divine favor she imagines she enjoys and gets severely burned, she finds it hard to accept the disastrous result since she believes she is Christ's savior and champion (195). She is filled with shocked disbelief, and apparently realizing the irony of her situation, makes an unbearably lucid and succinct description of her career throughout the novel: "I was hollow unless pain filled me, empty but for pain" (192). Thus, her sense of profound inadequacy and religious zeal are dangerously and tragically bound together. After all, her piety does not keep her from using Moses Pillager's love charm on Eli or from saying, "It was no matter to me what happened after life" (690). One cannot be a very good Catholic if the afterlife becomes a matter of no consequence.

Her fantasies of supreme power and authenticity based on her own sacrifice cause her unspeakable pain and her victims terrifying disasters, such as the rupture of conjugal happiness (Eli and Fleur), and an internecine feud (between the Kashpaws and the Morrisseys) that leads to the dissolution of tribal unity and her own insanity. All this would have been less pathetic or dangerous in a different context. In this novel, however, Pauline's attempts to differentiate herself for self-legitimation and better social and spiritual status among her fellow Indians result in a disintegration of both her self and the tribe. Rather than finding a way to integrate herself in the tribe where she truly belongs, she seeks to construct a subject position by enunciating (her narrative) and operating (her actions) in the colonialist language of the Christian America that is based on the cult of individualism and racial superiority of the whites. What causes her invisibility, then, is not the "system where woman is defined in terms of male desire" (Cornell 54); what makes her literally removed from the reservation and permanently alienated from her daughter and *alter ego* is her adoption of the colonialist logic. As the Editorial collective of the *Questions Feministes* states, "The very theme of difference, whatever the differences are represented to be, is useful to the oppressing group...to demand the right to Difference without analyzing its social character is to give back the enemy an effective weapon" (qtd. in Minh-ha 101). That is precisely how Pauline's desperate attempts to be different benefit no one except non-Chippewas in the novel.

Pauline's character in the novel, then, plays a dual role of the effect and vehicle of colonial power, and as such forms a contrast to that of Fleur. Although defeated and disenfranchised at the end, the latter enjoys a full range of human experiences among her family, friends, and fellow tribesmen, inspiring fear, reverence, love, and care. Even her exit is carefully planned and successfully executed, leaving other characters and leaders in awe of her power, however diminished and frazzled by the incessant and overwhelming encroachment of the colonial agencies. Pauline, on the other hand, never succeeds in assuming any real power; in fact, she continues to lose what little sympathy or concern her fellow human beings have for her initially. If we consider power as a potential to establish a position to speak and act from to influence people and the courses of events, hers is an exclusively negative one that slowly but surely deprives her of precisely that position. In the end, she is removed too far from reality to function as an effective agent emotionally and socially. Drawing their power from two very different sources, one communal and spiritual and the other individualistic and pragmatic, Pauline and Fleur both surrender to the higher and more insidious influence of colonialism largely because they internalize what it offers rather than finding or strengthening their own sources of power.

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